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105th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 105–208

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 16–21, 1997
Las Vegas Hilton Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

PROCEEDINGS—DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

105th Congress, 2d Session – – – – – – – – – – – – House Document 105–208

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

COMMUNICATION

FROM

THE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT, THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

TRANSMITTING

THE REPORT OF THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE ORGANIZATION'S 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION, INCLUDING THEIR ANNUAL AUDIT REPORT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES AS OF DECEMBER 31, 1996, PURSUANT TO 36 U.S.C. 90i AND 44 U.S.C. 1332

FEBRUARY 5, 1998.—Referred to the Committee on Veterans' Affairs and ordered to be printed

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NATIONAL ENCAMPMENTS OF VETERANS' ORGANIZATIONS;
PROCEEDINGS PRINTED ANNUALLY FOR CONGRESS

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

[Approved October 2, 1968.]

LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

AMERICAN DISABLED VETERANS,
November 4, 1997.

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

DEAR MR. SPEAKER: As business manager of Disabled American 404Veterans, 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 16–21, 1997, 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, 1996, 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 1997-98

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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

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

First Junior Vice Commander
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6811, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6188

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

Third Junior Vice Commander
George H. Steese, 4186 W. Terrace Avenue, Fresno, CA 93722

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

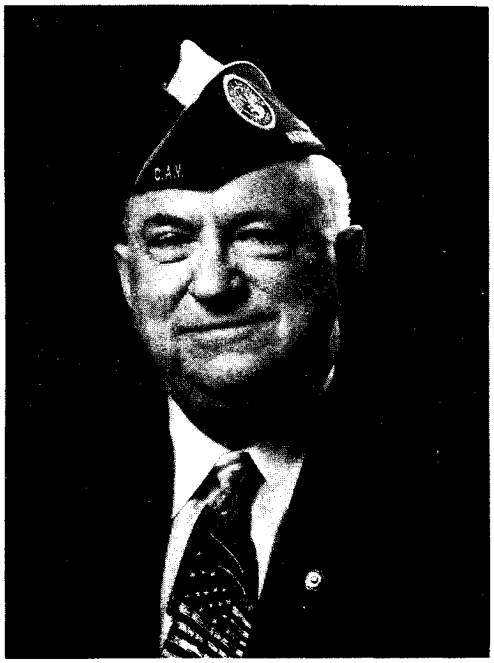
National Judge Advocate
Edward G. Galian, 200 Atlantic Avenue, #1, Lynbrook, NY 11563

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



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

Gregory C. Reed
National Commander
1996 - 1997
Disabled American Veterans

NATIONAL OFFICERS 1996-97

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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

Senior Vice Commander
Harry R. McDonald, Jr., 6161 Hwy. 393, Crestview, FL 32530

First Junior Vice Commander
William D. Wiggins, 302 Starmont Drive, Danville, VA 24540

Second Junior Vice Commander
Andrew A. Kistler, 802 Grant Street, Franklin, PA 16323

Third Junior Vice Commander
Michael E. Dobmeier, P.O. Box 6811, Grand Forks, ND 58206-6188

Fourth Junior Vice Commander
Richard Christopher, 6 Catalpa Street, Saugus, MA 01906-2931

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

National Chaplain
Rev. Carl E. Bergstrom, 17 Brookmoor Road, Dover, NH 03820-5303

Past National Commander
Thomas A. McMasters, III, 11965 Steven Drive, Sterling Hts., MI 48312

NATIONAL EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

First district: Everett J. Nygard, Jr., 314 Otter River Road, Templeton, MA 01548
Second district: Sal R. Tornatore, 170 W. 22nd Street, Huntington Station, NY 11746
Third district: David A. Schiapo, 65 Beacon Street, Cranston, RI 02910
Fourth district: Grove D. Penn, 2116 Elder Drive, Wilmington, DE 19808
Fifth district: Donald C. Graffius, 1606 Montier Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15221
Sixth district: Josue N. Saez, Guadalupe 26, El Alamo, Guaynabo, PR 00969
Seventh district: Tommy R. Simms, 333 Hollywood Blvd., NW, Ft. Walton Bch., FL 32548
Eighth district: Charles W. Mills, 2241 Edinburgh Drive, Montgomery, AL 33116
Ninth District: Ronald L. Voegeli, 702 Battery Creek Road, Beaufort, SC 29902
Tenth district: Roger L. Jansen, 4925 Butternut Drive, Holland, MI 49424
Eleventh district: Nicholas J. Border, 7306 Kingsman-Nickerson Road, Kinsman, OH 44428
Twelfth district: Richard R. Harris, 40154 Lakeview Avenue, Antioch, IL 60002
Thirteenth district: Glen E. Vogel, Sr., P.O. Box 353, Wolcottville, IN 46795
Fourteenth district: Harry VandeMore, 48402 292nd Street, Hudson, SD 57034
Fifthteenth district: Francis E. McLaskey, 3130 33rd Avenue, SW, Cedar Rapids, IA 52404
Sixteenth district: Robert D. Salisbury, 2562 N. Courtland Street, Orange, CA 92867
Seventeenth district: Stanley L. Miller, 1102 E. Wood, Carlsbad, NM 88220
Eighteenth district: Michael J. Smaydy, 321 S. Lynx Creek Road, Prescott, AZ 86303
Nineteenth district: Fred G. Ruppert, 2352 Broadmoor Avenue, Fairbanks, AK 99709
Twentieth district: William A. Bone, 205 Coventry Drive, Hewitt, TX 76643
Twenty-first district: Adrian H. Hunt, 123 Apache Drive, Searcy, AR 72143

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

PROCEEDINGS OF THE 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS HELD AT LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

August 16-21, 1997

JOINT OPENING SESSION

August 17, 1997

The Joint Opening Session of the Disabled American Veterans and Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary convened in the Conrad Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Sunday afternoon, August 17, 1997, and was called to order at 1:00 o'clock p.m. by Commander Gregory C. Reed.

COMMANDER GREGORY C. REED: We hope you enjoyed our tribute to the one and only Elvis Presley. (Applause) Ladies and gentlemen, Elvis has left the building.

I now call to order the 76th 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 an annual National Convention composed of the national officers and representatives of the state departments and chapters.

In accordance with these directives, I, Arthur H. Wilson, national adjutant, declare the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans to be convened at Las Vegas, Nevada, 1:00 p.m., August 17th, 1997.

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

COMMANDER REED: Present Colors.

(Presentation of Colors.)

COMMANDER REED: Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in the singing of our National Anthem.

(Singing of National Anthem.)

COMMANDER REED: Will the audience please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER REED: Color Guard dismissed.

(Dismissal of Color Guard.)

COMMANDER REED: I will now call on National Chaplain Carl Bergstrom for the invocation.

CHAPLAIN CARL BERGSTROM: Let us pray. As we gather together at this 76th Convention, we implore the God of us all that He would look kindly upon us, bless the members of the Disabled American Veterans and its Auxiliary, bless us as we gather together. Bless those whose lives are an inspiration to us. Bless those who are encouraging and supportive.

May we also reach out to others in times of distress. May we also, in Your Name, be an inspiration that others may also step forth, and that as each generation comes along, they will know and remember the price that was paid for the freedoms that we share.

Bless our nation and all in authority. Bless those who are absent from us, those in hospitals and those who are still listed as missing in action and may still be prisoners of war. Bless them and their families and loved ones everywhere. In Your Holy Name we ask. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Carl.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in celebrating the abundant beauty of the American landscape as we sing together, "America the Beautiful."

(Singing of "America the Beautiful.")

COMMANDER REED: Please be seated.

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

Look around you and you will see a successful convention under

way. But let me assure you that a successful National Convention requires countless men and women working together to ensure the Annual Convention is the most fun-filled, exciting and rewarding event of the year for all of us.

To successfully plan and carry out a great National Convention requires leadership, commitment, organization and 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 relentless enthusiasm is tempered with wise leadership and organizational skills that leave nothing to chance.

We have indeed been fortunate to have this comrade as chairman for the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. This year's chairman served in the United States Navy from 1952 to 1956. Following military service, he attended Rockhurst College, earning a degree in business administration and earned his Juris Doctor from the University of Missouri in 1969. In addition to other positions, he practiced law for ten years and is currently the general counsel and business and financial officer for Neo-Tech Worldwide, Incorporated.

Our National Convention chairman is no stranger to DAV leadership. He is a life member of Black Mountain DAV Chapter Number 12 in Henderson, Nevada, and has served as chapter commander twice. Within the DAV Department of Nevada, he has served as Benefits chairman, Finance Committee chairman, treasurer, adjutant, inspector and, most recently, as the 1996-97 department commander.

Ladies and gentlemen, join me in a warm welcome for our DAV National Convention chairman, Thomas J. Caenen. (Applause)

MR. THOMAS J. CAENEN: Thank you, National Commander Reed. Welcome, Secretary-Designate Hershel Gober, Senator Reid and distinguished guests. I also wish to welcome all members of the Disabled American Veterans, their families and guests.

Las Vegas is again proud to host a DAV National Convention. When you're finished with your day's meetings, please take time to view the many and exciting destination resorts that have been built. Also, you do not want to miss the Main Street experience, lighting extravaganza. All of this can be reached from the Cad Bus Service on the strip.

Mark your calendar for Monday evening, August 19th, for the Fun Night. Our department, in cooperation with the national organization, has produced an exciting show for you. As a preview, the name will be "The Las Vegas Hoedown." There'll be singing, dancing, clogging and the River Dance will be provided for you. You will definitely want to see this show.

Southern Nevada is enjoying phenomenal growth of 6- to 7,000 people moving here every month. Las Vegas is the fastest growing major city in the United States. But we still welcome newcomers to our valley.

For veterans, we are also proud to announce the opening of our new Veterans Outpatient Clinic. This clinic is 149,000 square feet and provides for ambulatory care. Nuclear medicine, CAT scans and MRI capabilities are available at the Michael Callahan Federal Hospital. Medical Center Director Ramon Ravi has done an outstanding job of pulling this project together. I also want to acknowledge Colonel David Young, commander of the Michael Callahan Federal Hospital located at Nellis Air Force Base.

Newcomers will also be glad to know that our 1997 Legislature has enabled us to build a 180-bed veterans home. This expansion could not have been possible if it was not for the strong support of our congressional delegation. We can now provide health service to our present veterans and have expanded capabilities for newcomers to Southern Nevada.

At this time, I also have the pleasure to introduce Mr. Arnie Anderson. He's our city councilman. Mr. Anderson. (Applause)

MR. ARNIE ANDERSON: Thank you, Tom, and good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. On behalf of the City of Las Vegas -- let me apologize for not having a suit on. I just arrived from out of state via Southwest Airlines, and my suit is in no shape to be worn without going home and getting it ironed, and I, according to the military tradition, did not want to be late, so please accept my

casual attire. (Applause) Thank you.

On behalf of the City of Las Vegas, we are honored that you are here. For those of you that just got here and haven't had a chance to partake of some of our games of chance, we want to wish you good luck. For those of you that have already been there, we want to say to you, better luck next time. (Laughter)

If you'll bear with me -- I have 60 seconds -- I have several questions I want to ask. United States Air Force, are you here?

(Response of, "Yes!")

MR. ANDERSON: United States Army, are you here?

(Response of, "Yes!")

MR. ANDERSON: United States Marine Corps, are you here?

(Response of, "Yes.")

MR. ANDERSON: United States Coast Guard, are you here? I'd better ask that again. How about Nevadans, are you here?

(Response of, "Yes!")

MR. ANDERSON: I would like the national commander -- I have to tell you, I have my very favorite brother who is here. Is the United States Navy here?

(Response of, "Yes!")

MR. ANDERSON: Would the national commander and the Auxiliary national commander please join me for just a moment? It is true that veterans have the key to our heart here in the City of Las Vegas. I therefore think it's most appropriate that I present to your national commander the key to the City of Las Vegas. Congratulations. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, serving as your national commander this past year has simply been extraordinary. First of all, I rediscovered why the DAV is such a vital force in the lives of so many disabled veterans and their families, and in just a few minutes I will share with you many of my observations and memories. But right now I want to watch along with you a brief movie appropriately titled, "DAV - A Vital Force."

This video was produced by our Communications Department at National Headquarters and takes us through a nostalgic, toe-tapping and sometimes whimsical look back at the life and times of the DAV during the past 12 months.

(DAV film)

COMMANDER REED: Wow! I don't know about you, but watching that really sent chills up my spine and makes me so proud of our wonderful organization. The DAV truly is a vital force in people's lives. Just think about all the ways we help build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. And every one of you in this room make it all happen. So give yourselves a big round of applause while we're at it. (Applause)

(Musical introduction of line officers)

(Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander Harry R. McDonald assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER HARRY R. McDONALD: That was keen, wasn't it?

Each year, it is the pleasure of the national senior vice-commander to introduce the national commander for the purpose of presenting his report to the convention delegates. This year, the honor falls on me to introduce a man who has continued the highest traditions of this great organization of ours, a man whose commitment to the DAV stands as an inspiring example of dedication and leadership to us all.

Greg Reed was unanimously elected DAV national commander at our National Convention in New Orleans last summer.

A native of Indiana, Greg enlisted in the United States Marine Corps in 1966. While serving in Vietnam in 1967, he suffered multiple shrapnel wounds from enemy mortar fire during a fire fight in Vietnam's Quang Tri Province. He sustained his injuries while trying to set up a helicopter landing zone to extract other wounded Marines.

When he was discharged from the Marine Corps in 1968 with the rank of lance corporal, he held the Purple Heart, Combat Action Ribbon, Vietnam Cross of Gallantry and the Presidential Unit Citation.

Following military service, Greg signed up as a life member of the Dr. Worthington Chapter Number 3 in Indianapolis while studying history at Indiana University. After graduating with a bachelor of arts degree, he joined the DAV's professional staff as a National Service Officer. He worked as an NSO until 1974 when he resumed his academic studies.

He earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from Butler University and went to work as a counseling psychologist with the Department of Veterans Affairs in Indianapolis before assuming his current position as a VA program analyst.

Greg has held nearly every elected and appointed position in his chapter. At the department level, he was the first Vietnam veteran elected as commander of the Department of Indiana.

At the national level, Greg served on the DAV's National Executive Committee from 1987 to 1988 and from 1991 to 1993. He served on the National Interim Employment Committee from 1984 to 1985; on the National Interim Hospital and Medical Services Committee, 1980-81; and was elected 4th junior vice-commander, 1988-89. He was elected national 2nd junior vice-commander for 1993-94; national 1st junior vice-commander for 1994-95; and national senior vice-commander for 1995-96.

You can see just how important service to veterans is to Greg and just how much everything the DAV stands for is to him. So, ladies and gentlemen, it is my distinct honor to present Greg Reed, national commander of the Disabled American Veterans. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Harry, for that warm introduction. You're very kind, but the gratitude you offer me must be shared by many other people who are helping to build a new spirit in the DAV. One of those people is you, Harry.

Others include your fellow line officers; the National Executive and Finance Committees; our national staff in Cincinnati and Washington, led by Art Wilson, Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman; our chapter, department and National Service Officers; chapter and department leaders throughout this great nation, including our HSCS, and all of our wonderful DAV and Auxiliary members, with a special note of praise for our volunteers.

When they asked Yogi Berra what makes a great manger, his answer was simple: "A great team." A lot of credit must go to all of you. You're the ones, the great team, who help make the DAV the vital organization it is.

Clearly, as a result of your collective efforts, the DAV continues to provide the very best possible service to our members and, indeed, to all of our nation's 2.1 million disabled service-connected veterans, their dependents and survivors.

Let me offer a special word of thanks to the Auxiliary. National Commander Margaret Hass and National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, you're great people, and you have a great organization. You know how I feel about the Auxiliary. You'll always have my support. (Applause)

My heart goes out to the Department of Indiana and Dr. Worthington Chapter 3. Jim Powers, Mike Whelihan, all of you know what you've done to make the past year so wonderful for me, and I love you for it.

Whatever I've been able to accomplish as your national commander has been due in great part to the team spirit within the DAV. I've never considered myself a lone ranger. Whatever the project, there was always someone around, many of you in the audience, to give support, to lend support, to approve the exceptions, to applaud the results. That outstanding team spirit is what makes success very sweet.

Finally, I wish to express my very deep gratitude to National Adjutant Art Wilson for his leadership, wise counsel and unwavering support and, most of all Art, your friendship. I have the highest regard and admiration for your integrity and professionalism.

Directed by your guiding vision, the DAV has become a model of excellence, a standard that other veterans service organizations strive to equal. (Applause)

Fellow delegates to the 76th DAV National Convention, friend, Brenda, Suzette, Melissa, honored guests: It has been a great

privilege for me to serve as your national commander. I will always treasurer the memories of places I've been and people I've met who make me extremely proud to be a part of this wonderful organization of ours.

Everywhere my travels have taken me, it has been a constant source of pride and inspiration to witness the caring and compassion of our members toward their fellow disabled veterans and their families.

The tremendous outpouring of assistance to our members and their loved ones affected by this year's devastating floods is a striking example of that care and compassion. In flood-ravaged areas of Northern Kentucky, Ohio, North Dakota and Minnesota, our members opened their doors and their hearts to shelter and comfort those dragged under by that severe flooding.

Nearly $350,000 was provided from the DAV's Disaster Relief Fund to help flood victims restore their homes and rebuild their lives. And from all over the country, our members and their families generously donated food, clothing and financial aid totaling more than $57,000. (Applause)

The floods of 1997 will be remembered as a tragic time, but also a time when the DAV pulled together in a common spirit of hope and renewal.

But it's not just helping the victims of terrible disasters like floods, hurricanes and earthquakes that makes me proud. The everyday acts of kindness and generosity are just as important and praiseworthy.

When a Transportation Network van takes a veteran to the VA clinic, when a chapter or department donates much-needed equipment to a VA medical center, or when one of our VA voluntary service volunteers reads a book to a hospitalized veteran, it shows that the DAV cares.

Over the past year, I have come to understand how vitally important our volunteer activities have become. I also know that much more help will be needed in the years ahead. During 1996, DAV volunteers continued to serve this nation by providing more than 2.3 million hours of critical service to hospitalized veterans, saving taxpayers nearly $30 million in employee cost. (Applause)

In 1996, the DAV's nationwide Transportation Program presented the VA with 141 Ford vans, the largest single donation we have made to date. In 1997, we presented an additional 52 vans to the VA. Since 1987, the DAV has donated 608 vans at a cost of nearly $11 million, and volunteer drivers have transported more than three million individuals over 131 million miles to VA health care facilities. (Applause)

As you can see, the DAV devotes its resources to the most needed and meaningful services for our disabled veterans. We are able to do so only with the continuing support of an American public that is grateful for all that our veterans have done.

As federal funding gets tighter, hospital staffs shrink and services dwindle, volunteers will play an increasingly important role in caring for our veterans. They can expect to take on more tasks outside the duties customarily performed by volunteers. But my faith is strong because we are a caring and compassionate people.

We are generous people. We will reach down, we will reach back, we will reach across to help our brothers and sisters who are in need.

To make certain the DAV's tradition of service and compassion will endure, we must have a strong, committed and active membership. Our chapters and our departments have accepted the challenge of growing their memberships and encouraging more active participation in the DAV, both locally and nationally.

Members represent the lifeblood of the DAV, and we have set an ambitious goal to create a single body of at least one million full-paid life members. Veterans helping veterans, working with each other to build a better life for ourselves and our families. What a noble calling! (Applause)

Each member strengthens our ability to generate grass-roots support for legislative initiatives that are important to disabled veterans. Life membership is permanent and makes us even stronger.

As you know, effective membership recruitment becomes even more challenging from one year to the next. Yet, so many of our chapters and departments have accepted the challenge, meeting and exceeding membership goals.

I am tremendously optimistic that the DAV will remain a strong, vibrant veterans' advocate for many years to come. (Applause)

An organization, like an individual, gets its reputation from its dealings with people. For more than 76 years, the DAV has built an unmatched reputation of service as a champion of the vital interests of our nation's former servicemen and women. Reputations can be fickle however.

I recall the story of the outlaw about to be hanged for his dastardly deeds. At the hanging, he was asked by the sentencing judge if he had any last words. "As a matter of fact, I do," he responded. "Judge, I know you've got a great reputation in this town. You're fair, you're honest, you set a good example. Everybody thinks you're a wonderful person. But I've got to tell you something, Judge. You just sure went and ruined yourself with me!"

Well, you can never please everybody. But it's wise to remember that achievements are sort of like yesterday's ball game. It's great to have won, but there's another game tomorrow. And if we're going to keep our hard-won reputation, we will need to concentrate on where we're going, not where we've been.

That's why I'm so very, very pleased to report that the DAV National Service Program is growing stronger every day. Our National Service Officers are not only ready to meet the challenge; they're meeting it head on. There are 260 of these men and women out there in the front lines working for you, your fellow disabled veterans, and families like yours.

Last year alone, these dedicated professionals secured benefits for nearly 240,000 veterans and their families, accounting for more than $1.8 billion in new and retroactive benefits. (Applause)

We are particularly proud of the fact that since the DAV created its National Service Officer Training Academy in 1994, we've added 118 of these dedicated service-connected disabled veterans to the ranks of our National Service Officer corps. And with this new wave of DAV NSOs entering the fray, our organization is laying the groundwork to continue that fine tradition of service on and into the future. And it will be a great future. These are dedicated and talented young people.

Far and away, we're giving our newest employees the best training available in the field of veterans' affairs. But we haven't forgotten our long-time employees either.

We're providing quality management and leadership training to the supervisory personnel of our headquarters team in Washington and Cincinnati and of our NSO offices around the country.

Let me assure you that the DAV will never back off in its drive to protect the employment and training rights earned by America's veterans. (Applause)

As I'm sure everyone knows, Jesse Brown stepped down as the head of the Department of Veterans Affairs, effective July 1, 1997. A short time later, the DAV held a reception for Mr. Brown at our National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. An overflow crowd was in attendance as we paid homage to perhaps the most capable veterans' advocate in recent memory.

A wise man once said, "Vision is easy; execution is hard." Jesse Brown is one of the few who have changed the lives of so many. Under his superb leadership, the VA has restructured its health care system from both eligibility and delivery perspectives to serve as a model for health care throughout the country.

The VA has dramatically improved the time it takes to process a disability claim; broadened compensation to include undiagnosed illness for some Persian Gulf veterans; and expanded the list of compensable conditions presumed related to Agent Orange exposure.

In addition, the VA has expanded programs to help women veterans, minorities, the homeless, POWs and Gold Star Wives.

We look to people like Jesse Brown for a brighter future. And

while he may no longer be assisting veterans from inside the government, you can be sure we haven't heard the last from a man who has dedicated his entire professional life to serving those who sacrificed so much for their country. (Applause)

Secretary Brown's deep, personal commitment to serving veterans and their families was the driving force behind all he accomplished as head of the VA. He will always be respected and remembered as the Secretary for Veterans Affairs. (Applause)

Some people are enshrined in history for what they did, others for what they said. Yogi Berra has both routes covered. He was selected to the Baseball Hall of Fame for his exploits on the diamond. He went on to become a well-respected coach and manager. But he has achieved another kind of fame for his utterances, both audacious and profound.

For example: "Anyone who goes to see a psychiatrist should have his head examined." Pretty hard to argue with that.

He also noted that, "You can observe a lot just by watching." He's certainly not wrong there either.

Still another quote applies to the current uncertainties regarding the battle with Congress to protect veterans' benefits. I am referring to what is probably Mr. Berra's most famous statement: "It ain't over till it's over." (Applause)

The battle to protect veterans' benefits is not over, and probably never will be. As we face challenge after challenge to the benefits disabled veterans have earned, colleagues like you are very, very important. The pressure to cut federal spending today is intense, and the temptation to economize at the expense of needed veterans' programs is more than many politicians can resist.

The growing number of nonveterans in Congress means that we will have to redouble our efforts to educate members of Congress about veterans' issues or risk losing VA disability compensation, survivor benefits, veterans' medical care and other programs we and our families need.

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)

As President Lincoln pledged so long ago to care for our nation's veterans, today's Congress has an ongoing national obligation to honor that very solemn promise.

I am proud of the fact that the DAV continues to be the leader in veterans' legislation. To be sure, the expertise and credibility our organization has built over the years is a tremendous plus. But we can't afford to take anything for granted if we are to continue having an impact on the legislative process.

With a new Congress to indoctrinate, it is more important now than ever before that we and our families, as private citizens and constituents, communicate with our senators and representatives so they can know and understand what our concerns are. They need your special insight and your real-life experiences to address those issues intelligently.

I know we've had to spend a lot of time and effort just protecting existing benefits and services from attacks and funding cutbacks, but we also need to make an active role part of our life in helping Congress make needed improvements in veterans' benefits.

It's not all a game of defense, however, and we've had some noble successes on veterans' issues. For example, just last year your tremendous grass-roots effort helped persuade Congress to take an important first step toward reforming the VA health care delivery system.

The Veterans' Health Care Eligibility Reform Act of 1996, H.R. 3118, passed both houses of Congress with broad bipartisan support and was signed into law on October the 9th, 1996.

Comprehensive eligibility reform has been one of the DAV's top priorities for years. Your letters and your phone calls to your senators and representatives were absolutely crucial then and will continue to be so. (Applause)

Not only will we continue to push for further reform legislation to allow the VA to provide better, more efficient health care to more veterans, but we will again be pressing for improvements in the entire benefits delivery system.

To succeed, we need to speak with a powerful unified voice that sends the clear, unmistakable message that Congress must safeguard and honor America's commitment to disabled veterans and their families.

That message cannot just be directed to the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees, because that's just like preaching to the choir. We need to get our message to every member of the House and Senate. After all, there are 535 representatives and senators who vote on legislation affecting veterans' programs and services.

We need to explain that fulfilling the nation's commitment to veterans does not mean Congress has to abandon other national priorities like balancing the federal budget. A responsible fiscal policy does not require cutting veterans' services or reducing the level of benefits.

And with so many other programs competing for a shrinking pot of funds, we must drive home the fact that veterans' programs and services are important and unique. They are unique, because disabled veterans have earned those services and benefits with blood, sweat and tears. They aren't just another government give-away program.

I know safeguarding veterans' programs and services is a tall order, but this is a challenge and a goal worthy of our best efforts. Someone has said that if you intend to succeed beyond your wildest expectations, you have to have some wild expectations. A few people wake up every day to go out and slay dragons. Most, however, are satisfied to chase lizards.

We, you and I, all of us together, have our collective strength and our collective will to get the job done. Together, we are one! (Applause)

We, you and I as individuals, must do our part to write those letters, to make those phone calls, and to make our voices heard, because the best way to educate 535 members of Congress is the same way they all count votes, one at a time. (Applause)

Someone once said that a speech is like a love affair. Any fool can start it, but to end it requires considerable skill. (Laughter)

Before I go, I want to say that success does not come to organizations just because they're big or have lots of money, or even very good products and services. It comes because of their people, organizational resources mightier than any machine or any amount of money.

I'm reminded of the story about the old man who had many troubles. Life seemed to hand him one bad thing after another, but he faced each obstacle with a smile and a cheery disposition. A close friend finally asked him how he managed to stay so happy despite all these hardships.

The old man quickly answered, "Well, the Bible often says, 'And it came to pass,' but never once does it say, 'It came to stay.'" (Applause)

When trouble comes our way, I know we'll come out on top because DAV and Auxiliary members here today and people like you throughout America are rising to meet that challenge.

I firmly believe the future of the DAV can be just as good, if not better, than the past. But to be so, we'll have to be lean, aggressive and smart, more committed to excellence, more innovative, more dedicated to our members and employees. Most of all, we'll need the contributions of absolutely everyone. There is no unimportant job in the DAV and no unimportant people. (Applause)

The DAV depends on each of you. We need your best efforts, and the efforts and ideas of all of your associates, to keep the DAV the Number 1 veterans service organization for many years to come. Your drive to succeed and excel in building our membership and your willingness to answer that call to action in our grass-roots efforts in the past has shown your level of commitment.

It's true: The DAV is the voice of disabled veterans and their families throughout this great country.

When I leave my post as your national commander, I will do so with the firm belief that all of you share the DAV's vision of tomorrow, a bright tomorrow we're building together today.

With sincerity, I say that it has been a great privilege and honor for me to serve as your national commander. God bless you and God bless the DAV. (Rising applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER McDONALD: Commander Reed, Greg, your leadership and devotion to the DAV will be remembered by all of us for many years, and your outstanding report is indicative of the faith that you have in the Disabled American Veterans, and I want to congratulate you.

At this time, the Chair will entertain a motion to accept the national commander's report. Go to a microphone, please.

NEC 7TH DISTRICT TOMMY R. SIMMS: Tommy Simms, 7th District. So move.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER McDONALD: We have a motion out here. Do I hear a second?

NEC 2ND DISTRICT SAL R. TORNATORE: District 2, Tornatore, seconds.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER McDONALD: All those in favor, signify by Aye. Thank you. (Applause)

(Whereupon, Commander Reed resumed the chair.)

COMMANDER REED: At this time, I would like to introduce your National Executive Committee. Please hold your applause until I've introduced all of them. 1st District, Everett J. Nygard, Jr. of Massachusetts; 2nd District, Sal Tornatore of New York; 3rd District, David A. Schiapo of Rhode Island; 4th District, Grover Don Penn of New Jersey; 5th District, Donald C. Graffius of Pennsylvania; 6th District, Josue Saez of Puerto Rico; 7th District, Tommy R. Simms of Florida; 8th District, Charles W. Mills of Alabama; 9th District, Ronald L. Voegeli of South Carolina; 10th District, Roger Jansen of Michigan; 11th District, Nicholas J. Border of Ohio; 12th District, James R. Harris of Illinois; 13th District, Glen E. Vogel, Sr. of Indiana; 14th District, Harry VandeMore of South Dakota; 15th District, Francis E. McLaskey of Iowa; 16th District, Robert D. Salisbury of California; 17th District, Stanley L. Miller of New Mexico; 18th District, Michael J. Smaydy of Arizona; 19th District, Fred G. Ruppert of Alaska; 20th District, William A. Bone of Texas; and 21st District, Adrian H. Hunt of Arkansas. (Applause)

And of great assistance to me this year was my national chief of staff, James S. Powers of Indiana; Officer of the Day Edward M. Kawamura of Hawaii; and Sergeant-at-Arms Wilfred J. Noel of Maine. (Applause)

Parade Magazine called United States Senator Harry Reid of Nevada one of a handful of leaders in Washington with the most integrity and guts. Since Nevadans elected him to the Senate in 1986, Harry Reid has developed a solid reputation as a real straight-shooter who can be counted to build bipartisan consensus in his quiet, diplomatic manner.

Senator Reid comes from the rural mining town of Searchlight, Nevada, where he learned the fundamental values of hard work and honesty that remains his guiding principles. He was raised in a small cabin without indoor plumbing and attended a two-room elementary school. His father, a hard-rock miner, never finished the eighth grade, and his mother never graduated from high school. But their youngest of four sons rose to achieve the American dream, a potential that Senator Reid now devotes his life's work to securing for all Americans.

After attending high school in Henderson, Nevada, because Searchlight had no high school, Harry Reid attended college with the aid of the local business community. He graduated from Utah State University in 1961 and earned his law degree from George Washington University in our nation's capital. His law school years acquainted him with Capitol Hill where he worked nights as a police officer to pay for school.

He returned to Nevada so he could serve Henderson as city attorney and was elected to the State Assembly in 1968 at the age of 28. At the age of 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 elected 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 it is now indeed my pleasure to introduce the Honorable Harry Reid, the senator from the great state of Nevada. (Rising applause)

SENATOR HARRY REID: National Commander Reed, Nevada veterans and veterans all, guests: I'm going to leave as soon as I finish my remarks. I'm late for church. But having said that, I don't know where I could spend a more spiritual afternoon than here. The feeling that goes through my body, and I'm sure most of yours, when the National Anthems are sung is something that you rarely get in church.

And to hear the report of the national commander, report on the hours and dollars of service that have been generated by the DAV this year, including the flood-ravaged Red River Valley, is something that certainly fits within any scriptural reference referring to charity.

So thank you very much for allowing me to be part of the program this afternoon.

My role today is to welcome the 4- to 5,000 delegates to this great convention to the State of Nevada. I do that, telling each of you that the State of Nevada is a very unique place. Surprisingly, the State of Nevada is the most urban state in the Union. Ninety percent of the people live in the metropolitan Las Vegas and Reno areas. We're more urban than New York, New Jersey, Florida, California or any state in the Union.

But in addition to the attributes of being the most urban state in America, we also have a very unusual state from a rural perspective. Nevada is the most mountainous state in the Union except for Alaska. The State of Nevada is made up of 314 separate mountain ranges. We have 42 mountains that are over 11,000 feet high. We, of course, have a national park, beautiful wilderness areas.

And as Mark Twain said many, many years ago, Lake Tahoe is the fairest place in all the earth.

So I invite each of you to have a good time at your convention -- we're glad you're here -- but also to recognize that you should come back and visit other parts of Nevada, whether it's Lake Tahoe, or the beautiful Ruby Mountains in Northeastern Nevada, or the historic mining town of Virginia City, we have many places, and we welcome you to each one of them.

I each day am grateful for the sacrifices that you have made. I'm not a member and have not been a member of any military organization, but my children and my grandchildren live in a land of plenty, a land of freedom and opportunity because of the sacrifices made by you in this audience. Whether we speak of Secretary Gober, who served two tours of duty in Vietnam and was awarded the Purple Heart and other medals of valor, he is what is symbolic of the veterans of this nation.

So I salute you and pledge to you my support and admiration in the years to come. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Senator.

It's an honor once again to share the lectern with the DAV's Auxiliary National Commander Margaret Hass. During my term as your national commander, I have had the pleasure and privilege of seeing her exemplify the leadership, love and dedication that has so wonderfully led the Auxiliary through the past year.

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

How fortunate we are to have such a wonderful Auxiliary, whose members serve as loving and devoted partners along with the DAV members to help build better lives for disabled veterans and their families. Under Margaret's capable leadership, the Auxiliary has been with the DAV every step of the way in the ongoing battle to protect the services and benefits disabled veterans and their

families count on.

Commander Margaret and I have shared many travels and events promoting the mission of the DAV and Auxiliary during our terms. I can tell you, without reservation, that the Auxiliary was magnificently represented by this wonderful woman who has dedicated herself to helping the families of disabled veterans who sacrificed so much for their country.

When Margaret spoke on behalf of the families of disabled veterans, she did so with unwavering love and strength. I was especially proud to have her join me at the witness table at the DAV's presentation before the joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. Her steadfast resolve helped to send a powerful message to our national leaders, a message that said, "We, the DAV and the Auxiliary, stand together." And stand with us the Auxiliary has for 75 glorious years.

Margaret is well aware of the Auxiliary's fine heritage. She is also acutely aware of issues facing disabled veterans and their families. She has been involved in Auxiliary activities for more than 20 years and has held nearly all elected and appointed Auxiliary unit and state department offices. That's quite a feat when you consider that she lives near the Canadian border in North Dakota, and her unit, Unit Number 4 in Minot, is 68 miles away. But that's the kind of dedication and commitment that Margaret brings to the Auxiliary.

Won't all of you please join me in welcoming a beautiful and warm and talented able leader, my Auxiliary counterpart and my friend, Auxiliary National Commander Margaret Hass. (Rising applause)

AUXILIARY COMMANDER MARGARET HASS: Thank you, Commander Reed, for such a flattering introduction. It's been a special time for me to serve with you during the past year.

At this time, I would like to introduce the officers that the membership chose to serve as our leaders. This year I learned full measure the blessing of a good leadership team. Please hold your applause until they have all been introduced.

National Adjutant and Past National Commander Maria Tedrow; Assistant National Adjutant Judy Hezlep, Ohio; National Senior Vice-Commander Evelynne Dunn, Nevada; 1st Junior Vice Evelyn Dorsey, Washington, D.C.; 2nd Junior Vice Paula Raymond, Illinois; and 4th Junior Vice Esther Westlake, Washington; National Chaplain Carol Gray, Michigan; Judge Advocate Shelia Allred, North Carolina; and Immediate Past Commander Barbara Hicks, Arizona; Past National Commander Betty Hall; and Helen Parcelle, the Auxiliary National Convention chairman. Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

I would also like to recognize our National Executive Committeewomen. Please stand as I call your name. And hold your applause, please, until all the names are called. District Number 1, Jacqueline M. Fossiano, Massachusetts; District 2, Dolores U. Robidoux, New York; District 3, Grace Boland, Rhode Island; District 4, Beatrice M. Albanese, New Jersey; District 5, E. Jimi H. Hayes, Pennsylvania; District 6, Mildred Valazquez, Puerto Rico; District 7, Frances L. Fabregas, Florida; and District 8, Elaine W. Majors, Louisiana.

District 9, our NEC is Vicky Grier, and she is not able to be with us today because of the illness of her husband, and so we have our alternate NEC, Ruth Koon from Georgia.

District Number 10, Gwen A. McCracken, Michigan; District Number 11, Jane M. Wood, Ohio; District Number 12, Beraldine D. Errett, Illinois; District Number 13, Esther M. Houston, Indiana; District Number 14, Sharon A. Kramer, Minnesota; District Number 15, Delitha Staples, Kansas; District Number 16, Alma Fowlkes, California; District Number 17, Dorothy R. Dudoich, New Mexico; District 18, Joan Fletcher, Arizona; District 19, Kathryn A. Wiley, Washington; District Number 20, June Bradford, Texas; and District Number 21, Gertrude Tidwell, Oklahoma.

Thank you for your support this year. (Applause)

There is also a group of women here to whom we, the Auxiliary, owe such a debt of gratitude. They are our mentors, the women who came before us to set such a fine example for us to follow. Their leadership and wise counsel helped mold the Auxiliary into a great

organization. I am referring to the many Auxiliary past national commanders who have joined us here. Our love and gratitude is always with them.

Would the past Auxiliary national commanders please stand so we can greet you. (Applause) Thank you.

At this time, I would like to acknowledge my family that was able to come to the convention with me. They're out there amongst you beautiful people somewhere. My eligibility is my husband, Victor. He's an Armed Guard Navy man from World War II. And I have two daughters here, Vicki and Melanie, and two granddaughters, Stephanie and Tori. Thank you for your love and support all these years. I love you all. (Applause)

Commander Reed, following our election in New Orleans last year, you attended the Auxiliary Fall Conference in Louisville, where you endeared yourself to all the Auxiliary members with these words: "Nothing can match the respect and appreciation that I have for our Auxiliary members who give so freely of themselves caring for veterans and their families in communities across the country. You are the binding thread, the steady and devoted partners united by a common loyalty, whose compassion has transformed the lives of thousands of disabled veterans."

Commander Reed, we thank you for carrying this vision of the Auxiliary throughout America during your term as DAV national commander. (Applause)

At this time, we would like to express our appreciation and honor you with this presentation.

> Presented to Gregory C. Reed, National Commander, in appreciation for distinguished service given to the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, 1996-1997. Maria M. Tedrow, National Adjutant and Margaret E. Hass, National Commander.

(Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

AUXILIARY COMMANDER HASS: What an exciting year! (Applause) It has been such a pleasure to serve as your Auxiliary commander while celebrating the Auxiliary diamond anniversary. Just think of it! Seventy-five years of service to the veterans and their families along the side of the DAV. Yes, what an exciting year!

Look around you, and you will see "We, the Auxiliary" at your side. We are your loved ones who have joined with the DAV sharing and caring for disabled veterans and their families for 75 years. We are women at their best, and we pledge to be with you and there for you for as long as we are needed. We want to be part of the solution, and you can always count on us. (Applause)

Our caring and sharing is like a multi-faceted diamond. We sparkle with millions of hours of volunteering to keep our promise of service, with countless hours of legislative grass-root lobbying to convince legislators to support veterans issues, and we shine with untold instances of spreading and living Americanism. We make a phenomenal difference in the lives of our disabled loved ones, our families, our children, youth and our communities every day, because we care so deeply for them.

We also sparkle with intent as we meet the needs of women today. We are taking an open and honest look at what women face in today's world, and we are striving to serve as a beacon of hope for them, a light of courage and compassion in their time of need. We know the plight of these women from our own collective experiences, and we offer the brightness of our love to them.

We are also blessed to be able to provide financial support to these women through the Auxiliary's Service/Support Program funded by the generosity of the DAV and Auxiliary members. Additionally, each year our National Education Loan Program makes it possible for eligible students to receive financial support for their education.

Yes, we the Auxiliary are working hard to help build a better life for America's disabled veterans and our families.

We were proud to take our place at the table with Commander Reed as he presented the DAV's National Legislative Program to the joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee during the 1996 Midwinter Conference in Washington, D.C. We the Auxiliary were there to support him and to be part of the solution for helping disabled veterans and their families.

I can assure you that the Auxiliary will continue that support, just as we continue to explain to each new generation why the sacrifices made by the disabled veterans are so noble and justified, and how precious and fragile our freedom really is. We will never cease to help others understand that you who have become disabled defending and maintaining our precious freedom must be cared for with deserved gratitude. (Applause)

Ensuring the care of the disabled veteran and their family is truly what the Auxiliary is all about.

Our founders were leaders, women of vision and purpose who inspired us. Like them, we are a strong voice in any issue facing our families, and we continually look for new ideas and programs to make the concerns of the disabled veteran more visible to all Americans.

During my year as Auxiliary commander, I have been fortunate to visit with so many of you across our great nation. I saw in each of you a star in a vast field of stars shining brightly in the present and ready to light the future of our organization.

Yes, each and every member, each chapter, each unit, made the Auxiliary's 75th diamond anniversary shine brightly in this wonderful year. You stand as illuminating examples of the saying, "As one life shines, the life next to it will catch the light." Each of you has spread the light with love, diligence, caring and good old-fashioned hard work that our organization represents.

As my term draws to an end, I am reminded that each sunset is the herald of a new dawn. This is my sunset, but I know the dawn of a new commander will be even brighter because she can count on "We the Auxiliary" lighting the way into the future with her. Thank you. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: She's beautiful, and she's great.

I've got to tell you a quick little story. We were in Puerto Rico together, and we were talking about that movie, "Fargo." And Margaret is from North Dakota, and she didn't like that movie at all, because she says that people in North Dakota, they don't talk like that. Well, about ten minutes later, she goes, "You betcha." (Laughter)

The Secretary-Designate of Veterans Affairs is not new to the VA and certainly not new to veterans' issues. Hershel Gober was one of President Clinton's first appointments. The Senate confirmed him as Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs in February 1993.

When former Secretary Jesse Brown resigned on July 1st of this year, Mr. Gober assured veterans that the advocacy role the VA moved toward during Jesse Brown's tenure would be continued. His record of achievement and his successful management of the VA's daily activities clearly reflect on his own activism and commitment to veterans.

At the VA, Mr. Gober has gained a reputation for straightforward communication, and his disdain for red tape is demonstrated by his creation of the Scissors Award for cutting out unnecessary work that gets in the way of giving good service.

In addition to his regular duties, Mr. Gober led presidential missions to Vietnam during this Administration, seeking resolution of POW and MIA issues. He currently serves on the President's Management Council, where he is actively involved in the National Performance Review effort.

Mr. Gober's 20-year military career included service in both the Marine Corps and the Army. He earned several decorations during his two tours of duty in Vietnam, including the Bronze Star and the Purple Heart.

It is now my pleasure and my privilege to present DAV Life Member Secretary-Designate of Veterans Affairs, the Honorable Hershel W. Gober. (Rising applause)

SECRETARY-DESIGNATE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS HERSHEL W. GOBER: Thank you. Thank you very much. You know, you all should wait till I get through speaking before you stand up to see if you liked it or not.

Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, Auxiliary Commander Hass, distinguished officers of the Disabled American Veterans, DAV Auxiliary, fellow veterans, comrades, honored guests, ladies and

gentlemen, and the folks from Arkansas, where are you? I guess the other ones must be out there pulling those handles. A great group of people, two of the best National Service Officers I ever worked with, Bob Ellis and Virgil Ahnberg, who are in Little Rock, Arkansas, and they are good, dedicated service officers. (Applause) Good folks.

You know, it's really good to get away from Washington. Before I start, I think I'll tell you this. I cut my speech in half. I left half of it lying back there. (Applause) Because back in Arkansas, I remember -- I belong to a lot of the veterans organizations back there, and you know, being a member of a veterans organization really prepared me for politics in Washington, almost, except the veterans' politics can teach those guys a lot of lessons they haven't learned yet.

But this friend of mine back in Arkansas was running for department commander of one of the major veterans organizations, and he had a very simple campaign speech. He would get up, and he said, "I'll promise you this: I'll travel long distances and make short speeches." He won. The other guy withdrew.

It's really good to get away from, Washington and get out where there are real people. You know, people in Washington take themselves much too seriously. They think that they are indispensable. I subscribe to what my daddy used to tell me. He'd always tell me, "Son, always take your job very seriously, but don't ever take yourself too seriously." So I follow what my daddy taught me. But some people in Washington really think they're indispensable.

And, of course, we veterans know that when Harry Truman relieved Douglas MacArthur, that blew that theory out of the water. (Laughter)

But some of them think they're very indispensable. It reminds me of the old farmer down in Arkansas. I was out driving around the road one day in my pickup truck, and I passed by this farm, and there was a pig out there that its right leg was wooden, had a wooden right leg. And that made me curious, so I just pulled over. It was on a Saturday afternoon, the old farmer sitting out on the porch, wasn't plowing or anything.

I pulled over, and I said, "Pardon me, sir, but why does your pig have a wooden leg?" And he said, "Well, son, he's a very courageous pig." And I said, "What do you mean?" He said, "Well, my wife and I were asleep one night when a fire started, and that pig came running in and woke us up. The whole house burned down, but we got out alive."

And I said, "Well, then, that's how the pig lost its leg; it got burned off in the fire." He said, "No. As a matter of fact, the pig got out just fine. Went back in and saved the kids." And I asked, "Then, why does the pig have a wooden leg?" And the farmer said, "Well, boy, with a pig like that, you don't eat it all at one setting." (Laughter)

So, I guess I know that no one is indispensable, but one thing that is indispensable is the partnership that Jesse Brown and myself formed with the DAV over the last four and a half years. That's indispensable. (Applause)

And I'll tell you something else. It ended up serving veterans better than any other Administration ever has. We worked together. Jesse Brown and I were a team, and I always liked it when the President and the Vice-President, when they'd go out and make speeches and we were there, they'd always say that Jesse and I were the best management team they had.

And the reason for that is very simple. It's not very complicated at all. We both were service officers. We both knew who we worked for, the veterans of this country, 26.5 million people on our Board of Directors, and we knew that. (Applause)

The progress that we made together -- and you know what I liked about it was opening the doors up. When we first got there, we talked about this, and we were not going to have meetings in secret and decide the future of veterans. We were going to open it up. And the DAV was at the table, as were the other major veterans organizations, and I think Art and Dave will tell you that we were very open. We never tried to put something over on veterans. We

had enough of that. We wanted to open up and let the people that really have the stake in the system have some input on how it's run.

And it's served us -- not only has it served the Department of Veterans Affairs well, but it has served the veterans of this country. Had we not begun the reorganization of the medical health care system about three and a half years ago, folks, right now we'd be closing hospitals. We'd be downsizing so bad, you wouldn't be able to get treated. But we were fortunate. We started. And so we got the system into the shape where that now we're seeing more veterans than ever, we have more outpatient clinics than ever, and we're giving better quality care.

And, as Jimmy Durante used to say, "You ain't seen nothing yet." We're going to keep doing it. (Applause)

I'm very happy for the fact that one of the first things we did when we came on board is we sat down and we talked about some of the people that had been overlooked. And one of those groups that had been overlooked were those valiant women that had served this country and for so long were ignored. And we decided we were going to change that. (Applause)

We now have women clinics in our hospitals, and women are coming to us in droves. We are treating a lot of women veterans, and we should, and they're getting the care that they deserve and have earned, just like the men veterans.

We expanded the benefits for those suffering from Agent Orange, my comrades from Vietnam. And we also decided that we were not going to let the Persian Gulf become the same issue, that we drag these young men and women who served in the Persian Gulf through 20 or 25 years before their country decided to do something for them. So we took a hard stand on that, and we will continue to do so. (Applause) Thank you.

We have stronger outreach for those veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, men and women. You know, you'd be surprised how many women we have that are suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. Maybe suffering from abuse in service, but also suffering from combat. You know, we forget sometimes that those nurses that tend those young, tender bodies of those young soldiers, Marines, and sailors and airmen, you know, it must have left a profound effect on them to see the life slip away from such a young person. And also the women that served around this country and served it admirably, and we could not have done it without them. So we intend to make sure they're recognized. And we intend to make sure that they are treated for the post-traumatic stress order like their brothers. (Applause)

We have reduced our waiting times for claims processing, but I will stand right here in front of you and tell you that we have a long way to go, and I'll also make a pledge to you. You know, the last four and a half years we tackled the health care system, and the health care system is running. It's still got problems, but it's headed in the right direction. We're going to make it.

I am going to make, as my cause -- I'm going to be like Don Quixote; I hope I don't run into too many windmills -- but I am going to go after the time it takes to process claims. And I pledge to you that I will work on that. I think it is atrocious that we expect a veteran to wait a year to get an answer to a claim. I would like to see veterans wait -- 30 days would be okay, and then we could be satisfied. (Applause)

I'm already deeply involved in it. It's my responsibility, and I accept that responsibility. If I don't do it, I'm the one that didn't do it. That's the way you do things. But when I accept that responsibility, I'm going to get a lot of other people in the VA very interested in it, and we will tackle this. And they want to do it. Our folks want to do this.

Our VA family, they're good people, and they want to shorten these times. And I'm going to take the shackles off of them and untie their hands and untie their brains, and we're going to come up with ideas that will work. I'm going to let them think is what I'm telling you. Their brains aren't shackled in that respect. But I'm going to let them have a say in how we do this. And I pledge to you I'll do that.

I want to also talk about the VA Volunteer Service. We have more than 114,000 regularly scheduled volunteers, the greatest number ever. And you know which organization is the Number 1 provider of volunteers? Take a wild guess. Take a wild guess. (Applause) Golly, you've got it! At the end of the year, when all the hours of unselfish giving and caring and doing for hospitalized veterans was added up, the most volunteers giving the most hours came from the DAV. (Applause)

And that's an understatement. The fact is that 941,000 hours given by volunteers from this great organization amounted to more than twice as many as the second-place organization. I salute every one of the 7,689 DAV volunteers and the 2,412 volunteers from the DAV Auxiliary. These wonderful people make a tremendous difference.

And you know, when I go into our hospitals, the first thing I do is I double their salary. (Laughter) In fact, I told them that from now on, when they work on holidays and weekends, they're getting double time, and they really appreciate that. But then I tell them, "I couldn't pay you what you're worth, because you won't sell me your heart; you give it."

And I'm so impressed when I'm around these folks. You know, our oldest volunteer -- I think Jesse gave her an award last year -- it seemed like she's 96 years old in California. And I added her hours up. When I got the figures, I took my pencil out and did it. Her hours amounted to over 40 years of federal service, five days a week, eight hours a day. And she still pushes patients around out there in their wheelchairs going to their appointments and says she's pushing these young folks around. (Laughter)

Now, I don't know. This lady is sure storing up a lot of stars in her crown wherever she goes, and we all know where she's going, because she really cares.

And I'm amazed. People like Michael Giles and Annie Randolph, your Volunteers of the Year. It's always amazing. There's something special about volunteers in any hospital or in any situation, but there is something uniquely special about volunteers in VA hospitals. I love it when I walk in and they welcome me to their hospital, their veterans. I love it.

Just this week, I was in Tampa in Bay Pines, and the way these people treat their veterans and the way they are proud of their hospital, and they way give of themselves, it's inspiring. I always go down there.

I think, gosh -- like when I go to the Winter Sports Clinic which the DAV cosponsors with the VA, I go out there and Karoline is here, of course, but I go out there and I think -- you know, somebody said, "Come on out here and inspire them." Huh! I get out there, and I get all pumped up and get inspired, and I come back. Because I see heroes on wheels. I don't see disabled veterans. I see heroes on wheels at the basketball games they're playing.

Coming down the slopes there, Karoline, coming down the slope at 35, 40, 50 miles an hour, you know, and I'm sitting on the sideline there, and I'm supposed to inspire these people? They inspire me, and I'm glad every time I go around them.

But anyway, I salute all the volunteers that the DAV provides. (Applause)

I learned a few years ago from watching one of the major party conventions, the best way to get a good hand is to say, "And in conclusion...." (Laughter and applause) I want to tell you one thing. You know, we now will get to keep the medical care cost recovery money that we get from the insurance when we treat veterans that are nonservice connected at our hospitals. We'd been collecting it for years and years and years, but now we get to keep it. Before we were collecting it and giving it to the Treasury. Doesn't sound like too good a deal to me.

So now we convinced -- the President thought it was a good idea, Congress thought it was a good idea, and so we're going to get to keep that. And it's over $600 million a year, and it will stay in the hospitals where it's collected in that area, so that you can put more outpatient clinics in, so that you can treat more veterans. (Applause)

But, you know, we're opening an outpatient clinic -- we've got 39 we just opened. We're going to open another hundred or so in the next year. We're going to put the care out there where the veterans live.

We're going to keep fighting for the Medicare subvention. I think it's atrocious that American veterans and the retired military are the only ones that don't decide where they take their Medicare money. They're the only people that don't get to make that choice. And I think that's wrong, and we'll keep fighting for that. (Applause)

I also am going to push for making sure that regulations that we write and letters that we send to veterans are in plain English, plain language. You know, I was in one of our facilities a couple of years ago. I was visiting around there and it was around noon, and I stuck my head into the service office, because I always like to visit the service officer's office, and it happened to be -- it wasn't a DAV service officer, but the officer was out.

I wouldn't let it be a DAV service officer, because I wouldn't want to get that DAV service officer in trouble. But the service officer was out, and there was a couple sitting there, and I said, "Can I help you?" And he said, "Yeah, I just want somebody to tell me what this letter says." And I said, "Well, heck, I'm reasonably intelligent. I was in the Marine Corps." (Laughter and applause)

Then I learned to read and joined the Army. (Laughter and applause) I can say that. I was a Marine. It was just a joke, guys. You guys know I did it, "Hoo-ah!"

But anyway, I asked him, I said, "Let me see if I can help you." He said, "I just don't understand it." So I picked it up and I looked at it, and when I got through reading it there were two of us in the room that didn't understand what it said. (Laughter)

So I went back, and I said, "Let's start writing so people understand things. All they want to know is to tell them what their benefits are, tell them how they get them. If they have an appointment, just say, 'Hey, Johnny Jones, you're supposed to be there to see Dr. Smith at 10:00 o'clock in Building Number 15 at such and such a time, and here's what you need to do.' Simple stuff. Don't give them any of this other stuff. Just keep it simple."

You know, we believe in the military the old acronym, KISS, "Keep it simple, stupid." That's what I want us to do.

I want people to -- and I believe as soon as we start measuring performance in realistic terms like, how long does a veteran wait to see a doctor when he or she comes to the clinic; how many days pass before a veteran gets an answer back from the VA Regional Office on a claim; and how long does a veteran sit in a VA medical center waiting for a prescription to be filled? One of my biggest pet peeves.

I stopped by the other day in Washington, D.C. to get a prescription filled. I'm the only one -- not in the VA, I mean the private pharmacy on the corner, drugstore. I went in there, and I'm the only one. I carried my prescription to the pharmacist. He's standing behind the counter. I gave it to him. Nobody else there now. And I handed him my prescription.

He said, "When do you want to pick this up?" (Laughter) And I said, "Right now." He said, "Oh, no, it'll be about two hours." And I looked around, I said, "No one else is here." "Well, I've got a backlog of prescriptions to fill." And I said, "Well, you just lost one." And I left and went some place else where they could process it quicker.

Now, that's what we've got to do. (Applause) And we're making progress on that.

Seriously, in closing, I want to tell you it's an honor, I am honored, deeply honored, to stand here in front of you. Hey, Elvis, I made the big room. (Laughter) Thank you very much. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you very much.

Henry Ford, the automobile pioneer whose ideas revolutionized transportation, once said, "The highest use of capital is not to make more money, but to make money do more for the betterment of

life." Ladies and gentlemen, I am proud to report that Henry Ford's extraordinary legacy of innovation and goodwill toward men lives on today at the Ford Motor Company.

Let me take you back to August of last year. 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.

I said at the time that Ford's generosity represented more than a needed donation to a worthy cause. Rather, it was the continuation of a great tradition, a tradition that began with Henry Ford dating back 75 years to the earliest pages of DAV's history. Our relationship with Ford began in 1922 at the DAV's 2nd National Convention in San Francisco.

For many disabled veterans, a trip to the West Coast was a long hard journey, but they made the trip because they believed in what the DAV stood for. Henry Ford must have thought the DAV was a good idea as well. When he learned that disabled veterans wanted to attend the convention, he helped many get there by organizing a cross-country caravan of 50 Model T Fords to make the trip. 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.

Servicemen and women have always been our nation's guardians and have always defended the sacred traditions entrusted to us by the Constitution. Ford Motor Company understands that we would not enjoy our freedom today were it not for the courage of those who defended us when we needed defending.

Ford Motor Company also understands that a physical disability doesn't mean that life can't be rewarding. Today a new chapter is being written here in Las Vegas as the DAV enthusiastically welcomes Ford's ongoing involvement in our Transportation Network, a unique program that exemplifies the spirit of selfless volunteerism.

Joining us this afternoon to make a special announcement is Ford Motor Company's executive vice-president of corporate relations, Peter Pestillo. Ladies and gentlemen, please give a warm DAV welcome to Mr. Peter Pestillo. (Rising applause)

MR. PETER PESTILLO: Commander Reed, thank you, but while I'm honored and appreciative, let us not miscast our roles, because the debt is ours, and the thanks must be mine.

When Henry Ford organized that caravan 75 years ago, it was an act of thanks, not one of charity, because he knew that without the courage, the dedication and the sacrifice and indeed the patriotism of those veterans, there would not be a Ford Motor Company. And somehow a People's Motor Works just doesn't have the same ring to it. So those of us who follow in his footsteps can only indeed continue to recognize it, honor it, and not ask that it be forgiven.

When we loaned those vans a year ago, we saw that the Ford oval and those beautiful DAV graphics had such a nice look to them that it seems a shame to me to take them back and repaint them, so why don't you just keep them. (Applause)

And in fact, Ray Barr and his people had such fun painting them and did such a good job of it that they somehow lost control of themselves, fooled around and they did another dozen. And somehow they wound up in your lobby. And I haven't the foggiest notion what to do with them. So if you don't mind, would you borrow those, too? (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: You betcha!

MR. PESTILLO: Now, if I need them back, I'm going to call you. (Laughter)

We can never repay the debt. We don't have to be forgiven. I would only hope that you'd see this as sort of a little bit of effort on the interest. Thank you very much for having us here. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, sir. Mr. Pestillo, my term of office ends Thursday. You've got to call somebody else. (Laughter)

Mr. Pestillo, on behalf of the more than one million members of the Disabled American Veterans, please accept our heartfelt thanks for donating these beautiful Ford vans to the DAV Transportation Network. We greatly appreciate your recognition of the tremendous need for this program and your willingness to support our efforts in such a significant way.

Let me also say to the dedicated men and women who work at the Ford plants across this great nation building some of the finest cars and trucks, you have rendered an invaluable service to the community of disabled veterans. I hope that, in some small way, each of you will feel pride in our partnership and in your individual contributions.

The generous heart of Ford Motor Company will be felt throughout the community of disabled veterans for many, many years to come.

Sir, on behalf of the more than one 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 wartime disabled are never forgotten, I want to present to you, sir, this hand-crafted Model T in recognition of Ford's 75 years of outstanding service to America's disabled veterans. (Rising applause)

Thank you, sir.

Annually, the DAV selects an Outstanding Disabled Veteran who has overcome personal, social and physical barriers to excel in life as an example to all disabled veterans. The Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year inspires us to courage in the face of fear, strength in the face of hardship, and achievement in the face of insurmountable odds.

Karoline Martin, a life member of DAV Chapter Number 90 in West Chester, Pennsylvania, is that kind of disabled veteran. She is also the first woman to receive this award. (Applause)

In addition to being selected the DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Karoline received the DAV Freedom Award during the 1997 DAV National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, and was named the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for the DAV Department of Pennsylvania in June.

Ms. Martin is the adopted daughter and only child of a retired noncommissioned officer who served in the Army. His example led her to join the Army in 1983. At 19, she soon became an accomplished soldier, completed airborne training at Fort Benning, Georgia, and joined the famed 82nd Airborne Division. She also served with the 5th Special Forces Group at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, and did a tour of duty in Frankfurt, Germany.

Within seven years, Karoline was a sergeant. But her dreams of a promising military career were cut short. She began to lose her sight due to exposure to hazardous chemicals while serving as a petroleum specialist. Karoline was honorably discharged from the Army in 1990 with a service-connected disability.

A short time later, she asked the DAV National Service Office in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, to represent her claim for service-connected disability compensation. She was eventually awarded 100 percent service-connected disability compensation from the VA. But her rehabilitation wasn't yet complete.

In 1992, Karoline discovered the DAV's National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, and it changed her life. When she saw how some veterans with various disabilities were adapting to skiing at our clinic, she decided to change her university studies to pursue a career in therapeutic training for people with disabilities.

Today, Karoline shares her love of riding with people with disabilities, much like the Winter Sports Clinic shares the thrill, excitement and love of winter sports in a therapeutic way with disabled veterans. She is employed as an instructor in therapeutic riding at the Thorncroft Therapeutic Riding Program in Malvern, Pennsylvania.

To witness the powerful effect that Karoline has on others with disabilities, join me in viewing a short film about this year's Outstanding Disabled American Veteran.

(Film presentation)

COMMANDER REED: Ladies and gentlemen, it is my pleasure to introduce the Disabled American Veterans 1997 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Ms. Karoline Martin. (Rising applause)

Let me read you the inscription.

MS. KAROLINE MARTIN: Thank you. I'd appreciate it if you did read, because I'd take a long time to read it. Maybe not; I could actually feel it.

COMMANDER REED:

> National Commander's Award to the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Karoline V. Martin. 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 serve as an inspiration and challenge to your comrades.

Signed, Gregory C. Reed, National Commander, and Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant.

MS. MARTIN: Thank you very much. (Applause) Well, that was the first time I saw the video, so I'm about as emotional as I've ever been. I love my students. And it's twice as emotional because I've had to leave them behind to start a new life in California. When I came out here yesterday was the last time that I will be a resident of Pennsylvania. But I'm also very honored and privileged to start a new life in California and get involved with the DAV program out there.

I respect the DAV organization, and in receiving this award I cannot receive it alone. I didn't do what I did all through my life alone. Everything that I've accomplished in my life has taken a culmination of efforts of my family, my friends, my peers, my co-workers, my students and every person that has been involved in my life.

So when I accept this award, I accept it on behalf of the DAV, on behalf of my family, my friends, my students and my peers, and I also accept this award on behalf of every woman veteran, disabled or not. I'm proud again to have the distinguished honor of having the opportunity to be the first disabled American veteran woman to receive this award. I've had a lot of firsts in my military career, and it seems that the DAV is offering me another first.

I'm getting speechless. Let me just end by saying thank you. And I didn't mention the name on the video, but my future husband's Tim Davis, and he's the one that I've been hanging around with. If you've seen him wheeling around with me, or I'm sitting on his lap, that's him. (Rising applause) Thank you very much.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Karoline, for your inspiration.

Margaret, would you please come to the podium?

AUXILIARY PRESIDENT HASS: Past National Commander Betty Hall will do the following honors.

MRS. BETTY HALL: Thank you very much. I don't know if you all notice, but I keep looking up. I have the distinction of being the only past national commander that the ceiling fell in at the convention. (Laughter) So you all had better look out.

National Commanders Reed and Hass, national officers, past national commanders, distinguished members and guests: It has been a pleasure to have served on the Past National Commanders Award Committee. We have so many outstanding members that not only provide care and support for their disabled veteran family member, but they also find time to volunteer in DAV and DAVA programs. They also volunteer in the communities in which they reside. They truly are an inspiration to all of us.

This award was established in 1990 and each state department submits one nominee to our National Headquarters. What a difficult task to select only one. But this being our 75th anniversary, which is diamonds -- and, of course, ladies love diamonds -- we really have a jewel for you today.

Our outstanding member is eligible through her husband, Walter, and they are an Auxiliary family with two daughters and seven granddaughters as members. Wow! (Applause)

I would like to share with you some of the remarkable things this lady does. She is a past state commander of the DAVA and is

currently serving as VAVS chairman for the state and unit. She's also a VAVS representative for the medical center. She's a greeter in the ICU waiting room, and assists with bingo and ward parties. She is a CPR instructor for veterans and families and also teaches in the community. She has participated in membership recruitment programs for the DAV and the DAVA.

She serves on several boards: Parker High School Community Education Program, Neighborhood Services for Affordable Homes, Keep Birmingham Beautiful, Healthy Start, and is serving as chairman of the Community Program for Health Start. She served as director of Smithfield Community Summer Youth Program.

She is a member of St. Joseph Baptist Church and is coordinator of the Homeless Outreach Ministry. She's a member of the Birmingham Dental Assistants Society and the Alabama Dental Assistants Association. She organized and directed distribution of clothing to needy persons. She organized youth groups to clean up the neighborhoods. She served as coordinator for Paint and Pride Program, identifying houses to be repaired, painted or demolished.

She works with homeless veterans and their families, providing clothing and food to them.

She arranges transportation and provides information to women in their child-bearing age, so they may become active in the Healthy Start Program to aid in reducing infant mortality.

She has received many certificates of appreciation and a plaque from the City of Birmingham.

It is my privilege and pleasure to present to you a lady that epitomizes volunteerism: The DAV Auxiliary's Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year from Unit 70, Birmingham, Alabama, Mrs. Cornelia B. Cobb. (Rising applause)

Honey, one Southerner to another: You're one busy lady! It's my pleasure to present you with this plaque: "DAVA Past National Commander's Award to Cornelia Cobb, Outstanding Member of the Year." Congratulations. (Applause)

MRS. CORNELIA B. COBB: Disabled American Veterans and Auxiliary National Commanders Gregory Reed and Margaret Hass, national officers, distinguished guests, past national commanders and members of the DAV and Auxiliary: I want to thank the past national commanders for this award. I accept it with sincere humility. I want you to know that serving the veteran and his family and the community is a way of life for me, and I thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: 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 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's Membership Department, George served as National VAVS representative for more than 20 years.

This year's George H. Seal Award winners are D. Michael Giles of Montvale, Virginia, and Annie E. Randolph of Hampton, Virginia.

Mike Giles is commander of DAV Chapter Number 14, Salem, Virginia, and volunteers 100 to 150 hours of his time every month to assist veterans at the Salem VA Medical Center. Since 1990, he has logged some 11,000 volunteer hours at the hospital, helping improve the quality of life for veterans.

Mr. Giles is a shining example of what volunteerism is all about. Among the many volunteer services he provides at the VA Hospital is his involvement with the post-traumatic stress disorder treatment program.

A combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Mr. Giles helps his fellow vets by bridging the gap between the patients and the staff. He helps arrange and coordinate activities for patients, including trips to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

Locating the names of buddies killed during the war etched into the wall can be an integral part of overcoming PTSD.

Mr. Giles, will you please come up and accept this well-deserved award? (Applause)

MR. D. MICHAEL GILES: Like Karoline, this is my first, too. First of all, I'd like to thank the Disabled American Veterans from the National all the way down to the local chapters. I joined the DAV in 1988 because I met a group of veterans who were committed to helping veterans who were not as -- how can I say it? -- not able as I am or they were to get along. The chapter happened to be the name of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Chapter 14 in Salem, Virginia. Their commitment to helping those veterans made me want to be a part of it. So in 1988, I joined the chapter.

Since then, I have met a lot of people, gained a lot of friends, and with the diagnosis of PTSD, along with other disabilities, it's very difficult at times to cope with different situations. So being a veteran with PTSD, Salem, Virginia has probably the best PTSD program in the country. I went through their program in 1991, and I asked the program director, who happens to be at this time a past department commander for the State of Virginia, if I could come back and volunteer. And since that time, it's been very therapeutic for myself and I hope the veterans that I have worked with since then.

There are other parts of the VA that I would like to recognize: volunteer service and recreation therapists. One reason for the rec. therapist is they challenged me to set goals, and my first goal was 1,000 hours as a volunteer for the DAV. Next, I would like to thank another person who is a recipient of this award, I think in 1983. That is the Hospital VAVS representative who I work along with. His name is Tom Gagnet, a World War II veteran, ex-POW.

I would like to thank the Department of Virginia, especially the department adjutant, Dave Tannenbaum. He has been an inspiration to me since becoming a member. Also, to a very special National Service Officer who's been my chapter adjutant since I've been commander -- I don't know how he does it, but thanks to him and people like him, I keep going on. And his name is Alan McClroskey. Thank you. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Michael.

Annie Randolph is commander of DAV Auxiliary Unit Number 6 in Hampton, Virginia. She has been a volunteer at the Hampton VA Medical Center for 16 years and has donated more than 10,000 hours of her time to help make a difference in veterans' lives. She also is the sole care-giver for her husband, a severely disabled veteran.

Mrs. Randolph devotes a considerable amount of time supporting recreation activities such as patient talent shows, cook-outs and holiday parties. As you know, those activities are essential to helping a patient's return to good health, both mentally and physically.

Annie, will you please step forward for the presentation of the George H. Seal Memorial Award. (Rising applause) "George H. Seal Memorial Award winner, 1997, DAVA, Annie E. Randolph, Hampton VA Medical Center, Virginia."

MRS. ANNIE E. RANDOLPH: National Commander Reed, national officers and guests, ladies and gentlemen: It is truly a great honor for me to be standing before you today as a recipient of the George H. Seal Memorial Trophy Award. In addition to this being an honor, because it signifies my work with veterans both in and out of the hospital, it is also an honor because it comes from this wonderful organization of Disabled American Veterans.

Many of you in this room know me well and have known me for years, so you must know that the work I do as a volunteer I do because I love the veterans, and I want to do my part in making their lives a little more pleasant. Besides, when all is said and done and I see the smile on the veteran's face, I get more personal satisfaction out of my volunteering work than the veterans do.

So my heart is truly filled that I was the one person chosen to represent that volunteerism for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. I thank you for your confidence in me, and I assure you

that I will continue to serve the veteran in every way possible.

And I would also like to say that I have a wonderful husband and my family out there. And the chief of volunteers is Frances H. Pride. She's a wonderful person, and I'd like for her to stand and be recognized. (Applause)

Thank you, Commander.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

One of the best parts of being your national commander is that I get to meet some truly extraordinary people who have joined the DAV's cause. And one of the things that makes it really special is when someone comes to the DAV out of a sense of compassion and heartfelt gratitude for the service and sacrifice of those who, as our next guest says, have taken a bullet for their country.

Lois Pope is a truly compassionate person. She is founder and chairman of the Lois Pope LIFE Foundation. She is a mother and grandmother, though you'd never know it to look at her. She is a marathon runner, an entrepreneur, an accomplished actress and performer, and a person who has made it one of her topmost goals to make certain that this country never forgets the service and sacrifice of America's disabled veterans.

The Lois Pope LIFE Foundation -- LIFE, L-I-F-E, stands for Leaders in Furthering Education -- is dedicated to encouraging young people to improve the quality of life for themselves and others. This nonprofit organization is guided by the firm belief that today's youth is our most valuable resource, and that learning from hands-on charitable opportunities is an important and lasting way to educate, motivate and improve the community.

And one thing that strikes me is one of LIFE's mission goals is to, and I quote, "affirm to our leaders of tomorrow that one person can and does make a difference."

Mrs. Pope's involvement with the DAV resulted from a visit to a VA hospital in Florida, which was a very emotional experience for her. After her encounter with the patients, many of whom were combat-disabled veterans, her already strong feelings of gratitude and patriotic pride for those who have served and sacrificed for America were heightened.

Lois Pope lost her first cousin in the Vietnam War, and she has deep sympathies for slain and wounded soldiers. When she learned that there is no national memorial in Washington, D.C. honoring our disabled veterans, it deeply disturbed her.

Over the past few months, the DAV has been exploring the feasibility of such a project, and we will continue to do so in the months ahead. And it gives me great pleasure to announce that the National Interim Legislative Committee has considered and adopted a resolution for the construction of a national memorial to disabled veterans. That resolution is being referred to the Convention Committee on General Resolutions and Membership for their consideration tomorrow morning.

It is my hope that the Legislative Committee will favorably consider the resolution, and that it will come to the floor and receive unanimous support and adoption by the delegates to the 76th National Convention.

We look forward to our association with Mrs. Pope to help ensure that America continues to remember and honor the service and sacrifice of those who bear the deepest wounds and scars of war in defense of this great country of ours.

So, without further delay, let me present to you a champion of humanitarian causes and a genuinely compassionate person, Mrs. Lois Pope. Let's make her really feel at home. (Rising applause)

MRS. LOIS POPE: Karoline was speechless toward the end; I'm speechless at the very beginning. And if anyone would like to have stage fright, would you like to change places with me? Because this is a wonderful place to have it.

Anyway, I'm really honored to be here. I'm beholden to you, National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Art Wilson. I'm honored to be in the presence of all of you. And we do have something in common. My brother, Frank Beredon, served in the United States Navy -- go, Navy! -- and, as you know, my first cousin, Richard Jurisek, died on his 21st birthday, shot down by a sniper in Vietnam.

Being here brings back memories of the first time I learned for myself about disabled veterans. In those days, I was still active in a career in show business, and I was asked by Dr. Rusk, who ran the Rusk Rehabilitation Center in New York City, to perform, to sing a medley of songs. I was an actress and a singer. We were taken to the rooftop of the Rusk Rehabilitation Center in Manhattan. What I saw there that day changed my life forever.

Without knowing what to expect, I had chosen a song, one of the songs from "West Side Story," that was very popular then and still is now. It's called, "Somewhere," "Somewhere, there's a place for us. Take my hand, hold my hand, and I'll take you there." It's a song of hope.

Strangely enough, as I was singing the song, I prayed to God that I wouldn't cry because of what I was visualizing, what I saw, you, you then and you now, dismembered, broken of body, but not of spirit; blinded, but with eyes that could see far better than mine. And as I sang, "Somewhere, there's a place for us. We'll find a place for us," I could see both the emotion and the hope in the veterans' faces, and it was an unforgettable moment.

And in tough times in my life, and I've had quite a few -- strangely enough, that day I was there to offer hope to you and bring a little sunshine into your lives and just the reverse happened: You enabled me to walk on through that storm that I was going through. So that's the day it started.

Then last year, when I went to the University of Miami Medical Complex for the announcement of the Lois Pope LIFE Center, my friend, Zachary Fisher, asked me to look up the Elizabeth and Zachary Fisher Houses that are right next to the veterans hospitals. There's 25 of them -- you must know about them -- throughout this country. And they're for the relatives of the veterans who can't afford to stay in hotels. They stay in the Elizabeth and Zachary Fisher Houses for nothing. He's on the LIFE Board, and he's a very dear friend of mine. He's one of my role models.

Anyway, it turns out that the hospital in Miami doesn't have a Zachary or Elizabeth Fisher House, so I went into the hospital to find out, well, maybe I was lost, where was it? And while there, one of these lovely ladies, one of these volunteers, said, "Let me take around and just show you just for a few minutes what's going on here."

Deja vu. So many years had passed. She took me out to a sun deck, not the sun roof, and there I saw the same thing I saw so many years before. I decided immediately, then and there, that disabled veterans have to be an important component of the LIFE Foundation, as they really had been for all of my life.

I donated $10 million to the University of Miami for research to find a cure for paralysis and other neurological disorders and diseases, after my friend, Chris Reeve, had that horrific accident horseback riding. He was the catalyst that led me to the University of Miami. At the university, I've come to know very well Mark Buoniconti, who is also a quadriplegic, and he suffered his accident while playing football at the Citadel, as you all know.

But while I am inspired by them and grieve -- I do, and I wonder why, like you do any tragic thing, why these things happen -- for Chris and Mark, their injuries came as a result of doing something they wanted to do, something they wanted to do in sports, veterans who are disabled and paralyzed in defense of this country deserve much greater recognition. (Applause)

These are the men and women who took bullets for us, who gave up their bodies and their future for us, as I said in the beginning, who became maimed, dismembered, blinded, and many were never the same, even if they suffered minor injuries. The example was given of nurses in hospitals who came back, and after seeing what they saw, how could they ever be the same? They were traumatized, I'm sure of it. They are truly the unsung heroes. You people who took the bullets for us in one way or the other are the true unsung heroes.

We need to find ways to recognize them and to make sure they are recognized for their sacrifices, all of you should be. We need

to make sure that you remain unsung no more. (Applause) Thank you.

For that reason, I have established the LIFE Presidential Unsung Hero Award. The first will be presented in Washington, D.C. on November 10th, the evening before Veterans Day.

I want to thank the DAV for all of you in the great work it does day in and day out on behalf of our unsung heroes, and I want to thank them for letting me be part of their work. Because of you, you in the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines -- and tell me if I've forgotten anybody -- Coast Guard, because of your charity, because of your courage, because of your great sacrifices, America is still the land of the free and the home of the brave. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Mrs. Pope. Thank you for your compassion, your caring, your patriotism. Thank you very much, ma'am.

Everyone here knows how lucky we are to be members of a great organization like the DAV, but there's a DAV member here today who is unbelievably lucky. The person you're about to meet actually threw away his first chance at $100,000. That's right. When he received his first entry tickets for the 3rd Annual DAV $250,000 Sweepstakes, he threw them away, because he didn't think he could win. But when his second group of sweepstakes tickets came, he took a chance and sent them in.

Guess what? He was the luckiest of 104 DAV members who shared in the DAV $250,000 Sweepstakes this year. After throwing away his first opportunity, he won the $100,000 Grand Prize Award with his second chance batch of tickets. Now, that's some serious luck!

Here he is with his lovely wife, Betty, the 73-year-old retired welder from Leeds, Alabama, who took a second chance and won the $100,000 Grand Prize, the luckiest DAV member I know, Eugene Champion. (Applause)

One of the privileges the national commander has is he calls the winner. When I called Leeds, Alabama, this gentleman thought he was talking to a slick-talking Yankee -- (laughter) -- seriously. I said, "Mr. Champion, today you are a champion." And after about five minutes, he started to believe me.

Sir, please share a few words with us. (Applause)

MR. EUGENE CHAMPION: That's true. When Mr. Reed called me, I had my doubts, because so many people will call you and deceive you on things and over the phone. I didn't know him. And I didn't realize that he was the commander. Jesse was the commander last time I had thought about it. (Laughter) And when Mr. Wilson came in, I recognized him right away. And finally they convinced me that I had won.

But I said, "Say, send me some paperwork, because I still can't believe it." (Laughter)

So I told my wife, Betty, when I filled my little tickets out, I said, "Now, the only thing bad about this, if we win, we've got to go to Las Vegas." She said, "That's no problem." So here we are.

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen, and God bless. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: We're all certainly happy for Mr. Champion and wish him the very best with his grand prize check. By the way, Mr. Champion, several of our members have offered to visit the casino with you later on if you're interested. (Laughter)

On a more serious note, I want to thank everyone who make the sweepstakes such a success. It's great to award so many prizes to our members, but the biggest winners of all are our DAV state department service programs. Every DAV state department shares in the proceeds of donations from the DAV $250,000 Sweepstakes. Thanks to the sweepstakes, departments can finance and expand state-level services to care for more disabled veterans and their families than ever before. That's the greatest prize of all.

I will now ask the adjutant to read the names of the convention committee advisors that I've appointed and who received the approval of the National Executive Committee at its most recent meeting.

ADJUTANT WILSON: Convention committee advisors: Credentials, Charles D. Luttjohann; General Resolutions and Membership, Jerry P.

Steelman and Rick Surratt; Legislation and Veterans Rights, Joseph A. Violante, Thomas L. Tomlinson; Constitution and Bylaws, Richard L. Sarrazin, Edward G. Galian; Finance and Dues, Glen E. Vogel, Sr. and Richard E. Patterson; Employment, Wayne L. Douglass, Ronald W. Drach; Hospital and Voluntary Services, Richard A. Wannemacher and Albert H. Linden, Jr.; Nomination of National Officers, Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach.

COMMANDER REED: Ladies and gentlemen, if you'll please rise, I will ask the chaplain to lead us in a closing prayer. Chaplain Bergstrom?

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. As we go forth from this place, help us to go forward to live life to the fullest, unashamed to share that life with those around us, looking to a future more bright and more brilliant because of the works of so many. And let us join in that work to the glory of Your Holy Name all our life's days. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Carl.

The convention stands in recess until 10:00 o'clock tomorrow morning. Thank you for attending.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 4:00 o'clock p.m., August 17, 1997.)

FIRST BUSINESS SESSION

The First Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 18, 1997, and was called to order at 10:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Gregory C. Reed.

COMMANDER GREGORY C. REED: Everyone please take your seats. The convention will come to order.

In opening the First Business Session of the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American veterans, it is fitting and proper that we render the respect due the flag.

(Salute to the flag.)

Please join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of allegiance)

COMMANDER REED: We will now be led in prayer by our national chaplain, Carl Bergstrom.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. Almighty and Ever-Living God, we invoke Your Presence here this morning as we gather together to conduct the business before us. May what we do be found pleasing in Your sight, and may the things that we do here at this time be for the best interests of the disabled veterans, their families and our nation now and always. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Carl. Please be seated.

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 will now call on the Credentials Committee for its first report.

MR. EDWARD R. HEATH: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Credentials was called to order for its first business session on August 18th, 1997 by the committee advisor, Charlie Luttjohann. The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Ed Heath from District 3 and Roland Paquette, District 20, were nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Ed Heath was elected chairman.

The next order of business was nomination and election of the secretary. Past National Commander Tom McMasters was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

Our registration at the present time is 643 chapters registered; 47 departments; 31 national officers; 13 past national commanders, for a total delegate count of 1,635, and total number of alternates 46, for a total vote of 11,713.

This is a partial report for informational purposes only. Comrade Commander, this concludes the first report of the Committee on Credentials.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you for your partial report.

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 amendments as provided in the Bylaws. The Rules are on your chairs, along with recommended amendments from the Interim Constitution and Bylaws Committee, as well as the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

And I will now entertain a motion to adopt the amendment to Rule 7(a) of the Rules. Mike Number 2.

MR. KENNETH MUSSELMANN: Ken Musselmann, past national commander. At this time, I'd like to offer Amendment 1 for approval. May I read the amendment?

COMMANDER REED: You may.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Section 3.10: Rules of the Convention, Rule 7, Paragraph (a).

> Resolutions from chapters and state departments must be submitted to and received at the office of the national adjutant in duplicate, printed or typewritten form, signed by the sponsoring chapter or state department, not later than ten days prior to the opening of the National Convention.

At this time, I'd like to make a motion to approve the amendment.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike Number 1.

MR. JOHN C. McCARTHY: John McCarthy, delegate, Chapter Number 4, Florida, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Comrade Commander, we have another amendment that we would like to offer.

COMMANDER REED: I will now entertain a motion to adopt the amendment of Rule 21(d).

MR. MUSSELMANN: Would you like me to read the amendment?

COMMANDER REED: Please do so.

MR. MUSSELMANN: Rule 21, Paragraph (d), Committee on Constitution and Bylaws.

> This committee shall give consideration to those resolutions which pertain to proposed amendments of the National Constitution and the National Bylaws. It shall give advice to National Headquarters on the Official Ritual and also consider all matters relative to DAV Auxiliaries and other subordinate units of the Disabled American Veterans insofar as they may affect proposed amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws. All proposed amendments shall be read to the convention no later than the third day prior to the scheduled day of adjournment of the convention, and voting thereon shall begin the following business day, except proposals referred to that committee by other convention committees too late for reading on that date, or resolutions originating in the committee; such amendments may be read on the business day preceding the scheduled day of adjournment, and voting thereon shall begin the following day.

At this time, I'll make a motion to approve Rule 21.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second?

MR. McCARTHY: John McCarthy, delegate, Chapter 4, Florida, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've all heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it. Thank you.

At this time, I will ask the national adjutant to read the DAV 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 this convention. Resolution:

> The Disabled American Veterans was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty to veterans 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 the laws administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

6. Enhanced outreach to ensure that all disabled veterans receive all benefits they have earned, and that the American people respect the needs these veterans encounter as a result of 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 REED: The Chair will now entertain a motion for the adoption of the DAV Statement of Policy. Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. ROLAND A. PAQUETTE: Roland Paquette, Chapter 57, District 20, moves that we accept the Policy as read.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. FRANK WEBB: Frank Webb, DAV Chapter Number 9, Houston, Texas, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

This is a very special moment for me, because I have the privilege and the pleasure of introducing an individual who cares about everyone in this room and cares about this national organization. Building better lives for all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families. That is the DAV's mission. It is first, last and always a mission of service. And service to America's veterans is what National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson is all about.

For more than 30 years, Art has dedicated himself to serving disabled veterans and their families, first as a DAV National Service Officer -- the very first Vietnam veteran to enter the DAV's National Service 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. It was that solid grounding in direct service to veterans that led to his elevation to take on progressively more responsible management duties at DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington.

Since Art's appointment as national adjutant in 1994, his steadfast leadership and uncompromising commitment to the organization's ideals resulted in the phenomenal rebirth of the DAV. Not only is he responsible for restoring the organization's financial health, Art has successfully restored the DAV back to our rightful position as the nation's foremost veterans service organization. (Applause)

I don't believe I've ever seen anyone work as hard as Art has over the past few years in rebuilding the Disabled American Veterans. We have a firm financial foundation upon which to continue building a new and more vibrant national organization.

More important than that is the strength and commitment to continue providing the best possible services to the men and women whose service and sacrifice have not only kept America free, but have made it possible for the rest of the world to enjoy unprecedented freedom from tyranny as well.

Now, ladies and gentlemen, here to give his report to the National Convention is my friend and your friend, our national adjutant, Art Wilson. (Applause)

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Greg. I'm humbled by that introduction. I appreciate that, Mr. Commander. And I thank you, Greg, for your wonderful and very kind comments about our DAV staff in your report yesterday.

Greg, it's been my honor and pleasure to serve with you this year. Everyone, everyone in this room should know of the professionalism that you have brought to the office of national commander. Like many of your predecessors, your tireless efforts and energy are tough to keep up with, sir, and we thank you. Thank you.

Throughout your year as national commander, you supported our staff with warmth and enthusiasm, and I want you to know that we feel the same fondness and respect for you. (Applause)

I want you to know as well, that our gratitude extends to all of your line officers as well: Harry and Bill, Andy and Mike and Richard, Ed, Reverend Bergstrom, the National Executive and Finance Committees, the interim committees. They've all done wonderful, wonderful work helping us build another great year for the Disabled American Veterans.

And, of course, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to our great Auxiliary led by National Commander Margaret Hass and National Adjutant Maria Tedrow.

Our National Service Officers, who make up the corps of DAV's professional commitment to service and their support staffs have also earned the gratitude of every DAV member in America. Once again this year, they've helped nearly a quarter of a million veterans and families get the benefits that they've earned. What a tremendous, tremendous record.

And this record wouldn't be possible without the dedication and commitment of our chapter service officers, our department service officers and our volunteers, and you have my wonderful thanks and respect. (Applause)

To Rick Patterson and Dave Gorman, our executive directors in Cincinnati and Washington, I owe a great debt. I count on these guys -- all of us count on these guys -- to make it all come together. These men are an exceptional professional team, both in management and operations. And you can be proud, just as I am, of their record of accomplishments.

You know, we're having one of our best fund-raising years in our entire history. Our accounting, our personnel, data processing, membership, communications and administrative functions are stepping up to new levels of professionalism. And our Cincinnati Headquarters has never looked better.

You know, one of my primary objectives when I first became your adjutant was to increase the operating efficiency of our Headquarters to be sure that our expenses, and that is, the cost of doing business, were monitored closely and under control. And I'm happy to report to you that we're well on our way to accomplishing our efficiency objective, and I'm satisfied that our operating costs are well under control.

For this, I thank you, Rick Patterson. You and your management staff, Bob Gushee, Charlie Luttjohann, Greg Jackson, Tom Keller, Anita Blum, Max Hart and all of our National Headquarters employees deserve our highest praise and appreciation. Thank you. (Applause)

You know, in Washington, we're living through a time of challenge so intense it's unlike anything that our organization has ever faced since the 1930s. But we're meeting that challenge, and

we're meeting it thanks to the wisdom and professionalism of Dave Gorman and our entire Washington Headquarters staff and what they bring into play.

Dave and Ken Wolfe, Joe Violante, Ron Drach and Bruce Nitsche and their respective staffs are terrific. And they're earning even greater respect from all of us every day, every day that they spend on the firing line in Washington, D.C.

But delegates to this 1997 National Convention, friends and honored guests: I'm going to tell you something that I know won't come as any surprise to you, that Dave and our entire Washington staff have their hands so full that they can barely pick up the plate in Washington. And you'll see the full picture painted quite clearly as Dave gives his report to this convention later today.

I won't go into the detail that Dave will, but I want to share a few general thoughts with you about the critical legislative situation that we face in Washington. The balanced budget agreement between the White House and the Congress is a disgrace in its treatment of America's veterans. It calls for the deepest cuts in veterans' programs in recent memory.

I'm afraid our elected leaders in Washington have started us down a slippery slope, one that keeps getting steeper and more slippery every year. And the slide could well continue through the rest of this century and into the next.

Ladies and gentlemen, the danger is real, so we must get our message to every member of the House and Senate. The danger is very real, so we must express our feelings to the President and his Administration. Yes, the danger, folks, is real, and we could lose much of the health care benefits that we've earned through sacrifice and fought so hard to protect.

But if we all do our part, we can win this fight, not only for ourselves and our families, but for future generations of disabled veterans. (Applause)

As I say this, I know of your weariness, for over and over again, for the 30 years that I've been around and more, you've heard us describe the constant threat to our programs. It hangs there in the sky like a funnel cloud ready to descend. Time and time again, we've deflected that destruction, and time and again, we've had to march into legislative combat just as soon as the last battle was done. But we cannot and we must not ever, ever give up.

Ladies and gentlemen, I say again, the danger is real when powerful and influential groups like the Heritage Foundation and the Concord Coalition keep driving their anti-veteran agenda with their allies in Congress.

The danger is real when the so-called Claims Adjudication Commission tells Congress that the best way to fix the VA claims system and get rid of its backlog is to restrict the rights of veterans filing for service-connected disability compensation, if you can believe it.

Folks, the danger is real, and we must take it very, very seriously. Yes, we must fight yet again.

During our gathering in New Orleans last summer, we concluded a year-long observance of our organization's 75th anniversary. It was a time of celebration, to be sure. But it was also a time for reflection, an opportunity to look back at our organization's past and assess its future.

When that commemoration came to an end, I thought of the leaders who founded the Disabled American Veterans. I thought of Judge Robert Marx, a wise philanthropist, a man of tremendous vision, and I imagined him standing before his comrades in Cincinnati's Memorial Hall, calling out for justice in a nation that had too soon forgotten those who came home from battle in World War I.

I pictured that firebrand orator, Rabbi Aaronsohn, approaching that same stage, his white cane tapping the floor before him. but I could hear his words, pleading with our Creator to bring a new day and a new dignity to those who came home from the war gassed, sick and wounded.

Then I quickly remembered a good friend, Jack Feighner, who passed away soon after our convention last year, a man who was a true, true believer of our cause, an earnest advocate for America's

disabled veterans, and a gentleman who understood our purpose completely, with a knowledge of our structure that few will ever match. Jack's life was a real meaningful life within our organization.

In the year since our anniversary celebration, I also pondered a great deal about the ordinary men and women who were destined to become the first members of the DAV and its Auxiliary, for they too were driven by a dream. Yet theirs are faces that have long since disappeared from our ranks. They lie in honored rest, and it is for us to hold aloft the torch that they lit some 77 years ago.

The light they lit has been entrusted to our keeping. It is for us to shine that light into the lives of those among us whose spirits have been darkened by disability, by illness and by a society that often does not care.

The light we inherited from the DAV's great founders is precious. Think of Judge Marx. Why did he do what he did? A man on his way to becoming a captain of industry. Yes, he was a wealthy and privileged man. Though severely wounded in combat, he wasn't motivated by his own need.

Robert Marx sat on the boards of several prominent Cincinnati companies. Surely he wasn't moved or worried over his own personal disability compensation check. What worried him was what he saw happening in the lives of the men and women with whom he served.

To say that we carry the torch lit by these great leaders is to say that we too must rise above the narrow concerns of our own personal lives. It is to say that the light we shine into the lives of our fellow disabled veterans is the deepest meaning of our involvement in the DAV.

Those who founded our organization were men of magnificent moral vision. Ours is a cause of high moral purpose. That is why we must always and ever be on watch to safeguard the moral integrity of the Disabled American Veterans.

If ever and whenever self-serving motives rise up within our organization, it detracts from the rightness of our cause, and it is our duty to descend upon that source of moral malignancy and strike it down to the ground with lightning, with the very light bequeathed to us by Robert Marx and all the men and women who gave us the treasure we hold in the DAV and our Auxiliary.

At this convention, we shall do just that. We will not waste this opportunity on those who would use our gathering to seek personal goals. Rather, we will honor the vision of service that lights our pathway as leaders in the Disabled American Veterans.

We will always seek the greatest good for our brothers and sisters throughout the land, each alike, whether they were gassed 80 years ago in World War I, or injured by a fragmentation wound only yesterday in Bosnia.

The duty that has been entrusted to us is sacred. Let us cherish that duty. Carrying that responsibility forward is the great privilege of our lives as members of the Disabled American Veterans.

In closing this morning, let me thank each of you, the members of our great organizations, your families and members of our wonderful Auxiliary, for all of you, including our national employees and employees through all of our departments and chapters, you deserve the thanks for what each of you do in protecting and advancing the tradition of DAV, building better lives for all disabled veterans. For it is upon your shoulders and your dedication and commitment to their cause that their future rests.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you. Thank you, Commander. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Art, for your inspiration, your leadership and your wisdom.

I will now entertain a motion to accept the national adjutant's report. Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. PAQUETTE: Roland Paquette, Chapter 57, District 20, recommends approval of the adjutant's report.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second on the motion? We've got three mikes. Let's not be shy.

MR. MANUEL F. LOZANO: Manny Lozano, Chapter 195, Texas. I

second that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

It is now my pleasure to introduce Charles D. Luttjohann, membership director, for his report and presentation of Membership Recruitment Awards. Charlie.

MR. CHARLES D. LUTTJOHANN: I'm going to start off with a story for you. It was June 30th, 1997, a typical hot, steamy summer day in Northern Kentucky. The lights throughout the City of Cold Spring, Kentucky, home of DAV National Headquarters, dimmed and flickered hauntingly as the big IBM ES 9000 at the Headquarters Building kicked into gear, sucking up all the available electricity in the county to run the year-end membership totals for 1996-97. (Laughter)

The old workhorse churned well into the night, spitting out enough green-line, sheet-fed computer paper to put a noticeable dent in the rain forest. I say that, I say that figuratively for all of you environmentalists out there, because at the DAV we do use recycled paper. (Laughter)

In any event, when the smoke and dust had cleared late the next day, the computer was blowing smoke out of its ink jets, and the paper was stacked to the ceiling. It was time to check out the final totals for the 1996-97 membership year. At first glance, it was obvious we were looking at a record-breaker. Commander Reed's membership programs and all of our loyal, dedicated, energetic recruiters had done it again.

Sure enough, when we checked the totals, we'd finished the year with 871,854 fully paid life members. (Applause) That's a cool 42,500 more than what we had started the year with. That's an impressive 80 percent of our total overall membership. Eight out of every ten members in our organization are fully paid life members. That's true commitment. In addition, our overall membership ended the year at 1,087,422.

In addition to that, every single department in the entire country had not only reached or surpassed their assigned goal, but they had done so by the end of April. And if that isn't enough to get your attention, 19 departments, including California, Florida and New York, which are the three largest in the entire country, had every single one of their chapters make or surpass their goal.

And I want to remind you that goal is not just based on going out and getting members that chip in a couple of bucks. We're talking about fully paid life members, every single chapter within those departments. Now, I think that's something to cheer about. Cheer! (Applause)

I think it's really great that there's no "can't" in these groups. Every year you hear people say, "Well, it's getting harder and harder and harder." But they keep doing and doing and doing. Everybody's doing their job, and they're doing a great job.

And I'll tell you, at this time, it gives me a great deal of pleasure to -- and I get to come up here and do this annually, and this is always an exciting thing for me -- to recognize, along with some help from Commander Reed here, the outstanding accomplishments of the department division winners. That's the five different divisions that we have set up by membership totals. And at this time we would like to recognize the commanders from those departments that excelled within those divisions.

And if I could get the commander to step up here with me, the first division winner I'd like to introduce is the Department of Alaska, represented by Commander Jimmey Mayo, who's up here for, I believe, the seventh year in a row. And their total membership totals are 104.55 percent of their goal. (Applause)

This year we're going to recognize our outstanding commanders with a lovely blue sport coat, signifying their division dominance. (Applause)

Thank you, Jimmey. They're a real regular up here, and they do a great job.

The Division IV winner is a newcomer, and they did a heck of a job this year, and they outshined everyone else in Division IV, and the winner this year is New Hampshire. They're a newcomer with

103.41 percent, and Steve Medairos is the commander of that department, and he's here to accept the award. (Applause)

He says he doesn't want to talk; he wants to get out and recruit some more members. He doesn't have time.

Division III. Division III is tough any more. It's a tough division, and I'm telling you, the winner of this one is tough. Iowa. They're always great. They always do a really good job. They've got an NSO staff that's totally committed to membership, Larry Jatho and his gang. And this year Francis McLaskey is here to accept the award at 103.48 percent for Iowa. (Applause)

NEC 15TH DISTRICT FRANCIS McLASKEY: I just want to thank Iowa. We appreciate all the backing of the membership. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Let me tell you one more thing about Iowa. I have a pretty good idea they're going to be up here next year, because there's four states that have already made their goal for this year, and Iowa's one of them, and Iowa already had every single chapter in their department that's already at goal for this coming year. Now, is that membership commitment or what, huh? (Applause)

You're out there going, "God! How did they do that?" Ask them.

Division II, great race this year. Indiana for the last three or four years has kind of set a precedent by jumping out first and making their goal. This past year, Colorado jumped up after Indiana had already made their goal and kind of jumped them about two months later, made a real race out of it for the entire year. And they stayed just barely ahead of them all year long, all year long.

And it was really neat, because about June 25th we had little bets going on at Headquarters as to what was going to happen that last week, see who was going to make the last little surge. And we all bet our money, and we all lost, because Missouri came back on the last day and won it by one-hundredth of a percentage point (laughter), at 104.17 to Colorado's 104.16. Let's hear it for Missouri, Irv Brabant. (Applause)

They just about pulled this thing off last year, too. They came within just a real -- I mean, it was just a matter of points of winning to get that last year.

MR. IRVING L. BRABANT: Thanks, Colorado. (Laughter)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Oh, I love that. That's great!

Division I, the big dog, the big dogs, all the big departments. They always get in the battle every year. This year, Ken Musselmann had my phone bill raging. He was on me all year long about getting new lists and new anything that he could come up with to get more members. And California ran away with the show this year. They did everything.

And you've got to keep in mind, because you're the biggest doesn't mean it's the easiest. If you're the biggest, that means you have to do more to get your percentages up there. Not only did they do that, they had the highest percentage over goal of anybody in the country. And also, they had every single chapter make goal.

So what we'd like to do this year, we'd like to recognize California, Larry Polzin, the department commander, and they are at 104.64 percent, 3,116 above goal. Let's hear it! (Applause)

MR. LARRY A. POLZIN: I'd just like to take this opportunity to thank all of those good members, hard workers in District 16, for making this a great honor for me, and we hope to see our current commander up here next year. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: I tell you, it's kind of strange, because these awards come and go so darn fast and to live with them throughout the year and see what they're going through to achieve these awards, it almost makes it seem kind of anti-climactic to give it to them so quickly and have them go, because they really work hard all year, and we really appreciate their efforts, the entire organization does.

Our next recipient of an award today is a guy that I almost feel embarrassed about introducing, because when I showed up today, I didn't even send him a letter this year telling him he won, and he just always walks right up on stage with me every year because it's a habit with him any more. He just shows up at convention at

9:30 on Monday morning. He just walks up with me and says, "What color am I getting this year?"

At this time, I'd like to introduce to you Super Recruiter, a guy that just dominates the recruiting field every single year. He's just a great guy, a hard, hard worker, totally dedicated to membership recruitment. Mr. Prospero Sodano. (Applause) He recorded a nifty 939 this year: 834 full paid, 105 partial lifes.

MR. PROSPERO SODANO: Thank you very much. The only thing, I have to build a bigger driveway. This is my fifth blazer. Thank you.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Actually, he was a little miffed today because he said that's the fifth sport coat, I believe. We ran out of colors on him. So what we're going to do next year is I've talked it over with Rick, and he's going to allow us to use our Engineering Department. We're going to go out and build him a new closet so we can get him more stuff. He's amazing.

I'll tell you what, though: He's amazing, but there's some other amazing ones out there, too. And we have one recruiter -- we have several different recruiters that I want to recognize here today, because those of you that do recruiting realize how difficult it is, and how much time and effort it takes to record some big numbers.

And there's some guys here -- I want to give you a list of 18 people, and Art's told me to make this quick. And I'm going to read them fast. But these guys truly deserve the recognition. And what I'd like to do is I'd like to start off with all those individuals that made over a hundred members, because that's quite an accomplishment. And I want to read them off to you now. And if you're here, you might want to stand up or wave your hand or whatever.

But we have Raymond Hempel, who had a hundred members; Calvin Hall, 100 members; Paul Newton, 103; Barry Souders, Santa Claus -- everybody knows Santa -- commander from North Carolina, a great guy, hard worker, he had 107; John Parker, 110; Paul Wekemann, 117; Jim Smith, 117; Dennis Gooden from the Iowa group there, 119; Vincent Finocchio at 122, and he's already got 60 this year; Robert Winterstien, another Iowan, 126; Larry Jatho we've mentioned, 130; Bob Sinclair out of Massachusetts, 132; Bill Gibney, 140; Kenny Kooyman, 157, and keep in mind Kenny had a lot of health problems this year. He was tied up for about six months. Still had 157. Let's hear it for him. That's really great. (Applause)

The recruitment team of Bruce Kaplan and Gary Burns out of the Maine NSO Office, with 176/174 respectively; and the North Carolina Connection, Coy Hennis with 346 and Richard Ladnier with 579. Let's hear it. (Applause)

And just a little additive here. Richard already has a hundred this year, and Coy Hennis has 103 for this upcoming year. Awesome, these guys are awesome!

Okay. We have one other thing we have to cover here today. Back at the Midwinter, we instigated -- the commander had brought down a program where we wanted to start shooting for a million life members. We wanted to see how close we could get. And we thought the best way to do that was to create some peer competition. So at Midwinter, we introduced what we called the East-West Membership Competition. You recall that? Do you? Do you all know which team is on the East? Do you know if you're on the East or the West? The Beast of the East? Say, "The Beast of the East." "The Beast of the East."

The Best of the West over on this side. The Best of the West and the Beast of the East, right? The Beast of the East what? The Beast of the East, let's hear it. Show that enthusiasm. The Best of the West. Whoa! Beast of the East. (Laughter) Hey, what can I say? Let's hear the Beast of the East again. (Roaring) All right. Best of the West. (Roaring)

Yeah! Hey, listen, when this thing first kicked off, I got back to the office the next day -- now, I'm not kidding you. It was really neat, because all these people that never had called me before all started calling saying, "Hey, I want to get that list because I don't want that jerk over in North Carolina beating me." And they started going back and forth.

I started getting calls from people saying, "God! I had one of the guys over in this other state that called me I never had heard from, and he was sharing some of these ideas with me." And all of a sudden, everybody was kind of going back and forth, and they were talking. And I thought, wow, this is really great, everybody's starting to, you know, kind of communicate now, share their ideas on membership, and the program was in action. It was great. It was really great.

And we carried that out, we extended it for an extra 30 days, as you all recall, and we kept getting more and more and more of them in, and everybody's been bugging me ever since I've been here about who the winner is. And I'll tell you the bottom line is I don't know who the winner is. I don't know, because the darned accounting firm had some computer problems right before I left National Headquarters, and they assured me that the report would be here today. And I called out just a few minutes ago to an NSO out in the parking lot, and he said he hadn't heard -- hold on, hold on.

Oh! Thank You, Lord. Thank You, Lord. The accounting firm has arrived. The envelope, please. Everyone just hold back, hold back. I'm excited, too. (Laughter) Thank you. What's your name, please?

MEMBER: Big Mike.

MR. LUTTJOHANN: Let me ask you, Big Mike: Has anyone had the opportunity to see the contents of this letter?

MEMBER: No. And if they did, I would have killed them. (Laughter)

MR. LUTTJOHANN: I'm authorized, Big Mike. I'm authorized. (Laughter) Let's hear it for Big Mike. (Applause)

You guys don't think the membership director isn't a tough job? All right. Here we go.

At this time I want to call up the two team captains: Al Linden for the Beast of the East (applause); Mike Terry from the Best of the West. (Applause) Come up here, guys. I want them to be with me when the results roll out of the envelope. I want you to know this is in fact legitimate. I'm opening this for the first time. The official result is -- it was a battle to the end, but the East was a beast, but the West was the best. (Applause)

Oh, man, I'm so excited. I hope you're all excited, too. I tell you, to signify the winner, we're going to recognize Coach -- we're going to recognize Mike with the winning jacket. And it signifies right on here, "The East was a best, but the West was the best." Congratulations. (Applause) A heck of a job. You guys all went nuts. We really appreciated everything you did.

Well, listen, we'll see what happens next year who's going to be the winner.

The other thing I want to -- I do need to make a comment about this, because I got an awful lot of people asking me about the letter that went out about your jacket sizes. And for those of you that were at the Midwinter, you'll recall that we were going to recognize the rest of the winners at the Winners' Banquet. And for those of you on the East, or from the Beast of the East that sent your coat sizes and everything in, don't worry about it. You guys, we'll see you at 11:30 tomorrow. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Before I call for the motion, I've got to tell you, when Charlie first stepped up, he tapped that mike and he said, "Am I on?" Charlie, you're always on, pal. (Laughter)

I'll now accept a motion, please. Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. FRANK WEBB: Frank Webb, DAV Chapter Number 9, Houston, Texas, makes that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. CHARLES P. HUTCHINS: C.P. Hutchins, State of Louisiana, District 8, Chapter 47, seconds.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

I'd now like to introduce National Finance Committee Chairman Glen E. Vogel, Sr. from the great state of Indiana. Glen. (Applause)

NEC 13TH DISTRICT GLEN E. VOGEL, SR.: National Commander Reed, national officers, distinguished guests and fellow members of the Disabled American Veterans: Let me begin by recognizing my fellow members of the National Finance Committee. National Commander Gregory C. Reed of Indiana; 2nd District NEC Sal R. Tornatore of New York; 14th District NEC Harry VandeMore, South Dakota; and 15th District NEC Francis E. McLaskey of Iowa.

I would also like to recognize National Senior Vice-Commander Harry R. McDonald, Jr., of Florida; National Judge Advocate Edward G. Galian of New York, who served the committee in a nonvoting capacity.

The financial picture of the first six months of 1997 paints a portrait of exciting forward movement in the DAV 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 mailed 31.3 million pieces of fund-raising mail, slightly less than for the same period last year.

We have seen continuing growth in contributions to the DAV. In this regard, please note that our growth keeps moving ahead, even as other charities in the human services arena lag behind in a prolonged period of stagnation. The DAV's income from direct mail fund-raising climbed nearly four and a half million dollars over last year's June the 30th results, rising to 44.5 million.

Our net income from direct mail fund-raising rose to $29.9 million for the first half of 1997, fully five and a half million dollars over the organization's net income for the first six months of 1996.

That's money available for use in supporting this organization's causes and services. It can be attributed to the improved targeting of our mailing and cost control measures. Other factors include excellent design of the address labels that are a prominent feature in our fund-raising mailings, and improved copyrighting and personalization of the letters going to members of the American public whom we are seeking as new donors.

By year's end, we will have dropped over 60 million pieces of fund-raising mail, and we expect to generate some $92 million in gross revenues from direct mail fund-raising. Net income, which is an important figure in terms of funding DAV's programs, should approach 63 million, an increase of almost six million over last year.

There's a success story in the department fund-raising program as well. During 1996-1997, each department received $3.50 per member, 50 cents more than expected, for a total distribution of almost $3.7 million. Very importantly, this money went to departments without any cost to them, without any work on their part as well.

This program is greatly enhancing the service programs offered by our departments, and it's a tremendous improvement over the fund-raising problems our department leaders struggled through in the past.

I thank all of our departments and chapters for their continued support of this program and especially when they're speaking with our members, I thank them. Their promotion is essential to continued growth and success.

That's the fund-raising situation. Now on to the overall financial picture. We began the year with $94 million in net worth. By June the 30th, our net worth has grown beyond $112 million.

In addition to the fund-raising factors I've already discussed, our investment income has greatly improved: 11.5 million for the first six months of this year compared to 2.5 million for the same period last year. Most importantly, DAV spending for service programs is well within the guidelines set by the groups that evaluate and report on the spending of most major charities.

The national organization's success has been crucial in our efforts to also stabilize the financial position of the Life Membership Fund. The national organization has reduced distributions to itself by a total of a dollar and a half per

member over the past few years. The most recent reduction absorbed by the national organization, 50 cents per member, took place at the National Finance Committee's June meeting.

At June the 30th, 1997, the Life Membership Fund has a value of $90.3 million. On July the 1st, $12.2 million was distributed to the National, departments and chapters.

As it stands today, and based upon reasonable actuary projections, the fund would be depleted by the year 2016. This is an improvement over last year's projections, and we have the foresight and action of our national staff and the performance of the stock market to thank for a tremendous improvement in the fund's health.

Before closing, I would like to thank the other committee members, National Adjutant Wilson, the DAV's professional staff, for their prudent and successful management of our organization and you, Mr. Commander, for the support I have received in my role as the Finance Committee chairman. It has been an honor to serve on and chair this important committee as we rebuild the financial strength of the organization providing for continued service to this nation's veterans.

Commander Reed, that concludes my report to the convention, a report of tremendous growth and success. And I now move for its adoption. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Mike 2, you're recognized.

MR. ANTHONY FUSCO: PDC Anthony Fusco, District 2, New York, Chapter 20. I'd like to second this fine report.

COMMANDER REED: Are you making a motion?

MR. FUSCO: I'm sorry. I'm making a motion to accept his report.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Tony. Mike 1, you're recognized.

NEC 14TH DISTRICT HARRY VANDEMORE: VandeMore, Chapter 1, South Dakota, seconds that motion.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. Ayes have it. Thank you, Glen.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 1996 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, 1996, 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, 1996 and the changes in its net assets and cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements, in 1996 DAV changed its method of accounting for investments to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 124 and, retroactively, restated the 1995 financial statements for the change.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 11, 1997

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

ASSETS	1996	1995 (Restated)
ASSETS:		
Cash	$ 2,913,643	$ 2,887,417
Accounts receivable	1,794,971	1,862,182
Solicitation materials	2,477,415	3,051,572
Prepaid expenses	3,086,978	3,258,089
Investments (Note 2)	109,138,941	83,755,958
Property & equipment, net (Note 2)	8,696,174	8,788,990
Life Membership:		
Cash	461,174	266,471
Investments (Note 2)	78,874,256	78,716,720
TOTAL	$207,443,552	$182,587,399

LIABILITIES AND UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	1996	1995 (Restated)
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable	$ 5,496,510	$ 2,214,287
Accrued expenses:		
Salaries and related taxes and withholdings	1,373,144	1,263,634
Sick leave	6,196,790	6,984,031
Medical	500,000	500,000
Pension (Note 5)	3,094,906	3,057,150
Postretirement benefits (Note 6)	12,998,000	8,894,000
Deferred dues and service fees collected in advance (Note 4)	3,771,489	3,705,137
Other	629,872	333,196
Life Membership:		
Accounts payable	120,377	115,768
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues (Note 4)	79,215,053	78,867,423
Total liabilities	113,396,141	105,934,626
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS:		
General	93,817,903	76,210,745
Net assets designated by the National Finance Committee (Note 3)	229,508	442,028
Total unrestricted net assets	94,047,411	76,652,773
TOTAL	$207,443,552	$182,587,399

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

	1996	1995 (Restated)
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:		
Support:		
Contributions received primarily from direct mail solicitations (Note 2)	$ 87,209,915	$ 83,447,955
Contributed services and facilities, primarily services (Note 2)	15,372,914	13,863,739
List royalties	2,451,189	2,040,139
Bequests	797,509	1,381,758
Total support	105,831,527	100,733,591
Revenue:		
Membership dues and fees (Note 4)	7,912,456	8,325,760
Income from investments	3,677,019	3,028,518
Gain on sale of investments	872,138	1,843,475
Miscellaneous	193,499	423,601
Total revenue	12,655,112	13,621,354
Total support and revenue	118,486,639	114,354,945
EXPENSES:		
Program Services:		
National Service Program	30,634,418	29,534,187
Legislative Service	583,485	639,400
Voluntary Service Program	17,491,098	14,066,296
National Employment Program	190,911	250,388
State Services, Relief Programs, and Memorials	3,999,533	3,981,489
Publications and Other Communications	2,501,090	2,632,528
Membership Services	4,422,996	4,563,329
Public Awareness	13,830,885	11,245,776
Total Program Services	73,654,416	66,913,393
Supporting Services:		
Fund Raising Costs	30,906,762	28,699,689
Administrative and General Expenses	3,593,263	2,899,917
Total Supporting Services	34,500,025	31,599,606
Total Expenses	108,154,441	98,512,999
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	10,332,198	15,841,946
UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS (Note 2)	7,062,440	8,312,527
INCREASE IN UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS	17,394,638	24,154,473
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, Beginning of year (Note 2)	76,652,773	52,498,300
UNRESTRICTED NET ASSETS, End of year	$ 94,047,411	$ 76,652,773

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

	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	Total Program Services	Fund Raising Costs	Administrative and General Expenses	Total Supporting Services	Total Expenses 1996	Total Expenses 1995
Salaries (Note 2)	$15,159,463	$273,994	$ 299,378	$ 96,650		$ 377,408	$ 933,131		$17,140,024	$ 4,088,368	$2,519,126	$ 6,607,494	$ 23,747,518	$ 22,769,586
Employee benefits (Notes 5,6)	7,760,389	135,166	140,841	46,376		194,190	449,282		8,726,244	2,072,701	1,470,369	3,543,070	12,269,314	12,040,566
Payroll taxes	1,258,120	20,682	25,752	5,752		32,538	75,944		1,418,788	418,164	236,398	654,562	2,073,350	2,125,532
DAV transportation network - volunteers			13,789,668						13,789,668				13,789,668	12,280,493
DAV transportation network- grants			2,245,375						2,245,375				2,245,375	846,525
Winter sports clinic			164,079						164,079				164,079	93,889
Other grants	24,874		566,800						591,674				591,674	174,293
Disaster relief					$ 17,975				17,975				17,975	20,738
State Service Program					3,648,714				3,648,714				3,648,714	3,635,083
Memorials					138,298				138,298				138,298	50,000
Scholarship					194,546				194,546				194,546	275,668
Expenses of national convention							384,319		384,319				384,319	436,813
Expenses of national commander and committees							367,900		367,900				367,900	392,708
Travel and relocation	1,484,704	39,943	78,629	25,039		15,205	93,940		1,737,460	30,385	136,609	166,994	1,904,454	1,471,390
Facilities	1,583,246								1,583,246				1,583,246	1,583,246
Postage and shipping	252,166	16,514	34,445	128		798,932	207,558		1,309,743	6,751,256	112,694	6,863,950	8,173,693	7,823,023
Equipment rental and maintenance	146,316		2,649			259	3,191		152,415	379,163	352,207	731,370	883,785	861,095
Supplies	473,053	86,976	99,233	2,351		83,958	230,274		975,845	544,759	401,185	945,944	1,921,789	1,627,146
Insurance	80,457	676	26,460	348		504	504		108,949	22,311	117,333	139,644	248,593	238,369
Telephone	84,196		986			1,195	5,858		92,235	13,960	53,050	67,010	159,245	143,404
Outside service	123,167		1,088			3,834	2,368		130,457	371,665	348,025	719,690	850,147	371,517
Project costs		7,562	6,920			202,818			217,300				217,300	102,543
Printing of magazine						764,646			764,646				764,646	973,801
Cost of solicitation mailings - materials									-	28,511,421		28,511,421	28,511,421	25,268,370
Heat, light, water and power	108,300								108,300	335,483	71	335,554	443,854	450,992
Security service	71,714								71,714	159,878		159,878	231,592	233,566
Depreciation of property and equipment	362,692	82	7,052			9,336	10,592		389,754	276,434	407,442	683,876	1,073,630	1,042,423
Legal fees	58,054						144,594		202,648		278,446	278,446	481,094	425,489
Professional fees	101,394					13,325	50,132		164,851	62,888	373,990	436,878	601,729	420,844
Allocations (to) from other departments	1,295,217						1,452,125	$13,830,885	16,578,227	(13,173,613)	(3,404,614)	(16,578,227)		
Other	206,896	1,890	1,743	14,267		2,942	11,284		239,022	41,539	190,932	232,471	471,493	333,887
Total, year ended December 31, 1996	$30,634,418	$583,485	$17,491,098	$190,911	$3,999,533	$2,501,090	$4,422,996	$13,830,885	$73,654,416	$30,906,762	$3,593,263	$34,500,025	$108,154,441	
Total, year ended December 31, 1995	$29,534,187	$639,400	$14,066,296	$250,388	$3,981,489	$2,632,528	$4,563,329	$11,245,776	$66,913,393	$28,699,689	$2,899,917	$31,599,606		$ 98,512,999

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

	1996	1995 (Restated)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in unrestricted net assets	$17,394,638	$24,154,473
Adjustments to reconcile increase in unrestricted net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Depreciation and amortization	1,010,652	1,083,162
Unrealized appreciation of investments	(7,062,440)	(8,312,527)
Loss (gain) on disposal of property and equipment	(21,321)	22,191
Investment gains	(872,138)	(1,843,475)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Accounts and interest/dividends receivable	410,478	(177,757)
Solicitation materials	574,157	(1,894,821)
Prepaid expenses	171,111	(302,361)
Accounts payable	3,286,832	70,776
Accrued expenses	3,464,025	1,525,586
Deferred dues and service fees and other	363,028	(709,907)
Reserve for future distribution of life membership dues	(3,844,589)	(2,925,598)
Net cash provided by operating activities	14,874,433	10,689,742
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Net cost of investment puchases	(17,410,269)	(11,448,527)
Payments for property and equipment	(1,262,126)	(853,750)
Proceeds from sales of property and equipment	302,633	10,997
Decrease in life membership investments	3,716,258	2,503,583
Net cash used by investing activities	(14,653,504)	(9,787,697)
NET INCREASE IN CASH	220,929	902,045
CASH, Beginning of year	3,153,888	2,251,843
CASH, End of year	$ 3,374,817	$ 3,153,888

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996

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;
- representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House, and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level departments and local chapters; and
- providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

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

Investments - In 1996, DAV adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124 "Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations," the effects of which have been applied retroactively. Under SFAS No. 124, 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. Previously reported unrestricted net assets have been restated as follows:

Unrestricted net assets at January 1, 1995 as originally reported	$52,829,568
Effect of adoption of SFAS 124	(331,268)
Unrestricted net assets at January 1, 1995 as restated	$52,498,300

The adoption of SFAS No. 124 also resulted in an increase in the reserve for future distribution of life membership dues as discussed in Note 4.

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, 1996 are summarized below:

General	Cost	Market Value	Unrealized Net Gain
Cash equivalents	$ 16,295,772	$ 16,295,772	
Corporate bonds	14,780,232	14,981,038	$ 200,806
Treasuries	17,361,218	17,611,737	250,519
Common stocks	38,792,698	52,833,067	14,040,369
Common stock funds	6,340,706	6,892,711	552,005
Subtotal	$ 93,570,626	108,614,325	$ 15,043,699
Interest and dividends receivable		524,616	
Total		$109,138,941	
Life Membership			
Cash equivalents	$ 3,609,351	$ 3,609,351	
Corporate bonds	12,198,167	12,449,695	$ 251,528
Treasuries	15,839,177	16,271,861	432,684
Common stocks	28,857,631	40,526,930	11,669,299
Common stock funds	4,926,720	5,500,649	573,929
Subtotal	$ 65,431,046	78,358,486	$ 12,927,440
Interest and dividends receivable		515,770	
Total		$ 78,874,256	

Property and Equipment - Property and equipment are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation, and are composed of the following at December 31, 1996:

	Cost	Accumulated Depreciation	Net Book Value
Land and improvements	$ 894,682	$ 351,992	$ 542,690
Buildings and improvements	8,414,925	3,809,631	4,605,294
Machinery and other equipment	9,548,463	6,000,273	3,548,190
Total	$18,858,070	$10,161,896	$8,696,174

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 2,318,536 hours accounted for in 1996 – 1,066,200 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 $13,690,008. This value, together with the value of certain contributed facilities, is recorded as Support and Expenses on the accompanying Statement of Activities and Statement of Functional Expenses. The remaining 1,252,336 hours -- valued at $16,079,994 are contributed to the DAV VA Voluntary Service Program. This amount and any other volunteer time has not been recorded on 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 1996, DAV incurred joint costs of $42,167,335 for informational materials and activities that included fund-raising appeals. Of those costs, $13,830,885 was allocated to public awareness (program services) and $28,336,450 was allocated to fund raising costs.

Reclassifications - Certain 1995 comparative amounts have been reclassified to conform with 1996 financial statement presentation.

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, 1996, $193,152 is designated for assistance to disabled veterans and their families who have suffered losses resulting from natural disasters. Another $36,356 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 1996 in the reserve for future distribution of membership dues:

Balance, January 1, 1996, originally reported	$70,132,202
Effect of adoption of SFAS No. 124	8,735,221
Balance, January 1, 1996, restated	78,867,423
Additions:	
Membership dues received	4,293,354
Earnings on invested assets	3,417,195
Gain on sale of investments	2,048,234
Total	9,758,783
Distribution of membership dues:	
National Headquarters	7,979,225
Local Chapters	3,129,005
State Departments	2,495,142
Total	13,603,372
Unrealized appreciation of investments	4,192,219
Balance, December 31, 1996	$79,215,053

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, 1996 the plan's accumulated benefit obligation, including vested benefits of $58,396,150, was $59,802,964.

The following table sets forth the plan's funded status and amounts recognized in DAV's statement of financial position as of December 31, 1996:

Actuarial present value of projected benefit obligation	$ 77,014,181
Plan assets at fair value, principally immediate participation guarantee contracts and common trust funds	66,619,337
Projected benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(10,394,844)
Unrecognized prior service cost	3,090,588
Unrecognized transition obligation	66,473
Unrecognized net loss	4,142,877
Pension liability	$ (3,094,906)

Net pension cost for 1996, included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses, included the following components:

Service cost	$ 4,351,643
Interest cost	5,829,589
Actual return on plan assets	(7,295,512)
Net amortization and deferral	1,605,586
Net periodic pension cost	$ 4,491,306

The discount rate used in determining the actuarial present value of the benefit obligations for 1996 was 7.5%. 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 also maintains a defined contribution Salary Savings and Investment Plan for its employees. For qualified employees electing to participate in the Plan, DAV contributes 3% of the employees' base salary. DAV's contributions in 1996 were $536,500 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, 1996, DAV has $476,000 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 settle 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 1996, which is included in employee benefits expense in the accompanying statement of functional expenses:

Service cost	$1,166,000
Interest cost	2,446,000
Actual return on plan assets	(38,000)
Net amortization and deferral	1,418,000
Net periodic postretirement benefit cost	$4,992,000

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	$ 18,256,000
Fully eligible active plan participants	788,000
Other active plan participants	16,554,000
Total	35,598,000
Fair value of plan assets	476,000
Accumulated postretirement benefit obligation in excess of plan assets	(35,122,000)
Unrecognized prior service cost	5,062,000
Unrecognized transition obligation, amortized over 20 years	15,343,000
Unrecognized net loss	1,719,000
Accrued postretirement benefit obligation	$(12,998,000)

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 10.5% 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 $5,935,000 and the current year benefit expense by $677,000. Other actuarial assumptions include an expected long term rate of return on plan assets of 7.75% and a discount rate of 7.5%.

7. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation - The statement of financial position does not include the net assets of the Disabled American Veterans National Service Foundation ("Foundation") which are held in trust 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, 1996, net assets of the Foundation were $15,518,894. During 1996, DAV provided the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Foundation $89,385. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge. Additionally, in 1996, DAV contributed $558,600 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.

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. DAV has paid certain costs and expenditures for the Memorial for which the Memorial is to reimburse DAV. In 1996, DAV agreed to contribute $138,298 to the Memorial, thereby, reducing DAV's receivable from the Memorial. The remaining balance of $53,863 is recorded as accounts receivable in the accompanying statement of financial position. 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 1996, DAV provided the Trust with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. For the personnel services, DAV charged the Trust $29,795. Facilities and equipment are provided by DAV at no charge.

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Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Financial Statements for the Year Ended December 31, 1996 and Independent Auditors' Report

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

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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, 1996 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, 1996 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements, in 1996 the Auxiliary changed its method of accounting for investments in marketable securities to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 124 and retroactively restated the 1995 financial statements for the change.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

March 17, 1997

Deloitte Touche
Tohmatsu
International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

ASSETS	1996	1995 (Restated)
GENERAL ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Note 2)	$ 3,681,053	$ 3,149,909
Materials and supplies	140,293	108,193
Prepaid expenses	28,444	27,279
Other assets	14,713	10,238
SERVICE PROGRAM ASSETS - Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,5)	137,337	116,603
EDUCATION LOAN PROGRAM ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,5)	743,564	693,337
Notes receivable (less allowance of $6,600 in 1996 and $2,850 in 1995) (Note 5)	180,374	191,595
LIFE MEMBERSHIP ASSETS:		
Cash and cash equivalents (Notes 2,4,5)	499,752	967,897
Accrued interest receivable	119,418	134,303
Investments at fair market value (Notes 2,4)	7,933,933	7,619,946
TOTAL	$ 13,478,881	$ 13,019,300

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	1996	1995 (Restated)
LIABILITIES:		
Accounts payable - DAV National Headquarters	$ 240,119	$ 138,736
Contributions distributable to state departments	139,397	86,713
Accrued vacation and sick leave pay	117,811	118,143
Deferred membership fees (Note 2)	605,159	560,282
Other	6,734	4,603
Reserve for future distribution of Life Membership dues (Note 4)	8,553,103	8,722,146
Total liabilities	9,662,323	9,630,623
NET ASSETS:		
Unrestricted - General (Note 3)	2,755,283	2,387,142
Temporarily restricted - Service Program (Note 5)	137,337	116,603
Permanently restricted - Education Loan Program (Note 5)	923,938	884,932
Total net assets	3,816,558	3,388,677
TOTAL	$ 13,478,881	$ 13,019,300

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

	1996				
	Unrestricted General	Temporarily Restricted - Service Program	Permanently Restricted - Education Loan Program	Total	1995 (Restated)
SUPPORT AND REVENUE:					
Membership fees and mandates	$ 491,370	$ 8,400	$ 9,485	$ 509,255	$ 493,524
Life Membership dues (Note 4)	666,216			666,216	654,774
Contributions (Note 2)	259,560	18,940	11,872	290,372	180,651
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,300			25,300	25,296
Sale of membership items, less related direct costs of $52,069	(977)			(977)	(3,882)
Conference and meetings	13,100			13,100	11,370
National convention	17,805			17,805	23,005
Interest income	181,540	3,089	23,434	208,063	211,019
Reserve for uncollectible loans			(3,750)	(3,750)	
Net assets released from restriction	9,711	(9,711)			
Other	13,712	16	(2,035)	11,693	20,936
Total revenues	1,677,337	20,734	39,006	1,737,077	1,616,693
EXPENSES:					
Salaries and wages	372,383			372,383	353,011
Employee benefits (Note 6)	131,624			131,624	111,265
Distributions to state departments	169,097			169,097	86,713
Fundraising expenses	90,463			90,463	67,697
Membership drive expenses	150,393			150,393	
Payroll taxes	30,821			30,821	30,801
Conferences and meetings	51,682			51,682	53,365
Expenses of National Convention	65,024			65,024	71,876
Printing, stationery and office supplies	39,064			39,064	24,361
Expenses of National Commander and officers	18,447			18,447	19,754
Contributed facilities (Notes 2,7)	25,300			25,300	25,296
Postage	53,350			53,350	58,990
Travel	27,484			27,484	44,222
Professional fees	14,200			14,200	12,500
Service program benefits	9,711			9,711	4,502
VAVS, memberships and other awards	15,031			15,031	19,100
Other	45,122			45,122	34,660
Total expenses	1,309,196			1,309,196	1,018,113
CHANGES IN NET ASSETS	368,141	20,734	39,006	427,881	598,580
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	2,387,142	116,603	884,932	3,388,677	2,790,097
NET ASSETS, End of year	$2,755,283	$137,337	$923,938	$3,816,558	$3,388,677

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 WITH COMPARATIVE AMOUNTS FOR 1995

	1996	1995 (Restated)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Change in net assets	$ 427,881	$ 598,580
Adjustments to reconcile change in net assets to cash provided by operating activities:		
Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	(39,006)	(39,327)
Change in assets and liabilities:		
Accrued interest receivable	14,885	(13,086)
Prepaid expenses and other assets	(5,640)	(17,826)
Materials and supplies	(32,100)	(6,850)
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	101,051	(263,909)
Deferred membership fees	44,877	(64,854)
Reserve for life membership dues	60,922	33,370
Contributions distributable to state departments	52,684	86,713
Other liabilities	2,131	(16,587)
Total adjustments	199,804	(302,356)
Net cash provided by operations	627,685	296,224
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in Life Membership investments	(543,952)	(461,704)
Education loans	(26,520)	(22,000)
Collections from repayment of education loans	37,741	32,205
Net cash used in investing activities	(532,731)	(451,499)
CASH FLOWS FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES - Permanently restricted contributions and interest income	39,006	39,327
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS	133,960	(115,948)
CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS:		
Beginning of year	4,927,746	5,043,694
End of year	$5,061,706	$4,927,746

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996

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.

2. **SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

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

Contributions - Contributions received are recorded 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 - In 1996, the DAV Auxiliary adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124, "Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations," the effects of which have been applied retroactively. Under SFAS No. 124, investments are recorded 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. The effect on the accompanying financial statements is an increase in the carrying amount of Life Membership investments and the related reserve for future distribution of Life Membership dues, as discussed in Note 4.

Investments in securities consist primarily of corporate bonds and U.S. Government Securities with an historical cost of $7,840,255. Gains and losses resulting from the sale of securities are recognized at the time of disposition and are computed using the specific identification method.

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 $5,029 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 1996 in the reserve for future distribution of dues:

Balance, January 1, 1996, originally reported	$8,398,503
Effect of adoption of SFAS No. 124	323,643
Balance, January 1, 1996, restated	8,722,146
Additions:	
Membership dues received	397,349
Earnings on invested fund assets	536,010
Unrealized depreciation of investments	(229,965)
Total	703,394
Distributions of dues:	
National Headquarters	666,216
Local units	79,259
State Departments	108,163
Investment fee	18,799
Total	872,437
Balance, December 31, 1996	$8,553,103

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.

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 1996, DAV charged the DAV Auxiliary $77,268 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 1996, 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 1996 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.

* * * * * *

I will now call on James Sursely, the chairman of the Committee on General Resolutions and Membership, for his report.

MR. JAMES E. SURSELY: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on General Resolutions was called to order for its first business session on August the 18th, 1997 by the committee advisors, Rick Surratt and Jerry Steelman.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. James E. Sursely was nominated for chairman. There were no further nominations. Nominations were closed, and James E. Sursely was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of secretary. Ken Grunewald 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 RESOLVED portion of the resolution.

Number 11. Restore Memorial Day to traditional date.

Resolution Number 48. To encourage all veterans to become registered voters.

Resolution Number 49. Supporting a strong national defense.

Resolution Number 220. Construct a monument to commemorate the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans.

Resolution Number 221. The condemnation of public desecration of the flag of the United States.

Number 226. Appreciation to all who are responsible for the success of the 76th National Convention.

Number 227. Appreciation to the Las Vegas Hilton for the success of the 76th National Convention.

And Resolution Number 228. Establishing public outreach as a priority activity.

Number 225 is the Disabled American Veterans appreciation for National Commander Reed, and I will read to you that resolution in its entirety. Resolution of the Disabled American Veterans appreciation to National Commander Reed.

> WHEREAS, Gregory C. Reed, disabled in service to his nation thereafter dedicated himself to service to his fellow disabled veterans and their families, to increase public awareness of their plight and improve the quality of their lives; and
>
> WHEREAS, in his passionate and untiring pursuit of that cause, he devoted both his talents and his outstanding leadership skills, occupying numerous elected and appointed positions from which he painstakingly chartered and guided the course of the Disabled American Veterans at local, state and national levels; and
>
> WHEREAS, his inspirational leadership culminated in his election to our organization's highest national office; and
>
> WHEREAS, during his term as our esteemed national commander, Mr. Reed, never content with mediocrity, excelled in all aspects of his conduct and performance as helmsman of our great organization; and
>
> WHEREAS, through his tenacity, strength of character and reputation of integrity, uprighteousness and earnestness, he not only gained the respect of his peers but also enhanced the prestige and renown of the Disabled American Veterans; and
>
> WHEREAS, his advocacy was always fervent and sincere, yet ever amiable and gracious; and
>
> WHEREAS, his quiet, confident and dignified diplomacy gained us many admiring friends and supporters, both in our government institutions and in communities across the breadth of our grand nation; and
>
> WHEREAS, his genuine concern, friendship and goodwill towards disabled veterans and their families has been exemplary, has fostered harmony, fraternity and camaraderie among us and has exhibited unique bonds between our nation's disabled veterans; and
>
> WHEREAS, his superlative stewardship has left an indelible mark and a legacy for future leaders of our

organization;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17th through the 21st, 1997, salutes Commander Reed and expresses its members' deep and sincere gratitude for his special contributions to disabled veterans, their families and organization; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we also extend our appreciation to Commander Reed's daughters, Suzette and Melissa, for their support and for sharing their father during his year as our national commander.

(Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on General Resolutions, 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. 011--LEGISLATIVE

TO REESTABLISH MEMORIAL DAY ON ITS TRADITIONAL DATE

WHEREAS, the Congress of the United States has enacted legislation designating the last Monday in May as Memorial Day; and

WHEREAS, this has detracted from the significance of the day set aside to honor the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in the military service of their country; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, that the Congress of the United States be respectfully requested to rescind its action setting the last Monday in May as Memorial Day and to reestablish May 30 as Memorial Day.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 048--LEGISLATIVE

TO ENCOURAGE ALL DISABLED VETERANS TO BECOME REGISTERED VOTERS

WHEREAS, 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 failure of all disabled veterans to register and vote will result in diminution of their influence on their elected representatives, further resulting in a corresponding erosion of their VA benefits and services; 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; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 049--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 17-21, 1997, goes no record urging Congress to provide adequate funds for the defense of our Nation both at home and abroad.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 220--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 221--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 226--ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO ALL WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the success for the 76th DAV National Convention convened in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 16-21, 1997, 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 17-21, 1997 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. 227--ADMINISTRATIVE

APPRECIATION TO THE LAS VEGAS HILTON FOR
THE SUCCESS OF THE 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the assistance and cooperation of the Las Vegas Hilton was essential to the success of the 76th 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 17-21, 1997, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 228--ADMINISTRATIVE

ESTABLISHING PUBLIC OUTREACH AS A PRIORITY ACTIVITY

WHEREAS, The Vietnam War, America's most recent ground war involving large numbers of combat casualties, has been over *for* 27 years; and

WHEREAS, the enthusiasm the American people felt for veterans in the wake of the Persian Gulf War has long since waned; and

WHEREAS, the memory of military action in Grenada, Beirut, Panama, Somalia, and Saudi Arabia died away while combat-disabled veterans were still undergoing initial hospitalization for their war wounds, and the prognosis for public awareness of the sacrifices being made in Bosnia today is not better; and

WHEREAS, as a result of this public forgetfulness, many in private and public life need to be reminded that a declining number of World War II, Korean and Vietnam veterans must not be used as an excuse to ignore the nation's primary policy obligation to meet the needs of not only those veterans, but also of the many who followed; and

WHEREAS, this forgetfulness on the part of the American people and their political leaders threatens great harm to the dignity of disabled veterans, as well as the future integrity of programs the federal government has created to serve veterans; and

WHEREAS, experience has shown that veterans themselves can lose awareness of the benefits and services available to them in eras characterized by a general de-emphasis on veterans needs and programs; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, direct their National Organization to establish OUTREACH to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically, in all Program Services.

* * * * *

COMMANDER REED: Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. ARMANDO C. ALBARRAN: Armando Albarran, Chapter 14, Department of Texas, District 20, make a motion to accept the report of the General Resolution and Membership.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. LOZANO: Manny Lozano, Chapter 195, State of Texas. I second that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

Thank you, James, for a wonderful report and those kind words.

MR. SURSELY: Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

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

Mike 3.

MR. JAMES H. TANNER: James Tanner, Massachusetts, adjutant,

Joseph R. Harold Memorial Chapter Number 10 makes that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second?

MR. FRANK WEBB: In behalf of one of our great DAV members not here you all know, Buddy's Chapter Number 11 -- this is Frank Webb, DAV Chapter Number 9, Houston, Texas, formally known as P.D. Jackson's grandson.

COMMANDER REED: Sir, did you second that motion?

MR. WEBB: Yes.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. Ayes have it.

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

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
	COMMITTEE ON NOMINATION OF NATIONAL OFFICERS	
01.....	John F. Regan.....	Massachusetts 114
(Alt)....	Thomas J. Daley.....	Massachusetts 049
02.....	Frank J. Randazzo.....	New York 110
(Alt)....	Anthony L. Mirando.....	New York 145
03.....	Joseph D. MacDonald.....	Maine 004
(Alt)....	Steven R. Medairos.....	New Hampshire 009
04.....	Joseph P. Trulio.....	New Jersey 009
(Alt)....	Matthew P. Greany.....	New Jersey 032
05.....	Jim Wyatt.....	Pennsylvania 115
(Alt)....	James E. Turner.....	Pennsylvania 014
06.....	Joseph Reeves.....	Virginia 041
(Alt)....	James W. Stewart.....	Virginia 010
07.....	Dennis A. Joyner.....	Florida 104
(Alt)....	Albert H. Linden, Jr.....	Florida 090
08.....	Thurston Mosely.....	Alabama 067
(Alt)....	William Blankenship.....	Alabama 011
09.....	Michael J. Truscello.....	South Carolina 012
(Alt)....	Gerald Jones.....	South Carolina 018
10.....	Leo J. Le Roux, Jr.....	Michigan 114
(Alt)....	Roger L. Jansen.....	Michigan 014
11.....	Verne Nygaard.....	Ohio 020
(Alt)....	Samuel E. Lanza.....	Ohio 011
12.....	Ted R. Buck.....	Illinois 028
(Alt)....	Philip C. Kreisa.....	Wisconsin 019
13.....	Franklin D. Littleton.....	Indiana 027
(Alt)....	Frank J. McKillop.....	Kentucky 090
14.....	Eugene A. Murphy.....	South Dakota 001
(Alt)....	Joseph M. Litzinger.....	North Dakota 002
15.....	Francis E. McLaskey.....	Iowa 010
16.....	Michael W. Tempesta.....	California 001
(Alt)....	Larry A. Polzin.....	California 073
17.....	Rudolph R. Vargas.....	Colorado 022
(Alt)....	Juan T. Urioste.....	New Mexico 033
18.....	Hermon T. Harrison.....	Arizona 008
(Alt)....	Donald F. Schmitt.....	Arizona 016
19.....	Jimmey W. Mayo.....	Alaska 006
(Alt)....	Dale P. Westlake.....	Washington 045
20.....	Bruce W. Burgess.....	Texas 005
(Alt)....	Jose T. Garcia.....	Texas 014
21.....	Irvin D. Eddy.....	Oklahoma 032
(Alt)....	Robert Z. Baley.....	Arkansas 062
Blind Vets		
	Floyd O. Britting.....	Blind Veterans 001
(Alt)....	Joseph Schlichtig.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach

COMMITTEE ON CONSTITUTION AND BYLAWS

01.....	Thomas J. Daley.....	Massachusetts 049

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	James E. Bixby.....	Massachusetts 029
02.....	Sally Wilson.....	New York 126
(Alt)....	Thomas F. Mazza.....	New York 118
03.....	Kenneth J. Kooyman.....	Rhode Island 012
(Alt)....	Thomas Conners.....	Rhode Island 017
04.....	Rick Newell.....	Connecticut 047
(Alt)....	Maurice L. Collin.....	Connecticut 047
05.....	David F. Ross.....	Pennsylvania 057
(Alt)....	Logan W. Carter.....	Pennsylvania 014
06.....	F. Espinosa-Labrador.....	Puerto Rico 001
(Alt)....	David L. Tannenbaum.....	Virginia 015
07.....	John C. McCarthy.....	Florida 004
(Alt)....	Robert A. Melcher.....	Florida 091
08.....	Sidney H. Shown.....	Tennessee 003
(Alt)....	Donald L. Samuels.....	Tennessee 003
09.....	Elbert T. Townsend.....	North Carolina 011
(Alt)....	Dennis D. Mensing.....	Georgia 001
10.....	Boniface R. Maile.....	Michigan 001
(Alt)....	Donald R. Crull.....	Michigan 001
11.....	Andrew J. Offutt.....	Ohio 103
(Alt)....	Joseph K. Shepherd.....	Ohio 131
12.....	Benito G. Barcella.....	Illinois 047
(Alt)....	Richard E. Marbes.....	Wisconsin 003
13.....	Raymond E. Drake.....	Kentucky 006
(Alt)....	Robert F. Christensen.....	Indiana 025
14.....	Robert F. Brown, Jr.....	North Dakota 003
(Alt)....	William L. Shelton, Jr.....	Minnesota 017
15.....	Dennis L. Young.....	Kansas 001
(Alt)....	Jerry W. Bay.....	Missouri 067
16.....	Kenneth Musselmann.....	California 019
(Alt)....	Robert Salisbury.....	California 023
17.....	Joseph G. Lucero.....	New Mexico 003
(Alt)....	Caroline D. Mason.....	Colorado 021
18.....	Chas. D. Vincent, Jr.....	Arizona 001
(Alt)....	Robert E. McCallum.....	Arizona 001
19.....	Anne M. Ruppert.....	Alaska 002
(Alt)....	Mallory Ann Hansen.....	Oregon 028
20.....	Richard L. Sarrazin.....	Texas 005
(Alt)....	Vincent C. Morrison.....	Texas 009
21.....	Harold D. Pinney.....	Oklahoma 003
(Alt)....	Cecil Stevenson.....	Arkansas 02
Blind Vets	Richard D. Holden.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Richard L. Sarrazin and Edward G. Galian

COMMITTEE ON CREDENTIALS

01.....	Everett J. Nygard, Jr.....	Massachusetts 030
(Alt)....	Alan W. Bowers.....	Massachusetts 046
02.....	Sal R. Tornatore.....	New York 028
(Alt)....	Tracy L. Brown.....	New York 034
03.....	Edward R. Heath.....	Maine 011
(Alt)....	Stanley J. Hoy.....	New Hampshire 001
04.....	Eduardo G. Morales.....	New Jersey 049
(Alt)....	Richard E. Manners.....	New Jersey 014
05.....	John J. Lorenz.....	Pennsylvania 096
(Alt)....	Eugene Davis.....	Pennsylvania 015
06.....	Sloan H. Hoopes.....	Virginia 003
(Alt)....	Charles E. Skidmore.....	West Virginia 030
07.....	Marshall E. Voelz.....	Florida 092
(Alt)....	George J. Passwater.....	Florida 026
08.....	Roy J. Broussard.....	Louisiana 017
(Alt)....	Paul Hoffpauir.....	Louisiana 017
09.....	Richard P. Geary.....	North Carolina 016

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Jeffrey S. Sankes.....	North Carolina 016
10.....	T. A. McMasters, III.....	Michigan 129
(Alt)....	Russell Spalding.....	Michigan 020
11.....	Joseph R. Lenhart.....	Ohio 073
(Alt)....	Daniel D. Shreeve.....	Ohio 116
12.....	Sidney Bick.....	Illinois 047
(Alt)....	Thomas W. Rymer.....	Wisconsin 045
13.....	Jesse L. Wright.....	Kentucky 016
(Alt)....	James S. Powers.....	Indiana 003
14.....	Dick A. Haan.....	Minnesota 001
(Alt)....	Victor C. Hass.....	North Dakota 004
15.....	A. Rondal McKinney.....	Missouri 002
(Alt)....	Garland L. Findley.....	Iowa 006
16.....	Patrick J. Carroll.....	California 012
(Alt)....	Joel C. Devenish.....	California 043
17.....	Richard M. Rambes.....	New Mexico 003
(Alt)....	Keith L. Gustin.....	Colorado 007
18.....	Harvey L. Jacobsen.....	Nevada 004
(Alt)....	George Y. Taketa.....	Hawaii 006
19.....	Raymond E. Guise, Jr.....	Idaho 011
20.....	Roland A. Paquette.....	Texas 057
(Alt)....	Derrell G. Neal.....	Texas 175
21.....	Sidney G. Banker, Jr.....	Oklahoma 030
(Alt)....	Timmy W. Pennington.....	Arkansas 051
Blind Vets	Robert H. Dawson.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisor: Charles D. Luttjohann

COMMITTEE ON EMPLOYMENT

01.....	Ronald S. Burke, Jr.....	Massachusetts 115
(Alt)....	Matthew J. Carpenter.....	Massachusetts 004
02.....	Alvin Lee Burks.....	New York 076
(Alt)....	Anthony Fusco.....	New York 028
03.....	Bruce E. Kaplan.....	Maine 006
(Alt)....	H. C. Littlefield.....	New Hampshire 004
04.....	Salvatore Lo Sauro.....	New Jersey 015
(Alt)....	Frank Albanese.....	New Jersey 009
05.....	M. Rae White.....	Pennsylvania 050
(Alt)....	John M. Hoden.....	Pennsylvania 075
06.....	Phillip W. Turpin.....	Virginia 003
(Alt)....	Michael J. Piper.....	Maryland 021
07.....	Charles C. Perkins.....	Florida 040
(Alt)....	Albert M. Sorrentino.....	Florida 030
08.....	Charles R. Combs.....	Alabama 006
(Alt)....	J. D. Garrett.....	Alabama 051
09.....	Barry I. Souders.....	North Carolina 005
(Alt)....	Andrew J. Wingo, Sr.....	South Carolina 054
10.....	John F. McComb.....	Michigan 013
(Alt)....	Dennis N.Emery.....	Michigan 129
11.....	David R. Helton.....	Ohio 115
(Alt)....	Theodore Karageorge.....	Ohio 116
12.....	James R. Harris.....	Illinois 047
(Alt)....	Joseph F. Guido.....	Wisconsin 005
13.....	Richard A. Pickard.....	Indiana 043
(Alt)....	Jeffrey C. Hall.....	Kentucky 155
14.....	Delbert J. Foster, Jr.....	South Dakota 001
(Alt)....	Richard J. Bradsteen.....	North Dakota 002
15.....	Douglas E. Meeks.....	Nebraska 007
(Alt)....	Clarence L. Borders.....	Missouri 001
16.....	John F. McCoy.....	California 019
(Alt)....	Robert R. Ehlers.....	California 046
17.....	Veda M. Jones.....	Utah 014
(Alt)....	Terry D. Schow.....	Utah 004

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
18.....	Loren L. Watson, III	Nevada 034
(Alt)....	John W. Jascur.....	Arizona 010
19.....	Bradley S. Barton.....	Oregon 001
(Alt)....	Jack B. Corson.....	Oregon 001
20.....	Ruben H. Lopez, Jr.....	Texas 014
(Alt)....	Melvin L. Wilson.....	Texas 009
21.....	Bobby W. Hines.....	Oklahoma 032
(Alt)....	Yvonne S. McCool.....	Arkansas 056

Advisors: Wayne L. Douglass and Ronald W. Drach

COMMITTEE ON FINANCE AND DUES

01.....	Arthur S. Cushing.....	Massachusetts 017
(Alt)....	Arthur F. Kingsley.....	Massachusetts 115
02.....	Frank J. Fantanza.....	New York 015
(Alt)....	Abraham Wolkofsky.....	New York 023
03.....	Edward S. Lastowski.....	New Hampshire 001
(Alt)....	Paul R. Bisson.....	Maine 004
04.....	Edward F. Norman.....	Connecticut 006
(Alt)....	Steven Stupak.....	Connecticut 009
05.....	Carmen A. De Santi.....	Pennsylvania 021
(Alt)....	Terence J. Seeman.....	Pennsylvania 008
06.....	Harry E. Yaukey, Sr.....	Maryland 036
(Alt)....	Emerson L. Clopper, Jr.....	West Virginia 034
07.....	Charles E. Heiney.....	Florida 125
(Alt)....	Larry O. Kyser.....	Florida 023
08.....	Paul P. Benoit.....	Louisiana 007
(Alt)....	William J. Lane.....	Louisiana 030
09.....	Rodney C. Jernigan.....	South Carolina 004
(Alt)....	Billy H. Braswell.....	Georgia 033
10.....	Donald P. Kirkpatrick.....	Michigan 135
(Alt)....	James E. Bruney.....	Michigan 002
11.....	Gary R. Akers.....	Ohio 072
(Alt)....	Daniel Smiley.....	Ohio 109
12.....	Kenneth C. Thompson.....	Wisconsin 045
(Alt)....	James J. Ferrara.....	Illinois 055
13.....	Fred A. Sutton.....	Indiana 009
(Alt)....	James T. Ashby.....	Kentucky 003
14.....	Carl M. Youngblom.....	Minnesota 015
(Alt)....	Jerome G. Krejci.....	North Dakota 002
15.....	Harold G. Benoit.....	Kansas 034
(Alt)....	William R. Davidson.....	Nebraska 007
16.....	Astro A. Tortolano.....	California 011
(Alt)....	James H. McCarthy, III.....	California 070
17.....	Robert N. Moffett.....	New Mexico 013
(Alt)....	Stanley L. Miller.....	New Mexico 030
18.....	W. D. Brzezinski.....	Nevada 011
(Alt)....	Cynthia S. Brunette.....	Nevada 007
19.....	Irene L. Martin.....	Washington 045
(Alt)....	Harold E. Wiley.....	Washington 046
20.....	Eugene T. Arrendale.....	Texas 012
(Alt)....	Kenneth P. Nedderman.....	Texas 032
21.....	Frank E. Nye.....	Oklahoma 049
(Alt)....	Adrian H. Hunt.....	Arkansas 041

Advisors: Glen E. Vogel, Sr. and Richard E. Patterson

COMMITTEE ON GENERAL RESOLUTIONS AND MEMBERSHIP

01.....	James H. Tanner.....	Massachusetts 010
(Alt)....	Russell T. Henderson.....	Massachusetts 004
02.....	Albion J. Giordano.....	New York 005
(Alt)....	Ronald D. Tears.....	New York 015
03.....	Michael Venezia.....	Vermont 022

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Roger A. Bourgery.....	Vermont 003
04.....	Eugene J. Newton.....	New Jersey 004
(Alt)....	Herbert G. Henn.....	New Jersey 032
05.....	Kenneth A. Grunewald.....	Pennsylvania 085
(Alt)....	Wilbert O'Neill.....	Pennsylvania 061
06.....	Raymond A. Chatary.....	Maryland 007
(Alt)....	Kenneth W. Ruby.....	Maryland 022
07.....	James E. Sursely.....	Florida 016
(Alt)....	D. Jean Van Trump.....	Florida 042
08.....	Robert M. Guy, Jr.....	Tennessee 003
(Alt)....	Edward G. Roberson.....	Tennessee 110
9.....	Coy W. Hennis.....	North Carolina 020
(Alt)....	Ernest H. Stroud.....	South Carolina 014
10.....	Alfred L. Hindes.....	Michigan 003
(Alt)....	David E. Smith.....	Michigan 003
11.....	John L. Maki.....	Ohio 043
(Alt)....	James M. Gray.....	Ohio 042
12.....	Werner J. Schalow.....	Wisconsin 005
(Alt)....	Douglas M. Collins.....	Illinois 003
13.....	Michael A. Whelihan.....	Indiana 052
(Alt)....	Harry S. Gaylord.....	Kentucky 149
14.....	Rex Kiser.....	Minnesota 001
(Alt)....	James V. Hamann.....	Minnesota 002
15.....	Mickey Joe Jones.....	Missouri 017
(Alt)....	Clifford M. Piersee.....	Kansas 001
16.....	Roberta L. Robles.....	California 007
(Alt)....	Richard Turbeville.....	California 058
17.....	Jimmie Joe Snider.....	Colorado 007
(Alt)....	Paul W. Jackson.....	Colorado 007
18.....	Robert L. Montague.....	Hawaii 006
(Alt)....	Fred F. Narcaroti, Sr.....	Arizona 016
19.....	Shirley M. Scofield.....	Idaho 028
(Alt)....	Philip E. Caldwell.....	Oregon 020
20.....	Andrew Flemming.....	Texas 009
(Alt)....	Eric J. Chavez.....	Texas 003
21.....	Bobby R. Eddy.....	Oklahoma 002
(Alt)....	David Reeves.....	Oklahoma 005
Blind Vets		
	David T. May.....	Blind Veterans 001

Advisors: Jerry P. Steelman and Rick Surratt

COMMITTEE ON HOSPITAL AND VOLUNTARY SERVICES

01.....	Richard Stentiford.....	Massachusetts 080
(Alt)....	James Cooper,Jr.....	Massachusetts 009
02.....	Joseph Blumenthal.....	New York 109
(Alt)....	Carmen A. Vitale.....	New York 001
03.....	Gordon J. Forrett.....	Vermont 015
(Alt)....	Raymond S. Sanchas.....	Rhode Island 013
04.....	Alfred Faticoni.....	Connecticut 008
(Alt)....	Timothy J. Kelly.....	Connecticut 019
05.....	Shirley A. Belardo.....	Pennsylvania 014
(Alt)....	Calvin R. Hall.....	Pennsylvania 064
06.....	Thomas C. Johns.....	Maryland 007
(Alt)....	Robert E. Cousins.....	Virginia 044
07.....	Robert F. Melville.....	Florida 085
(Alt)....	Herbert A. Lewis, Jr.....	Florida 013
08.....	Francis L. Weaver.....	Mississippi 011
(Alt)....	Roy A. Diehl.....	Mississippi 011
09.....	Wallace E. Tyson.....	North Carolina 046
(Alt)....	Louis Bogdan.....	South Carolina 067
10.....	Joseph Parys.....	Michigan 051
(Alt)....	Edward J. Gac.....	Michigan 002
11.....	Harlan F. Plummer.....	Ohio 171

1997 NATIONAL CONVENTION, LAS VEGAS, NEVADA - Continued

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
(Alt)....	Martin P. Roberts.....	Ohio 134
12.....	Thomas W. Rymer.....	Wisconsin 045
(Alt)....	Nathaniel L. Holman.....	Illinois 006
13.....	Anthony W. Cobb.....	Kentucky 004
(Alt)....	John M. Miller.....	Indiana 009
14.....	Wayne W. Blue.....	Minnesota 001
15.....	Terry Blacketer.....	Nebraska 007
(Alt)....	James R. Hess.....	Iowa 020
16.....	Bruce F. Davenport.....	California 065
(Alt)....	Robert J. Allard.....	California 022
17.....	George L. Chapman.....	Colorado 021
(Alt)....	John O. Ognie.....	Colorado 007
18.....	James Dale Gay.....	Arizona 016
(Alt)....	Carl Vacco.....	Arizona 001
19.....	Lloyd V. La Plante.....	Washington 023
(Alt)....	Emelda Henson.....	Idaho 002
20.....	Rex A. Lloyd.....	Texas 009
(Alt)....	Brian V. Bible.....	Texas 037
21.....	Alan Huddleston.....	Oklahoma 060
(Alt)....	Stephen Painter, Jr.....	Oklahoma 029

Advisors: Richard A. Wannemacher and Albert H. Linden

COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION AND VETERANS RIGHTS

01.....	Joseph A. Tine, Jr.....	Massachusetts 110
(Alt)....	Richard T. Sheehan.....	Massachusetts 110
02.....	Samuel Danial.....	New York 030
(Alt)....	William Novak, Jr.....	New York 005
03.....	Jennette Genovese.....	Rhode Island 001
(Alt)....	Gary P. Burns.....	Maine 001
04.....	Reese E. Phillips	Delaware 006
(Alt)....	James H. Fox.....	New Jersey 024
05.....	George I. Ford, Sr.....	Pennsylvania 014
(Alt)....	James E. Uckele.....	Pennsylvania 092
06.....	Jacob N. Stafford.....	West Virginia 056
(Alt)....	James L. Pritchett, Jr.....	Maryland 007
07.....	Richard E. Giese.....	Florida 028
(Alt)....	Ernest F. Hartman.....	Florida 094
08.....	H. C. Franklin, Jr.....	Mississippi 048
(Alt)....	Gerard D. Shuster.....	Mississippi 017
09.....	Hugh A. Mathis.....	South Carolina 005
(Alt)....	Sallyann H. Kolde.....	North Carolina 016
10.....	Carl W. Poest.....	Michigan 014
(Alt)....	Roy A. Redmond.....	Michigan 002
11.....	Donald Lee Kranek.....	Ohio 065
(Alt)....	Edgar E. Davis.....	Ohio 002
12.....	Raymond E. Helsley.....	Illinois 003
(Alt)....	Reba L. Eslinger.....	Wisconsin 066
13.....	Joseph S. Carroll.....	Indiana 052
(Alt)....	Harry G. Erway, III.....	Kentucky 155
14.....	Henry H. Sadler.....	Minnesota 010
(Alt)....	Harry F. VandeMore.....	South Dakota 001
15.....	Prezell Frazier.....	Iowa 020
(Alt)....	Frederick F. Herman.....	Nebraska 002
16.....	Don J. Pouliot.....	California 002
(Alt)....	Clyde Maddox.....	California 028
17.....	Stephen H. Spitzer.....	New Mexico 003
(Alt)....	Dorothy C. Long.....	Colorado 011
18.....	Robert T. Fletcher.....	Arizona 020
(Alt)....	Patrick R. Young.....	Arizona 020
19.....	Charles W. Chapin.....	Idaho 023
(Alt)....	Donald Sanders.....	Washington 033
20.....	Claude J. Boggs, Sr.....	Texas 128
(Alt)....	Alphonso R. Altieri.....	Texas 057

District	Name (Delegate and alternate)	Chapter No. and State
21.....	Michael N. McConnell.....	Oklahoma 030
(Alt)....	James C. Gordon.....	Arkansas 056

Advisors: Joseph A. Violante and Thomas L. Tomlinson

COMMANDER REED: We'll now hear from Arthur Cushing, the chairman of the Committee on Finance and Dues. Arthur.

MR. ARTHUR S. CUSHING: Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Finance and Dues was called to order for its first business session on August 18, 1997 by the committee advisors, Glen E. Vogel, Sr. and Richard E. Patterson.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Arthur Cushing was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Arthur Cushing was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of a secretary. Edward Lastowski was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

There were no resolutions submitted for consideration by the Committee on Finance and Dues this year.

The committee reviewed the proposed 1998 budget with the committee advisors. The proposed 1998 budget was referred to the National Convention Committee on Finance and Dues by the National Finance Committee with their recommendation for adoption. Following the completion of the committee's review, the committee voted unanimously to recommend to the National Convention adoption of the proposed 1998 budget.

The committee then expressed its thanks to the committee advisors, Glen E. Vogel, Sr. and Richard E. Patterson 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 thanks of the National Convention.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Arthur.

Do we hear a motion? Mike 1, you're recognized.

MR. HUTCHINS: C. P. Hutchins, PDC, Department of Louisiana, District 8, makes a motion to adopt, to accept.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 3.

MR. TANNER: James Tanner, adjutant, Boston Chapter 10.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it. Thank you.

Delegates, this is your convention. We will now hear the Committee on Employment, Ron Burke, chairman.

MR. RONALD S. BURKE, JR.: National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson and fellow delegates: The National Convention Committee on Employment was called to order for its first business session on August 18th, 1997 by the committee advisor, Ron Drach.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Ron Burke, District 1, was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Ron Burke was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of the secretary. Ray White, District 5, 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 RESOLVED portions of the resolutions.

Resolution Number 081. Provide for veterans' preference in all JTPA programs.

Resolution 119. Require all vets legally mandated positions be filled.

Number 120. To amend the residency requirements for state directors and assistant state directors of the Veterans Employment and Training Service.

Number 141. Amend the definition of disabled veteran for purpose of benefits administered under Chapter 42, 38 USC.

Number 190. Oppose the transfer of vets to the Employment and Training Administration.

Number 192. 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 193. Transfer the Veterans Employment and Training Service to the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Number 199. Veterans' preference for state and assistant state directors of Veterans Employment and Training.

Number 147. Affirmative action for employment of disabled veterans.

Number 149. Allow disabled veterans retired from the military on disability to count service time towards civil service retirement.

Number 180. Amend law to make veterans and EEO-protected class.

Number 088. Provide direct loans and set-asides for disabled veterans.

Number 054. Adequate funding and permanency for vets' employment and training including NVTI, SBA, DVOP, LVER and homeless programs.

Number 078. Maintain responsibility for federal employment programs at the federal level for veterans.

Number 080. Provide disabled veterans priority in all affirmative action programs.

084. Increase funding for TAP and DTAP.

085. Employ incentives for retraining disabled veterans.

Number 157. Supporting veterans' preference in public employment.

Number 191. Support HR 167, veterans' preference in all federal employment and training programs.

Number 196. Amend Chapter 42, Title 38, USC to include grants under affirmative action.

Number 197. Provide an appeal process for veterans who believe their veterans' preference or affirmative action rights have been violated.

Number 055. Amend the Vocational Rehabilitation Program to delete the time restrictions on starting and completing the program.

Number 086. Voc. rehab. employment assistance.

Number 194. Expand authority for unpaid work experience.

Number 195. DVOP should be a part of VA vocational rehabilitation case management.

Number 200. VR and C staff be provided state-of-the-art equipment.

201. Oppose limitation of subsistence allowance for vocational rehabilitation clients.

202. Implement VA vocational rehabilitation standards for vocational rehabilitation counselor position.

And Number 198. Veterans' preference in the U.S. Postal Service.

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Employment, 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. 081--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 119--ADMINISTRATIVE

FILL ALL VACANT LEGISLATIVE MANDATED POSITIONS IN THE VETERANS EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING SERVICE (VETS)

WHEREAS, Public Law 92-540 mandates one Assistant Director for each 250,000 veterans and other eligible in population; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans Employment and Training Service (VETS) has left some of these positions vacant three (3) years or more; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, requests the Veterans Employment and Training Service to immediately fill all legally-mandated positions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 120--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 141--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 190--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 National Employment Director 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 17-21, 1997, opposes any efforts by this administration to transfer VETS to ETA.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 192--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 199--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any change to the veterans' preference provisions accorded state and assistant state directors.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 147 -- ADMINISTRATIVE

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION FOR EMPLOYMENT OF DISABLED VETERANS

WHEREAS, Congress has enacted a law requiring an Affirmative Action program for disabled veterans in federal government employment; and

WHEREAS, many disabled veterans now working for the federal government are not being afforded the opportunity for training, which would provide them with the necessary knowledge and/or experience needed for promotion to higher grades; and

WHEREAS, there currently does not exist a procedure for enforcing the provisions of 38 U.S.C. 2014 and 5 C.F.R. part 720 for disabled veterans; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, seek enforcement provisions and protections for disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 180--ADMINISTRATIVE

TO INCLUDE VETERANS AS A PROTECTED CLASS IN THE EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY ACTS

WHEREAS, veterans as a class are not protected by the Civil Rights Act of 1964; and

WHEREAS, this exclusion restricts veterans from enjoying the same protections accorded other covered groups; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, seeks an amendment to the Civil Rights Act of 1964 to include veterans as a protected class.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 088--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 054--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 17-21, 1997, seeks and supports adequate funding and permanency for all veterans' employment and training programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 078--ADMINISTRATIVE

NATIONWIDE PROGRAMS OF EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE FOR VETERANS/DISABLED VETERANS CONTINUE TO BE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

WHEREAS, in title 38, United States Code, at chapters 41, 42, and 43, the Congress expressed its purpose that veterans are a national responsibility; and

WHEREAS, it has been the finding of numerous surveys and studies that, for a variety of reasons, the vast majority of veterans/disabled veterans of the Armed Forces of the United States are disadvantaged in pursuing civilian employment and careers; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, opposes any elimination of federal direction and control over the employment assistance for veterans/disabled veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 080--ADMINISTRATIVE

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 17-21, 1997, 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. 084--ADMINISTRATIVE

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 17-21, 1997, hereby goes on record urging Congress to provide adequate funding for TAP/DTAP.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 085--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 157--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 17-21, 1997, supports veterans' preference in federal, state and local employment.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 191--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 U.S.C.; 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 17-21, 1997, hereby supports passage of H.R. 167.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 196--LEGISLATIVE

AMEND CHAPTER 42, TITLE 38 U.S.C. TO INCLUDE GRANTS UNDER AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

WHEREAS, section 4212, chapter 42, title 38 U.S.C. 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 17-21, 1997, requests that section 4212 of title 38, U.S.C., be amended to include "recipients of federal financial assistance" be covered for affirmative action purposes.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 197--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 055--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 17-21, 1997, seeks legislative change that would eliminate these two restrictions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 086 -- ADMINISTRATIVE

VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE

WHEREAS, disabled veterans completing VA vocational rehabilitation programs, particularly severely disabled veterans, are too infrequently placed in jobs leading to meaningful careers in their chosen occupations; and

WHEREAS, VA's vocational rehabilitation personnel are often unfamiliar with the avenues through which veterans can receive employment assistance, such as the Disabled Veteran Outreach Specialists (DVOPs) who are required to begin job development for rehabilitated veterans within six months of their completion of training; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, does hereby (1) urge the VA and VETS/DOL to establish formal cross-training for VA vocational rehabilitation counselors and DOL funded veteran employment specialists in order to expedite appropriate and effective job placement for disabled veterans completing their rehabilitation, and (2) request additional funding for this cross training and to augment personnel levels in the VA vocational rehabilitation program, and (3) urge VETS/DOL to increase the number of DVOP staff outstationed at VA vocational rehabilitation facilities for the purpose of developing more meaningful jobs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 149 -- ADMINISTRATIVE

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 17-21, 1997, 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. 194--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 195--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 200--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 201--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any action to limit the amount of subsistence allowance because of an amount of compensation being received.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 202--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 to 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 17-21, 1997, recommends that the newly developed upgraded qualification standards be implemented immediately.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 198--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 17-21, 1997, 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.

* * *

COMMANDER REED: Mike 3.

MR. MICHAEL A. CHRISTIE: Mike Christie, commander of the Department of New Jersey, makes that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 1.

MR. CHARLIE M. FOSTER: Chuck Foster, Chapter 9, Houston, Texas, District 20, second.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. Ayes have it. Thank you, Ron. (Applause)

We'll now hear from Tom Johns, chairman of the Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Services. Tom.

MR. THOMAS C. JOHNS: Thank you, Commander. Comrade Commander and delegates, the National Convention Committee on Hospital and Voluntary Service was called to order for its first business session on August 18th, 1997 by the committee advisors, Past National Commander Al Linden and Richard Wannemacher of the national staff.

The first order of business was the election of the convention committee chairman. Thomas C. Johns was nominated for chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed, and Thomas C. Johns was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of the secretary. Terry Blacketer was nominated and elected secretary of the committee.

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

Resolution Number 223. Supporting the position of comprehensive Department of Veterans Affairs health care services to entitled veterans.

Number 145. Opposing the imposition of user fees for outpatient care at military medical facilities.

Number 76. Support adequate medical services and benefits for women veterans.

Number 52. Support state veterans home programs.

Number 222. Oppose third-party payments for service-connected disability

Number 224. In support of increased sharing or resources between the health care systems of the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Defense.

And Number 229. Extend appreciation to the VAMC Las Vegas for the success of the 76th National Convention.

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

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 052--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 076--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 145--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 222--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 223--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 critical need to clearly define eligibility for VA care, the services that will be provided and how the system will be funded; and
WHEREAS, any reform of VA must encompass, as a minimum, the following:
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;
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;
Reduced centralized bureaucracy, permitting local medical facility directors to utilize resources in the most efficient and economical manner;
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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation following the concepts and principles embodied above -- establishing an entitlement to VA health care services for a clearly defined category of veterans.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 224--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 229--ADMINISTRATIVE

EXTEND APPRECIATION TO THE VA MEDICAL CENTER LAS VEGAS, NEVADA, FOR THE SUCCESS OF THE 76TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

WHEREAS, the cooperation and professionalism extended to the delegates and guests of the 76th 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 76th 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 17-21, 1997, 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 76th National Convention and for making this Convention a memorable one.

* * *

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the report. Is there a motion?

Mike 1.

MR. WILLIAM J. KARL, JR.: William Karl, Chapter 106, Denton, Texas. I make a motion that we accept the committee report and dismiss the committee with a vote of thanks.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 3.

MR. JOSEPH M. MARTINEZ: Joseph Martinez, and I make a motion that we second it.

COMMANDER REED: What chapter, what department?

MR. MARTINEZ: Chapter Number 5, District -- Chapter Number 96.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it. Thank you, Tom.

When you approach the mike for a motion, please state your name and your chapter and your department. Thank you.

COMMANDER REED: Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask our chaplain to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. As we leave this place at this time for rest and refreshment, may we continue to do the most in our power to continue to serve disabled veterans and their families with the help of The Almighty. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: The convention stands in recess until 1:30 p.m.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:20 o'clock a.m., August 18, 1997.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday afternoon, August 18, 1997, and was called to order at 1:30 o'clock p.m. by Commander Gregory C. Reed.

COMMANDER GREGORY C. REED: The convention will please come to order.

Please join me in the salute to the flag.

(Salute to the flag.)

COMMANDER REED: We will now have our chaplain, Carl Bergstrom, lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Direct us, O Lord, in all our doings that in all our works begun, continued and ended in You we may praise and glorify Your Holy Name now and always. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Carl. Please be seated.

Once again, I have the privilege and pleasure to introduce a friend of mine and everyone in this room. The depth of experience, intelligence and skillful leadership are the hallmarks of our organization's management team. And DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman certainly embodies all those qualities.

Dave has been with the DAV for more than a quarter of a century, making valuable contributions to our mission and chalking up extensive experience in both our National Service and Legislative Departments before assuming his duties as executive director of DAV Washington Headquarters in 1995.

Dave joined the DAV's professional ranks in 1971 as a National Service Officer soon after his discharge from the U.S. Army. While on patrol in the central region of Vietnam, he was seriously wounded by a Viet Cong landmine explosion. As a result of his wounds, both legs were amputated.

Having served as an NSO for three years in Boston and Providence, Dave was assigned to the DAV National Appeals staff in Washington, D.C., where he was promoted to supervisor of the staff in 1981. He later assumed management duties at National Service and Legislative Headquarters, earning promotion to assistant national legislative director for medical affairs in 1983 and to deputy national legislative director in 1994.

In 1995, Dave became executive director of our Washington Headquarters, overseeing day-to-day operations of our Service, Legislative, Volunteer and Employment operations.

And now, please welcome, with a warm round of applause, Dave

Gorman, to present his report to the convention. (Applause)

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DAVID W. GORMAN: Thank you very much, Commander. National Commander Reed, distinguished guests and delegates to this 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans. As executive director of the DAV's Washington Headquarters, it is my genuine honor and privilege to present this annual report to this, the 76th National Convention of the DAV.

First, I would like to thank National Commander Greg Reed for his able leadership and his steadfast commitment to the DAV and our mission of service and hope to disabled veterans and their families. Commander, we thank you for that. Greg's presence in Washington, D.C. this year has really lent an extreme amount of credibility to the DAV and his presence, his frequent presence, on Capitol Hill.

I also want to express my deep respect and my sincere gratitude to National Adjutant Art Wilson. His guidance, his wise counsel and his rock-solid support have been invaluable to all of us in Washington in our efforts to continually serve you and your families. I'm proud to call Art my friend, my boss and my mentor. And at this moment, to call him the national conscience for the direction in which veterans' benefits must proceed.

Our national adjutant has brought the DAV to heights unmatched, but certainly envied in the veterans community. His motto of "Simply do what's right for veterans and their families" has allowed his name to be at the top of America's honor roll of veterans' advocates.

Of course, none of what we have been able to do in Washington would be possible without the simply outstanding work accomplished by Rick Patterson and his great staff in Cold Spring, Kentucky. Rick's vision, his commitment to purpose, and his keen business savvy have earned him the respect and admiration of all who know him.

In keeping with the theme from yesterday's very moving opening session, I want each of you to recognize, as I do, that the DAV truly is a vital force in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. And I just want to share some of my thoughts on where the DAV has been and where I believe we are going.

Not long ago, our National Service Department was entering a state of near chaos. Our National Service Officer corps was in a serious decline as many of our long-term NSOs began to retire. And with them went decades of irreplaceable experience and very specialized knowledge that kept the DAV in the forefront of service and advocacy for this nation's veterans. But through his vision and his bedrock commitment to service, National Adjutant Wilson, all that has changed, and changed all to the good, I might add.

Art saw the immediate need to replenish our dwindling NSO corps. The answer to that, of course, was the DAV NSO Training Academy. The academy, located in Denver, Colorado, provides the very foundation for the training of our NSOs so that DAV can continue to provide today's veterans and tomorrow's unequalled quality representation.

Since 1994, five classes with a total of 118 trainees have graduated, and in 1998 at least one and possibly two more classes of new-generation NSOs will graduate, a whole new generation of NSOs trained and ready to bridge the gap in meeting the needs of today's and tomorrow's disabled veterans and their families.

Thanks to the foresight and the leadership of Art Wilson, the DAV's future is bright, and it is assured. The Vietnam Era NSOs, like our World War II predecessors, are leaving behind them a strong and unmatched legacy of professionalism in service that will be carried forward by the veterans of more recent conflicts.

And now, if I may, let me just highlight some of what we've been doing in Washington over the past year, and you can get much more detailed information from the annual reports of the various department directors that are available in the DAV Public Relations Office. And please believe me: There just isn't enough time for me to even scratch the surface of all the activities we have been engaged over this past 12 months.

As I've mentioned, our National Service Program is really looking up. Under the able and the steady direction of National

Service Director Ken Wolfe, it continues to be the backbone of the DAV and is what is our reputation of service and excellence is built on. For sure, your Service Program and the National Service Officers who make it the best it can be, will play a significant role in helping us live up to our potential and meet the challenges we face now and for the years to come.

I'd like to take this opportunity to have all of the NSOs stand up and be recognized and let's all give them a great big hand for a job well done. (Applause)

Over the last year, these young men and women have secured benefits for some 240,000 veterans and their families for a total of more than $1.8 billion in new and retroactive benefits, and that's billion with a "b." (Applause)

I want to again compliment Ken and his staff, Deputy National Service Director Jerry Steelman and Assistant National Service Directors Tony Baskerville, Mike Walsh and the newest addition to our service staff, Sam Sabino, for their commitment and their untiring efforts to make ours the best veterans' service program in the nation.

Some out there in the veterans community are wringing their hands about the so-called upheaval at the VA, what with the departure of a true veterans' advocate, Secretary for Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown. But we will not and we must not despair that all the progress and all the veteran-oriented changes that Jesse brought to the VA will be lost now that he's no longer in office.

He set the VA on a steady course of improvements that bodes well for the foreseeable future. The DAV, better than anybody else, knows and appreciates what Jesse did for the VA. After all, he is one of ours.

The incoming Secretary and others selected to hold high that standard of excellence and advocacy and carry it forward in fulfilling the VA's mission will find no better ally than the DAV. But do the wrong thing, and you'll find no stronger adversary.

But let us not lose sight of the fact that in veterans' affairs, just like in poker or 21 here in Las Vegas, we have to play the hand we're dealt. As you know -- and you'll get some more details in the Legislative Seminar coming up on Wednesday -- our elected leaders and policy makers in Washington are gambling with the future of veterans' benefits and programs.

Later on during this convention, you'll be hearing a lot more about our legislative battles, but I do want to say a word about Joe Violante and your DAV legislative team. We all owe them a great deal of thanks for their efforts in warding off the many vicious attacks on our benefits in Washington. For all they do to protect our benefits and keep us all informed and updated on the issues, I again want to thank Joe and his staff, Rick Surratt and Dick Wannemacher.

Your National Employment Department, headed by Ron Drach, is making sure your voice is heard on a number of important employment and related issues such as homelessness. Many homeless veterans have service-connected disabilities that no doubt have contributed to their plight. Ron Drach is the recognized expert in Washington when it comes to protecting veterans' employment rights and maintaining job training and employment assistance programs.

DAV volunteer programs. What can I say? They just keep getting better and better under Bruce Nitsche's guiding hand. Our VA Voluntary Service Program, Hospital Service Coordinator Program and the DAV Transportation Network continue to be the envy of many others across the country. During this past year, DAV volunteer drivers, including many of you in this room, logged more than 19 million miles carrying more than one-half million veterans to and from VA medical facilities for much needed health care.

The extremely important VAVS Program, which involves so very many of you in this room, brings hope and light into the lives of hospitalized veterans. In the past year alone, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers donated an incredible 2.3 million hours of VAVS service. Let me repeat that: 2.3 million hours. It's simply incredible. (Applause)

And let's be certain of a couple of things here. First, the DAV is not the largest veterans service organization. However,

the two larger organizations simply pale in comparison and stand in the DAV's shadow when it comes to the sheer numbers of volunteers and how dedicated you are to bringing a little brightness and a little love into the lives of our hospitalized veterans.

For that, every DAV and DAV Auxiliary volunteer should hold your heads high and be as proud of yourselves as we are of each of you.

I'd also like to take a moment to thank Assistant National Communications Director Gary Weaver and his staff for all the work they do in support of our programs. And a very special word of thanks goes to Associate National Director of Communications Dave Autry. Dave's presence and his day-to-day involvement in the goings-on in Washington make him an extremely valuable asset to our entire staff.

Another valued member of our staff at Washington Headquarters is Administrative Assistant Daryl Richardson. It's a mystery to me sometimes how she does it, but somehow she manages to keep things running smoothly amid all the chaos and confusion. For that, my heartfelt thanks to Daryl.

I also need to 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 that much easier.

We've also seen anti-veteran proposals come out of the Heritage Foundation and other think tank groups to eliminate the VA as a cabinet department and make it a subordinate unit within the Department of Defense. Come on now. Give me a break! Under some of those recommendations, veterans would no longer obtain medical services from the VA. Instead, they would receive vouchers to help pay for privately provided health care.

What then? Would we all end up in the losing end? I hate to even think of the day when it may come when a privatized VA system would be talked about and mismanaged like Medicare. Think about it. Fraud, waste and abuse cost Medicare $23 billion last year alone. That, ladies and gentlemen, is more than the entire VA health care budget.

Another example of efforts to attack our benefits programs is the recommendation of the Veterans Claims Adjudication Commission calling for restrictions and reductions in veterans' benefits simply to make things easier for the VA. Some of these include a time limit for filing compensation claims; a reduction in the time for filing a notice of disagreement to appeal a regional office decision, the number of times a veteran can reopen their claim for increased compensation benefits; lump sum settlements for lower-rated service-connected disabilities; or a restriction on the jurisdiction of the Board of Veterans Appeals in the cases it may hear.

As you can imagine, none of these changes would do a thing to improve the quality or the timeliness of VA claims adjudication. But rest assured, each would do everything to hurt veterans and their rights.

So far, we've managed to fight off the bulk of these and many other anti-veteran policies, thanks to our strong committed membership and grass-roots efforts. Your efforts in our grass-roots campaign have paid off in the past.

But more recently, while Congress was working on the balanced budget deal, some folks, like Congressman Bud Shuster from Pennsylvania, tried to raid funding for veterans' programs to help pay for pork barrel transportation projects. You may not realize it, but the Shuster plan was defeated by just two votes. One vote really made the difference, because if there had been a tie, the measure would have gone forward and cost the VA some $400 million.

And how did that one vote happen? Well, it's a pretty incredible tale, and the full story is in this edition of the DAV Magazine, which is here and available to you at the convention. But we owe a large part of that to the fact that the Department of Maryland Commander Ken Ruby made a phone call to his representative in the House and convinced that congressman to change his mind and vote for this nation's veterans and against the politically popular

roads and bridges projects that might have been funded in his home district.

I know a lot more of you made calls to Congress, and I want to publicly thank each and every one of you right now for your participation. But I would like to acknowledge Ken Ruby as an example of what we can all accomplish. And the next time you ask yourself whether your one letter or phone call to your representative or your senators can make a difference, take a lesson from this and how we were able to get Congressman Roscoe Bartlett to change his mind and cast the deciding vote on the Shuster amendment, which was an anti-veteran amendment. (Applause)

With one phone call to one member of Congress and one vote, the VA and veterans' programs were spared a reduction of $400 million. So it works, it can work, and will work again.

There are thousands and thousands of Ken Rubys in the DAV family, and many of you in this very room today fought that bill and have fought other bills in the past for us. For that, we are also very, very grateful. And we are proud, we're proud that we in the DAV share a common bond that is unique to only a select few, the service-connected disabled veteran.

While others talked about it, you all did it. You answered your country's call to service, and you are doing it again. You're fighting a different kind of battle, the battle to force those who would reduce veterans' benefits to confront the moral dilemma of doing so. You are confronting them with the very basic yet so profound motto of National Adjutant Wilson's, "Simply do what's right for America's veterans and their families." (Applause)

All we ask for is fairness, fairness and recognition that no class of citizen that has given so much of themselves should have to take a back seat to anyone else when it comes time for a grateful nation to remember and honor our heroes. Yes, we have faced some pretty tough trials and some pretty tough struggles, and we will undoubtedly face more in the months and years ahead, but we can look back to the future secure in the knowledge that America's veterans will be able to count on the DAV to be there for them, just as the DAV has been there for all of us.

And you can be assured that the DAV's advocacy is top-notch and recognized as such by members of Congress, by the VA and by other influential policy makers in Washington, D.C. That's because your Washington, D.C. Headquarters staff has earned the reputation as highly trained professionals who are committed to excellence when it comes to advocacy for our fellow disabled veterans. And they earned it, earned it based on a lot of hard work and, for the Washington staff, a total of 273 years of experience, direct hands-on experience representing veterans.

I am very, very proud of each and every one of them, and I hope you share my pride as they truly are the best of the best. And we in turn are just as equally as proud of each and every one of you, because you belong to the finest and the best service organization in this country.

And on behalf, ladies and gentlemen, of the entire Washington Headquarters staff, I just want to say thank you, thank you for making it all possible and for allowing us to do the kind of job that we can do for you and our fellow disabled veterans and their families. Thank you. Thank you, Commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Dave. I'll entertain a motion to accept Mr. Gorman's report.

MR. SEYMOUR GITLIN: Sy Gitlin, Chapter 76, National Amputation, seconds the motion. And at this time, I'd like to, for the record, that Dave Gorman is the Amp. of the Year.

COMMANDER REED: Sir, I need you to make a motion.

MR. GITLIN: I make a motion to accept Dave Gorman's report.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. Mike 1.

MR. LOZANO: Manny Lozano, 195, Texas. I second that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Kenneth D. Wolfe, National Service Director:)

National Commander Gregory C. Reed, national officers, distinguished guests and delegates to the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: Today we hear our national leaders talking about building a bridge to a brighter future in the 21st Century. Since the 1920's the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) has been dedicated to one single purpose; building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. As we seek to bridge the gap into the 21st Century, we remain steadfast in our commitment to veterans and their dependents who have made enormous sacrifices and prominent contributions in the service to our Nation.

As they served to defend democracy here at home and abroad, our Nation's service members endured hardship allowing the rest of us to continue enjoying the freedom upon which this Nation was founded. They lose income and other economic and educational opportunities, endure the rigors of military service, risk the hazards of war and other dangerous military missions, and suffer injury, disease, or even death. The individuals who will serve our country in the next century can be assured the DAV will be ready to assist them should the need arise.

DAV's National Service Department continues to carefully monitor activity within the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other government agencies as they prepare a blue print for the future. One element of design is the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Field Restructuring Task Group. The VBA Field Restructuring Task Group is charged with developing recommendations by which benefits delivery can be physically restructured to improve accessibility and service.

In October 1995, VBA began its Compensation and Pension (C&P) Business Process Reengineering (BPR) project. The BPR team revised VBA's compensation and pension goals at the outset of the current business process reengineering efforts. Above all the new goals focus on service to the veteran.

Several DAV National Service Officers served as members on these crucial committees making sure VBA's efforts to cut waste do not affect service and benefits to veterans and their families. I want to thank Mark A. Winn, Supervisor of our Board of Veterans Appeals Office, Robert P. Plante, Supervisor of our Chicago, Illinois office and David W. Thomason, Assistant Supervisor of our Washington, D.C. office, for their participation on these committees. They echoed DAV's position to improve quality throughout the VA. When decisions are made with the goal of "do it right the first time," then quality and timeliness will also improve.

As the VA formulates its plans for the 21st Century, we are preparing to keep pace. In a mutual effort to streamline the claims adjudication process through the use of automated technology, and in cooperation with VA, DAV has successfully completed a computerization pilot project at the DAV National Service Office in Fort Snelling, Minnesota. The purpose of this pilot project was to develop and test the capability of an interface that allows information to flow faster and more accurately between DAV and the VA. This modernization enables NSOs to have greater access to reference material and precedent case decisions by the U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals, and provides a major degree of quality and more timely service to disabled veterans and their families.

Since the successful completion of that pilot project on February 28, 1997, the DAV's very substantial investment of $2 million in hardware and software is ready to emerge. On June 27, 1997, DAV and the VA entered into a partnership that will allow DAV National Service Officers total access to VBA's Information Technology Resources. I want to thank Dennis Painter, Computer Center Manager at National Headquarters, and his phenomenal team of technicians: Rusty Fries, Project Leader; Vince Barnett, Senior Network Engineer; and Kathy Walker, Network Engineer Apprentice, for their remarkable efforts to ensure the success of this project. We plan to have all National Service Offices on line shortly after year's end. This Committee and substantial investment in DAV's future and the future of its National Service Program is not some

trendy attempt at modernization. Rather, it's part of a well-thought-out plan that will ensure our Nation's veterans and their families have the best claims representation available now and into the 21st Century.

The advancements in DAV's computer system keep our National Service Officers head and shoulders above all others. It's no secret that the DAV provides the best claims representation available. Our ability to provide this service is made possible with the help and support of a grateful public and more than 1.2 million dedicated DAV and DAV Auxiliary members and our employees at every level.

DAV NSO TRAINING ACADEMY

DAV's blueprint to the next century began in August of 1993 when nine National Service Officer Trainees were hired. At that time, it was apparent that the future would require a greater number of NSOs, and with some innovative thinking, the concept of an NSO Training Academy was drawn. On July 11, 1994, the first class of trainees began their academic studies. The University of Colorado at Denver professors provide college courses in medical terminology, anatomy, and physiology, allowing our NSOs to command a sound medical background when assisting veterans in developing their disability claims. DAV National Service Officers must also be proficient in preparing written briefs in support of their claimants. To assist them in this process, they are provided a course in legal reasoning and brief preparation. There is also a need to clearly make points supporting those we represent and the theories of argumentation and persuasion are learned in the class room.

In addition to the instruction provided by the University of Colorado, seasoned DAV National Service Officers provide detailed instruction teaching what benefits are available, who is eligible, and how NSOs assist veterans and their families in applying for benefits. Trainees also receive instruction on the proper application of pertinent VA laws and regulations to include the *VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities*. To date, five classes have graduated from the Academy totaling 118 new National Service Officers and Trainees. I am pleased to inform you that we will begin Class VI on January 12, 1998. When their training has been completed these newly skilled advocates will join our elite corps of NSOs helping fellow disabled veterans, their dependents and survivors obtain the benefits their honorable service earned them.

RETIREES

In recognizing the need to maintain a corps of National Service Officers to carry the DAV well into the 21st Century, we must not forget those who helped DAV earn the respect and admiration we enjoy today. This year witnessed 30 NSOs bring their careers to a close. These individuals took over 550 years of experience and wisdom with them, but in each instance, they left behind countless veterans and families who have benefited from their efforts. Jerry D. Cox, Garold K. Bertrand, Rickie L. Garmon, and Paul K. Majo, Board of Veterans Appeals, Washington, D.C.; Richard F. Schultz, National Service and Legislative Headquarters, Washington, D.C.; Elmer Sewell, Baltimore, Maryland; William J. Stockell, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania; Billy Nix and Paul L. Nelson, Atlanta, Georgia; David F. Ryan, Fort Snelling, Minnesota; Wallace H. Hawkins, Louisville, Kentucky; Paul A. DeMichael and John Uzarski, Cleveland, Ohio; Billy R. Black and Charles M. McLeod, Montgomery, Alabama; Larry J. Dawson and Gary G. Zimmerman, Phoenix, Arizona; David R. Gray, Nashville, Tennessee; Ronald F. Moschella, Newark, New Jersey; Robert H. Whitmore and James T. Ruppenthal, Houston, Texas; Henry Walthour, Sr. and Byron Murphy, New Orleans, Louisiana; Terrence G. Chenot, Reno, Nevada; George Hayden, Oakland, California; Collie Mattfeld and William Stralo, San Diego, California; Richard Krueger and James Slade, Los Angeles, California; Dennis Self, Muskogee, Oklahoma; and Clyde Dartey, Milwaukee, Wisconsin. 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. Retired National Service Officer Jack F. Feighner passed away October 3, 1996. He was a graduate of DAV National Service Officer Training Program Class X at American University in Washington, D.C. He worked at the St. Louis, Missouri, DAV National Service Office and later at the DAV Board of Veterans' Appeals Office in Washington, D.C. His career also included assignments at offices in Roanoke, Virginia; Winston-Salem, North Carolina; Louisville, Kentucky; Detroit, Michigan; Houston, Texas; and San Antonio, Texas. Jack was Deputy National Service Director and Director of Special Service Projects at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C. He later served as Director of Special Projects at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, until his retirement in 1977. Following his retirement Jack continued to play an active role in DAV.

Retired National Service Officer John J. Grant passed away July 14, 1997. He began his employment with the DAV on September 5, 1972, as an NSO Trainee at the National Service Office in Washington, D.C. He was promoted to Assistant Supervisor of that office in October 1974, and to Supervisor in October 1976. John was transferred to the Board of Veterans' Appeals in December 1982, and was promoted to Assistant Supervisor of that office in September 1988. John was appointed to Associate National Service Director at National Service and Legislative Headquarters on October 9, 1989, where he remained until his disability retirement on December 1, 1990. John continued working on behalf of veterans as a Chapter Service Officer for Chapter 48 Eastern Prince William County, Dale City, Virginia.

Retired National Service Officer Joe L. Tiefel passed away March 22, 1997. He began his DAV career in May 1945 when he attended the NSO Training Program at American University in Washington, D.C. He was assigned to the National Service Office in Muskogee, Oklahoma. In 1948 he transferred to Los Angeles, California, and continued to serve there until his retirement in August 1972.

National Service Officer Clark H. Rogers passed away December 27, 1996. He joined the DAV's professional staff in 1995. He was a 1996 graduate of Class II from the DAV National Service Officer Training Academy in Denver, Colorado. Following graduation, he was assigned to our office in Muskogee, Oklahoma where he rendered assistance to disabled veterans and their families until his death.

DAV STRUCTURED AND CONTINUING TRAINING PROGRAM

DAV has always claimed the significance and worth of an ongoing program to ensure our NSOs are better equipped to represent all veterans and their dependents. The laws, rules, regulations and procedures of the Department of Veterans Affairs are continuously changing, and we must be prepared to meet the needs of our future generations. 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 National Service Officers who have completed a 16-month training program. It is a comprehensive course developed for the purpose of enhancing such job-related skills as paralegal and paramedical principles needed to represent veterans before the Department of Veterans Affairs. Additionally, there is an emphasis on utilization of U.S. Court of Veterans Appeals precedent decisions, with Court decisions specific to each lesson. Our training program has been revised and expanded to a two-part format to better enable National Service Officers to train on both the adjudication of claims and ratings of service-connected disabilities. The current program contains 990 test questions, approximately 30 questions specific to each training lesson.

DAV's purpose will never change although the job of an NSO

continually changes. I feel strongly that the NSO of tomorrow will have the same commitment DAV National Service Officers have always had, which is to do everything possible to obtain the earned benefits this Nation's veterans and their dependents are entitled to receive. This unwavering commitment has been the cornerstone of DAV NSOs for generations.

INSURANCE

National Service Officers working at the VA Insurance Centers in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and St. Paul, Minnesota, successfully represented 946 veterans who sought to have insurance premiums waived due to total disability. An additional 51 veterans represented by the DAV have had their waiver of premiums continued. Our NSOs at these centers reviewed approximately 131 insurance files and appeared before the VA on 168 occasions in the process. The financial return to DAV claimants to include insurance policy proceeds during this membership year totaled over $3,576,923. Earlier this year all VA insurance activities were placed under the jurisdiction of the VA Insurance Center in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS

DAV NSOs continue to provide excellent representation to active duty personnel and retirees appearing before the Physical Evaluation Boards. Our NSOs interviewed 1,563 servicemembers, reviewed 1,277 medical records, and conducted 286 formal hearings resulting in over $5,756,859 in retroactive and annual benefits.

DISCHARGE REVIEW BOARDS AND BOARDS FOR CORRECTION OF MILITARY RECORDS

The various military Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military Records were established by Congress to correct inequities by the military. DAV National Service Officers last year presented 707 cases to the Army, Navy, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, and Air Force Discharge Review Boards and Boards for Correction of Military records.

BOARD OF VETERANS APPEALS

I continue to be both pleased and proud of the accomplishments by the staff of National Appeals Officers located at the Board of Veterans' Appeals. These individuals are recognized by most as the finest claims technicians available to our Nation's veterans and dependents at the highest level within the VA. There are those, however, who would consider these advocates nothing more than individuals who delay the process, have little expertise in the claims area, and subsequently add little to the overall appellate process. There are those who feel that attorneys should be allowed into the process since the laws and regulations VA operates within are too technically complex and beyond the comprehension of most veterans advocates. Let me go on record here and now that nothing could be farther from the truth. DAV's commitment to providing the best available representation has existed for many years and will continue as one of those vital forces in the area of veterans' benefits. Opinions of those who purport to know better not withstanding, the effectiveness of that office will always be second to none. There are also those who would limit your rights to appeal a VA decision, by reducing the number of days in which to file an appeal, or to limit the time evidence may be submitted prior to a Board's decision. Again, I can assure you that we will vehemently oppose any such erosions in your rights to appeal decisions. During the past twelve (12) months, the NAOs presented 14,446 cases to the Board for appellate consideration. This number clearly reflects that we represent over 34 percent of all cases before the Board. A favorable decision rate of 18.7 percent is testimony to the success we have and is a direct result of our expertise and commitment to being the best.

UNITED STATES COURT OF VETERANS APPEALS

During the membership year July 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997, the DAV Court of Veterans Appeals Office filed original appeals in 153 cases. During the same period of time we had 139 favorable dispositions. A favorable disposition includes reversal of the BVA decision, monetary settlement of the case, and remand of the case back to the VA for proper application of the law.

DAV COVA Office filed 75 percent of all appeals filed by veterans service organizations. This is an increase of nearly 200 percent over the previous year's activity when DAV filed 26 percent of all veterans service organizations appeals. Our Judicial Appeals Representatives Ronald Smith, Steven Purcell and James Stewart have used their talents to bring about effective, timely and correct decisions on behalf of claimants.

During the past year, the Court has issued several decisions which will greatly impact veterans' claims. In *McAdory v. Brown*, the Court indicated that the VA must evaluate all aspects of a knee disability, including both lateral instability and limitation of motion secondary to arthritis. In the past the VA would only evaluate what it considered to be the prominent disability.

In *Cohen v. Brown*, the Court upgraded the method for establishing entitlement to service connection for post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). In this decision, the Court noted that the VA must rely on DSM IV for the diagnosis of PTSD. This decision also made it easier to establish the stressor for each veteran's claim.

In *Beryle v. Brown*, the Court emphasized that disability resulting from a through and through gunshot or shell fragment wound was to be rated as of at least a moderate degree of disability regardless of whether the muscle sustained any permanent damage.

Finally, in *Russo v. Brown*, the Court identified the requirements for a well-grounded claim, noting that these requirements include evidence of any injury in service, evidence of a current disability and medical support of a relationship between the two.

ADMINISTRATIVE REVIEW PROGRAM

The Administrative Review process is not a part of the VA's appeal process and is requested upon a finding of clear and unmistakable error in a rating decision. DAV's success in the Administrative Review Program continues to be very impressive. During the past year, 45 cases were presented for Administrative Review, of those 36 have been allowed, four were denied and five are still pending.

SOCIAL SECURITY DISABILITY INSURANCE BENEFITS

DAV National Service Officers have been recognized for the excellent representation they provide before Administrative Law Judges of the Bureau of Hearings and Appeals in Social Security. NSOs represented 144 claimants successfully obtaining $153,806 in retroactive and annual benefits. DAV also presented cases to the Social Security Administrative Appeals Council. During this past year 13 cases were referred for review and at the present time are still pending resolution.

HOMELESS VETERANS

Research done by the International Union of Gospel Missions indicates that 29 percent of America's homeless people were veterans in 1991, a figure that climbed to 34 percent by 1996. Most of this dramatic increase can probably be attributed to military downsizing. Homelessness is a serious problem within the veteran population, and the DAV's experience in working with these veterans indicates that psychological disability is a major factor. DAV Chapters, Departments and NSOs working with local agencies are seeking out and assisting homeless veterans. Some DAV Chapters and

Departments have established shelters for these veterans. Others provide basic needs such as food and clothing, toiletries, or often, just volunteer their time as needed. The DAV has also testified before Congress about the extensive needs of these veterans. In addition, the DAV Charitable Service Trust has sought out and provided funding to several shelters and other projects aimed at caring for homeless veterans and their families. In making grants, the Trust has looked for emphasis on services to psychologically disabled veterans.

INCARCERATED VETERANS

DAV NSOs work with prison officials to assist incarcerated veterans, aiming at successful transition to life following their prison terms. NSOs make sure these veterans get all the benefits their military service has earned, directing them to resources for employment, training and education, medical care and compensation for service-incurred disabilities. It is our goal to help this segment of the veteran population become productive citizens through programs and services offered by VA.

POST-TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDERS

After funding the groundbreaking 1978 Forgotten Warrior Project, the DAV set up a post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) outreach program on which today's VA Vet Center program is modeled. As the VA program evolved, DAV phased out its store front initiative, but we continue efforts to educate mental health professionals about PTSD. *Post-Traumatic Stress Disorders: A Handbook for Clinicians*, edited by Tom Williams, Psy. D. and published by the DAV, is distributed to such professionals at no cost. PTSD is a continuing problem of serious proportions arising from a life threatening circumstance, not necessarily a wartime condition. Results of a VA-funded study released in 1989 indicated that 15.2 percent of all Vietnam veterans currently suffer from PTSD. The DAV also serves on the VA's Advisory Committee dealing with PTSD and other readjustment issues. All veterans whether serving during wartime or during peacetime are potential victims of psychological trauma. There is no reason to believe military men and women who served in Bosnia, Panama, Grenada, the Middle East, Somalia and other places of armed confrontation will not also suffer from PTSD as a result of their experiences in the same proportions as other periods of military service.

NATIVE AMERICAN VETERANS

Research done by the VA confirms the DAV's long-held belief that Native American veterans aren't taking full advantage of their veterans' rights. In a drive to reach and assist these veterans, our NSOs visit Indian reservations offering their expert services. Further, they have taken part in training Native American benefits advisors who assist tribal members. Recent initiatives by the VA to provide direct loans for housing of Native American veterans were supported by the DAV.

WOMEN VETERANS

The DAV is fighting for women veterans on a variety of fronts. We have organized and participated in top-level forums designed to bring women veterans and government policy makers together so problems can be honestly and openly aired. DAV testimony has kept the issue before Congressional committees, and our organization is actively involved in the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans where the DAV is represented by Patricia A. Bracciale a National Service Officer from Detroit, Michigan. In addition to this VA committee, the DAV has its own Women's Advisory Committee made up of women veterans from DAV's leadership across the country. Jeanette Genovese, NSO Supervisor of our Providence, Rhode Island, office represented DAV at a National Summit on Women Veterans, sponsored by the White House Office on Women's Outreach and

Initiatives, AMVETS and VA. This type of forum addressed many issues related to women veterans and their access to the many benefits and services available from VA.

TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS AND DISABLED TRANSITION ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The Cold War has faded into history, and large numbers of veterans are leaving the military, many without the basics skills needed for a quick, successful transition to civilian life. 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. Several years ago we established offices specifically for this purpose in the Norfolk, Virginia, and San Diego, California, areas 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. DAV NSOs offer information on veterans' benefits and services, as well as a review of service medical records and claims filing assistance.

PERSIAN GULF EXPERT SCIENTIFIC PANEL

Approximately 657,000 men and women served in the Persian Gulf as active duty service members, reservists and National Guards. To date, 72,000 veterans have sought care or service from VA. Of these, 25,000 veterans have utilized the Readjustment Counseling Services after they returned, and 4,100 veterans have been granted service connection for disabilities incurred while on active duty. In many cases, veterans returning from the Persian Gulf are ill with a variety of symptoms, some totally disabling without any explainable causation. There have been extensive discussions on this subject concerning possible exposure to chemical weapons, depleted uranium, environmental hazards, oil well fires, inoculations, insecticides and many other factors, but little is known about the causes.

The objectives of the VA Secretary's Persian Gulf Expert Scientific Panel are 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. I am proud to report that National Appeals Officer Edward E. Hartman, a combat-disabled veteran of the Persian Gulf War, is DAV's representative on this committee. He replaces another combat disabled Persian Gulf War veteran, NSO Jeffrey C. Hall, who was reassigned from the National Appeals Office to Louisville, Kentucky.

DISASTER RELIEF PROGRAM

When floods, tornadoes, and other natural catastrophes strike, the DAV is there to help affected disabled veterans and their families. DAV NSOs go to the area, search out disabled veterans who need help and provide on-the-spot grants from our Disaster Relief Fund. Grants totaling $17,975 were disbursed to help disabled veterans secure temporary lodging, food and other necessities during 1996 and 1997. Flood victims eligible for DAV assistance in North Dakota, Ohio, Kentucky and other states have expressed their sincere appreciation of DAV's efforts. Since the program's inception in 1968, $3,299,855 has been disbursed.

INFORMATION SEMINARS

Information Seminars conducted in local Chapter areas remain

among our most effective outreach mechanisms. These seminars provide local access to NSOs' expertise in the area of veterans benefits. If the veteran cannot get to the VARO where the NSO is stationed, then we will do what we can to get to them. These Information Seminars, usually held on weekends or in the evenings, provide us a method of continuing our offering of free service and bring DAV assistance and visibility of the organization to the local community. Often these NSOs participate in radio, television and other media or public relations activities during these visits. During the past year our NSOs conducted 96 Information Seminars. Over 5,833 veterans or dependents attended these seminars and 136 became members as a result of what they learned about the DAV.

CONCLUSION

In less than three years, this Nation will embrace the dawn of a new century as we enter the next millennium. As our national leaders continue building that bridge to a brighter future, DAV can watch with pride because we had the foresight to begin construction of our bridge four years ago. Plans were drawn for a solid foundation many years ago by leaders who envisioned the need to ensure our Nation's veterans and their families would always have effective representation before the VA and other government agencies.

I want to thank Commander Gregory C. Reed and the other elected officers, the National Executive Committee and the National Finance Committee for supporting our Service Programs. Good business leaders create a vision, articulate that vision, passionately own that vision and relentlessly drive to bring their vision to reality. These words describe National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. Mr. Wilson, on behalf of the entire National Service Department, I want you to know we truly appreciate your leadership. The guidance, direction and support of Executive Directors David W. Gorman and Richard E. Patterson have allowed our Service Program to continue to be the best. I would also like to acknowledge the support and cooperation of everyone who contributed to the successes of the DAV Service Program this past year. I speak specifically of the Directors, their staffs, and employees at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, and at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

I want to extend personal thanks to Deputy National Service Director Jerry P. Steelman and Assistant National Service Directors Anthony L. Baskerville and Michael J. Walsh. Let me also acknowledge and welcome a new member to the National Service Department, Assistant National Service Director Samuel D. Sabino.

All of the success achieved by our National Service Officers begin with the dedicated Chapter and Department Service Officers and Hospital Service Coordinators. All DAV members can take pride in our accomplishments recorded during 1996-97.

As we journey forward, please be reminded a vision is a point on the horizon that will be reached only at some date in the future, a statement of what will be created years or decades ahead. To create visions, leaders must become preoccupied with the future. They must be able to project themselves ahead in time. Your leaders are prepared to do just that. Without a doubt, we are preparing to cross that bridge into a new century. One that will have many challenges for us all. One that I am excited about being a part of and hope you all feel that same excitement. One that will continue to show our Nation the DAV is an organization building better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

OFFICE: MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	358
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	976
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,163

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

4.	PENSION	277
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	97
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	284
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	59
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	35
10.	DEATH PENSION	76
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	124
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,450
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,884,958.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,964,722.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$30,849,680.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,923
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	921
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,267
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,527
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,017
25.	MEMBERSHIP	89

OFFICE: PHOENIX, ARIZONA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	676
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,439
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,258
4.	PENSION	277
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	165
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	872
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	153
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	77
10.	DEATH PENSION	13
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	361
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,292
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,613,334.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$38,341,064.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$40,954,398.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,731
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,470
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,861
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,282
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	26
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,241
25.	MEMBERSHIP	219

OFFICE: LITTLE ROCK,ARKANSAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	493
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,367
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,114
4.	PENSION	437
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	83
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	10
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	615
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	97
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	100
10.	DEATH PENSION	123
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	201
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,640
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,426,205.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$33,373,634.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$35,799,839.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	9,228
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	3,126
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	4,662
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	7,078
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	401
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	80
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	4,195
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	133

OFFICE: W. LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	938
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	1,111
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,805
4.	PENSION.....	1,288
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	112
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	583
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	152
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	134
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	305
11.	INSURANCE.....	20
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	424
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	6,872
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$3,835,168.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS....	$47,725,126.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$51,560,294.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	11,134
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	4,997
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	4,392
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	6,526
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	2,373
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	5,452
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	102

OFFICE: SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	1,171
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	2,086
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,876
4.	PENSION.....	221
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	1,126
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	475
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	231
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	129
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	93
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	401
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	7,810
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$7,093,216.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS....	$67,587,778.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$74,680,994.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	1,395
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	2,651
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	3,107
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	5,225
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	752
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	24
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	5,519
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	224

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

	OFFICE: DENVER, COLORADO	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,012
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,518
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,709
4.	PENSION	216
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	70
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,006
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	134
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	71
10.	DEATH PENSION	35
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	311
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,082
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,297,205.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$49,326,365.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$52,623,570.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,457
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,788
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,839
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,217
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,975
25.	MEMBERSHIP	109

	OFFICE: HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	92
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	281
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	561
4.	PENSION	54
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	23
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	138
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	13
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	117
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,305
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$802,461.32
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$9,809,675.86
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$10,612,137.18
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,523
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	345
20.	INTERVIEWS	707
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,660
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,168
25.	MEMBERSHIP	17

	OFFICE: WASHINGTON, D.C.	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	253
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	506
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	633
4.	PENSION	63
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	67
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	74
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	49
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10.	DEATH PENSION	2
11.	INSURANCE	1

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	30
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	68
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,778
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,026,356.49
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$18,950,429.54
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$19,976,786.03
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,920
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,169
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,963
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	940
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	978
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	5
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,577
25.	MEMBERSHIP	183

OFFICE: ST. PETERSBURG, FLORIDA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,865
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	4,827
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	5,522
4.	PENSION	1,252
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	349
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,087
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	173
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	459
10.	DEATH PENSION	257
11.	INSURANCE	3
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	1,202
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	17,996
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$9,111,739.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$141,144,677.45
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$150,256,416.45
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	19,864
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	3,937
20.	INTERVIEWS	6,888
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,812
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	10,945
25.	MEMBERSHIP	398

OFFICE: ATLANTA, GEORGIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	332
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	869
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,057
4.	PENSION	178
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	82
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	573
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	7
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	54
10.	DEATH PENSION	34
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	139
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,325
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,109,590.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$26,510,152.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$28,619,742.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,061
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	780
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,368
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,175
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	5
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,104
25.	MEMBERSHIP	108

OFFICE: HONOLULU, HAWAII

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	187
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	180
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	392
4.	PENSION	19
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	10
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	14
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	52
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	20
10.	DEATH PENSION	2
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	46
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	922
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$510,637.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$8,687,608.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$9,198,245.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	990
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	305
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,307
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	871
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	295
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	987
25.	MEMBERSHIP	38

OFFICE: BOISE, IDAHO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	184
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	272
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	312
4.	PENSION	81
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	135
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	228
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	5
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10.	DEATH PENSION	15
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	68
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,331
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$692,141.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$8,716,269.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$9,408,410.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,542
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	661
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,420
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,314
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	125
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	27
24.	NEW CLAIMS	800
25.	MEMBERSHIP	28

OFFICE: CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	366
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	989
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	988
4.	PENSION	404
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,959
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	222

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

8.	MISCELLANEOUS	120
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	57
10.	DEATH PENSION	16
11.	INSURANCE	18
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	362
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,503
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,936,876.72
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,446,331.52
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$43,383,208.24
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,228
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,012
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,010
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,530
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	9
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,860
25.	MEMBERSHIP	120

OFFICE: INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	321
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	918
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	662
4.	PENSION	364
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	322
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	315
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	136
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	70
10.	DEATH PENSION	67
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	172
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,347
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,830,201.82
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,785,182.41
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$25,615,384.23
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,795
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	705
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,070
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,087
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	38
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	23
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,501
25.	MEMBERSHIP	55

OFFICE: DES MOINES, IOWA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	209
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	585
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	974
4.	PENSION	284
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	655
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	228
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	215
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	52
10.	DEATH PENSION	238
11.	INSURANCE	24
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	187
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,651
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,786,289.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,879,240.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$25,665,529.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,289
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	513

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

20.	INTERVIEWS	1,717
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,135
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	3
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	3
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,728
25.	MEMBERSHIP	350

OFFICE: WICHITA, KANSAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	446
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	648
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,054
4.	PENSION	110
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	315
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	218
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	36
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	30
10.	DEATH PENSION	78
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	143
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,078
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,553,091.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$21,264,797.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$22,817,888.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,322
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,036
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,350
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,529
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	32
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,420
25.	MEMBERSHIP	121

OFFICE: LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	384
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,221
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,670
4.	PENSION	1,541
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	267
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	32
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	112
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	111
10.	DEATH PENSION	516
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	519
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,373
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,327,599.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$60,906,290.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$64,233,889.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,828
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,811
20.	INTERVIEWS	970
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,663
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,474
25.	MEMBERSHIP	106

OFFICE: NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	236
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	821
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	941
4.	PENSION	315

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	216
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	329
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	44
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	28
10.	DEATH PENSION	20
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	23
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,974
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,474,373.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,691,774.88
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$25,166,147.88
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,369
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	660
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,349
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,913
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	33
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,576
25.	MEMBERSHIP	40

OFFICE: TOGUS, MAINE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	149
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	680
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	441
4.	PENSION	77
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	31
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	251
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	8
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	19
10.	DEATH PENSION	2
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	121
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,779
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,251,901.47
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$15,521,699.64
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$16,773,601.11
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,144
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	290
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,244
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,576
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	487
25.	MEMBERSHIP	278

OFFICE: BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	192
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	503
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	482
4.	PENSION	90
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	79
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	289
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	16
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	16
10.	DEATH PENSION	4
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	43
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,714
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$896,648.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$11,688,329.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

17.	FULL AMOUNT	$12,584,977.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,218
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	529
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,364
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,372
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	809
25.	MEMBERSHIP	106

OFFICE: BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	372
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,497
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,305
4.	PENSION	219
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	11
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	418
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	32
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	82
10.	DEATH PENSION	32
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	442
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,412
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,629,021.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,384,497.50
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$43,013,518.50
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,041
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,358
20.	INTERVIEWS	5,014
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,701
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	10
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,810
25.	MEMBERSHIP	28

OFFICE: DETROIT, MICHIGAN

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	234
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,255
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,135
4.	PENSION	788
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,134
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	3
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	441
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	153
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	125
10.	DEATH PENSION	875
11.	INSURANCE	8
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	597
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,748
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,701,785.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$39,593,922.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$42,295,707.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,788
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,555
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,624
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,779
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	25
24.	NEW CLAIMS	5,267
25.	MEMBERSHIP	81

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

OFFICE: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	608
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,258
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,340
4.	PENSION	289
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	113
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	583
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	248
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	60
10.	DEATH PENSION	132
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	272
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,904
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,746,276.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$37,291,436.50
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$40,037,712.50
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,512
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,215
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,751
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,690
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	6
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	7,519
25.	MEMBERSHIP	60

OFFICE: JACKSON, MISSISSIPPI

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	173
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	430
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	637
4.	PENSION	263
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	42
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	211
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	17
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	34
10.	DEATH PENSION	28
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	108
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,943
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$984,636.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$14,164,139.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$15,148,775.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,962
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	335
20.	INTERVIEWS	654
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,536
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,139
25.	MEMBERSHIP	38

OFFICE: ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	863
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,509
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	3,044
4.	PENSION	428
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,146
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	4
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,249
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	236
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	63
10.	DEATH PENSION	48
11.	INSURANCE	1

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	305
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	9,896
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$5,753,774.79
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$59,611,442.30
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$65,365,217.09
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,791
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,268
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,158
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	7,120
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	28
24.	NEW CLAIMS	6,226
25.	MEMBERSHIP	183

OFFICE: FORT HARRISON, MONTANA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	70
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	312
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	85
4.	PENSION	83
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	213
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	78
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	12
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	9
10.	DEATH PENSION	37
11.	INSURANCE	11
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	108
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,019
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$448,099.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$8,862,819.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$9,310,918.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	383
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	329
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,602
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	384
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	266
25.	MEMBERSHIP	44

OFFICE: LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	237
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	354
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	395
4.	PENSION	189
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	33
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	5
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	141
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	27
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	29
10.	DEATH PENSION	40
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	129
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,579
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$770,628.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$12,075,616.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$12,846,244.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,852
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	620
20.	INTERVIEWS	776
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,131
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	30

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

24.	NEW CLAIMS	954
25.	MEMBERSHIP	4

OFFICE: MANCHESTER, NEW HAMPSHIRE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	303
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	668
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,196
4.	PENSION	41
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	133
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	11
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	261
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	38
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	18
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	8
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,678
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,088,486.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,432,596.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$27,521,082.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,418
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	639
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,009
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,280
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	64
24.	NEW CLAIMS	962
25.	MEMBERSHIP	84

OFFICE: NEWARK, NEW JERSEY

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	268
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	761
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	587
4.	PENSION	51
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	151
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	4
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	260
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	65
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	31
10.	DEATH PENSION	32
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	258
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	2,468
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,388,745.27
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$15,677,495.06
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$17,066,240.33
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,354
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	958
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,750
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,852
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,758
25.	MEMBERSHIP	96

OFFICE: ALBUQUERQUE, NEW MEXICO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	295
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	773
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	802
4.	PENSION	217
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	311
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	364
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	22

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10.	DEATH PENSION	62
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	138
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,024
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,692,745.36
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$23,452,218.36
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$25,144,963.72
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,677
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	626
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,444
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,862
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,463
25.	MEMBERSHIP	102

OFFICE: NEW YORK, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	512
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,403
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,598
4.	PENSION	128
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	366
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	114
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	91
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	68
10.	DEATH PENSION	21
11.	INSURANCE	3
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	396
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,702
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,230,368.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,461,755.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$42,692,123.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,150
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,474
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,791
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	5,255
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	8
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	7
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,178
25.	MEMBERSHIP	282

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	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	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,604.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$50,481.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$53,085.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	44
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	441
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,178

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	42
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
24.	NEW CLAIMS	708
25.	MEMBERSHIP	187

OFFICE: BUFFALO, NEW YORK

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	214
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	709
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,187
4.	PENSION	111
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	389
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	2,004
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	54
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	44
10.	DEATH PENSION	42
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	283
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,039
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,298,963.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$29,186,570.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$31,485,533.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,355
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	536
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,660
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,734
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,542
25.	MEMBERSHIP	93

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	14
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	14
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$29,896.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$391,142.40
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$421,038.40
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	441
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	279
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,766
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	9
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	58
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,946
25.	MEMBERSHIP	46

OFFICE: WINSTON-SALEM, NORTH CAROLINA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	460
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,603
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,243
4.	PENSION	108
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	535

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	486
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	42
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	53
10.	DEATH PENSION	10
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	286
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,826
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,524,751.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$34,143,765.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$36,668,516.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	6,600
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,978
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,086
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,585
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	36
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	11
24.	NEW CLAIMS	3,848
25.	MEMBERSHIP	46

OFFICE: FARGO, NORTH DAKOTA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	182
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	377
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	534
4.	PENSION	138
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	128
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	348
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	22
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	12
10.	DEATH PENSION	91
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	7
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,839
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$842,113.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$10,008,860.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$10,850,973.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,465
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	544
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,507
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,074
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,276
25.	MEMBERSHIP	292

OFFICE: CLEVELAND, OHIO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	331
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,315
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,358
4.	PENSION	742
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	773
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	529
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	42
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	124
10.	DEATH PENSION	590
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	725
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	7,530
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,075,250.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$60,080,892.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$64,156,142.00

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	12,738
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,429
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,487
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	10,739
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	4
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	6
24.	NEW CLAIMS	5,345
25.	MEMBERSHIP	157

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	235
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	808
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,149
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	164
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	69
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	50
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,807
25.	MEMBERSHIP	30

OFFICE: MUSKOGEE, OKLAHOMA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	265
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	815
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,085
4.	PENSION	494
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	163
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	298
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	134
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	39
10.	DEATH PENSION	110
11.	INSURANCE	23
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	155
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,581
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,829,487.31
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$25,806,594.94
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$27,636,082.25
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	3,561
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	964
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,476
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,975
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,149
25.	MEMBERSHIP	87

OFFICE: PORTLAND, OREGON

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	318
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	968

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,185
4.	PENSION	179
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	329
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	504
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	42
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	60
10.	DEATH PENSION	42
11.	INSURANCE	16
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	245
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3,888
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,130,946.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$31,145,955.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$33,276,901.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,579
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	695
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,234
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,927
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,580
25.	MEMBERSHIP	105

OFFICE: PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	457
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,429
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,724
4.	PENSION	312
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	325
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	456
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	120
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	83
10.	DEATH PENSION	122
11.	INSURANCE	122
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	473
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	5,623
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,571,077.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$40,796,120.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$43,367,197.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,723
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,973
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,873
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	3,675
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	4
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,773
25.	MEMBERSHIP	185

OFFICE: WILKES-BARRE, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$0.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$0.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$0.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	84
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	39
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	262
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	74
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	156
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	6

OFFICE: PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	447
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	1,163
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	2,504
4.	PENSION.....	343
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	1,938
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	12
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	440
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	171
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	95
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	520
11.	INSURANCE.....	2
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	392
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	8,027
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$4,011,317.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$59,296,688.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$63,308,005.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	5,332
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,356
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	2,917
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	3,885
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	38
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	4,071
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	514

OFFICE: PROVIDENCE, RHODE ISLAND

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	183
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	626
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	490
4.	PENSION.....	84
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	71
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	160
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	8
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	26
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	17
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	122
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	1,787
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$858,121.43
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$15,534,774.61
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$16,392,896.04
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	3,357
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	596
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	2,124
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	2,311
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	983
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	261

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

	OFFICE: COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	391
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	740
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,525
4.	PENSION	329
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	188
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	437
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	75
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	63
10.	DEATH PENSION	108
11.	INSURANCE	46
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	221
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,124
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,999,554.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$28,096,299.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$30,095,853.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	4,946
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	958
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,950
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,816
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	7
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	1
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,390
25.	MEMBERSHIP	201

	OFFICE: SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	178
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	351
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	413
4.	PENSION	93
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	74
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	434
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	20
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	25
10.	DEATH PENSION	25
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	69
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,682
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$791,052.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$8,664,624.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$9,455,676.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,651
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	316
20.	INTERVIEWS	648
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,089
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,159
25.	MEMBERSHIP	38

	OFFICE: NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE	
1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	529
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,054
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,498
4.	PENSION	475
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	243
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	399
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	43
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	40
10.	DEATH PENSION	91
11.	INSURANCE	0

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	191
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	4,564
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,292,750.99
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$36,887,030.54
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$39,179,781.53
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,870
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,061
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,015
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	2,366
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,697
25.	MEMBERSHIP	94

OFFICE: WACO, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	693
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,056
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,444
4.	PENSION	741
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	282
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	904
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	232
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	223
10.	DEATH PENSION	136
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	823
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	8,534
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$4,196,720.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$68,426,567.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$72,623,287.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	9,251
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	4,418
20.	INTERVIEWS	3,111
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,835
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,378
25.	MEMBERSHIP	215

OFFICE: HOUSTON, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	579
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	953
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	1,492
4.	PENSION	408
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	1,595
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	1
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	529
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	99
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	61
10.	DEATH PENSION	513
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	302
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,533
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,348,395.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$42,738,162.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$46,086,557.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	8,479
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,097
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,553
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	6,598
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	2

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,832
25.	MEMBERSHIP	127

OFFICE: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	0
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	0
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	0
10.	DEATH PENSION	0
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	0
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	211
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	213
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$344,079.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$4,686,032.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$5,030,111.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	412
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,323
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,132
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	185
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	1,295
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
24.	NEW CLAIMS	2,331
25.	MEMBERSHIP	204

OFFICE: SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	184
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	348
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	428
4.	PENSION	42
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	13
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	201
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	19
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	27
10.	DEATH PENSION	16
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	114
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,392
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$798,675.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$11,030,284.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$11,828,959.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,544
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	361
20.	INTERVIEWS	769
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,909
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	322
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	346
25.	MEMBERSHIP	67

OFFICE: WHITE RIVER JUNCTION, VERMONT

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	61
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	160
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	203
4.	PENSION	67
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	35
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	71
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	7

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	8
10.	DEATH PENSION	1
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	15
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	628
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$351,075.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$4,747,926.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$5,099,001.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,881
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	265
20.	INTERVIEWS	1,686
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,281
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	620
25.	MEMBERSHIP	62

OFFICE: ROANOKE, VIRGINIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	656
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	1,374
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,524
4.	PENSION	387
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	100
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	7
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	1,017
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	83
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	63
10.	DEATH PENSION	48
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	213
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	6,473
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$3,972,109.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$50,514,026.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$54,486,135.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	7,751
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	1,811
20.	INTERVIEWS	4,054
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	4,511
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	19
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	8
24.	NEW CLAIMS	4,792
25.	MEMBERSHIP	254

OFFICE: SEATTLE, WASHINGTON

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	1,222
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	2,127
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	2,328
4.	PENSION	270
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	112
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	2
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	964
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	35
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	115
10.	DEATH PENSION	16
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	309
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	7,500
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$6,131,314.27
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$67,867,504.27
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$73,998,818.54
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	5,499
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	2,709
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,443

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	4,461
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	10
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	4,482
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	161

OFFICE: HUNTINGTON, WEST VIRGINIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	141
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	392
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	533
4.	PENSION.....	318
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	24
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	207
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	57
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	21
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	36
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	152
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	1,881
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$992,440.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$20,292,860.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$21,285,300.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	2,289
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	342
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	1,542
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	1,568
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	779
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	35

OFFICE: MILWAUKEE, WISCONSIN

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	495
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	1,439
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	1,698
4.	PENSION.....	316
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	199
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	5
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	706
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	90
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	66
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	79
11.	INSURANCE.....	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	298
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	5,391
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$3,297,282.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$45,689,601.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$48,986,883.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	6,967
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,379
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	2,182
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	6,122
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	19
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	3,602
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	225

OFFICE: CHEYENNE, WYOMING

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	61
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	112
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	132
4.	PENSION.....	11

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	4
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	18
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	19
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	7
10.	DEATH PENSION	2
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	28
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	394
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$238,956.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$3,630,586.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$3,869,542.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	576
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	80
20.	INTERVIEWS	375
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	455
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	211
25.	MEMBERSHIP	3

OFFICE: WILMINGTON, DELAWARE

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	62
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	143
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	121
4.	PENSION	33
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	19
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	47
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	10
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	13
10.	DEATH PENSION	3
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	36
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	487
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$214,260.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$3,227,961.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$3,442,221.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,198
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	136
20.	INTERVIEWS	550
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	616
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	511
25.	MEMBERSHIP	5

OFFICE: DALLAS, TEXAS

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	0
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	0
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	0
4.	PENSION	0
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	0
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	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	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	3
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$2,728.50
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$90,812.70

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$93,541.20
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	34
19.	POWER OF \TTORNEYS.....	1,064
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	4,439
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	2
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	2
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	1,523
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	32

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.....	224
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	4,648
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	458
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	37

OFFICE: SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS.....	1,570
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED.....	1,044
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED.....	891
4.	PENSION.....	76
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED.....	506
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY.....	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS.....	1,438
8.	MISCELLANEOUS.....	124
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION.....	61
10.	DEATH PENSION.....	8
11.	INSURANCE.....	102
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES.....	222
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS.....	13
14.	TOTAL AWARDS.....	6,055
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES.....	$3,126,113.92
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS...	$40,099,482.04
17.	FULL AMOUNT.....	$43,225,595.96
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED.....	6,567
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS.....	1,809
20.	INTERVIEWS.....	5,122
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES.....	4,984
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS.....	2,180
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES.....	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	4,021
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	141

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

OFFICE: RENO, NEVADA

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	226
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	504
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	559
4.	PENSION	70
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	54
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	387
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	24
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	35
10.	DEATH PENSION	8
11.	INSURANCE	1
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	126
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,994
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$849,757.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$11,851,152.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$12,700,909.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	1,772
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	596
20.	INTERVIEWS	993
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,450
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	877
25.	MEMBERSHIP	34

OFFICE: SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	53
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	214
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	508
4.	PENSION	101
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	122
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	0
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	538
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	11
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	44
10.	DEATH PENSION	18
11.	INSURANCE	0
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	6
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	0
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	1,615
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$1,065,161.00
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$14,075,001.00
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$15,140,162.00
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	2,254
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	289
20.	INTERVIEWS	2,065
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	1,358
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	0
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	914
25.	MEMBERSHIP	43

OFFICE: NORFOLK, VIRGINIA

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

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

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	996
20.	INTERVIEWS	0
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	7,761
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	1,559
25.	MEMBERSHIP	48

OFFICE: NAS MIRAMAR SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA

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	214
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	198
20.	INTERVIEWS	214
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	0
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	62,937
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	0
24.	NEW CLAIMS	0
25.	MEMBERSHIP	0

OFFICE: TOTAL NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICE REPORT

1.	NEW SERVICE CONNECTIONS	23,757
2.	COMPENSATION INCREASED	54,033
3.	COMPENSATION MAINTAINED	66,345
4.	PENSION	16,492
5.	PENSION MAINTAINED	18,037
6.	SOCIAL SECURITY	101
7.	EDUCATION BENEFITS	27,475
8.	MISCELLANEOUS	4,336
9.	DEATH COMPENSATION	3,513
10.	DEATH PENSION	5,857
11.	INSURANCE	409
12.	BURIAL ALLOWANCES	13,568
13.	PHYSICAL EVALUATION BOARDS	292
14.	TOTAL AWARDS	234,215
15.	TOTAL MONTHLY INCREASES	$129,081,503.66
16.	TOTAL RETROACTIVE PAYMENTS	$1,786,386,835.52
17.	FULL AMOUNT	$1,915,468,339.18
18.	VA FILES REVIEWED	283,558
19.	POWER OF ATTORNEYS	75,153
20.	INTERVIEWS	142,638
21.	RATING BOARD APPEARANCES	202,817
22.	MILITARY AFFAIRS	79,686
23.	SOCIAL SECURITY ACTIVITIES	598

RECAPITULATION OF SERVICE ACTIVITIES - Continued

JULY 1, 1996 THROUGH JUNE 30, 1997

24.	NEW CLAIMS.....	164,043
25.	MEMBERSHIP.....	8,113

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Bruce G. Nitsche, National Director of Voluntary Services:)

National Commander Gregory C. Reed, national officers, distinguished guets and delegates to the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: Ours is an organization that will always remember the sacrifices of disabled veterans and for 52 years now we have demonstrated this through the DAV and Auxiliary VAVS programs. Today I would like to take a moment to salute 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 our veterans, particularly those who are aging. If you're not already in the ranks of our volunteers, we need you. We need your time, your sensitivities, your ideas, and your help in making certain that America's veterans get the care they deserve.

As you consider your 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, 8,512 DAV VAVS volunteers donated 1,973,010 hours in the 12 months ending March 31, 1997.

With a group this large and the huge number of assignments they perform, you can imagine the extensive management effort that's carried out on a local level by 18 State Chairmen, 185 VAVS Representatives, 29 Associate Representatives, 305 Deputy Representatives, and four Associate Deputy Representatives.

The DAV volunteer effort is enhanced by a very active corps of 2,943 Auxiliary volunteers who donated 367,066 hours last year. Together, DAV and Auxiliary volunteers provided 2,340,076 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 $30,046,575.84 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, 189 DAV Hospital Service Coordinators (HSCs) operate 192 active programs. They've recruited 5,006 volunteer drivers who logged 19,368,975 miles last year, taking 518,889 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 608 vans to VA medical centers nationwide at a cost of $10,775,969.69.

On August 20, 1996 the Ford Motor Company sponsored a "Drive Away" Ceremony at their World Headquarters in Dearborn, Michigan where they generously donated the use of eleven 1996 Ford Super Club Wagon XL, 15-Passenger vans to the DAV Transportation Network for a one year period. These vans were designated at 11 VA Medical Centers across the country in the DAV TN. The VAMCs that received these vans are: West Los Angeles, California; Washington, D.C.; Augusta, Georgia; Indianapolis, Indiana; Detroit, Michigan; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Kansas City and St. Louis, Missouri; Buffalo, New York; Cleveland, Ohio; and Martinsburg, West Virginia. We are very pleased that after having evaluated the usefulness of the loan of these vans, Ford has permanently donated the vehicles to these VAMCs.

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 partnership with us is a real boost to the program.

As a further demonstration of their commitment to the DAV TN, Ford is donating the use of an additional twelve 1997 Ford Super Club Wagon XL, 15 passenger vans, for one year. This will take place on Sunday August 17th at the Opening Session, at this National Convention here in Las Vegas. The VAMCs receiving these vans are: 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.

But DAV HSCs do more than coordinate transportation; they also help veterans file claims for VA benefits. HSCs have completed 78,903 VA claim forms, referring 22,869 veterans to DAV National Service Officers for professional benefits assistance. They've also conducted 248,999 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 AWARD

The George H. Seal Memorial Award 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 20 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 composed 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 72 DAV volunteers and 40 Auxiliary volunteers, the committee chose as
this year's winners:

*** D. Michael Giles:**

Mr. D. Michael Giles, 49, is a member and commander of DAV Chapter 14, Salem, Virginia, and volunteers 100-150 hours of his time every month to assist veterans at the Salem VA Medical Center. Since 1990 he has logged some 11,000 volunteer hours at the hospital, helping improve the quality of life for patients.

Mike Giles is a shining example of what volunteerism is all about. Among the many volunteer services he provides at the hospital is his involvement with the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) treatment program.

A combat veteran of the Vietnam War, Mike helps his fellow veterans by bridging the gap between the patients and the staff. He helps arrange and coordinate activities for patients, including trips to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C. Locating the names of buddies killed during the war etched into "the Wall," as it is called, can be an integral part of overcoming PTSD.

Mr. Giles does a lot more than just work with veterans in the PTSD program. He also arranges fishing trips, golf clinics, and other recreational outings for patients, as well as cook-outs and pizza parties, contributing his own money to cover some of the costs.

Mike has truly dedicated his life to serving other veterans, to help improve the quality of their lives. His ability to inspire the patients to do their best in overcoming their disabilities makes him a clearly outstanding example for other volunteers to follow.

*** Annie E. Randolph:**

Mrs. Annie E. Randolph, 73 years young, is a member and commander of DAV Auxiliary Unit 6, Hampton, Virginia. She has been a volunteer at the Hampton, Virginia VA Medical Center (VAMC) for 16 years and has donated more than 10,000 hours of her time to help make a difference in veterans' lives. Her outgoing, cheerful personality and caring warmth are a boost to the veterans' morale.

As a volunteer receptionist, she has initial contact with all visitors, many of whom are domiciliary patients in the medical center's homeless program. Those patients often come in for personal hygiene items and clothing, which Annie cheerfully distributes upon request. She also dispenses much-needed kindness and friendship. Patients often are depressed when they arrive at the office, but most often leave with a smile on their faces and a bounce to their step after their interaction with Annie Randolph.

Annie devotes a considerable amount of time supporting recreation activities such as patient talent shows, cook-outs and holiday parties, and outings to the circus and sporting events. Those activities are essential to helping a patient's return to good health, both mentally and physically.

In addition to volunteering at the VAMC, Mrs. Randolph is the sole care giver for her husband, a severely disabled veteran.

Various other awards Annie has received include selection as the medical center's 1996 "Volunteer Star" and the local Volunteer Center's "Ordinary People Doing Extraordinary Things" award.

The selection committee once again stated that all of the nominees are very special volunteers. 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 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, 292 disabled veterans from 38 states took part in the 11th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic at Crested Butte, Colorado. With more than 400 volunteers -- including 153 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:

National: Ford Motor Company; Hughes Data Systems; Prince Bandar bin Sultan; Sprint; The Coca-Cola Company.

Gold: American Country Countdown with Bob Kingsley; American Express; Baxter Healthcare Corporation; Bayer Corporation; DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation, Inc.; Johnson & Johnson Health Care Systems, Inc.; Milbank Memorial Fund; PaineWebber; 3M.

Silver: Advanced Prosthetics & Orthotics, Inc.; DAV Department of Colorado; Fifth Third Bancorp; Zachary and Elizabeth Fisher; GE Medical Systems; McGaw, Inc.; Pfizer, Inc.; ROHO, Inc. and CROWN THERAPEUTICS, Inc.; Schiff, Kreidler-Shell, Inc.; Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC); Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc., Chapter 57, Colorado; Zeneca Pharmaceuticals.

Bronze: AMSUS-Sustaining Members; Astra Merck, Inc.; AT&T Wireless Services; BVL Fund; C. R. Bard, Inc.; CANON Government Marketing Division; Dickstein Shapiro Morin & Oshinsky, L.L.P.; DAV Prescott, AZ Chapter 16, Inc.; Great Brands of Europe, Inc./Evian; John, Cathy, Timothy and Taffney Fischer; Flex-Foot, Inc.; Genentech, Inc.; Hoechst Marion Roussel; Eastman Kodak Company; Eli Lilly and Company; Mary E. Moore Family Foundation; Oakley; The Orthotics & Prosthetics National Office; Pharmacia and Upjohn; Piper & Marbury, L.L.P.; Radventures, Inc.; SmithKline Beecham Pharmaceuticals; Tenth Mountain Division Foundation, Inc.; Wallace Computer Services, Inc.

Using the theme of "Lives Forever Changed," 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, golf and snowmobiling.

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 1997 recipient is blind skier Karoline Martin.

Ms. Martin, a member of DAV Chapter 90, West Chester, Pennsylvania has indeed accomplished a lot. Even before she became disabled she was an accomplished soldier. She joined the U.S. Army in 1983 a fully sighted, motivated trainee. She took her basic training at Ft. Dix, New Jersey; Advanced Individual Training at Ft. Lee, Virginia, and went on to Ft. Benning, Georgia to complete Airborne training. She later served in the 5th Special Forces Group at Ft. Bragg, North Carolina and did a tour of duty in Frankfort, Germany.

It was while serving in the Army that the trouble with Ms. Martin's vision began. In the Army she served as a petroleum specialist, and the exposure to the chemicals that she handled is thought to have caused or aggravated the macular degeneration and nerve damage to her eyes that resulted in a service-connected disability. By the time Sgt. Martin received her honorable discharge from the Army in 1990, her vision was so bad, she could no longer see to drive.

Shortly after her discharge, Ms. Martin contacted the DAV National Service Office in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, for assistance and to represent her claim for service-connected disability compensation. Following an evaluation of her impairment at the VA medical center at Raleigh-Durham, North Carolina, and confirmation of the evaluation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C., she was awarded 100% service-connected disability compensation from the VA.

In the fall of 1992, Ms. Martin heard about the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. She said, "I sent for a packet about the clinic and signed up for the 1992 clinic in Snowmass, I paid my way there, had great fun and got a super education."

When she got to Colorado that first year, she was exposed to all different kinds of peoples' disabilities and learned how they adapted to skiing. She thought, "if they can adapt, I can adapt." Upon returning home, she changed her university studies to pursue therapeutic training for people with disabilities.

Since that time, Ms. Martin has gone on to share her love of riding with people with disabilities, much the same as the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic shares the thrill, excitement and love of winter sports in a therapeutic way with disabled veterans. She gained her certification as an instructor in therapeutic riding in 1995 and has been teaching others for the past two years.

*** 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 48th annual tournament in Singing Hills Resort, El Cajon, California, August 12-15, 1996, drew 92 entries, 46% of them veterans. The winner of the DAV trophy was Michael Hodge, a combat-disabled Vietnam veteran who lost both legs at a firebase about 20 miles outside of Da Nang, through enemy incoming fire as he waited for a helicopter after completing a work detail. After a short stay in Da Nang Naval Hospital, he ended up at Oaknoll Naval Hospital, and completed his rehabilitation at Wadsworth Veterans Hospital in West Los Angeles. Michael now works for the City of Culver City, California as their risk manager, responsible for the administration of the city's self-insurance programs, loss control and safety. Due to his expertise in his field, he was selected by the Attorney General's office to sit on a National Board to help develop a public entity database. He is a Life Member of the DAV and VFW, and has spoken to schools, colleges and civic organizations on the challenges of the disabled and making one's life count for something. Although missing both legs above the knee, his hobbies include motorcycling (he has been cross-country twice), boating, water sports, league bowling (he carries a 146 average with a 219 high game), and of course, golf. He was recently elected to the position of Secretary of the Western Amputee Golf Association and has been a Life Member of the Western and National Golf Associations.

*** 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 1996, 30 First Swing seminars and Learn to Golf Clinics were conducted. Participants included 435 therapists; 633 physically challenged people, 188 of whom were disabled veterans; 87 professional golfers; and 358 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 those 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 country singer, composer, and entertainer Travis Tritt; Kevin Dobson, actor/director of television and motion pictures; television/film actor Barry Corbin; American Country Countdown Host Bob Kingsley; and Major League Baseball Umpires Larry Barnett and Eddie Montague and Jerry Layne. The DAV is indeed honored that such outstanding celebrities want to be a part of the DAV Voluntary Service Program. We recognize the enormous demands they face, and we appreciate the gift of their valuable time. They'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. They include DAV and Auxiliary National Commanders Gregory C. Reed and Margaret E. Hass, National Officers and staff of the DAV and its Auxiliary, 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. Special thanks go to National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson for his leadership and dedication to service for all disabled veterans. My personal thanks to Secretaries Linda DeMartino and Linda Chester. Over and again, we've gained invaluable help from our DAV National Service Officers, Hospital Service Coordinators, and VAVS leadership teams across the nation. I cannot forget Jim Delgado, who heads up the VA Voluntary Service program and Administrative Officer Jim Mayer. And the assistance of the DAV Charitable Service Trust was an essential ingredient of our 1996 success story.

Last to be mentioned are most important, the members of the volunteer corps fielded by the DAV and Auxiliary. As has often been said, "There is no higher distinction than service to others." And there are none more distinguished than the men and women who are out there right now, working to bring the comfort of love and the joy of life to our nation's disabled veterans and their families. Thank you.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
VA VOLUNTARY SERVICE (VAVS)
April 1, 1996 through March 31, 1997

NUMBER OF REGULARLY SCHEDULED VAVS VOLUNTEERS	8,512
NUMBER OF HOURS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	1,900,045
NUMBER OF ASSIGNMENTS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	10,027
NUMBER OF VISITS BY REGULARLY SCHEDULED VOLUNTEERS	313,607
NUMBER OF HOURS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	72,965
NUMBER OF VISITS BY OCCASIONAL VOLUNTEERS	11,097
NUMBER OF HOURS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	1,973,010
NUMBER OF VISITS BY ALL VAVS VOLUNTEERS	324,704

VAVS APPOINTED POSITIONS

NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN	18
NUMBER OF STATE CHAIRMEN ALSO SERVING AS REPRESENTATIVES	14
NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIVES	185
NUMBER OF DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	305
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE REPRESENTATIVES	29
NUMBER OF ASSOCIATE DEPUTY REPRESENTATIVES	4
NUMBER OF HONORARY REPRESENTATIVES	3
NUMBER OF APPOINTED POSITIONS	558
ANNUAL JOINT REVIEWS RECEIVED FOR THE YEAR	85

DONATIONS

VAVS DONATIONS JANUARY 1, 1996 thru DECEMBER 31, 1996	$ 2,923,160.06
OTHER HOSPITAL and SERVICE RELATED DONATIONS (This includes department and chapter costs associated with welfare & relief, as well as HSC & DSO programs.)	$ 9,516,809.52

TOTAL DONATIONS	$12,439,969.58

TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM

(These DAV Transportation Statistics reflect the data gathered from January 1, 1996 through December 31, 1996)

TOTAL NUMBER OF HOSPITAL SERVICE COORDINATORS (HSCs)	189
NUMBER OF VETERANS TRANSPORTED	518,889
TRANSPORTATION HOURS	1,130,064
TRANSPORTATION MILES	19,368,975
HSC PERSONAL INTERVIEWS	185,386
HSC TELEPHONE INTERVIEWS	248,999
HSC NSO REFERRALS	22,869
HSC VA FORMS COMPLETED	78,903

1996 NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK GRANTS

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK HSC PROGRAM GRANTS	$ 301,989.00
NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION NETWORK VAN GRANTS (141 vans purchased and delivered in 1996)	$1,956,031.60
1996 Total National Grant Expenditures	$2,258,020.60

(The following written annual report was submitted by Mr. Ronald W. Drach, National Employment Director:)

National Commander Reed, distinguished guests and delegates to our 76th National Convention: I am honored and privileged to submit to the delegates at our 76th National Convention my annual report as your National Employment Director and provide you with an overview of the various activities of this department during the past year.

I would like to express my deepest appreciation to National Commander Gregory C. Reed and his line officers for their support and cooperation. Commander Reed's leadership has been extremely valuable. Additionally, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has been a strong ally of the employment programs, and I thank him for his support. I would also like to take this opportunity to thank David W. Gorman, Executive Director, Washington Headquarters, for his support and leadership.

Our National Service Officers (NSOs) are unequaled in their skill and ability to provide representation to our nation's disabled veterans and their dependents. The NSOs' hard work helps ensure that our nation's service-connected 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 Bruce G. Nitsche, National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante, and Acting National Director of Communications Gary Weaver and their respective staffs.

I would be remiss if I did not thank National Auxiliary Commander Margaret E. Hass 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. I work with the Executive branch and the Congress in program development and oversight.

As a registered lobbyist I appeared before Congress five 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.

Since our last convention, I have prepared testimony on the following issues: employment and training initiatives; small business; programs for homeless veterans; reemployment rights; transition assistance; and several times on veterans' preference. I continue to work closely with the members and staffs of the Subcommittee on Benefits 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 or affirmative action has been violated.

I 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 I 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 offices (27) participated in TAP/DTAP briefings at various military installations. Our National Service Officers had contact with over 117,000 separating military personnel over the period January 1, 1996 to December 31, 1996. Of those, 105,973 were male and 11,438 were female. We assisted in filing 94,191 claims for VA disability compensation benefits. Of major concern is how close to discharge these individuals are when they attend the TAP session. The law requires separating service members to attend these sessions 180 days prior to discharge. According to our reports:

46,216 were within one month of being discharged;

- 30,651 are within two to three months of being discharged;
- 24,875 are within four to six months of being discharged; and
- 15,963 are 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.

The Commission is made up of twelve members appointed by certain committees in Congress. I was appointed to serve on the Commission by Senator John D. "Jay" Rockefeller, IV (D-WV). The Commission is charged with looking at several programs and reporting to Congress recommendations to improve or modify those

programs. The work of the Commission is to last 18 months.

The Commission will be holding a "town meeting" at the conclusion of our National Convention at the Las Vegas Hilton on August 21, 1997.

DOL PROGRAMS

DOL programs for veterans are administered by the Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS).

Heading VETS was Assistant Secretary of Labor Preston Taylor, who was appointed by President Clinton and confirmed by the Senate on November 19, 1993. The DAV has enjoyed a positive, open communication with his office. Secretary Taylor resigned effective May 29, 1997. His Deputy, Al Borrego, is serving as Acting Assistant Secretary.

Programs under VETS include Veterans' Reemployment Rights (VRR) and Title IVc 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. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich resigned shortly after the last election and has been replaced by Secretary Alexis Herman. We have yet to meet with Secretary Herman but anticipate her support and cooperation on many of our 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

The 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 chair 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 the Department of Labor's DVOPs were working with the 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 was ongoing between the two agencies and they were put on notice to work closer together to improve employment services.

As a result, the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling established a "Design Team" and "Steering Committee" to review how the VA provides those services and makes recommendations for meaningful change. The Director of Vocational Rehabilitation and Counseling asked for DAV's representation on the Steering Committee and I am proud to serve in that capacity. A draft report was provided to the Steering Committee by the Design Team during the week of June 10, 1996. There were several issues the Steering Committee found to be unacceptable, and changes were to be made in consultation with members of both the Steering Committee and Design Team members. As of this writing, more than a year has passed and DAV has not been contacted for input into the final report nor have we received a copy of the final report.

On a separate track, the Department of Labor developed a new training module through the National Veterans' Training Institute (NVTI) in Colorado to provide training, particularly to Disabled Veterans Outreach Program specialists (DVOPs), to deal with the unique problems many of the vocational rehabilitation clients have. I assisted in the development and assessment of the curriculum. As

of June 19, 1997, NVTI has provided this specialized training to 18 classes consisting of 278 DVOPs and 143 LVERs. We will be monitoring the ongoing development and implementation of these new initiatives to ensure that disabled veterans under vocational rehabilitation actually obtain meaningful employment consistent with their training.

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.

Because of ongoing problems in enforcement of veterans' preference laws, we were able to have legislation introduced in the 104th Congress. That legislation was ultimately passed by the House, but was never introduced in the Senate and was never signed into law.

Early in the 105th Congress, similar legislation, H.R. 240, was introduced by Congressman John Mica (R-FL) and, it again passed the House with very little problem. It has been sent to the Senate and was recently introduced as S. 1021 by Senators Cleland (D-GA) and Hagel (R-NE). We will be working with both the House and Senate to have legislation enacted and signed by the President.

We routinely receive inquiries from service-connected disabled veterans who are seeking federal employment. Many veterans inquire about employment opportunities, veterans' preference, and the Veterans' Readjustment Appointment (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 *Federal Employment Policy Handbook: Veterans in the Civil Service*. We have obtained and provided copies to all National Service Offices for their review and use when advising veterans of their rights under veterans' preference.

For the past several years, we have worked with OPM and other federal agencies in developing a disabled veteran workshop to be conducted during a national symposium on employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

U.S. POSTAL SERVICE PROGRAMS

We are receiving 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).

As a result of some of the past problems with the postal service, DAV was instrumental in having the White House establish a White House Interagency Policy Group on veterans' issues. We have met with them on several occasions and continue to have an opportunity to meet with high level White House domestic policy staff to discuss major issues of concern.

SMALL BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION (SBA)

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 8a 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 veterans business owners vying for federal contracts are sometimes surprised to learn that they are not eligible as "8a contractors" or for any other special consideration. Certain minority-owned businesses that receive special consideration for contracts with federal departments and agencies are considered "8a 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.

EQUAL EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITY COMMISSION (EEOC) PROGRAMS

The EEOC is the final administrative authority on all disability employment discrimination cases filed against federal departments and agencies. Under current legislation, 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. We have provided all National Service Offices with information that can be used to provide advice and assistance to disabled veterans who believe they have been discriminated against.

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.

NONGOVERNMENT PROGRAMS

We have been involved with numerous nongovernment 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 written annual report was submitted by Mr. Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director:)

National Commander Gregory C. Reed, distinguished guests and delegates: It is a privilege indeed an honor, and certainly a pleasure to report to you on the national legislative activities of the Disabled American Veterans since last year's National Convention. The DAV's legislative efforts and accomplishments throughout the year, as always, are the product of a dedicated staff working together and with the unparalleled support, inspiration, and leadership of our National Commander, National Adjutant, and Executive Director of the Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington. Therefore, before I proceed with the results of this year's activities, let me express my sincere thanks to National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, and Executive Director of the Washington Headquarters, David W. Gorman, for all the support and guidance they have provided to the legislative staff.

Additionally, I want to thank Rick Surratt, Assistant National Legislative Director, and Dick Wannemacher, Associate National Legislative Director, for their hard work and devotion and especially for the support they have given me throughout the year. Dick is new to the legislative staff, but he has earned his wings since he joined us on the first of August last year. Also, let me express my gratitude for all the assistance we received from the National Service Officers across the country. They are the experts on veterans' law, and they always are the best source of information on what is happening or what is needed in the area of veterans' benefits and services. They are always happy to play a role in our legislative advocacy, and they help us so much when we call on them for various reasons. Their input is invaluable and helps shape our legislative program every year.

Few of our successes could be possible without our grassroots support. Our Benefits Protection Team Leaders are at the forefront of our battles to protect the rights of America's disabled veterans and lead the grassroots effort. We owe them a great debt of gratitude for their good work. Finally, let me thank all of you who participated in our legislative campaigns this year. You are truly the bedrock of the greatest veterans' organization on earth. Backed up by leadership and a team like this, the DAV operates from a position of strength in Washington, and the annual report of the DAV Legislative Department is therefore always a proud one.

The DAV exists to advance the interests of disabled veterans. Of course, the DAV's Bylaws also include a continuing mandate that we oppose legislation detrimental to disabled veterans. Through the advocacy of DAV and other veterans groups, veterans have come to enjoy a comprehensive array of benefits and services crafted to meet a variety of veterans' special needs. Nonetheless, these benefits need adjustments and improvements from time to time. The DAV is quite active in pressing for improvements in, or additions to, the existing benefit programs. We take pride in calling for responsible legislation that will best serve veterans. The "paygo" provisions of the Budget Enforcement Act and the push to limit government spending have limited our potential to obtain new benefits for veterans, however. The paygo mechanism requires an increase in revenue (e.g., taxes) or a reduction in another entitlement program to offset the cost of any legislation creating a new benefit. The push to reduce the deficit has, in addition, required us to devote much of our time and resources to protecting our existing benefit programs from cuts or elimination. In that climate, we have been successful in getting some improvements in our benefits this year, but to a much greater extent, partly because we have been successful in defeating major attacks on our veterans' programs in past years, that has apparently dissuaded

those who would do so from mounting any major attacks upon us so far in the 105th Congress. Certainly, obtaining an adequate budget for veterans' programs continues to be a recurring annual struggle. Let me now summarize our activities and the status of veterans' legislation.

After we returned from the DAV's 75th National Convention, we were in the final months of the 104th Congress, notable for being one of the least productive Congresses in this century. With little to show for the efforts of the 104th Congress so far, the budget for fiscal year (FY) 1997 was still to be hammered out, and bills on veterans' health care reform, the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for compensation, and other important veterans' issues were yet unresolved late in the session.

Still stinging from the political fallout of the contentious FY 1996 budget impasse and disastrous government shutdown of the previous year, Congress was anxious to avoid a similar showdown on the FY 1997 budget. The adverse effects of the shutdown on veterans had been particularly embarrassing for the Government. Therefore, veterans' programs escaped the usual serious attacks and fared relatively well in the FY 1997 appropriations. We were able to obtain modest increases for health care, general operating expenses, and other discretionary spending, though some funding levels fell slightly below the President's request. The FY 1997 appropriations bill for VA also provided compensation, vocational training, and health care for Vietnam veterans' children suffering from spina bifida, on the presumption that it is related to the veterans' exposure to Agent Orange. DAV's Resolution No. 223 supported appropriate benefits for these children, but outside of title 38 and the VA. Congress enacted a compensation COLA of 2.9% to offset the rise in the cost of living as measured by the Consumer Price Index. DAV Resolution No. 084 supported a compensation increase.

In addition to appropriations and the COLA bill, in its final days, the 104th Congress enacted other veterans legislation to:

- change, for veterans who served in Vietnam, the beginning date of the Vietnam Era from August 5, 1964, to February 28, 1961, for purposes of VA programs generally, and to January 9, 1962, for benefits and health care eligibility based on exposure to herbicides ("Agent Orange");

- change the 1-year period provided by law to permit eligible survivors to receive accrued benefits (due but unpaid at time of death) covering a retroactive period of up to 2 years preceding the veteran's or other VA beneficiary's death;

- change the law to pay the veteran's compensation or pension to eligible survivors for the month of death, where previously the veteran's compensation or pension entitlement ended on the last day of the month preceding the month of his or her death.

The DAV had resolutions supporting expansion of the Vietnam Era, supporting a change in law to permit payment of all accrued benefits, and supporting a change in law to continue payment of compensation or pension to survivors for 3 months following the veteran's death. We had testified before Congress in support of these changes. We therefore obtained a substantial portion of the expanded benefit entitlement we were seeking. This legislation also made a variety of improvements in VA's education and life insurance programs, extended the time for completion of the work of the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission, and established another commission to review the adequacy and effectiveness of veterans transition assistance and benefit programs and related matters.

For veterans whose compensation is subject to recoupment of Special Separation Benefits (SSB) paid in connection with early release from service, Congress amended the law to provide that the amount of such recoupment will be less the amount of Federal income

tax withheld, based on the flat rate withholding. This remedies, for veterans receiving SSB after September 30, 1996, the inequity of recouping the gross amount of SSB, including the amounts paid as Federal income tax, from subsequent awards of VA disability compensation.

We were also successful in the 104th Congress in achieving major eligibility reform for VA health care. This was one of the most important veterans' issues before the Congress last year. Reform of VA's health care eligibility rules had become a pressing matter because of three major factors that changed the climate under which VA provided medical services to America's veterans. These factors were (1) the changing needs of veterans due to the aging of the veteran population, (2) advances in medicine that changed the manner in which health care is most appropriately and efficiently delivered to patients, and (3) increasing pressures to contain or reduce health care spending because of budgetary restraints on available resources. Legal constraints on how VA health care may be delivered had hampered VA's ability to change the system to adapt to these changing circumstances. Although Congress and all concerned recognized that reform of the system was imperative, Congress was reluctant to pass legislation containing broad reforms for fear that reconfiguring VA's delivery of health care for efficiency might itself require prohibitively large initial or even long-term investments. Ironically, in some areas, the more effective, efficient use of resources through reduction of per-patient costs required treating larger numbers of veterans in under-used facilities or services. Additionally, more appropriate, more efficient medical care for many veterans meant treating them in a less expensive outpatient setting rather than the more expensive, and often unnecessary, inpatient setting. Because many of the veterans VA served had eligibility to inpatient care but not outpatient care, this is where eligibility reform factored prominently into the problem. It was feared by some, however, that expanding eligibility for services, particularly outpatient services, might bring in a flood of new patients that VA could not serve without an infusion of additional funding. Thus, the issue was an especially problematic one for Congress, which wanted to make improvements but had to do so without substantial additional costs. For that reason, the health care reform legislation that the 104th Congress enacted did not fully achieve what DAV and other veterans' groups would have liked under ideal circumstances, but it was a good first step toward the broader changes we hope to attain eventually. Moreover, in addition to providing VA greater latitude to treat veterans in more appropriate and more efficient settings, this legislation expanded the services available to many of the veterans VA already treats and should attract new veterans into the system, thereby reinforcing it and helping solidify its future importance as the Nation's largest health care provider. This legislation also contained several provisions aimed at improving VA health care for women veterans and extended expiring authority for the treatment of disabilities related to herbicide exposure and service in the Persian Gulf. The DAV's Resolution No. 094 supports improvement of VA's health care services for women veterans, and DAV generally supports treatment of any condition related to military service. Needless to say, we are quite proud of our ongoing role and our intensified year-long effort to bring these much-needed changes to realization. And be assured, on that front, the DAV will continue to work to improve the health care services and delivery system for our Nation's disabled veterans.

The 105th Congress began with a totally clean sheet. Balancing the Federal budget was a priority issue, however. Of course, the push to reduce the Federal budget deficit always puts veterans' programs at risk, and many observers believed that Congress and the President, in his second term, would have more of a will to make substantial reductions in Federal spending. The President's budget, submitted to Congress on February 6, 1997, included a plan to balance the Federal budget in five years. The President' budget proposed to achieve reduced spending in veterans' programs through extension of several temporary deficit reduction measures previously put in place in the Omnibus Budget

Reconciliation Act (OBRA) and by slowing the growth in spending on veterans' medical care and administrative expenses by lessening the inflationary adjustments necessary each year just to maintain services at current levels. However, the President's plan assumes that increased efficiencies in the delivery of veterans' health care and in the administration of the benefit programs will offset funding reductions for the operations of the Veterans Health Administration (VHA) and the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), and that there will therefore be no reduction in the level of services as a result of this reduction in funding. The DAV and Congress were skeptical of whether these goals of increased efficiencies are achievable within the time and under the circumstances outlined in the budget plan.

Also, to help offset a reduction in the level of funding for veterans' health care, the President's budget proposed changes in law to permit VA to keep all its collections from insurance companies for the treatment of certain nonservice-connected conditions and to phase in a plan to allow VA to collect for certain treatment of nonservice-connected veterans from Medicare. Although the DAV had long advocated a change in law to allow VA to keep these third-party collections to enhance its capacity to deliver health care rather than return the collected funds to the Treasury as is currently required, the DAV did not support the use of the third-party collections as a way to reduce the Federal Government's obligation to adequately fund VA medical care. It is the DAV's position that VA should have the third-party collections in addition to, not in place of, full appropriations.

Shortly after the President's budget was released, the DAV and co-authors released their *Independent Budget* for FY 1998. This is the tenth year that the DAV, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA), and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) have published an *Independent Budget* (*IB*) as a more realistic alternative assessment of the resource needs of veterans' programs. The DAV authors the portions of the *IB* pertaining to the benefit programs, the general operating expenses for VBA and the Board of Veterans' Appeals, the budget for the United States Court of Veterans Appeals, and funding for veterans' employment programs in addition to a section on VA volunteers and VA Voluntary Service (VAVS). AMVETS prepares the part on the National Cemetery System, PVA prepares the part on veterans' medical care and research, and the VFW prepares the part on VA construction.

In February 1997, the DAV presented testimony to the Veterans' Affairs Committees of the House and Senate, and in May to the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Appropriations Subcommittees of the House and Senate, on the President's budget and the *IB* recommendations. The DAV voiced its opposition to the proposal in the President's budget to make the deficit reduction measures enacted in OBRA permanent. Among these measures is the rounding down of compensation COLAs. DAV Resolution No. 121 opposes the permanent rounding down of COLAs. In our testimony, we noted that making these measures permanent was unnecessary and, in the case of the COLA round down, would eventually erode the value of compensation. The DAV expressed concern about the proposed staffing reductions in VBA and VHA and noted that the *IB* recommended that staffing reductions not be made. The DAV also expressed deep concerns about the proposed funding levels for VA health care and objected to replacement of appropriated dollars with third-party collections. DAV opposed a proposal to prohibit service connection for smoking-related disabilities. The testimony included several *IB* recommendations to improve benefit programs and the VA's claims processing system.

Commander Reed also touched on many of these issues in his statement to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in March 1997. Commander Reed reminded the committees that no group is on the whole more deserving of assistance than those who have made sacrifices in our Nation's defense. He stated that veterans' programs should always be viewed as among our most important national obligations and one of the first priorities for government funding.

Because the President's budget for veterans' medical care was

particularly inadequate, the DAV and some of our other veterans organization partners began a series of meetings with members of the Budget Committees to urge that they provide adequate appropriations for VA health care apart from the additional revenue from third-party reimbursements and Medicare collections proposed in the President's budget.

Adding to the problem was the broad preliminary budget package agreement between the President and Congress, announced on May 2, 1997. This agreement bypassed the established negotiation process and cut the appropriation levels for VA's discretionary spending, which would have most likely been borne by the VA health care system and thus would have reduced services even further. In response, the DAV and its partners intensified it efforts to secure sufficient funding. We then began a series of meetings with members of the VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies appropriations subcommittees in conjunction with a media blitz of newspaper ads, radio talk show appearances, and letters to the editor. We also sent out a call to action by our Benefits Protection Team in which we concentrated our efforts on Congressional leadership and key legislators in the appropriations process. We followed with meetings between our group and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committees to reinforce support there.

At the time of preparation of this report, our efforts had met with some success in the House, although there are signs that we are also getting the attention of the Senate. On June 25, 1997 the appropriations subcommittee in the House marked up its bill for VA appropriations for FY 1998. The bill would provide $16.959 billion in appropriations for veterans' medical care, $54 million less than the 1997 level of $17.013 billion. However, this appropriation contemplates VA's retention of an additional $604 million in third-party collections. This brought funding back up to the level proposed in the President's budget. This bill also increased funding for medical and prosthetic research by $33 million over the 1997 level. The General Operating Expense appropriation would receive an additional $29 million over the 1997 level. The bill included $21.5 billion for mandatory spending to fund VA's compensation and other benefit programs. The full committee adopted this bill in its mark-up on the 8th of July.

The Senate VA, HUD, and Independent Agencies Subcommittee/Committee marked up its bill (S. 1034) for VA appropriations for FY 1998 on July 15 and 17, respectively. The recommendations included $17.027 billion for VA medical care. In addition, the Committee also recommended authorizing VA to retain third-party collections estimated to total $604 million, bringing the Senate Committee's recommendation for discretionary funding for medical care up to $17.631 billion, an increase of $617.4 million above the current level. Funding for medical and prosthetic research is increased by $33 million over the 1997 level, similar to the House recommendation. The General Operating Expenses appropriation would be decreased by $41.2 million below current funding, although additional resources will be made available through reimbursements. The measure, S. 1034, was passed by the Senate on July 22, 1997.

The differences in the House and Senate appropriations will be resolved in conference at some date in the future.

Of course the annual budget process is but one of the ongoing issues DAV deals with. Problems of Persian Gulf War veterans have been a persisting issue that DAV has been deeply concerned about and involved in. This year alone, DAV has testified on three separate occasions regarding compensation and health care issues relating to Persian Gulf veterans. Additionally, the DAV has actively lobbied the VA to expand the presumptive period for Gulf War illness. From the very beginning, DAV has sought to have an open-ended presumptive period for Gulf War illness. Recently, VA agreed to expand the Gulf War illness presumptive period to December 31, 2001. We supported this ten-year presumptive period because it provides veterans with sufficient time to file claims for Persian Gulf illness if they begin to develop symptoms, it provides researchers with sufficient time to find answers to this perplexing situation, and it provides us with additional time to

assess the situation.

The DAV also provided both oral and written statements to the Committee on the Evaluation of the Department of Veterans Affairs Uniform Case Assessment Protocol, Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences. The DAV expressed concern about the fact that the protocol examination placed too much of an emphasis on a veteran's history of smoking and failed to obtain any detailed histories on the veteran's possible exposures to environmental hazards while serving in the Persian Gulf. The Committee will be providing a report on their evaluation of the Uniform Case Assessment Protocol for Persian Gulf veterans later this year.

Finding answers to the cause of Gulf War illness has been complicated due to the fact that the Department of Defense (DoD) initially reported that U.S. servicemembers were not exposed to chemical or biological agents. However, five years after the end of the Gulf War, DoD announced that U.S. service personnel might have been exposed to chemical agents. Initially, the number of exposed personnel was considered to be small; however, the number of exposed personnel increased almost weekly and has now been set at about 27,000 military personnel that may have been exposed to chemical agents released after U.S. forces exploded Iraqi ammunition bunkers. Unfortunately, rarely a week goes by that some new revelation regarding the possible exposure of U.S. troops to some sort of chemical or biological agent or a study expressing an opinion as to the possible cause of Gulf War illness is released. In both cases, soon thereafter, contradictory findings or studies are released, further complicating an already complicated situation.

In December 1996, the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses came out with their report. Unfortunately, the report did not provide any concrete answers to the question of what is causing Gulf War Illness. While the report stated that, " veterans clearly have service-connected illnesses," it concluded that the current scientific evidence does not demonstrate a causal connection between so-called Gulf War illness and the environmental risk factors that veterans were exposed to in the Persian Gulf. The Committee felt that many of the problems experienced by Gulf War veterans were likely due to stress. The DAV questioned the findings of the Committee that stress was a likely contributing factor to the broad range of psychological and physiological illnesses currently being reported by Gulf War veterans. The DAV did concur in the findings of the Committee that further investigation is required to determine the long-term effects of exposure to low-level chemical warfare agents, and the synergistic effects of exposure to certain risk factors, and the possibility of an increase in the risk for cancers.

Several bills pertaining to Gulf War veterans have been introduced in the 105th Congress. H.R. 189 would establish a Commission to investigate exposure to chemical and biological warfare agents used during the Persian Gulf War; H.R. 250 would expand priority health care to veterans who served during the Persian Gulf War in Israel and Turkey; and H.R. 466 and S. 211 would expand the presumptive period for Gulf War illness (these bills were introduced prior to the VA's expansion of the presumptive period). DAV Resolution No. 227 calls for the expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for unknown ailments; priority medical treatment for those ailments associated with service in the Persian Gulf; and urges VA, DoD, and Health and Human Services to continue to cooperate in tests and studies to unlock the mysteries surrounding the ailments suffered by Gulf War veterans.

Another issue that has consumed much of our time is problems with VA's claims processing system. Congress responded to ongoing and increasing problems with claims backlogs and long delays in claims processing by establishing the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission to study the efficiency of the current processes and procedures and to recommend ways to increase the efficiency of the system. The Commission issued its final report to Congress in December 1996. Instead of being helpful in the effort to solve

VA's claims processing problems, the Commission's actions have themselves added to the difficulties faced by those seeking effective ways to overcome the problems.

In May 1997, the DAV testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in a hearing on the Commission's report. Like all of the other veterans' organizations testifying, the DAV was highly critical of the Commission's work. The DAV pointed out that, instead of studying the processes and procedures and instead of recommending ways to increase the efficiency of those processes and procedures as directed by law, the Commission concentrated on ways to reduce the number of VA claims to accommodate VA's current level of inefficiency. Even worse, the DAV observed, the Commission would accomplish this reduction in VA's workload by reducing veterans' ability to file and prosecute such claims and appeals.

The Commission focused heavily on the fact that a large percentage of VA's claims are by veterans seeking higher ratings for disabilities already established as service connected. The Commission suggested that these "repeat claims" and future obligations to pay compensation could be reduced by paying veterans one-time lump-sum settlements for their service-connected disabilities. The Commission argued that compensation should not be a "life-long" benefit for veterans. The DAV objected strongly to the government using lump-sum settlements, based on the level of disability while still rated low, as a way to entice veterans to bargain away their future compensation entitlement. The DAV cited the numerous disadvantages lump-sums would have for veterans and the many technical problems they would create for VA.

Following the line of reasoning that the cause for VA's problems is veterans filing too many claims, the Commission also recommended a time limit for filing compensation claims. If a veteran did not file a claim within a set period of time following discharge, such claim would become barred by law. This statute of limitations on filing claims would reduce the number of claims and would relieve VA of the necessity to assist the veteran in developing evidence to support claims involving older records. Again, the DAV strongly objected to such measure as a way to make the process easier for VA at the expense of reducing veterans' rights. The DAV argued that veterans should have the right to file compensation claims whenever they choose and that there are many good reasons why claims are not filed immediately after discharge.

The Commission recommended that the time for filing appeals be reduced from the current 1-year period to 60 days. The Commission produced no evidence to show that the ability to file appeals up to a year after the decision had in any way led to the claims backlog. The DAV's position is that this is just another way to reduce work for VA by excluding appeals not filed in a short period of time after the decision. This might reduce some of VA's work, but again at the expense of reducing veterans' ability to seek correction of erroneous decisions.

Also regarding appeals, the Commission recommended that the authority of the Board of Veterans' Appeals to correct VA regional office decisions be restricted by limiting the types of errors the Board could reverse. The Board's reversal rates have climbed up to around 20% and the remand rates have been up to around 50% of the cases reviewed by the Board. With this change, the Board's work would be reduced, but veterans would be unable to have many errors corrected by the Board. As with the Commission's other suggestions, this would reduce veterans' rights for VA's convenience. The DAV objected to the recommendation for that reason.

The Commission suggested that there should be a reduction in VA's obligation to assist the veterans in developing their claims. The Commission believed that the VA's "duty to assist" placed too much of an administrative burden on VA. The DAV objected to any lessening of VA's duty to assist on the ground that VA was created to serve veterans. This recommendation would allow the system to focus first on serving itself. The Commission had offered no data to show that the claims backlog was caused by the VA's legal

obligation to assist veterans in obtaining evidence to support their claims.

The DAV has long maintained that poor quality in regional office decisions caused most of the claims backlog problems. Because VA does not carefully and fully consider the claim the first time, it must perform much rework on claims, thereby overloading the claims and appeals processes. An internal study by VA has finally arrived at the same conclusion. The DAV has urged Congress to reject the Commission's recommendations and support VA's plan to correct its claims processing problems. The debate over the proper approach continues. The report from another study by the National Association of Public Administrators (NAPA) is due to be published in the near future. Preliminary indications are that the NAPA study may endorse some of the Commission's recommendations, but most of that report is likely to deal with findings on deficiencies in VA's management structure. The DAV will also analyze and comment as appropriate in that report.

The DAV is following the work of yet another commission created to study VA and veterans' benefits. As I mentioned previously, the 104th Congress established the Commission on Servicemembers and Veterans Transition Assistance to review the adequacy and effectiveness of the assistance and benefits provided to separating servicemembers to aid them in the transition from military to civilian life. The DAV presented its views to the Transition Commission in June of this year. At the same time, DAV National Service Officer, Philip A. Ridley, a beneficiary of transition assistance, provided his experiences and insight on transition services and benefits to the Transition Commission. In addition, fortunately, DAV's own National Employment Director, Ronald W. Drach, was appointed by Congress to serve as a member of that Commission. Hopefully, the transition Commission will not veer off track like the Veterans' Claims Adjudication Commission did.

There have been some efforts and support for a commission to study VA health care. H.R. 335, introduced in January 1997, would establish a commission to conduct a comprehensive study of VA health care. The DAV has steadfastly opposed the creation of still another commission, especially to study health care issues. This is an area which is already receiving much attention by everyone knowledgeable and concerned. The DAV is very doubtful that a commission could add anything beneficial on this issue, and such commissions tend to take a highly abstract, theoretical approach to problems and solutions.

The delivery of quality health care to our Nation's veterans continues to be an issue requiring a great deal of attention from all concerned parties. In May 1997, the DAV testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Health, in support of H.R. 1125, a bill to allow VA to retain collections from private health insurance companies, and H.R. 2015, a bill to authorize a pilot project on collections from Medicare for treatment of certain nonservice-connected veterans. The DAV noted that adequate funding for VA's health care delivery system is critical to VA's ability to meet the medical care needs of the Nation's veterans.

The DAV has two resolutions relevant to these issues. Resolution No. 019 supports adequate funding and staffing levels for VA's health care programs, Resolution No. 270 supports furnishing services to meet all of eligible veterans' health care needs.

The health care reform legislation passed by the 104th Congress required VA to establish an enrollment plan for veterans. Enrollment will be phased in and will begin in October of this year. The DAV has been monitoring VA's development of its enrollment plan carefully to ensure that it does not adversely affect those who deserve the highest priority in access to VA medical care, our service-connected disabled veterans. We are also watching the effects of the new system to allocate resources between the 22 Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISNs), as well as the effect of the VISN organizational and management structure which is still in its infancy. The rapid and marked

changes in the way health care is delivered will no doubt cause complex dynamics and a variety of transitional problems that will demand our close attention to ensure VA continues to operate in a manner that best serves veterans rather than its own convenience.

The DAV has been actively involved in a number of other issues related to the interests of disabled veterans. In May 1997, the DAV presented testimony to the Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs regarding the impact of legislation that will require all veterans to have a banking account for electronic transfer of their benefit checks. In accordance with DAV Resolution No. 125, the DAV has pressed for legislation to require the Board of Veterans' Appeals to review any decision alleged to involve clear and unmistakable error. Bills for that purpose have been passed in the House in the last two Congresses, but the Senate has not acted on the issue. H.R. 1090, passed by the House in April 1997, deals with that issue. A companion bill, S. 464, has been introduced in the Senate. Enactment of one of these bills into law will continue to be one of DAV's priorities in the 105th Congress. The DAV testified in support of these bills in a hearing before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee on July 17,1997. In that hearing we also testified in support of a Compensation and Dependency and Indemnity COLA for 1997 and in opposition to legislation to prohibit service connection for smoking-related disabilities. Legislation to permit concurrent receipt of disability compensation and military retired pay has been a major concern, but Congress has failed to enact legislation for that purpose despite strong support from DAV and other veterans' groups. Three bills relating to concurrent receipt, H.R. 44, H.R. 65, and H.R. 303, are currently pending in the House, and S. 657 is pending in the Senate. We will continue to push for a change in law to remove the offset between military retired pay and compensation consistent with DAV Resolution No. 006.

In July 1997, the DAV presented testimony to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee on two bills to amend the law pertaining to benefits eligibility in the case of veterans who commit capital crimes. The DAV opposed S. 923 which would make veterans who commit Federal capital crimes ineligible for any veterans benefits. The DAV viewed H.R. 2040 as a more appropriate response to concerns about burial of veterans in federally funded veterans' cemeteries when they have committed major crimes involving murder of Federal officers and related destruction of Federal property or support of terrorist activities so as to bring shame and dishonor upon themselves. The American Legion, AMVETS, the Blinded Veterans Association, the Jewish War Veterans of the USA, the Paralyzed Veterans of America, the Veterans of Foreign Wars of the United States, and the Vietnam Veterans of America adopted and joined in the DAV's testimony on this matter. At the time of the hearing, S. 923 had already been passed by Senate without any consultation with veterans' organizations, but H.R. 2040 is more likely to be the version passed by the House.

A piece of legislation which may be of interest to the DAV and its members that has been enacted into law during this session of the 105th Congress is Public Law 105-19, the Volunteer Protection Act of 1997. This act exempts individual volunteers from liability for harm caused to others a as result of the volunteer's performance of volunteer activities under certain conditions. It also provides limits on the liability in other situations.

There are several pending bills which include provisions to raise the standard mileage rate expense deduction for charitable use of passenger automobiles. These include the tax bills S. 949 and H.R. 2014 as well as H.R. 1731, and S. 676. DAV's Resolution No. 253 supports an increase in this deduction. Another bill, H.R. 1941, would amend the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) to exempt reimbursements paid to individuals for the charitable use of their automobiles from gross income. Consistent with DAV Resolution No. 246, H.R. 37 would exempt veterans' organizations form the prohibition against soliciting on U.S. Postal Service grounds.

Other pending bills of interest to the DAV and its members are:

- H.R. 432, which would establish a medal for those who participated in activities related to nuclear radiation (supported by DAV Resolution No. 245);

- H.R. 559, which would add bronchio-alveolar cancer to the list of diseases presumed to be related to radiation exposure (supported by DAV Resolution No. 219);

- H.R. 1149, which would amend the IRC to clarify the tax-exempt status of veterans' benefits;

- H.R. 1408, which would amend the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) so that the statute of limitations shall not bar a claim for credit or refund based on a retroactive determination of entitlement to receive military disability benefits (supported by DAV Resolution No. 220);

- H.R. 1409, which would amend the IRC to clarify the exclusion of veterans' benefits from taxable income (supported by DAV Resolution No. 008);

- H.R. 1399 and H.R. 1426, which would provide a presumption of service connection for "cold weather injuries" claimed as related to military service;

- H.R. 1532 and S. 813, which would provide for penalties specifically for acts of vandalism of National Cemeteries;

- H.R. 1540, which would provide for presumptive service connection in the case of disabilities related to service exposure to carbon tetrachloride;

- H.R. 1602, which would restore the grave marker allowance; and

- H.R. 2004, which would reinstate eligibility to Dependency and Indemnity Compensation in the case of certain widows who became disqualified by reason of remarriage after the veteran's death but whose subsequent marriage thereafter terminated (supported by DAV Resolution No. 237).

As you can see, although we may not have achieved all we would have wished, we have had another successful year overall. All of the details of our activities would fill up a book. Much has been done, but much remains to be done. We will continue to work to improve the benefits and services that you and all disabled veterans so rightfully deserve. Let me assure you that we will at the same time remain ever vigilant because we know not everyone out there respects, appreciates, and understands why and what veterans deserve. Also, let us continue to enjoy the close association and fraternal relationship we have with you, but especially, let us continue to have your support and assistance, because without you we have no purpose and without your support we cannot succeed. Together, we will meet the challenges and carry on DAV's fine tradition in the upcoming year.)

COMMANDER REED: It is now my pleasure to introduce National Employment Director Ronald W. Drach for presentation of Employment Awards. Ron.

MR. RONALD W. DRACH: Thank you, Commander. National Commander Reed, delegates and honored guests: It is indeed my pleasure to appear before you today to present several awards.

The first award is for the Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative for 1997. Our recipient this year is a life member of DAV Chapter Number 7, Columbus, Georgia. He is recognized within the business community as a strong advocate for veterans seeking suitable employment and training. He has been very effective in gaining the interest of local employers for hiring veterans.

He is able to motivate the entire Employment Office staff to

serve disabled veterans through team-building. Approximately 25 percent of all applicants served by his office are veterans. He is heavily involved in the Transition Assistance Program at Fort Benning, Georgia, which is near his office. This individual has assisted 497 veterans in finding employment. This is more than half of all those registered at his office. About 33 percent of the disabled veterans seeking employment assistance were successfully employed, and more than 50 percent of the Vietnam Era veterans have found employment.

National Commander Reed, it is indeed a pleasure to present to you our Outstanding LVER of the Year, John Graves of the Alabama State Employment Service. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: I'd like to read the citation:

> The Disabled American Veterans proudly presents the National Commander's Award to the nation's Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative, John Graves from Phenix City, Alabama, for your outstanding dedication and distinguished employment assistance to our nation's service-connected disabled veterans and other veterans. August 18th, 1997.

Signed Gregory C. Reed, National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: It is impossible for the LVER to accomplish all of that on his own. He needs the support of the entire office. Mr. Graves has been able to motivate the entire Employment Office staff to work with all veterans, thus resulting in a very successful placement rate. All too often, the other employees do not get recognized, and that is why we determined that the local office that employs the Outstanding LVER would automatically receive an award for the entire office.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Phenix City Employment Service Office is the office manager, Robert Guy. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: I'd like to read the citation.

> The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the Phenix City Employment Service Office, Phenix City, Alabama, for distinguished service to our nation's disabled veterans in ensuring them the opportunity to lead productive lives by pursuing meaningful careers.

Dated August 18th, 1997. Signed Gregory C. Reed, National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

MR. ROBERT GUY: I thank you for the honor for being here, and for you men and women who have just blessed us so much. And, you know, my prayer has always been to give back. And it's just an honor for the Lord to put me in a position as the employment officer to serve you. My dad-in-law was a POW and a disabled veteran, and he was going to be here, but he's going to be in Virginia at another meeting.

But I am thankful for people like you. And we continue in Alabama in Phenix City, us rebs down that way, to be of service to you and continue to do that if at all possible. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: Our next award is for the Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist. Several years ago,the Department of Labor and the Department of Veterans Affairs were criticized by Congress for not working close enough together to find employment for vocational rehabilitation clients. One way to increase the cooperation was to out-station DVOPs at the VA regional offices and other sites where vocational rehabilitation services were being provided.

In this case, our recipient is out-stationed at the Indianapolis, Indiana VA Regional Office. This resulted from the efforts of the regional office director. Our recipient was assigned to their employment study team. This team coordinates the full range of education, training and job placement services for disabled veterans.

This VA regional office has reported a dramatic improvement in providing vocational rehabilitation clients service in the past year. During the last three months of 1996, 108 vocational rehabilitation participants found suitable employment. By

comparison, during the first nine months of 1996, only 66 rehabilitated disabled veterans found suitable employment.

In the first six months of 1997, 113 of these disabled veterans obtained employment, compared to only 32 in the same time period in 1996. This is indeed a testimony to the fact that when out-stationed and provided the necessary support services, DVOPs can and do make a difference in the lives of vocational rehabilitation participants.

National Commander Reed, it is indeed my honor and privilege to present to you our 1997 Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist, a life member of Chapter 3, Indianapolis, Indiana, Kenneth D. McKinney, from your hometown of Indianapolis, Indiana. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: I'd like to read the inscription:

> The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the contributions made by Kenneth D. McKinney, DVOP, Indianapolis, Indiana, 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.

Dated August 18th, 1997. Signed, Gregory C. Reed, National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant.

Ken, would you like to say a few words?

MR. KENNETH D. McKINNEY: First of all, I'd like to thank the VA for putting me in for this award and also the DAV for me getting the award. As Ron had mentioned, with the Chapter 31 program, I'd like to thank all those in the State of Indiana that work in the VA Office and the VR&C, also the contractors throughout the State of Indiana, and thanks to all the DVOPs and LVERs throughout the State of Indiana.

And as Commander Reed mentioned yesterday, that he wasn't a Lone Range, I'm not either. And with us all working together, we can get the job done of getting disabled vets a job. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: Like the LVER, we know that the DVOP cannot do his job without the full support of the local office and local office manager. It is even more difficult when the individual is assigned to an Employment Office but out-stationed to the VA. It takes a unique spirit of cooperation and commitment to make this situation work. We have heard criticism in the past that the local office manager is reluctant to out-station their better employees. However, when their better employees are out-stationed, we see the dramatic results, as we see in Indianapolis.

Here to accept the award on behalf of the Indiana Work Force Development Eastside Office is the office manager, Ms. Marti Baker. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED:

> The Disabled American Veterans proudly recognizes the Indiana Work Force Development Eastside Office, Indianapolis, Indiana, for distinguished service to our nation's disabled veterans in ensuring them the opportunity to lead productive lives by pursuing meaningful careers.

Dated August 18th, 1997. Signed, Gregory C. Reed, National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

MS. MARTI BAKER: Ken told me all he was going to say was "Thank you," so if I don't do a little more than that, he's going to make me look bad. And since he's made me look so good today and in the previous year, I just want to tell everyone I'm honored to be here, very appreciative of the award. And Ken and I together will continue to work hard for not only disabled veterans but my responsibility is to all veterans. So I'll continue to work hard with the veterans staff in Indianapolis to keep us going in the right direction. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: All of the work of the LVERs and DVOPs would be for naught if it weren't for enlightened employers who realize that disabled veterans make good employees. Our next award recipient is the Large Employer of the Year, and happens to be a Federal Government agency. Not only does this office employ veterans, they are doing an exemplary job in working with their vocational rehabilitation clients. They currently have 125 veterans placed in

work, study and training positions under the Vocational Rehabilitation Program, the majority of whom are receiving their training at two South Dakota VA medical centers.

Our recipient has an agreement with the local union that disabled veterans will receive consideration for job openings and promotional at the medical center. As a result of that commitment, 24 permanent positions were recently filled by 14 veterans. As of March 31st, 1997, almost one-third of all their employees were veterans, and of those veterans, more than 50 percent were disabled veterans, and nearly 33 percent of new workers hired in the past year are disabled veterans.

Commander Reed, it is indeed an honor and privilege to present to you our Large Employer of the Year, the VA Medical and Regional Office Center in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Here to accept the award is the regional office director, Vincent R. Crawford. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED:

> The Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award is presented to the Outstanding Large Employer of the Year to the VA Medical and Regional Office Center, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, 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 employers.

Dated August 18th, 1997. Signed, Gregory C. Reed, National Commander and Arthur H. Wilson, our National Adjutant. (Applause)

MR. VINCENT R. CRAWFORD: Thank you very much. To receive recognition for something that you enjoy, as I enjoy improving veterans' services, is very nice, but no director could stand up here without acknowledging immediately that I'm really mostly a delivery man. My job is to take this award back to the people who really earned it: the human resources managers at the VA Medical Center and Regional Officer, the employers, the individual selecting officials who made those selections, and most of all our very talented and hard-working vocational rehab. and counseling staff.

Kevin Roseland, whom we share as the chief of voc. rehab with the Fargo Center, has two counseling psychologists and one support person, Bev Blackwell, Dr. Bob Peterson and Diane Rinehart. With those three people, there are over 400 veterans in training, and this year we have exceeded the record we set last year for job placement for disabled veterans.

The real credit for the award, I think, goes to Dr. Peterson, because, in addition to starting all those programs that Ron mentioned, he also found the time to put together a television program during Disability Awareness Week, which was aired several times on the local educational channel.

I have to thank one more group, and that is to thank all of you. In addition to the great work that volunteers do from the DAV and DAV Auxiliary at our medical center and our regional office, we have the benefit of one of your finest NSOs in the person of Larry Bouska, one of the new NSOs that Mr. Gorman mentioned in Earl Hutchinson, and, of course, your former National Commander Gene Murphy. Gene sends us job candidates. I hardly go to a meeting without Gene asking me what's the employment number for veterans and disabled veterans, and he is a great supporter.

And lastly, to all of you, thank you for your hospitality. Thank you for the recognition, and thank you most of all for the wonderful work you do. God bless you. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: Although they employ only 49 people, nearly one-third are disabled veterans, and those disabled veterans are included in top management positions. This small employer provides transportation, vehicle operations and maintenance under contract at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas. Our recipient is justifiably proud of their record of offering stable employment with little turnover.

In the past year, they hired only three employees, and two were disabled veterans. They are a company willing to make accommodations, and they have installed wheelchair ramps, bathroom modifications, and provided special parking areas for persons with

disabilities who need them. As a federal contractor, they are required by law to take affirmative action to employ and advance in employment qualified disabled veterans. From their record, they certainly exemplify the meaning of affirmative action for disabled veterans, which should be emulated by all federal contractors.

National Commander Reed, it is indeed my pleasure to present to you the recipient of our 1997 Small Employer of the Year Award, Phoenix Management, Incorporated from Texas. Here to accept the award is their President, Marjorie Strickland; Vice-President Leonard Strickland; and Contract Manager George Denman. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED:

> The Disabled American Veterans National Commander's Award is presented to the Outstanding Small Employer of the Year, Phoenix Management, Incorporated, Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, 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 employers.

Dated August 18th, 1997. Signed, Gregory C. Reed, National Commander; Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant. (Applause)

MR. LEONARD STRICKLAND: We were recently asked why we had so many disabled veterans employed, and our answer was quite simple: We look for the very best, and we look for the people that have the experience. And you are the people that have the experience and can provide the leadership for the contracts that we operate. And we thank you very much for the honor of being selected as the Small Business of the Year. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. DRACH: Commander, that concludes the presentations. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

It is always a pleasure to introduce our next speaker. He is a past national commander who distinguished himself as our national commander during his 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. His efforts on behalf of the Memorial have been instrumental in defining it as a moving tribute to the dignity of all men and women who fought and sacrificed life and limb in Vietnam.

The Memorial 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 Reed, National Adjutant Art Wilson, distinguished guests, fellow members of the DAV and Auxiliary and friends: As I begin my remarks here today, I would first like to introduce those that serve with me on the Board of the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial. They are: Enid Zysk, our vice-president, who is from Virginia; Al Linden, secretary-treasurer, from Florida; Hector Salgado from New Mexico; and unable to be here today is Ray Hall from California. We've got a fine team of leaders on our Board of Directors, and I'd like to thank each and every one of these terrific DAV members for helping make the Memorial's mission a success this past year.

I'd also like to thank the staff members who keep our program going, both on the ground in Angel Fire in New Mexico and at our DAV National Headquarters in Cincinnati. The Memorial's business side is handled by Nancy O'Brien, the Charitable Programs director at DAV National Headquarters. Nancy's a dedicated DAV Auxiliary member and a highly capable manager. Working with her all these years has convinced me that the Memorial is very fortunate to have her on our team.

Nancy, if you'd please stand for recognition. Because she makes it work for us. Thank you. (Applause)

The past year has also brought the addition of two great new

staff members to take care of our operations out in Angel Fire. The new manager at the Memorial is Butch Farley, a combat veteran of the Vietnam War and a DAV member. Butch brings us the background of 23 years in the Air Force. He also holds a master's degree in business and offers us the benefit of wide-ranging business experience.

And Butch's new administrative assistant is Artie Ann Ortega.

I tell you, I feel very blessed that these two great people have chosen to work with us. They were all but brand-new when the Memorial hosted its annual Memorial Day program this past spring, but it didn't slow them down at all. They put together a dynamite program, and the Memorial, believe me, has never looked better.

We promised America a Memorial Day program to move the soul, and Butch and Artie Ann delivered for us.

Now to bring you up to date on what's happening at the Memorial. To quote a song popular with my parents' generation, "The joint is jumpin'!" Veterans, their families and other visitors to the Memorial get even more value of the educational kiosk in our visitors' center due to the upgrading that we did to bring it into current technology.

The system now operates much more efficiently, and access to film footage, photos and historical news coverage of the Vietnam War is more rapid than ever.

We've also upgraded the Memorial's media room video projection system with state-of-the-art equipment. That means a brighter, more vivid projection experience for all of our visitors.

The addition of material for 150 more Americans who were killed in Vietnam brought the number represented in the Memorial's archives beyond 1500. We are pleased to represent so many who have given the ultimate sacrifice, but we would like to have information on as many of the war's 58,000 who died as possible.

To gather this information, which we view as a sacred trust with our departed brothers and sisters, we depend totally on families and friends of the war's martyrs. Please pass the word and be generous with any information that you may have.

The strains of 1960s rock music and film from the Vietnam War begin our new video, which carries the simple title, "The DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial." The video begins as a stunning tapestry of life in the war zone, and 18 minutes later leaves the viewers emotionally moved.

Houston filmmaker Joe Smith has created a touching chronicle that pays tribute to the human spirit in the face of war, disability, grief and death, and it emerges as a prayer of hope and promise for future generations of Americans.

It includes a history of the Westphall family, who originally completed the Memorial Chapel at Angel Fire in memory of their son, Lt. David Westphall, who was killed in Vietnam with other members of his unit in 1968 during an enemy ambush at Con Thien.

But the most powerful comments featured in the new film are those of the Memorial's visitors, veterans of Vietnam and other wars, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphaned children.

As you can see, we've been busy making the Memorial a better place to serve veterans, their families, their survivors and the American people. But let me repeat: We are definitely counting on you to keep the Memorial's program going.

That's why I'd like to take this opportunity to ask you to please join me in making a donation to the Memorial's mission. It has become a tradition here at the convention for chapters, departments and individual members to step up to the stage and make contributions to the Memorial after this report. I'd like to do that again this year, but I'd like to begin in a very unique way.

Last year, we had a very special moment when Virginia's DAV Department Commander June Springer stepped up to the podium with her adjutant, Dave Tannenbaum. June did something very important that morning. On behalf of the Department of Virginia, she kicked off an endowment for the Memorial with a $10,000 gift. This will help guarantee a future source of funding for the Memorial.

This effort is very important. Support of the Memorial from the general public has been limited and very undependable. This

has left the Memorial in a consistently overdependent position with regard to the DAV's national organization.

I'm very grateful for the DAV's long and unwavering support, but the Memorial does need to move closer to self-sufficiency. What the Department of Virginia did last year was very crucial to that process.

Now I hear that June Springer's success as commander in Virginia, Mr. James Clem, would like to lead off today's contributions with another donation to the Memorial's Endowment Fund. So Jim, if you're close by, I would invite you and Dave to step up to the mike and be followed by anyone else who would like to make a donation to the Memorial. Thank you.

MR. JAMES CLEM: President Joyner, it is my honor and privilege on behalf of the Department of Virginia to present a second donation of $10,000 to the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial Endowment Fund.

You know, this Memorial is virtually a grass-roots movement on behalf of our organization for a very important reminder of our Vietnam veterans' sacrifices versus the National Memorial in Washington, D.C. The DAV has taken on the maintenance and operation of this Memorial, and now we must ensure its future preservation.

The Department of Virginia therefore issues a challenge to all the other departments in this great organization to donate a dollar per member to this Endowment Fund for the preservation of the DAV Vietnam Veterans National Memorial.

At this time, with the consent of the convention, I would like to ask Department of Virginia Adjutant David Tannenbaum to read into the convention record the names of the chapters of the Department of Virginia that helped make this donation possible.

MR. DAVID TANNENBAUM: Ladies and gentlemen and fellow members of the DAV, the following chapters, department individuals contributed to our donation this year: Lester S. Gordon Chapter 2, $400; Norfolk Chapter 4, $100; General Anthony Wayne Chapter 58, $200; Arlington-Fairfax Chapter 10, $750; Salem Vietnam Veterans Chapter 14, $1,000; Prince William County Chapter 15, $500; Paul Long Chapter 44, $400; Archer T. Gammon Chapter 19, $500; Virginia Beach Chapter 20, $100; J. Robert Graham Chapter 26, $350; Al Bartraw, Jr. Chapter 50, $52; H. H. MacKenzie Chapter 3, $1,761. That chapter has 1,761 members. Patrick Henry Chapter 34, $200; York County Victory Chapter 13, $100; General Anthony Wayne Chapter 58, $200; Murray Rhea Peninsula Chapter 6, $100; and Galax Chapter 37, $117.

The following individual donations were received: George Hoeflein, $500; Dave Tannenbaum, $200; and the Department of Virginia making up the balance, $2,470, making a total of $10,000. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. GEORGE E. MOREY: George Morey, department commander of California. On behalf of all the members of the Department of California, we are honored to support the Memorial with this check for $1,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN J. SKYLER: John Skyler, Department of New York. On behalf of all the members, I would like to present to you a thousand dollars.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

JUDGE ADVOCATE EDWARD G. GALIAN: Ed Galian, judge advocate, and adjutant for the Department of New York. Will you take a small check of a hundred dollars from me personally?

MR. JOYNER: I'll take anything.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GALIAN: You've got it.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER RICHARD CHRISTOPHER: Richard Christopher, 4th national junior vice, a personal donation of $300.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: On behalf of the land of pleasant living, the State of Maryland would like to donate from the Department of Maryland $1,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. ROBERT A. MELCHER: Bob Melcher, the commander of the great sunshine state of Florida. We'd like to give the president

here $2,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: The Department of North Carolina proudly presents a check for $100 for this cause.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. NAXSENS: State Commander Naxsens would like to present a thousand dollars.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: The members of DAV Chapter 30 in Shreveport, Louisiana had a very good year last year in our fund-raisers, so we thought it would be only appropriate to double our normal donation, so this year here's one for $2,000.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. JOSEPH J. MALDET: Denny, from Chapter 103 in Cincinnati for three individuals a hundred dollars apiece for 300. And I'd like to throw out a challenge. Those machines out there take the money, so let's leave it here. Here's a $10. I put out a challenge to all our members. Joe Maldet.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. ROD G. RAMIER: Rod Ramier, San Jose, California, Machado Memorial Chapter 11. We'd like to donate $100.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: From our small chapter of Azusa 64, we'd like to donate $100 to the Memorial Fund.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: As commander, Prescott Chapter 16, Prescott, Arizona, our chapter would like to donate a thousand dollars.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. MURRAY S. MARCUS: This is Murray Marcus. Mr. Bob Hatfield, commander and former commander of Chapter 104 in Winter Park -- we've been discussing all day, "How much shall we donate there. We hear some of these numbers. We can't be cheapskates." So what we're going to do is we're going to leave it open, and we're going to get ahold of him, and we're going to really get those Indians back there and really beat the drums. I won't say how much, but we're going to get some big real numbers.

MR. JOYNER: Okay, Murray. Thank you.

MR. MARCUS: Dennis Joyner happens to be a member of our chapter.

MR. DELBERT J. FOSTER, JR.: I'm Delbert Foster, commander, Department of South Dakota. On behalf of the Department of South Dakota, I'd like to present you with this check for $250.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. CLIFFORD M. PIERSEE: Cliff Piersee, Department of Kansas commander. On behalf of Chapter 18, Department of Kansas, here's $50, and from the Department of Kansas, $500.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. IRVIN L. BRABANT: Irv Brabant, commander, the Department of Missouri. We'd like to donate this on behalf of the department, $200.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: From the State of Missouri, St. Louis Chapter Number 1, $500.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. JOSEPH A. TINE, JR.: Joe Tine, commander, DV 110, Tewksbury, Massachusetts, a hundred dollars.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. ROGER SULLIVAN: Roger Sullivan, Chapter 87, Leesburg, Florida. My chapter sent me out with best wishes for the convention without the checkbook, but I'd like to make a pledge for $250 on behalf of the chapter.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN F. ROETS: John Roets, commander of Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas, $500.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MR. WALTER H. WESSING: National Commander, Past National Commander, I'm a small boy from Missouri. I don't give much money, but I'll give you a little. So I've got something to give you, Commander, if you accept it. Judge Advocate, would you come up here and I'll give something to you. You, too, get a surprise.

Here's a hundred dollars. That's 50 plus a ten. Walter Wessing, Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri.

Now, wait a minute. When you're all done, you're supposed to pay taxes. I want you to pay taxes on that. So I'm going to pay taxes this year. That's $2. Now, I'm going to give this to you. You can spend it here or anything you want to do with it.

Commander, I'm going to give that to you, too. You're doing a good job, Commander. I'll try to give you a little more next year if I get some more money.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Ladies and gentlemen, on behalf of Steel City Chapter 39, Pueblo, Colorado, we wish to pledge an amount of $200 to the Angel Fire in New Mexico.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: In behalf of Steel City Chapter 39, DAV 39, Department of Colorado, I present this -- I received your letter and I was going to mail it in, but I thought I'd bring it.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you.

MEMBER: From the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, Department of Puerto Rico, $200; Chapter Number 1, San Juan, Puerto Rico, $100.

MR. JOYNER: Three hundred dollars. Thank you.

MR. DONNELL H. GENTRY: Gentry of Chapter 20, Glendale, Arizona. I'd like to donate $10, and I hope everybody from Chapter 20 will donate also.

MR. JOYNER: Thank you very much.

Commander, that concludes my report, and I thank each and every one of you for your support over the years.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Denny. I will now entertain a motion to accept Past National Commander Joyner's report.

MR. RICHARD TURBEVILLE: Richard Turbeville from Chapter 58 in California moves to accept with great admiration this report.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. Is there a second to the motion? Mike 3.

MR. JAMES E. BIXBY: Jim Bixby, Chapter 29, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it. (Applause)

I'll now call on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for the first reading of amendments to the National Constitution and Bylaws.

MR. RICHARD L. SARRAZIN: This will be the first reading of our Constitution and Bylaws report. There's no discussion today or amendments. They'll be printed and be on your seats in the morning.

The National Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws was called to order for its first session today, August 18th, 1997, by the committee advisors, Dick Sarrazin and Ed Galian. The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Dick Sarrazin was elected as the chairman. There being no further nominations, nominations were closed and Sarrazin was elected chairman. The next order of business was the nomination and election of the secretary. Sally Wilson of New York 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'll read only the number and the RESOLVED portions of the resolutions.

The first resolution is a rewriting completely of Article 11 of the National Bylaws which deals with membership and dues. There's quite a few changes in it. If there's no objection, I'll read the important changes, because most of them are just vocabulary and grammar changes.

The important changes are Article 11, Section 11.8, which has to do with the distribution of dues. Prior to this time, it would say that chapter dues during certain dates would not exceed $3. The state department dues would not exceed $2. And what we did was we changed that. Instead of saying "not to exceed $3," we made it

$3, instead of exceeding $3. And we did that for the various time elements that were in the chapter. In other words, you've got the membership dues, those who were members enrolled prior to July '75, and the next one is prior to June of '84; the next one is after '84.

I'm sure you don't want me to read these three pages. So without objection, we can consider them read, and you'll have them tomorrow.

The next one is Article 12, deals with national employees. It's changed. It's only a grammatical error change. It said the member of the committee, the board, and it said the nominated member. We just changed it to read "the board."

Most of these are housekeeping. The next one deals with Article 14. "A quarterly balance sheet of financial position of the national organization shall be printed in the DAV Magazine." We had "balance sheet." We changed it to "statement of financial position."

The next one was loans and advances under Article 14. It read, "No funds of the national organization or any subordinate unit shall be used for making loans of any kind except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws." We added, "or in the National Bylaws of the women's Auxiliary."

The next one has to do with Article 17, which is Articles of Incorporation. On the fifth line down, we removed "state departments and the National Executive Committee department," and we put in "a judge advocate and the national judge advocate." What that means is when somebody wants, a chapter wants to incorporate, used to get the whole the state Executive Committee have to be balloted and approved, and the whole National Executive Committee, and it's ridiculous and a waste of time. So what we want to do is just have the state judge advocate approve it and the national judge advocate approve it, and it'll be done faster and cheaper.

The next one is the accumulation of funds. This is pretty important. All departments have been having problems with this, because people aren't forced to do what they're supposed to do. It has to deal with Section 18.1, Paragraph 3 under expenses, and that has to do with terminology. "The expenses as referred to in this article shall not include those attributable to conduct of operation of any fund-raising project or subordinate unit or its affairs."

If somebody has discussion on that, we'll discuss it tomorrow.

The next one has to do with a Rules change which you adopted this morning.

The next one has to do with financial records. Let me go through them both on these financial records. They're Number 230 and 231, and I could just give you the change. One has to do with financial records of the state department, their fiscal years. We want to make the fiscal year consistent within the DAV and have it be the same as the membership year. So the fiscal year of all state departments will be the membership year.

And the next one has to do with chapter fiscal years, making it consistent. All chapters will have their fiscal year the same as the membership year.

And another one I'm going to ask for approval today. This is more a sense of conscience.

> BE IT FURTHER 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.

I would ask for this particular one -- I don't think it has to be read twice, Commander, because all we're doing is requesting the national staff to put the correct wording in. I would ask that this one be adopted. It'd be Resolution 189. I'll make the motion it be adopted.

COMMANDER REED: Mike 2.

MR. SIDNEY H. SHOWN: Mr. Commander, second the motion. Sid Shown, Nashville, Tennessee, Chapter 3, Department of Tennessee, District 8, the heart of the South.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The

Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: That completes our initial reading, Commander. The final reading and the adoption or the discussion will be done tomorrow. Thank you.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Mr. Sarrazin.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I will ask our National Chaplain Bergstrom to lead us in a closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. Almighty and Ever-Living God, we give You thanks at this time for the many gifts that have been offered at this place for the benefit of so many. May they enjoy what we have given as much as we have enjoyed in the giving. In Your Holy Name. Amen.

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

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 2:45 o'clock p.m., August 18, 1997.)

THIRD BUSINESS SESSION

The Third Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 19, 1997, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Gregory C. Reed.

COMMANDER GREGORY C. REED: The convention will please come to order.

Please rise and join me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of allegiance)

COMMANDER REED: We will now be led in prayer by our chaplain, Rev. Carl Bergstrom.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. As we gather once again to conduct the business before us, may we do so with open minds and strong hearts that we may do the best for our organization, for disabled veterans and their families, and for our nation now and always. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Please be seated. 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.

I will now call on the Credentials Committee for a partial report.

MR. HEATH: The Credentials Committee met this morning in the Conference Room 8 at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. Roll call showed 1,722 delegates and 48 alternates present. This is a partial report for informational purposes only, and reflects the registration at the close of registration at 4:00 p.m. on August 18, 1997. At the present time, we have 657 chapters, 48 departments, 31 national officers, 13 past national commanders, for a total of 1,722 delegates and 48 alternates, for a total vote of 11,903.

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

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

Will you please join me in welcoming the Imperial Golden Rodent Curtis Guigelaar, Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer John Engwiller and the Imperial Council of the National Order of Trench Rats.

MR. JOHN D. ENGWILLER, SR.: Ladies and gentlemen, distinguished representatives of the Disabled American Veterans, brothers, sister cats: I present to you our imperial officers. First off, our Imperial Golden Rodent Curtis Guigelaar from Sand Lake, Michigan; our Imperial Blue Rodent Harry Warburton from Port Charlotte, Florida; Imperial Bubonic Plague Jimmie Foster, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma; Imperial Nightingale David Oglesby, Havelock, North Carolina; Imperial Cure Rat Charlie Johns, Kansas City, Missouri; Imperial Hole-y Rat Frank Cummings, Metairie, Louisiana; Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer John Engwiller from Sarasota, Florida, that's me; Imperial Historic Rat Andre Magner, Muskegon, Michigan; Imperial Rendezvous Rat Floyd Buell, Henderson, Nevada.

Imperial Executive Rodent Edward Lastowski, Manchester, New Hampshire; Imperial Executive Rodent William Phillips, Seaport,

Delaware; Imperial Executive Rodent George Ford, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Imperial Executive Rodent Al Sorrentino, Palm Bay, Florida; Imperial Executive Rodent Newland Crutcher, Cincinnati, Ohio; Imperial Executive Rodent Harry Mulligan, Peoria, Illinois; Imperial Executive Rodent Robert Brown, Bismarck, North Dakota; Imperial Executive Rodent Michael Stokes, Lebanon, Missouri; Imperial Executive Rodent Joel Devenish, California; Imperial Executive Rat Johnny Casch, Washington; Imperial Executive Rodent Chesley Rutledge, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma.

Imperial Rodent '70 Paul Bailey, Kingston, Pennsylvania; Imperial Rodent '69 Fred Sutton, Terre Haute, Indiana; Imperial Rodent '68 Ernie Balcolm, Lake Panasoffkee, Florida; Imperial Rodent '67 George Zoscsak, Grand Rapids, Michigan; Imperial Rodent '60 John Dilaurenzio, who won big money last night on "Let it Ride," Connecticut; Imperial Rodent '39 Sam Vigil, Westminster, Colorado; Imperial Rodent '37 Charles Merrifield, Louisville, Kentucky.

Well, because he showed up a little late, and he's so thin I missed him, Hank Redding, Nevada.

Also we have Bill Brzezinski, Nevada.

At this time, I'd like to have our Imperial Golden Rodent make a few remarks.

MR. CURTIS L. GUIGELAAR: Good morning, everyone. First and most importantly, I would like to thank Commander Reed and the entire Disabled American Veterans national organization for their support and cooperation during this membership year. I think it was absolutely outstanding, and I appreciate that myself for the organization.

Secondly, I would like to thank everyone in the National Order of Trench Rats that worked so hard this year, because we had an outstanding year. The only thing we didn't do in great strides was pick up membership. But we have a couple of programs in place, and we're hoping to change that shortly.

I don't know how to say more from my heart, except that without all of you, our organization would be lacking members, and I'm just pleased that everything has worked out for this organization this year. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. ENGWILLER: During my travels, I've had many people come up to me and say, "Just what does the National Order of Trench Rats do?" Last year, I read the figures on our man hours, our dollar donations to the VAVS, to the community, to the Disabled American Veterans, the mileage that our workers put on. I'm proud to say as of the finish of last year, the National Order of Trench Rats has donated to the Disabled American Veterans Memorial and Legislative Funds $211,509.19 to date. (Applause)

And this Thursday it's going to be our privilege to present a little bit more. We're not a rich organization. We weren't formed to have a lot of money. We're to aid and assist the Disabled American Veterans.

At this time, if I could have the national commander, Gregory Reed; David Gorman, executive director, Washington Headquarters; Rick Patterson, executive director, Cincinnati; Art Wilson, national adjutant, if they would come forward for a little gift from our organization to them. I have a gift from our members to you. This gift, we hope, will always be a reminder that we stand ready to assist you in any way possible. (Applause)

Here's our Las Vegas ball caps and our 1997 ugly rat pin on the cap.

Now, Mr. Wilson, yours is only bigger because we heard you had a bigger office. (Laughter and applause)

Thank you from our organization to yours, and as I said in my gift, we stand ready to aid and assist the Disabled American Veterans. Thank you, and I hope to see you all later on during the week, and have a good time. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thanks again, Curtis and John. Thank you very, very much.

I will now call on the chairman of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights, Dick Giese, for his report.

MR. RICHARD E. GIESE: Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights

was called to order for its first business session on August 18th, 1997 by the committee advisors, Thomas Tomlinson and Joe Violante, who are to my rear.

The first order of business was the election of a convention committee chairman. Dick Giese 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 the 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 this National Convention. For the purpose of saving time, I will read only the number and portions of the resolutions.

Resolution Number 22. To provide a ten-year protection period for service-connected disability evaluations.

Number 23. Expand the POW presumption.

24. Provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

25. Liberalize criteria for Agent Orange claims.

27. We oppose the indexing of VA disability compensation benefits.

Number 28. To raise the estate limit applicable to certain incompetent institutionalized veterans.

Number 29. To allow all veterans to recover amounts withheld as tax on disability severance pay.

Number 30. Opposing any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security disability insurance benefits or any other federal benefit by VA compensation.

Number 32. To extend eligibility for veterans' mortgage life insurance for service-connected veterans rated permanently and totally disabled.

Number 33. Restore eligibility and increase burial and plot allowances.

Number 34. Supporting legislation to provide a headstone or marker for all veterans.

Number 35. Supporting adequate funding for all VA programs.

Number 36. Opposition to reduction, taxation or elimination of veterans' benefits.

Number 37. Opposing any reduction in veterans' programs.

Number 38. Oppose abolishment of the Veterans Affairs Committee.

Number 39. Opposition to use of VA-generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services.

Number 42. In support of a cost-of-living adjustment for military retirees.

Number 43. To extend military commissary and exchange privileges and space-available air travel to certain service-connected disabled veterans.

Number 44. Seeking the immediate release of any American who may still be held captive following World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and the return of remains of any Americans who died.

Number 45. And this resolution was amended by the interim committee. Support legislation to restore the provisions of the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996.

Number 46. Oppose any authorization of members of the Armed Forces for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

Number 58. Amend 38 US Code 3902 and 38 Code of Federal Regulations 17.119, Subparagraph (a), eligibility for auto-adaptive equipment to include any veteran whose service-connected disability inhibits his or her ability to ambulate.

Number 60. Increase face value of service-disabled veterans insurance.

Number 61. To provide an open period to apply for service-disabled veterans insurance.

Number 67. Disability compensation increase.

Number 70. Oppose the taxation of VA disability compensation benefits.

Number 74. Oppose the dissolution of the military commissary

system.

Number 90. To provide a temporary total rating for the period that an amputee has a new prosthetic device constructed.

91. Special monthly compensation for loss of female mammary gland.

99. Opposing lump-sum payments for service-connected disabilities.

Number 100. Opposing the permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments in veterans' benefits.

Number 101. Opposing any change that would redefine service-connected disability or restrict the conditions or circumstances under which it may be established.

Number 102. Supporting legislation to remove offset between military nondisability payments and service-connected disability compensation.

Number 103. In support of legislation to provide for reinstatement of eligibility to dependency and indemnity compensation upon the termination of a disqualifying marriage.

104. Opposing the imposition of time limits for filing compensation claims.

Number 105. Opposing any change in the VA's duty to assist.

Number 106. Supporting legislation to permit review of Board of Veterans Appeals decisions on the basis of clear and unmistakable error.

Number 107. Supporting legislation to preclude inappropriate remands from the Court of Veterans Appeals to the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Number 109. Oppose the reduction of the appeal period for VA decisions.

Number 110. Oppose any change in the scope of the review of VA decisions by the Board of Veterans Appeals.

Number 111. Opposing reorganization of the VA as a bureau within the Department of Defense.

Number 125. Oppose a freeze in the rates of VA disability compensation benefits.

Number 127, another resolution that was amended by the interim committee. Supporting a change in the payment of certain accrued benefits upon death of a beneficiary.

Number 128. To provide an increase in the special adapted housing grant authorization by Section 2101, Subparagraph (a) of Title 38 of the U.S. Code.

Number 131. Educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80 percent or more disabled.

Number 132. Eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits provided under Chapter 35, 38 U.S. Code.

Number 134. In support of legislation to allow for the payment of fees, expenses and court costs under 28 U.S. Code, Section 2412, Equal Access to Justice Act, to unsupervised nonattorneys.

Number 162. Amend Title 38, CFR 4.118 to allow for a more equitable range for ratings of scars of the trunk and extremities.

165. Concurrent payments of VA disability compensation and military retired pay providing for a compensable rating for certain hearing-impaired veterans.

Number 167. Supporting legislation to provide for a waiver of premiums for supplemental service-disabled veterans insurance.

173. To amend 26 U.S. Code 143 L4 to expand eligibility for veterans' tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds to veterans with service in Lebanon, Grenada, Panama, Persian Gulf and Bosnia.

176. To extend CHAMP VA to full-time students until graduation.

178. Recommend a change in the period defined as the Vietnam Era.

Number 203. To extend commissary and exchange privileges to veterans with service-connected disability and their dependents.

Number 204. Supporting legislation to ensure that military retirees receive all benefits which were promised them when they were entered into the Armed Forces. (Applause)

Number 205. Supporting legislation to provide presumptive

service connections for injuries classified as cold weather injuries.

Number 206. Supporting an increase of special pension for Medal of Honor recipients.

207. Supporting legislation to authorize veterans' pro-bono legal assistance.

208. Opposing the practice of allowing the Board of Veterans Appeals to participate in defending decisions before the Court of Veterans Appeals.

209. Opposing to subjecting compensation to means testing.

210. Supporting change in law to provide for commencement in payment period for temporary total ratings for compensation as of date of entitling event.

211. To establish Section 5307 of Title 38 U.S. Code as the sole means to compel division of VA benefits.

212. In support of a military medal to recognize and honor the courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty of those veterans exposed to radiation during military service.

Number 213. To support legislation that would exempt the benefits paid to wartime service-connected disabled veterans from the pay-go provision of the Budget Enforcement Act.

Number 214. To compensate Persian Gulf War veterans suffering from unknown illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War.

Number 215. Supporting a change in regulatory requirements for a temporary total rating under 38 CFR 4.30.

Number 216. To extend commissary and exchange privileges on the basis of an award of dependency and indemnity compensation.

Number 217. To extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100 percent service-connected disabled veterans.

218. To increase the grant for automobiles or other conveyances available to certain disabled veterans and to provide for an automatic annual adjustment based on that fact.

Number 219. Support for legislation to allow veterans organizations to solicit contributions on Post Office property.

That's the end of the resolutions, and I certainly want to thank my committee. They did work hard, and if they would just please stand for recognition. I think they're in the room here. But they did. This was a long, hard grind. (Applause)

Comrade Commander, this completes the report of the Committee on Legislation and Veterans Rights, and I move the adoption of these resolutions and the committee be discharged with the thanks of the National Convention.

(The above-mentioned resolutions follow:)

RESOLUTION NO. 022--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 023--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 024--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 025--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 17-

21, 1997, 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. 027--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 17-21, 1997, goes on record as being strongly opposed to the automatic indexing of future adjustments in the VA service-connected disability compensation program.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 028--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 029--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 030--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 032--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 033--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 034--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 035--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 17-21, 1997, seeks and strongly supports adequate funding for all VA programs.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 036--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 a 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 17-21, 1997, vigorously supports the protection of veterans' benefits from taxation, cutbacks, and elimination.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 037--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 038--LEGISLATIVE

OPPOSE ABOLISHMENT OF COMMITTEES ON VETERANS' AFFAIRS

WHEREAS, veterans, who have sacrificed to preserve our democratic form of government, deserve committees dedicated to their interests in the House of Representatives and Senate; and

WHEREAS, the Senate and House Committees on Veterans' Affairs have been standing committees for many years; and

WHEREAS, in the past there have been several proposals to abolish the Committees on Veterans' Affairs; and

WHEREAS, the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees have functioned as bipartisan committees to ensure that VA and American veterans receive the benefits they have earned by serving this Nation; and

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States of America must never diminish the obligation that is owed to those who served in the Armed Forces; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, opposes the abolishment of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 039--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 17-21, 1997, goes on record as strongly opposing the use of VA generated savings for purposes other than restoring VA benefits and services.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 042--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 17-

21, 1997, 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. 043--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 to 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 17-21, 1997, 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. 044--LEGISLATIVE

SEEKING THE IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF ANY AMERICANS WHO MAY STILL BE HELD CAPTIVE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR 11, 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 a 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 17-21, 1997, 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. 045--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORT LEGISLATION TO REPLACE PROVISIONS OF THE MISSING SERVICE PERSONNEL ACT OF 1996

WHEREAS, there are nearly 10,000 American Servicemen and women still unaccounted for in the aftermath of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War and subsequent military engagements; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Disabled American Veterans are deeply concerned for those servicemen and women still unaccounted for from those wars and military engagements and for those who may be classified as missing-in-action in future wars or military engagements; and

WHEREAS, the families of the missing Americans must live in uncertainty and anguish regarding the fate of their loved ones; and

WHEREAS, there is a deterioration in the trust and credibility placed in some of the government officials involved in accounting for these missing Americans; and

WHEREAS, Congress passed the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996 to provide guidelines for accounting for missing service personnel and for establishing procedures and safeguards to ensure that the next-of-kin of missing service personnel are kept informed; and

WHEREAS, Congress amended this new law and removed certain important provisions necessary to ensure a proper accounting of missing service personnel; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to restore the procedures for determining the whereabouts and status of missing persons, ensuring access to government information concerning the whereabouts and status of missing military personnel, and safeguarding the rights of these missing personnel and their family members as initially contained in the Missing Service Personnel Act of 1996.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 046--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 service members 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 17-21, 1997, opposes any rule or provision that would authorize use of service members for human experimentation without their knowledge and informed consent.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 058--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 060--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 061--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 067--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 070--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 17-21, 1997, vigorously opposes any proposal that would subject VA disability compensation benefits to taxation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 074--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 17-21, 1997, vigorously opposes any proposal to phase-out the Armed Forces Commissary System.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 090--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 091--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 099--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 veteran but would be for overnment savings and convenience; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, opposes any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 100--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 17-21, 1997, opposes permanent rounding down of cost-of-living adjustments for veterans' benefits.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 101--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 17-21, 1997, opposes changes in current law so as to redefine or restrict service connection.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 102--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO REMOVE OFFSET BETWEEN MILITARY NON-DISABILITY PAYMENTS AND SERVICE-CONNECTED DISABILITY COMPENSATION

WHEREAS, servicemembers receive severance, separation, readjustment, and retired pay not based on disability; and

WHEREAS, current law requires these benefits to be offset against service-connected disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, each of these benefits are merited for totally separate reasons and do not duplicate in any way service-connected disability compensation; and

WHEREAS, the current provisions requiring offset are inequitable; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to remove the offset between non-disability severance, separation, readjustment, and retired pay and service-connected disability compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 103--LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE FOR REINSTATEMENT OF ELIGIBILITY TO DEPENDENCY AND INDEMNITY COMPENSATION UPON TERMINATION OF DISQUALIFYING MARRIAGE

WHEREAS, Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is paid to surviving spouses, children, and dependent parents of veterans to compensate for the loss of financial support resulting from the death of the veteran in service, death of the veteran due to service-connected causes, or death of the veteran following a long and continuous period of total disability; and

WHEREAS, eligibility for DIC terminates upon remarriage of surviving spouses or marriage of veterans' children; and

WHEREAS, prior to the enactment of Public Law 101-508, the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1990 (OBRA '90), eligibility for DIC revived upon termination of such remarriage of a surviving spouse or marriage of a child of a veteran by reason of death, divorce, annulment, or voidance; and

WHEREAS, OBRA '90 removed the provisions for revived eligibility in cases of termination of the disqualifying marriage by death or divorce, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, leaving revived eligibility only in cases of annulled or voided marriages; and

WHEREAS, later amendments reinstated eligibility for cases in which the disqualifying marriage ended, or in which proceedings to terminate such marriage had commenced, before November 1, 1990; and

WHEREAS, for claims filed after October 31, 1990, in which termination of, or action to terminate, a disqualifying marriage had not occurred on or before that date, there continues to be no

revived eligibility upon termination of a marriage except in the case of annulled or voided marriages; and

WHEREAS, this unfairly singles out veterans' spouses and children for this treatment, where other Federal programs permit reinstatement of survivors' benefits under the same circumstances; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to fully reinstate the pre-OBRA '90 provisions for revived DIC eligibility upon termination of disqualifying marriages of spouses and children.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 104--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any change in law to limit the time for filing compensation claims.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 105--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any lessening of VA's duty to assist.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 106--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PERMIT REVIEW OF BOARD OF VETERANS'

APPEALS DECISIONS ON THE BASIS OF CLEAR AND UNMISTAKABLE ERROR

WHEREAS, final decisions of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) may not be reopened or reviewed except upon submission of new and material evidence or in the case of clear and unmistakable error; and

WHEREAS, a decision by the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit construed the law as including no right to review of a clear and unmistakable error occurring in a final Board of Veterans' Appeals decision; and

WHEREAS, it is inequitable to bar correction of a decision which is undebatably wrong and which deprives a VA claimant of benefits to which he or she is unquestionably entitled, merely because the error occurred or was continued at the Board of Veterans' Appeals level; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to provide for review, as a matter of right, of a prior Board of Veterans' Appeals decision in which a claimant asserts there is clear and unmistakable error, and to further provide for right of review of the Board's decision on this question by the United States Court of Veterans Appeals without necessity for a jurisdictional notice of disagreement.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 107--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 109--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any change in law to reduce the period for appealing VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 110--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any change to restrict the scope of BVA's review of VA claims decisions.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 111--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, 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 17-21, 1997, opposes such abolishment of VA as a Federal Department and reorganization as a lesser agency under the Department of Defense.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 125--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 127--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation which would provide for payment in full of all due and unpaid accrued benefits to the spouse or dependent children.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 128--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 $38,000.00 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 17-21, 1997, 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. 131--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 132--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 134--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation in Congress which would allow unsupervised nonattorney representatives to obtain EAJA fees under section 2412 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 162--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 165--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 166--LEGISLATIVE

PROVIDING FOR A COMPENSABLE RATING
FOR CERTAIN HEARING IMPAIRED VETERANS

WHEREAS, a significantly high number of veterans with hearing impairments have a zero percent noncompensable rating for high frequency hearing loss; and

WHEREAS, most veterans who have such a rating with the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) experience significant difficulties with such hearing loss in ordinary daily living; and

WHEREAS, the *Schedule for Rating Disabilities* provides a compensable rating of 10 percent for other comparable disabilities; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Veterans Affairs should recognize those veterans who are impacted by their high frequency hearing loss; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation granting veterans with high frequency hearing loss a compensable rating (10%) when it has been determined medically that the veteran requires and has been issued a hearing amplification device.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 167--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 U.S.C., 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" (38 U.S.C. 1912(d)); 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 17-21, 1997, 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. 173_LEGISLATIVE

TO AMEND SECTION 143(l) (4) OF TITLE 26, UNITED STATES CODE,
TO INCLUDE VETERANS WHO SERVED AFTER JANUARY 1, 1977,
WITHIN THE DEFINITION OF "QUALIFIED VETERAN" FOR PURPOSES OF
ELIGIBILITY FOR HOME LOANS FUNDED BY TAX-EXEMPT
MORTGAGE REVENUE BONDS ISSUED BY CERTAIN STATES

WHEREAS, The State of Oregon and four other states (Alaska, California, Texas, and Wisconsin) issue tax-exempt mortgage revenue bonds to fund programs that provide low interest home loans to certain veterans; and

WHEREAS, Federal law currently defines "qualified veteran" for purposes of these programs as any veteran who served on active duty at some time before January 1, 1977; and

WHEREAS, veterans of later periods of active service should also be afforded this benefit as a matter of equity; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to amend paragraph (4) of subsection (1), section 143, of the Internal Revenue Code to read "**Qualified veteran.**—For the purposes of this subsection, the term 'qualified veteran' means any veteran who meets such requirements as may be imposed by the law of the state issuing such qualified veterans' mortgage bond" and to make any conforming technical amendments necessary.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 176—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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to extend eligibility to CHAMPVA until an eligible child's graduation from an approved course of full-time education.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 178—LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO CHANGE THE LEGAL DEFINITION OF "VIETNAM ERA" FOR PURPOSES OF VETERANS BENEFITS

WHEREAS, under current law, the ending date of the Vietnam Era is May 7, 1975; and

WHEREAS, hostilities related to the conflict in Southeast Asia involved seizure of the container ship Mayaguez by Cambodian forces on May 14, 1975; and

WHEREAS, Armed Forces of the United States engaged in combat with hostile Cambodian forces during the rescue operation on May 15, 1975; NOW

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to amend the legal definition of the "Vietnam Era" to include the period during which United States Armed Forces were involved military operations related to the Mayaguez incident.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 203--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 17-21, 1997, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 204--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to require our government to provide military retirees with all benefits promised them.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 205--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO PROVIDE PRESUMPTIVE
SERVICE CONNECTION FOR INJURIES CLASSIFIED AS
COLD WEATHER INJURIES

WHEREAS, many veterans have been exposed to extremely cold weather conditions for prolonged periods of time while defending our Nation in such places as Germany, Korea, and now Bosnia; and

WHEREAS, in many cases, particularly under battlefield conditions, these veterans were unable to obtain adequate medical care at the time of their exposure; and

WHEREAS, many of the veterans suffering from cold weather injuries participated in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II or the Chosin Reservoir in Korea and were exposed to extreme cold weather conditions under particularly adverse combat conditions; and

WHEREAS, many of these veterans have their claims denied by the Department of Veterans Affairs because of the lack of documentation regarding treatment for cold weather injuries during

service; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to provide presumptive service connection for injuries classified as cold weather injuries for those veterans who were exposed to extremely cold weather conditions during military service.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 206--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING AN ANNUAL COST-OF-LIVING INCREASE OF SPECIAL PENSION FOR MEDAL OF HONOR RECIPIENTS

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States of America has deemed it proper and necessary to establish and confer the Medal of Honor upon those individuals whose actions during time of war were considered so far above the call of duty and whose actions were so motivated by a concern for the well-being of their fellow comrades that they selflessly placed themselves in harm's way without regard to the consequences of their actions upon their own life; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of a grateful Nation deem it proper and necessary to continue to recognize and to continue to appreciate the valor of these patriots not only for their heroism, but also for the living example and inspiration they provide as valued soldier-citizens to their generation and the generations to follow; and

WHEREAS, the Government of the United States and the citizens of a grateful Nation should deem it inconceivable that our Medal of Honor recipients should be allowed to suffer the indignations of a barely survivable level of existence lest the grandeur of our words extolling the high praise of heroism ring hollow and inconsistent with our duty, compassion and our concern for their well-being; and

WHEREAS, there has been no adjustment to the monthly stipend or honorarium granted to Medal of Honor recipients in many years, to heroes that are truly entitled, to individuals who were tested on the battlefields of war; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to provide an annual cost-of-living adjustment in the rate of special pension granted to Medal of Honor recipients.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 207--LEGISLATIVE

SUPPORTING LEGISLATION TO AUTHORIZE THE VETERANS' PRO BONO PROGRAM

WHEREAS, almost 75% of all veterans who appeal their case to the United States Court of Veterans Appeals are unrepresented; and

WHEREAS, unrepresented veterans face greater obstacles in obtaining a favorable decision in an expeditious manner; and

WHEREAS, the Court of Veterans Appeals initially set aside almost $1 million of its funding to create and administer a program to provide free representation to veterans unable to obtain their own representation; and

WHEREAS, since the Program's inception, more than 800 veterans have been provided with free representation and more than 1,300 have received some form of legal advice; and

WHEREAS, the Veterans' Pro Bono Program has been operating for the past four years and has not yet been authorized by Congress; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to authorize the Veterans' Pro Bono Program.

* * * *

RESOLUTION NO. 208--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 209--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 17-21, 1997, opposes any scheme to means test disability and death compensation.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 210--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation seeking an exemption of the temporary total ratings from this provision of section 5111 of title 38, United States Code.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 211--LEGISLATIVE

TO ESTABLISH SECTION 5307 OF TITLE 38, UNITED STATES CODE AS THE SOLE MEANS TO COMPEL DIVISION OF VA BENEFITS

WHEREAS, a primary purpose of section 5301 of title 38, United States Code, exempting VA benefits from taxation and claims of creditors and preventing their exposure to legal claims of creditors and preventing their exposure to legal process, should be to maximize national uniformity in the protection afforded to VA benefits; and

WHEREAS, a necessarily implied purpose of section 1115 of title 38, United States Code is to provide support for dependents of VA beneficiaries; and

WHEREAS, a primary purpose of section 5307 of title 38, United States Code, empowering the VA Administrator to apportion VA benefits where a veteran's spouse and/or children live separately, should be to provide the means for achieving both uniformity of protection and support for dependents in such living circumstances; and

WHEREAS, the U.S. Supreme Court's 1987 decision in *Rose v. Rose*, authorizing courts to compel veterans to pay VA benefits to dependents living separately, creates substantial risks that VA benefits will be divided on a non-uniform basis; and

WHEREAS, extending the protection afforded VA benefits under section 5301 to claims of dependents living separately would enhance the likelihood of uniform treatment of VA benefits while preserving for such dependents both the availability of apportionment under section 5307 for VA benefits and the availability of judicial process for veterans' assets not attributable to VA benefits; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to amend section 5301(a) of title 38, United States Code, to provide that, except as provided by

federal statute, payments of benefits under any law administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs shall not be liable to attachment, levy or seizure by or under any legal or equitable process whatever, including court orders of any sort whatsoever, before or after receipt by the beneficiary.

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RESOLUTION NO. 212--LEGISLATIVE

IN SUPPORT OF A MILITARY MEDAL TO RECOGNIZE AND HONOR THE COURAGE, SACRIFICE AND DEVOTION TO DUTY OF THOSE VETERANS EXPOSED TO RADIATION DURING MILITARY SERVICE

WHEREAS, members of the United States military have participated (both willingly and unwillingly) in test detonations of nuclear devices, served in Hiroshima or Nagasaki, Japan following the detonation of nuclear bombs, and served and continue to serve at duty stations on land, sea, and air where they are exposed to atomic and/or radioactive weapons, equipment, and nuclear reactors; and

WHEREAS, this service has been in the performance of their duties as members of the Untied States Armed Services; 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, the honorable service of the men and women who were exposed to ionizing radiation during their military service has gone unrecognized by the military and our Nation; NOW

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Disabled American Veterans in National Convention assembled in Las Vegas, Nevada, August 17-21, 1997, supports the recognition of these brave men and women who were exposed to radiation during military service with the issuance of a military medal for their atomic/radiation service to acknowledge their courage, sacrifice and devotion to duty.

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RESOLUTION NO. 213--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 214-LEGISLATIVE

TO COMPENSATE PERSIAN GULF WAR VETERANS SUFFERING FROM UNKNOWN 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 17-21, 1997, vigorously supports the Department of Veterans Affairs expeditious handling of Persian Gulf War veterans' claims and the payment of fair and just compensation for these unknown ailments; 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. 215--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 216--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 17-21, 1997, 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.

* * *

RESOLUTION NO. 217--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 17-21, 1997, 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. 218--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 increased since 1988, resulting in substantial erosion of the value of the benefit due to inflation; and

WHEREAS, the current grant of $5,500 represented only about 25% of the total average cost of automobiles in 1996, 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 17-21,1997, 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. 219--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 17-21, 1997, supports legislation to allow veterans' organizations to solicit contributions on postal property.

* * *

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Dick, an excellent report.

Do we have a motion to accept the report? Mike 3, you're recognized.

MR. ALAN BOWERS: Alan Bowers, Chapter 46, Massachusetts, moves for the adoption of the recommendations of the committee.

COMMANDER REED: Do we have a second?

MR. ROY REDMOND: Roy Redmond, Chapter 2, Grand Rapids, Michigan supports.

COMMANDER REED: We have a motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.

Thank you, Dick. Excellent report. (Applause)

I will now call on Richard J. Cosgriff, president of the DAV National Service Foundation, for his report. Dick.

MR. RICHARD J. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, Commander. This is the report of the National Service Foundation and the Colorado Trust, which is now included in the Foundation. I'll read the report at this time.

National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers and delegates: This year, it is a greater pleasure than ever to present the annual report of the National Service Foundation and its Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund. Our standard program has grown at a very respectable pace, and we're particularly proud of the work we have done to assist chapters and departments through the Colorado Trust, which was introduced to you last year at the National Convention.

There is much in which the DAV National Service Foundation can take pride. There is also much in which you can take pride as one of the Foundation's supporters, whether that support comes from your chapter, your Auxiliary unit or your dugout, your DAV or Auxiliary departments, or you as an individual, which we depend on very much.

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 our program? That is why I see the Foundation's program as your program.

The work of the DAV National Service Foundation is an expression of concern for your fellow disabled veterans and their families, an expression of deep kindness at the core of your heart.

As the Foundation's president, I was assisted during the 1996-97 term by such distinguished members as the national commander, Greg Reed; the Foundation's vice-president, National Adjutant Art Wilson; Secretary-Treasurer Bill Leach; Directors Bonnie Maile and Gary Burns; and also director, the National Finance Committee chairman, Glen Vogel.

We also offer our gratitude to Charitable Programs Director Nancy O'Brien and her staff at National Headquarters. Their assistance, always efficient, always thorough and always first-rate, is a key factor in the Foundation's success.

As measured by our consistent growth, we feel great satisfaction and encouragement as we look towards the future. As of December 31st, 1996, we exceeded our goals, reporting net assets of $15.5 million. This includes assets of 5.5 million in the General Fund; 8.2 million in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund; 1.6 million in the Colorado Trust; and $188,794 in the NOTR Special Legislative Fund.

During the past year, the Foundation has done much to assist the DAV's national organization. As part of our ongoing work, we provide furniture and office equipment for our National Service Offices. We maintain a fund for medical studies to help establish expert medical testimony in support of veterans' claims and the purchase of medical and legal textbooks for our National Service Officers as reference material.

The DAV National Service Foundation does not engage in any public solicitation. Rather, we rely on support from the DAV and Auxiliary members. And leaders of the DAV and Auxiliary at every level have earned our deep appreciation. Individual chapters and Auxiliary units, our departments, the Trench Rats and dedicated

DAV and Auxiliary members, all of them play an essential role. From the bottom of our hearts, we say thank you.

During the past year, we've recognized our foremost donors through 164 awards. These awards included Certificates of Commitment to 20 chapters and 3 Auxiliary units that contributed at least $1 for each member in their chapter or Auxiliary unit; Certificates of Commitment to 19 departments that gave at least $10 for each of their chapters; 103 Commendation Plaques for those whose total donations topped $1,000; and the Grand Memorial Honor Roll Plaque in Washington, D.C. that's on the National Headquarters, we had an additional 19 donors, recognizing them for a total of $5,000 or more. Their names are on that plaque in the Washington Headquarters.

In the year ended December 31st, 1996, DAV National Service Officers were responsible for the whole year, last year, of $473,000, an increase of $88,000 over the previous year, and I think we all owe the National Service Officers a great hand for their contributions. (Applause) Thank you very much.

And at this time, I'd like to call on National Service Director Ken Wolfe who will assist me in recognizing the winning National Service Offices by category, based on the contributions received.

Division I. From Togus, Maine, Gary Burns, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. GARY BURNS: Thank you, Dick. Good morning to the national officers and all my fellow delegates. I believe it's seven years in a row that Maine has won this award, and that accomplishment is, without question, not without a lot of work but also we had a lot of help. And I think it's appropriate this year that I recognize the people from Maine that help out with this all year long.

NSO Bruce Kaplan is working in the Communications Office. That's where he'd better be, right, Ken, if he's not in the room? I'd ask Norm Newell, department senior vice-commander, HSC driver, and just Mr. Do-it-All up there for us to please stand. Arthur Porell, Chapter 11, please stand. Sy Noel, Chapter Number 5 commander, will you stand? Paul Bisson, Chapter 4. These guys do it for the NSO Office in the department all the time, every week. Joe Mac, our department commander and our leader up there, please stand.

I want to mention also Harold Smith, our department adjutant who would be here. He's still in the hospital at Togus, automobile accident coming back from the department convention in Vermont in May. He's still in the hospital at Togus. Ed Heath, our department judge advocate in Chapter 11. Thank you, people.

By mistake, they put 1997 on the plaque. I told them just to move it down a notch and hold it, because we'll be back next year. Thank you very much. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, Gary.

Division II is Syracuse, New York, Harry Schultz, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. HARRY SCHULTZ: Good morning. I just want to take this opportunity, as Gary did, to thank the other people who are responsible for Syracuse, New York receiving this award. NSO Paul Brewer and my secretary, Ann Stefanini, without whom none of this would be possible and, of course, without all of the generosity from all of you. Again, I thank you, and we'll be back next year, too. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Division III, St. Louis, Missouri, Bill Beachum, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. WILLIAM BEACHUM: Thank you very much, Mr. Cosgriff and Mr. Wolfe. I'd just like to say that we are very fortunate in the State of Missouri to have a very fine network of department, chapter and National Service Officers, and to them, they deserve the credit for this. They have very aggressively pursued donations to the National Service Foundation.

And lastly, but not least, we have a very fine staff of National Service Officers in St. Louis, Missouri. I'd like to name them. They are: Kenneth Hale, the assistant; we have John Bickerton, Dan Memmesheimer and Robert Victor Price. All of

these people deserve the credit for this award. To you I say thank you. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Division IV, Boston, Massachusetts, John Regan, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. JOHN REGAN: Thank you very much. Distinguished delegates, it's a real pleasure for me to be here, because this is the first time that Massachusetts has achieved this honor. It's not going to be the last. I really want to recognize especially all the National Service Officers in the Boston Office, especially Bob Sinclair who, for many years now, has been our long ball hitter as far as the Service Foundation is concerned. He's done a great job.

May I ask all the members from District 1 over to my right to take a bow, because without their help we would not be receiving this award today. Thank you very much. Gentlemen, ladies. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Last, Division V, New York City, Al Giordano, supervisor. (Applause)

MR. ALBION J. GIORDANO: Thank you, delegates. Last year I had the pleasure of accepting the plaque for Buffalo, New York. This year I'm accepting it for New York City and, like Gary, we've had it for a couple of straight years.

I'd like to express my appreciation for my entire staff, my NSOs who are here, and also my support staff who worked very hard to win this award. I'd be remiss if I didn't mention my predecessor, Mark Winn, who set the program in place in New York City. Thank you. (Applause)

MR. KENNETH D. WOLFE: The real winners by this competition are all of those men and women that we serve, this nation's wartime disabled, their dependents and survivors who benefit from all the fine work. President Cosgriff and the other members of the Board of Directors from the National Service Foundation thank all of you for your wonderful support, and we hope that you'll continue long into the future. (Applause)

MR. COSGRIFF: Continuing on with this report, all funds that we control remain invested in the Trust Division of Cincinnati's Fifth-Third Bank. Our annual audit for the year ending December 31st, 1996 was done by the accounting firm of Deloitte and Touche. Their report will be incorporated in the official record of this convention. As a charitable organization, we report yearly to the IRS.

The National Order of Trench Rats Fund shows a balance of $188,794. I turn over to Commander Reed a check for $10,044, the interest earned on this account this past year. By request of the Trench Rats, this gift is designated to support the DAV's National Legislative Program. I have that check here to present to Commander Reed. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Dick.

MR. COSGRIFF: As I mentioned earlier, the Colorado Trust, an idea which was introduced last year by National Adjutant Art Wilson, is maintained as a separate fund in the Foundation. And I take particular pride in the Foundation's role over the past year in getting the Colorado Trust off the ground.

Almost $1.7 million has moved into the Colorado Trust since its establishment, as you recall, last year at the convention. We've made some well-chosen grants to chapters and departments, most in support of the transportation programs around the country, and you would be surprised how many hospitals did not have a transportation program until this program was thought up and suggested and worked out by National Adjutant Art Wilson.

Our balance as of June 30, 1997 stood at a little over $1.2 million, and we're poised to offer even more help to chapters and departments that need a hand in fielding the service programs, and especially the transportation program.

That's tremendous work, I'd say, and I offer my most deeply felt thanks to the chapters and departments whose generosity has made this possible.

I also want to thank the national organization, which has matched one for one every dollar that our chapters and departments have given to the Colorado Trust.

In addition, we want to thank the members of the Advisory Committee which consisted of one member from every district in this country and are in this department.

Before I close, I want you to know that the Foundation has once again this year pledged a half a million dollars to the Colorado Trust -- of course, we expect to get a million dollars from the national organization in there, too -- in service to all the disabled veterans we serve across America. We believe in chapter and department-level service, and we're determined to carry out and put our money behind our verbal commitment to the Colorado Trust.

But we need your partnership to take this Trust to its full potential. We need the chapters and departments on our side, particularly those who have resources they can commit. What we're doing is leveling the field for all of the disabled veterans that we serve across America. Now, that's a goal we can all stand behind. So I suggest that you support this essential program.

Mr. Commander, this concludes my report. And as tradition would have it, the Foundation stands ready to accept donations from the convention floor. These donations will be placed in the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund, the Trench Rats Fund or the Colorado Trust Fund, as designated.

And also in closing, I'd like to state that one of our long-time very active members that served in various departments, and a past national commander, and is still serving his department -- he served way back in World War II as a national commander -- gave a substantial contribution this year to the Foundation. And I think we owe -- this gentleman does not want me to mention his name, but I think we do owe a big vote of thanks for this contribution that he's given us this year. And his name will appear in the minutes of the convention.

I also received a check for a hundred dollars from a Charles Demele, who had to leave the convention because his wife was ill, and he's from California. And I just received another check from Black Mountain Chapter in Henderson, Nevada, for $100. And I want to thank those people for those checks.

I'll start receiving checks if anybody wants to contribute any funds at this time.

MR. GEORGE MOREY: George Morey, department commander, California. Dick, as commander of California, the largest and best department of the DAV, it gives me great pleasure to present this check for the Colorado Trust in the sum of $50,000. Yes, I said $50,000.

It also gives me great pleasure to present this check, the annual donation to the Service Foundation, for $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. We'll let George say whatever he wants to say when he gives us a check for $50,000.

MR. JOHN J. SKYLER: John J. Skyler, commander, Department of New York. On behalf of the department and its members, I'd like to take this time and opportunity to present to the Colorado Trust Fund the sum of $25,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. SKYLER: In addition, on top of it, I'd like to present another check to the National Service Foundation for another thousand dollars.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN REGAN: John Regan once again, department commander of Massachusetts. I have also two checks. The first one is for the DAV Colorado Trust in the sum of $25,000, and a second check also made out to the DAV National Service Foundation for $1,000. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: We've already exceeded $100,000.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER McDONALD: Dick, I want to give you my personal check in the amount of $500 for the National Service Foundation. I believe, put your money where your mouth is, and I've always supported the Service Foundation. This is in honor of my wife of 47 years, Merallyn.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. And you can return to California whenever you want.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER CHRISTOPHER: I'd like to make a personal donation of $300.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: Good morning, Richard. Once again, I have been extended the privilege and honor of presenting a check from one of our little chapters in Illinois, not as much as I did before, but this is from two hard-working leaders, a man-and-wife team, and so I would like to present to you a check for $2500 on behalf of Albert Reynolds and Carla Reynolds, Chapter 17, Decatur, Illinois.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. SCOTT TRIMARCHI: I'm Scott Trimarchi, National Service Officer and president of the National Guild of Attorneys in Fact, whose members comprise of current and retired National Service Officers. Mr. Cosgriff, I'm very happy to present to you two separate checks, one for the National Service Foundation in the amount of $3,500, and the other for the Colorado Trust in the amount of $1,000.

These checks were made possible as a result of the second annual golf tournament that we had conducted recently. These proceeds are intended for the continued service to departments and chapters to service veterans and their families. We look forward to a successful third annual golf tournament next year, and through the support of chapters and departments and their pledges to the holes on that golf tournament, we can make that possible.

I'm proud to present these checks to you, sir.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. That's $3500 -- these are both from the National Guild. The National Service Officers help us tremendously, and this is also from the National Service Officers. Thirty-five hundred dollars for the Foundation and $1,000 for the Colorado Trust. Thank you very much.

MR. DELBERT FOSTER: Good morning. I'm Delbert Foster, commander of the Department of South Dakota. On behalf of the Department of South Dakota, I'd like to present this check for $500 to the Service Fund, and also from Arthur H. Muchow Chapter Number 1, Sioux Falls, South Dakota, home of Past National Commander Gene Murphy, I'd like to present this check for $250.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. JAMES CLEM: I'm James Clem, commander of the Department of Virginia, and on behalf of the Department of Virginia, we have a check for a thousand dollars for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir. Thank you.

MEMBER: Hi, Richard. On behalf of the men and women of Chapter 2, San Diego, California, I'm pleased to present you with this check in the amount of $2500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. DON POULIOT: Don Pouliot, Chapter 2, San Diego, Dick's chapter. It's a pleasure to present him with a personal check for $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thanks, Don.

MEMBER: On behalf of the Department of Minnesota, we'd like to present you with two checks, one to the DAV Charitable Trust in the amount of $5,000; the second check we'd like to present from the Department of Minnesota to the DAV PRF in the amount of $5,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. That's $10,000. Thank you.

MEMBER: On behalf of Chapter 2, Kansas City, Missouri, I would like to present this check for the National Service Foundation for $10,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir. Thank you very much.

MEMBER: On behalf of Machado Memorial San Jose Chapter 11 to the National Service Foundation, $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, Rod. Thank you very much.

MR. REESE PHILLIPS: I'm Reese Phillips of Delaware. I wish to present this token of our appreciation to Charles A. Cashner, our past state commander.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, $100.

MEMBER: Richard, as the newly elected southern gentleman, supreme southern gentleman, they voted last night to donate a check for $100 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. CLARENCE BORDERS: Commander Clarence Borders, Missouri. St. Louis Chapter 1 would like to donate to the Service Foundation $2,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. ROBERT HUGHES: Robert Hughes, the senior vice-commander of Arlington-Fairfax Chapter 10 in Virginia. I'd like to donate $100 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JOHN ROGERS: John Rogers. On behalf of the members of Chapter 15, Manassas, Virginia, I'd like to donate a check for $300.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. LLOYD HELMS: Lloyd Helms, junior vice-commander of Chapter 30, which is located in Shreveport, Louisiana. The members this year would like to donate to the National Service Foundation in the amount of $4,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. STEVEN MEDAIROS: Steve Medairos, department commander from New Hampshire. I'd like to donate $500 in memory of PDC Pete Laterno, PDC Richard Goodfield, PDC Henry Tucker, PDC Robert Michard and Bert Packard to the National Service Foundation, and $500 to the Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MEMBER: In 1994, the 14th District lost a good friend; National Service Officer Hiram J. Fuller retired. And the 14th District, every time we meet, we pass the hat and we add a little bit to the memorial for him. And this year the 14th District raised $153, and it brings the total memorial to $1,069 in memory of Hiram J. Fuller of Minnesota. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. CLIFFORD PIERSEE: Cliff Piersee, Department of Kansas commander. I'd like to make this donation of $500 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. JOHN ROETS: John Roets, commander of Chapter 4, Wichita, Kansas. I'd like to make a donation of $500 to the National Service.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. That's to the National Service Foundation.

MR. CLEVE LENZ: I'm Cleve Lenz, Chapter 34, Kansas. I would like to present this check in honor of our commander. If you'll wear this the rest of the day -- and I want you to read that. What does it say on there?

MR. COSGRIFF: This says "Kansas Number 34. Thanks to our veterans, America is Number 1." Thank you very much. And the check is in the amount of $1,000. Thank you, sir.

MR. MICHAEL TEMPESTA: Mike Tempesta from Fresno, California, Chapter 1 in Fresno. I'd like to present you with a check for $2500. Like I said, "I'd like to present it to you," but I forgot it. So I'll have to give you an IOU for $2500, Richard.

MR. COSGRIFF: Twenty-five hundred dollars. Thank you. And we won't let Chapter 1 in California for get the $2500 pledge, either. We'll give that right to Sandy.

MR. GORDON THOMPSON: Gordon Thompson, Chapter 117 from the egg basket of the world, Petaluma, California. A donation of $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. BOB WILLIAMS: Bob Williams from the National Blind Chapter. I'd like to donate a $100 check to the Service Foundation in memory of our comrades that passed away this year.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MEMBER: Dick, on behalf of Salem Vietnam Veterans Chapter 14, Salem, Virginia, we would like to present this check to you in the amount of $500 in honor of Mike Giles, the George Seal,

1997 winner. I'm glad to present this as Mike is a very dear friend of mine, and we'd like to honor him in that way.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. RONALD LEADER: Ron Leader from Chapter 95, Tri-Cities in California, your neighbors to the north, presents you with a check for $350 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. FELIX MEJIA: Felix Mejia, commander, Chapter 70, California. Mr. Cosgriff, on behalf of the members of Thomas F. Durbin, we present a check for the National Service Foundation in the amount of $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. IRVIN BRABANT: Irv Brabant, commander of the Department of Missouri. On behalf of the Department of Missouri, I have two checks: one for $500 for the National Service Foundation and one for $300 to the Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. CHARLIE STEPHENS: Charlie Stephens, Salina, Kansas, Chapter 11 with 400 members, makes this donation to the National Service Foundation of $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Did you hear what he said? Four hundred members, and it's for $1,000.

MEMBER: Because we have the greatest NSOs in St. Pete, Florida, I'd like to present $500 personal donation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. BARRY SOUDERS: I'm Barry Souders, Chapter 5, North Carolina. The Department of North Carolina Disabled American Veterans proudly presents a check for $1,000, and we have the greatest NSOs in the DAV. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. GERARD SHUSTER: Gerard Shuster, state commander from the Department of Mississippi. I have a check for $1,000 Yankee dollars for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Thank you.

MR. JOHN McCOY: John McCoy, Chapter 19, Lakewood. Dick, a check for a hundred dollars.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. JAMES PENN: James Penn from Chapter 43 in Gardena presents a check for $100 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. BILL COLDWELL: Bill Coldwell, inspector for the State of Oregon. On behalf of Ed Mazza, department commander of Oregon, and all the members of Oregon, I present this check for $250 to the Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Thank you, sir. For the Colorado Trust. Thank you.

MR. LEON KERSTNER: Leon Kerstner, commander of the Department of Colorado. I have two checks: $5,000 for the National Service Foundation and $5,000 for the Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. GAUDENCIO REYNO: Gaudi Reyno, Long Beach Chapter 17, California, junior vice-commander. Mr. Chairman, on behalf of Chapter 17, Long Beach, California, I present to you a check for $500. Also I have another check here, a personal donation of Alex Andres, adjutant, Long Beach Chapter 17, California, in memory of his son, Artemio Andres, for $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Thank you, Alex.

MR. WILLIAM DAVIDSON: William Davidson, Chapter 7, Lincoln, Nebraska. I have a check for $200 for the Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. JOSEPH F. SYKES, JR.: Joe Sykes from Chapter 64 of Azusa, California. We'd like to present this check to the Vietnam Service Foundation for $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MEMBER: Sir, on behalf of Tri-County Chapter 67 of Pennsylvania, I have a thousand dollars for the DAV National Fund. I also have a $500 check for the Colorado Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. KENNETH RUBY: Ken Ruby, commander of the Department of Maryland. I would like to give you this check for the National

Service Foundation for $1,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. ROBERT MELCHER: Bob Melcher, commander of the State of Florida. Richard, we sent you a check for $50,000 for the Colorado Fund, and I now have a check for a hundred dollars for the Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Fine! Thank you very much. And we did receive his check for $50,000.

MR. RAYMOND RAULERSON: Ray Raulerson, National Service Officer from Florida. On behalf of Largo Chapter 143, Department of Florida in memory of the past commander of the chapter, Jeanie Sweeney, I'd like to present a $500 donation to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. JOHN KESSENGER: I'm John Kessenger, National Service Office, Nashville and adjutant, Chapter 8, Tennessee. On behalf of our 347 members, a check for $347 for the Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. This check is from DAV Chapter Number 8 in Tennessee for $1 for each member, and they have 347 members in the chapter.

MR. JEROME HAGEMAN: Jerry Hageman, adjutant, Chapter 7, Colorado. I have two checks: National Service Foundation, $2500 and the Colorado Trust Fund, $25,000. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Did everybody get that straight? Twenty-five hundred for the Foundation and $25,000 for the Colorado Trust. Thank you very much, sir.

MR. BELLAMAR BUNKER, JR.: I'm Bill Bunker, past commander, Chapter 84, Florida. I'd like to make a check for $1250.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. THOMAS RYMER: Thomas Rymer, representing Oconto County Chapter 45, Wisconsin. That's just north of the 1997 Super Bowl champions. I have a check here for $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. MICHAEL CHRISTIE: Mike Christie, commander, Department of New Jersey. On behalf of the membership of the Department of New Jersey, it is my pleasure to present to you a check for $5,000 for the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MR. JOSEPH TINE: Good morning. I'm Joe Tine, commander, DAV 110, Tewksbury, Massachusetts, with a hundred dollar check for the National Service Foundation. And we all know the best Service Officers are the best in Boston.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. ERNEST K. WHITE: I'm Ernest K. White, chapter commander of Louisville, Kentucky Chapter 6. I'd like to present this check to the DAV National Service Foundation of $500 from Chapter 6, Louisville, Kentucky.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. MICHAEL VENEZIA: Mike Venezia, commander, Department of Vermont. As it's been over the past three years, we forgot the check. This year is no exception. We've got a check for a thousand dollars coming to you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Okay. We'll keep the record.

MR. EMORY FARKAS: Emory Farkas, delegate, Chapter 73, Tamarac, Florida, a donation to the Service Foundation of $100.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. PHILIP KREISA: Phil Kreisa, department commander, State of Wisconsin. I have a check here for $300 to the National Service Foundation from West Allis Chapter Number 19 in honor of the NSOs in the Milwaukee Office. I also have a pledge from the Department of Wisconsin for $1,500. Adjutant Marbes says the check will be in the mail when we get back and "Go pack, go."

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. Both of those are for the Foundation.

NEC 3RD DISTRICT DAVID A. SCHIAPO: David Schiapo, NEC from the 3rd District from the smallest state in the Union, Rhode Island. On behalf of my chapter, Dominic J. Romeo from Princeton, Rhode Island, I would like to present a check to the Foundation in the amount of $1600.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MS. ALICE JEAN FAULSTICH: Jean Faulstich, commander, Chapter 1, Minneapolis, presents this check from our members for $5,000 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you. This is a check for $5,000 from the Minneapolis Chapter Number 1. Thank you very much. That's to the Foundation.

MR. LLEWELLYN SNOWBECK: Lew Snowbeck, Minneapolis Chapter Number 1, a hundred dollars for the Foundation and a hundred dollars for the Charitable Trust.

MR. COSGRIFF: You've been giving every year. Thank you very much.

MR. FRED CHELLERSON: I'm Fred Chellerson, Minot Chapter Number 54, a hundred dollars for the National Service Foundation for all the good work they've done for me. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. ROBERT WILCOX: Robert Wilcox, past commander of Chapter 23 in Santa Ana, California, a hundred dollars for the Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir. This is a hundred dollars from Jack Fisher Chapter Number 23 in California for the Foundation.

MR. JAMES HESS: I'm Jim Hess from the Department of Iowa. I'm the commander. I'd like to present this check to the DAV National Service Foundation for $100 and donated in memory of our dear friend and Past Department Commander Russell Bain.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MEMBER: On behalf of Chapter 20 and its members, I'd like to present this check for $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. GORDON FORRETT: Gordon Forrett, commander, Chapter 15, 142 strong from the great State of Vermont, gives $300 in memory of John Spicer.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. JOSEPH MacDONALD: I'm Joseph MacDonald from the Department of Maine, and I'd like to present a check for the sum of $500.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much. That's to the Foundation.

MR. VICTOR J. LAMPE: Victor J. Lampe, commander of Cincinnati Chapter Number 1, mother chapter of this Disabled American Veterans, and thank you, Commander Reed, for sending Big Mike to our chapter at our meeting. I'd like to present you with a check for $3,000.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much, sir.

MR. RICHARD FETTIS: Richard Fettis, commander of San Jacino Chapter 1 of the great State of Texas, proudly presents a check to the DAV National Service Foundation in the amount of a thousand dollars.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir.

MS. JANET FISHER: Janet Fisher, Chapter 3, District 15, Topeka, Kansas, $200, part of my winnings from the floor.

MR. COSGRIFF: Is that right! Here's her winnings from the floor, two $100 bills. Thank you very much.

MR. JOSEPH MALDET: Joe Maldet attaches a contribution to the National Service Foundation from Harry F. Grote, Jr., Chapter 103, Department of Ohio. It honors $100 each for three of our living members: Stanley Grimes, Elmer H. Broder, and Paul A. Mitcher. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you, sir. That's for $300.

MEMBER: Hi, Dick! This is my check for $200, Chapter 2, San Diego.

MR. COSGRIFF: Chris gives us a contribution every year. Thank you, Chris.

MR. MICHAEL GOTT: Michael Gott, commander of the Department of Hawaii. The department pledges $500 to the National Service Foundation.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. TIM PENNINGTON: I'm Tim Pennington, commander of the Department of Arkansas. I have two checks for you here today from all of our members on behalf of the National Service

Foundation. We have a check for $1,000, and then we have another check from Fort Smith, Arkansas for the National Service Foundation of a hundred dollars.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

MR. LESTER JAMES GRAHAM: Les Jim Graham, largest chapter in the entire world, Chapter 2, San Diego, donating a hundred dollars in memory of a lifelong friend who just passed away in New Orleans, also a member, Pete Peterson. And the check's in the mail, I swear it.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

MR. GEORGE WERNER: George Werner, Chapter 38, the Three Crosses of New Mexico, donates personally $100 in the name of my chapter. Thank you.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you very much.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GALIAN: One hundred dollars out of my own pocket.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you. This last check is a check to the Foundation from Ed Galian, past national commander, for $100.

In just a minute, I'll give you some figures here.

MR. WALTER WESSING: I can't give you much this time. I tried to make it. I had to go back to the room and get some medicine to get circulating again. But here's a hundred dollars in memory of Jack Tedrow, Maria Tedrow's husband. Remember that? My name's Walter Wessing from Kansas City, Missouri, Chapter Number 2. That's a hundred dollars.

Commander, I hope to see you next year.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Walter.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you.

We're trying to get a ball park to give to you for the Foundation. We don't have it. I don't know if we have the figure for the Colorado Trust as yet. It's a lot of money. These are ball park figures: 90,000 for the Foundation and 137,000 for the Colorado Trust. That's over $200,000. (Applause)

Thank you very much, Commander. And Commander, again, I want to apologize to you for not getting you out in California during the month of February, to get you out of Indiana. But we'll see if we can't do something better for you next year.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, sir. And thank you for all your hard work, Dick.

MR. COSGRIFF: Thank you. Mr. Commander, I'd like to make a motion that you accept this report.

COMMANDER REED: We have a motion on the floor to accept the report of Mr. Cosgriff. Mike 3.

MR. ALAN BOWERS: If that's a motion, Alan Bowers, Chapter 46, Massachusetts would second that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it. Thank you, Dick, and thank all of you out there for your generosity. (Applause)

Deloitte & Touche LLP

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

Financial Statements for the Years Ended December 31, 1996 and 1995 and Independent Auditors' Report

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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, 1996 and 1995 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, 1996 and 1995, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the years then ended in conformity with generally accepted accounting principles.

As discussed in Note 2 to the financial statements in 1996, the Foundation changed its method of accounting for investments in marketable securities to conform with Statement of Financial Accounting Standards No. 124 and, retroactively, restated the 1995 financial statements for the change.

Deloitte & Touche LLP

February 10, 1997

Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu International

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION 203

STATEMENTS OF FINANCIAL POSITION
DECEMBER 31, 1996 AND 1995

ASSETS	**1996**	**1995 (Restated)**
CASH, (including $26,271 relating to The Colorado Trust in 1996) (Note 2)	$ 63,499	$ 34,584
INTEREST AND DIVIDENDS RECEIVABLE (Note 2)	101,970	137,802
CONTRIBUTION RECEIVABLE	25,050	
THE COLORADO TRUST RECEIVABLE FROM DAV (Notes 2,3)	558,600	
PREPAID EXPENSES	322,832	9,340
INVESTMENTS - Marketable securities (including $224,124 relating to The Colorado Trust in 1996) (Note 2)	14,523,581	12,018,387
TOTAL	$15,595,532	$12,200,113
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
LIABILITIES:		
Due to DAV (Note 3)	$ 46,713	$ 44,231
Due to DAV legislative program (Note 2)	10,044	10,829
Other liabilities	19,881	5,000
Total liabilities	76,638	60,060
NET ASSETS (Note 2):		
Unrestricted net assets:		
General	3,501,707	3,455,457
The Colorado Trust	500,000	
Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund	8,276,320	7,385,956
Accumulated unrealized appreciation of investments	1,927,003	1,113,846
Total unrestricted net assets	14,205,030	11,955,259
Temporarily restricted net assets - The Colorado Trust	1,125,070	
Permanently restricted net assets - National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Program	188,794	184,794
Total net assets	15,518,894	12,140,053
TOTAL	$15,595,532	$12,200,113

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF ACTIVITIES
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 AND 1995

	1996				1995 (Restated)		
	General and Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	The Colorado Trust (Temporarily Restricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total	General and Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund (Unrestricted)	National Order of Trench Rats (Permanently Restricted)	Total
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUES (Notes 2,3):							
Public support - contributions and bequests	$ 890,364	$ 1,117,200	$ 4,000	$ 2,011,564	$ 649,667	$ 3,000	$ 652,667
Revenues:							
Interest and dividend income - Unrestricted	607,230			607,230	589,974		589,974
Interest and dividend income - Temporarily restricted		7,870		7,870			
Interest and dividend income - NOTR	10,044			10,044	10,829		10,829
Gain on sale of investment securities	156,308			156,308	221,628		221,628
Total revenues	773,582	7,870		781,452	822,431		822,431
Total public support and revenues	1,663,946	1,125,070	4,000	2,793,016	1,472,098	3,000	1,475,098
EXPENSES - Supporting services - Management and general	153,419			153,419	136,971		136,971
NET TRANSFERS TO DAV NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (Notes 2,3)	73,913			73,913	84,021		84,021
NET CHANGE IN NET ASSETS BEFORE UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	1,436,614	1,125,070	4,000	2,565,684	1,251,106	3,000	1,254,106
UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	813,157			813,157	1,113,846		1,113,846
NET CHANGE IN NET ASSETS AFTER UNREALIZED APPRECIATION OF INVESTMENTS	2,249,771	1,125,070	4,000	3,378,841	2,364,952	3,000	2,367,952
NET ASSETS, Beginning of year	11,955,259		184,794	12,140,053	9,590,307	181,794	9,772,101
NET ASSETS, End of year	$ 14,205,030	$ 1,125,070	$ 188,794	$ 15,518,894	$ 11,955,259	$ 184,794	$ 12,140,053

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 AND 1995

	1996	1995
ADMINISTRATIVE CHARGES (Note 3)	$ 89,385	$ 84,743
TRAVEL AND RELATED EXPENSES	8,443	10,747
INSURANCE	3,974	3,583
PROFESSIONAL SERVICES	10,918	3,550
AWARDS	2,820	3,172
PRINTING, POSTAGE AND SUPPLIES	14,457	11,652
REGISTRATION FEES	85	40
INVESTMENT TRUSTEE FEES	22,563	19,039
MISCELLANEOUS	774	445
TOTAL	$153,419	$136,971

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

STATEMENTS OF CASH FLOWS
YEARS ENDING DECEMBER 31, 1996 AND 1995

	1996	1995 (Restated)
CASH FLOWS FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES:		
Increase in unrestricted and temporarily restricted net assets	$ 3,374,841	$ 2,364,952
Adjustments to reconcile increase in net assets to net cash provided by operating activities:		
Unrealized gain on investments	(813,157)	(1,113,846)
Amortization expense		(1,758)
Investment gains	(156,308)	(221,628)
Changes in operating assets and liabilities:		
Interest and dividends receivable	35,832	(1,123)
Contribution receivable	(583,650)	
Prepaid expenses	(313,492)	(6,106)
Due to DAV	2,482	5,026
Due to DAV legislative program	(785)	(515)
Other	14,881	(4,000)
Net cash provided by operating activities	1,560,644	1,021,002
CASH FLOWS FROM INVESTING ACTIVITIES:		
Purchases of investments	(8,805,498)	(4,923,909)
Proceeds from sale of investments	7,269,769	3,895,847
Net cash used by investing activities	(1,535,729)	(1,028,062)
CASH FLOW FROM FINANCING ACTIVITIES:		
Contributions of permanently restricted assets	4,000	3,000
NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH	28,915	(4,060)
CASH, Beginning of year	34,584	38,644
CASH, End of year	$ 63,499	$ 34,584

See notes to financial statements.

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS
NATIONAL SERVICE FOUNDATION

NOTES TO FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31, 1996 AND 1995 (RESTATED)

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 1996, the Board designated $500,000 for The Colorado Trust discussed below.

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 1996, The Colorado Trust received $558,600 in contributions which were matched by DAV. Additionally, the Foundation's board designated $500,000 for use by The Colorado Trust, which is included in unrestricted net assets.

Permanently Restricted Net Assets - Contributions to the National Order of Trench Rates DAV Legislative Program are permanently restricted. Investment income of $10,044 and $10,829, in 1996 and 1995, respectively, from the National Order of Trench Rats DAV Legislative Program are transferred to DAV and are temporarily restricted for use by DAV's Legislative Program.

Investments in Securities - In 1996, the Foundation adopted Statement of Financial Accounting Standards (SFAS) No. 124 "Accounting for Certain Investments Held by Not-for-Profit Organizations," the effects of which have been applied restroactively. Under SFAS No. 124, investments 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. The effect on unrestricted net assets at January 1, 1995 is immaterial.

Investments in securities consist of equity securities, corporate bonds and U.S. Treasury Notes. 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:

1996	Cost	Market	Unrealized Gain
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
1995			
Cash Equivalents	$ 184,403	$ 184,403	
Corporate Bonds	600,000	607,077	$ 7,077
U.S. Treasury Notes	5,650,000	6,036,447	386,447
Common Stocks	4,470,138	5,190,460	720,322
Total	$10,904,541	$12,018,387	$ 1,113,846

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.

3. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

The DAV provides the Foundation with the use of DAV personnel, facilities and equipment. DAV charged the Foundation $89,385 and $84,743 in 1996 and 1995, respectively, for personnel services. At December 31, 1996 and 1995, the Foundation owed $46,713 and $44,231, respectively, for personnel services. Facilities and equipment are provided by the DAV at no charge.

Additionally, as discussed in Note 2, DAV contributed $558,600 to The Colorado Trust. This balance was payable to The Colorado Trust by DAV at December 31, 1996.

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.

* * * * * *

I will now call on the Constitution and Bylaws Committee for their final report.

MR. SARRAZIN: I'll preface this with all the districts were represented, and you all elected your own delegates, so you know who they are.

Comrade Commander and delegates: I will now proceed with the second reading of the proposed changes to the Constitution and Bylaws, which are recommended for adoption. In the interest of time, again, I'll only read the number and the RESOLVED portions of these resolutions.

MR. ED PALMER: Mike 1. Comrade Commander, Ed Palmer from Chapter 198, Texas, District 20. We're trying to take notes. Some of us were sent here by our chapters. Some of these people may not be interested, but we cannot understand when we have so much commotion going on at the back. Could we get some quiet, please?

COMMANDER REED: Thank you very much. You heard the delegate. This is a very important part of our convention. Would you please give Mr. Sarrazin your undivided attention. If you want to have a conversation, why don't you just go out in the hall, okay? Thank you.

MR. SARRAZIN: This will be the second and final reading of these resolutions. The first one is a complete redo of Article 11, which changed the membership. This is the longest one. I'll preface this. Most of it is just simply housekeeping. It must be read twice. So Article 11, Membership. You all have a copy of this, so if I make a mistake reading it, it's not a mistake, it's done on purpose. It's just to see if you're awake, okay?

Section 11.1: Definition

Members are persons who have met the eligibility criteria set out herein, and have paid the appropriate dues. There shall be no associate, special or honorary memberships. Members who are under suspension are not considered "members" under these Bylaws.

Section 11.2: Membership Eligibility

Paragraph 1: (a) --

and you have your notes, so I won't read the notes --

Any man or woman, wounded, gassed, injured or disabled in the line of duty during time of war as substantiated by official medical records of the armed forces, by notation on discharge certificate or Adjutant General's office record, or by United States Department of Veterans Affairs records, while in the service of either the military or naval forces of the United States of America, and who has not been dishonorably discharged or separated from such service, or who may still be in active service in the armed forces of the United States of America is eligible. Others, who were disabled while serving with any of the armed forces of any nations associated with the United States as allies during any of its war periods, who are American citizens and who are honorably discharged, are also eligible for membership. Those who are eligible also include but are not limited to the following:

1. All persons who were prisoners-of-war.
2. All persons awarded the Purple Heart.
3. All persons with a disability discharge from military service.
4. All persons who are receiving or ever did receive compensation from the United States Department of Veterans Affairs for a disability incurred during time of war.
5. All persons with a wartime service-connected disability of ANY degree (including those with a rating of less than 10 percent) officially so rated by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs.
6. All persons awarded vocational training because of injury or disability.
7. All persons retired from military service for disability incurred during time of war.
8. All persons drawing the statutory award for arrested or cured tuberculosis of wartime service origin.

(b) If there is a question on eligibility, it shall be submitted to the national adjutant for his or her decision. The decision of the national adjutant under this article shall be final.

Section 11.3: Eligibility; Definition of "Time of War"

Paragraph 1: "During time of war," as used in Article III of the National Constitution, shall include the following periods of service:

Mexican War:	April 24, 1846 to May 30, 1848
Civil War:	April 15, 1861 to August 20, 1866
Indian Wars:	From 1869 to 1898 there were 34 campaigns and military expeditions; disability because of service in any one is sufficient.
Spanish-American War:	April 21, 1898 to April 11, 1899
Philippine Insurrection:	April 11, 1899 to July 4, 1902
Boxer Rebellion:	June 20, 1900 to May 12, 1901
Cuban Pacification:	October 6, 1906 to April 1, 1909
Vera Cruz Expedition:	April 21, 1914 to November 26, 1914
Punitive Expedition into Mexico:	March 15, 1916 to February 5, 1917
World War I:	April 6, 1917 to July 2, 1921
World War II & Korea:	September 16, 1940 to January 31, 1955
Vietnam and other engagements:	January 31, 1955 to October 14, 1976
Iranian Crisis, Lebanon Crisis, Invasion of Grenada, Invasion of Panama and other engagements:	November 4, 1979 to January 31, 1990
Persian Gulf, Somalia, Haiti, Bosnia or other Crises:	August 2, 1990 until terminated by Presidential Proclamation or Congressional resolution

Paragraph 2: The requirement "during time of war" is also met if it is determined that the applicant's wound, injury or disability was incurred at any time (1) as a direct result of an armed conflict, or (2) while engaged in extra-hazardous service under conditions simulating war, or (3) while the United States was engaged in any war. A disability incurred or aggravated during service between September 16, 1940 and December 7, 1941 is included in the term "under conditions simulating war."

Paragraph 3: This organization reserves the right to pass on the eligibility to membership of any applicant.

Section 11.4: Duration of Membership

Membership may be initiated by the payment of dues as specified in Section 11.9. When the membership is paid for in full, it continues through the member's life, except as otherwise specified in these Bylaws. Members may elect to pay in installments, in which event they shall have three full membership years from the date of the first installment to complete payment. Balance due may be paid at any time during such period. Distribution under Section 11.10 will only occur when three are sufficient funds in the member's account. If full payment is not made during three full membership years, he or she is not, thereafter, a member. He or she may reinstate their membership at any time by paying in full the remaining balance due.

Section 11.5: Multiple Memberships

No member shall hold membership simultaneously in more than one chapter within the same state unless such other

chapter is composed exclusively of blind veterans or amputee veterans.

Section 11.6: Basic Rights and Privileges

No member shall be expelled or limited in any of the rights and privileges of membership, except as hereinafter specified in Article 16. He or she shall have all the benefits of chapter, state department and national membership. Life membership may be secured by paying a one-time, lump sum payment, or through installments as set out herein.

Section 11.7: Eligibility to Office

Any person holding membership in this organization shall be eligible to any elective or appointive office in this organization, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws.

Section 11.8: Transfers

Paragraph 1: Members of one chapter may secure a transfer of membership to another chapter, with the approval of the receiving chapter, whereupon, the national organization shall notify both chapters.

Paragraph 2: No transfer shall take effect as to dues credit or voting strength until the beginning of the membership year following completion of the transfer. All rights of membership in a chapter shall become effective upon the approval of the transfer by the receiving chapter.

Section 11.9: Membership Dues

Paragraph 1: Membership dues shall be $20, and shall be for the membership year or any part thereof. The membership year starts July 1 and ends the following June 30. All membership dues will be applied toward becoming a member for life, and will be deposited directly in the individual's membership account as established under Paragraph 2 below. Once the appropriate full membership amount has been paid into the member's account, he or she will no longer be required to pay dues.

Paragraph 2: Those eligible who have not attained the age of 41 before July 1 of the current year may become a member for life upon payment of $150. Those who are between the ages of 41 and 60, upon payment of $1250; those who are between the ages of 61 and 70, upon payment of $100; and those who have attained the age of 71 or over, upon payment of $75.

Section 11.10: Distribution of Dues

Paragraph 1: Provided there are sufficient funds in the member's account, the following distribution shall be made from the Life Membership Fund during the life of a member enrolled before July 1, 1975:

(1) Chapter dues of $3;
(2) State department dues of $2;
(3) National per capita tax of $8.

Provided, however, that if it shall be determined by the National Finance Committee that such payments from the Life Fund based upon annual audit are not on a sound actuarial basis, the above payments will be reduced to not less than:

1. Chapter dues of $1.50;
2. State department dues of $.75;
3. National per capita tax of $3.

Paragraph 2: Provided there are sufficient funds in the member's account, the following distribution shall be made from the Life Membership Fund during the life of a member enrolled between July 1, 1975 and June 30, 1984:

(1) Chapter dues of $3.50;
(2) State department dues of $2.25; national per capita tax of $9.

Provided, however, that if it shall be determined by the National Finance Committee that such payments from the Life Fund, based upon annual audit, are not on a sound actuarial basis, the above payments will be reduced to not less than:

1. Chapter dues of $2;
2. State department dues of $1;
3. National per capita tax of $4.

Paragraph 3: Provided there are sufficient funds in the member's account, the following distributions shall be made from the Life Membership Fund during the life of a member enrolled on and after July 1, 1984:
(1) Chapter dues of $4;
(2) State department dues of $2.50;
(3) National per capita tax of $10.

Provided, however, that if it shall be determined by the National Finance Committee that such payments from the Life Fund, based upon annual audit, are not on a sound actuarial basis, the above payments will be reduced to not less than:

1. Chapter dues of $2.50;
2. State department dues of $1.25;
3. National per capita tax of $5.

Section 11.11: Dues Not Refundable

No member, upon resigning from membership, shall receive a refund of any dues except as provided in Article 16, Section 16.3, Paragraph d.

Section 11.12: Recruitment Drives

Special recruitment drives conducted by state departments, chapters or individuals shall advise new members of the presence of chapters closest to their home or area so that such members shall have the opportunity to indicate their chapter preference.

Section 11.13: 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 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.

Commander, I move that this resolution be adopted.

COMMANDER REED: We have a motion on the floor. Mike Number 1.

MR. SIDNEY SHOWN: Sid Shown, Chapter 3, Department of Tennessee, District 8, the heart of the South. I second the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 182. Article 12, National Employees.

Section 12.2: Procedure

Paragraph 2: Within 15 days after the demand for a hearing, the employer and the former employee shall each nominate a member to the Hearing Board and secure such nominee's consent to act. The nominated members shall agree upon a third member to be chairman of the Board and secure his or her consent to act. If the employer or the former employee fail to make such nomination timely, or if the two members fail, within ten days after both are nominated, to agree upon a chairman who consents to act, then the national commander shall fill such vacancies.

Commander, I move that this resolution be adopted.

COMMANDER REED: Mike 3, you're recognized.

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

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 183. It deals with Section 14.3, Financial Statements.

A quarterly Statement of Financial Position of the national organization shall be printed in the DAV Magazine.

Commander, I move that the resolution be adopted.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 2.

MR. MATTHEW GREANY: Matthew Greany, Chapter 32, New Jersey. I'll second that motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution 184.

Section 14.6: Loans and Advances.

No funds of the national organization or any subordinate unit shall be used for making loans of any kind, except as otherwise provided in these Bylaws, or in the National Bylaws of the Women's Auxiliary.

Commander, I move that this resolution be adopted.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Mike 3, you're recognized.

MR. LINDEN: Second the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 185. It deals with Article 17.

Section 17.1: Approval Required

Any subordinate unit, including but not limited to, foundations, memorial homes, thrift stores and any other entity which is now incorporated or desires to incorporate and use the name of the Disabled American veterans or the letters "DAV" or any name similar thereto in its corporate name must submit the proposed articles of incorporation and any bylaws or amendments to the respective department judge advocate and the national judge advocate for approval prior to filing and complying with state law. They must contain the following provision, unless the charitable trust laws of the particular state direct otherwise.

"This corporation recognizes the national organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination to the national organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all rules, mandates and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the corporation, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Paragraphs 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws."

Commander, I move this resolution be approved.

COMMANDER REED: Mike 3, you're recognized.

MR. RUSSELL SPALDING: Russ Spalding, Chapter 20, Michigan. I second the motion and have a question. What does that do to the existing corporations that we're now involved in? We are already incorporated in the State of Michigan. Explain that, please.

MR. SARRAZIN: In your present incorporation papers, you have a provision that says any future changes will be deemed as a change to this corporation, unless your particular state demands you go and resubmit your papers. Then you'll have to do that.

MR. SPALDING: In other words, if it's in effect now, we don't need to do anything about it.

MR. SARRAZIN: I don't think so. I'd have to check your state laws, or you will.

MR. SPALDING: Thank you.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 186 on

Article 18.

Section 18.1: Definition of Terms
Paragraph 3: "Expenses" as referred to in this article shall not include those attributable to the conduct or operation of any fund-raising project of a subordinate unit or its affiliate.

Commander, I move this resolution be approved.
COMMANDER REED: Mike 1, you're recognized.
MR. RICHARD GEARY: Richard Geary, Chapter 16, Department of North Carolina delegate, seconds the motion.
COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; all those opposed. The Ayes have it.
MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 230.

Section 8.4: Financial Records, Reports
Paragraph 1: Each state department must keep a complete financial record of all monies received, expended and remitted; all money must be deposited in the name of the state department. Each state department shall have an Audit Committee composed of at least three members of the state department, excluding the state commander, state senior vice-commander, state treasurer, state adjutant and state Finance Committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit and submit a report of same to the national organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year, which shall be the membership year commencing July 1 and ending June 30. All reports will be accomplished on forms provided by National Headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the state department during the reporting period. Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable, and may subject the state department to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2 of these Bylaws. Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the charter of the state department. If, in the opinion of the national organization, a financial audit of the department is necessary and the national commander authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the national organization at department expense.

Commander, I move that this resolution be accepted.
COMMANDER REED: Mike 3.
MR. JOSEPH MARTINEZ: Joseph Martinez, a member of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Chapter 96, would like to second it.
COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it.
MR. SARRAZIN: The next resolution is Resolution Number 231. It deals with Section 9.3: Financial Records and Reports.

Paragraph 1: Each chapter shall keep a complete financial record of all monies received and expended. All money must be deposited in the name of the chapter. Each chapter shall have an Audit Committee composed of at least three members of the chapter, excluding the commander, senior vice-commander, treasurer, adjutant and Finance Committee chairman, who shall conduct an annual audit and, if the gross receipts excluding dues exceed $10,000, submit a report to the state department and national organization within 90 days after the close of the accounting year, which shall be the membership year commencing July 1 and ending June 30. All reports must be filed on forms provided by National Headquarters. All financial reports shall specify and itemize the precise source and expenditure of all funds of the chapter during the reporting period. Broad or general classifications will not be deemed acceptable, and may subject the chapter to the audit provisions of Article 15, Section 15.7, Paragraph 2

of these Bylaws. Failure to file annual financial reports will be cause to suspend or revoke the chapter charter. If, in the opinion of the national organization, a financial audit of the chapter is necessary and the national commander so authorizes it, such audit will be conducted by the national organization at chapter expense. This provision shall not prevent a department from requiring submission of an annual financial report from its chapters.

Commander, I move the adoption of this resolution.

COMMANDER REED: Mike 2.

MR. GREANY: Matthew Greany, New Jersey Chapter 32, seconds this motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded.

MR. PHILLIP A. HOFFMAN: Mike 1. Question.

COMMANDER REED: Question on the motion. Mike 1.

MR. HOFFMAN: Or discussion. Comrade Commander and members of the convention, my name's Phil Hoffman from Muskogee Chapter Number 7 in Columbus, Georgia. And as I read the proposed resolution, the Audit Committee report would be based on the membership year of July 1 to June 30th. Currently, the chapters are required to elect new officers in March and install them in April, which common sense tells you should also require an audit of the chapter books with the installation of new officers.

And it just seems to me that you're having an Audit Committee do double duty there. If this were proposed to be left with the election of officers, rather than on the membership year, then the Audit Committee would audit your books, submit the report, and you're done.

And if it's in order, Comrade Commander, I'd like to move to amend.

COMMANDER REED: Why don't we hear the explanation first from the chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

MR. SARRAZIN: That may be in your particular chapter, sir, but each chapter has its own fiscal year. The fiscal year and the election of officers have nothing to do with each other. Your fiscal year has been determined by your chapter. Some are the same as the Government. God forbid we ever start acting like them. But it's in October. Some of them use the calendar year; some of them use the membership year.

If your particular chapter wants an audit because of the change of officers, that's fine, but this is to be consistent within the whole organization, and all we're doing now is making it consistent so that all chapters' fiscal years are the same time. Like I say, it's up to the individual chapter if you want an audit when you change your officers. But there's no mandatory provision for that.

COMMANDER REED: All right. We have a motion on the floor. It's been duly seconded. Mike 3.

MR. JAMES BIXBY: Jim Bixby, Chapter 29, Braintree, Massachusetts makes a motion to accept the resolution.

COMMANDER REED: Sir, we already have a motion on the floor. Thank you, anyway.

MR. BIXBY: Second it.

COMMANDER REED: We've got one, too. Thank you.

All right. You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; all those opposed. The Ayes have it.

MR. SARRAZIN: Commander, that completes the resolutions that the committee recommended for adoption. I'd like to thank the committee. And I move the committee recommendations be accepted and the resolutions be adopted, and that the committee be dismissed with a vote of thanks.

COMMANDER REED: Mike 1.

MR. SHOWN: Mr. Commander, Sid Shown, Nashville, Tennessee, Department of Tennessee, District 8, heart of the South, seconds.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it. Thank you.

Thank you, Dick. (Applause)

We have a presentation that's going to be made. The chapter commander from Prescott, Arizona, Chapter 16, will you please come on up and make a presentation. Go ahead and identify yourself.

MR. FRED NARCAROTI: Commander, Fred Narcaroti, Prescott Chapter 16, Prescott, Arizona. Commander, I have a donation here for you for the Winter Sports Clinic for $5,000.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. (Applause) A donation for $5,000 for the DAV Winter Sports Clinic. Thank you very, very much. I knew those people in Arizona liked snow.

I wanted to commend the delegates this morning for your attention and your courtesy. Thank you very much.

Ladies and gentlemen, please rise, and I'll ask the chaplain to lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. We pray to The Almighty that as we leave this place, we'd remember that our work is not completed. We continue to work for disabled veterans and their families and our nation always. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: The convention stands in recess until Thursday morning at 9:00 o'clock.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 11:00 o'clock a.m., August 19, 1997.)

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans convened in the Conrad Room of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Thursday morning, August 21, 1997, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Gregory C. Reed.

COMMANDER GREGORY C. REED: The convention will come to order.

Please join with me in the Pledge of Allegiance.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER REED: Chaplain Bergstrom, will you please lead us in prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Let us pray. Almighty and Eternal Lord, once again we implore Your Divine guidance that we may do those things that we must do this morning to conduct the business of our organization, that those things that we do may be in the best interests of the DAV and for the disabled veterans and their families and our nation now and always. Amen.

COMMANDER REED: Please be seated.

Will you please welcome Sloan Hoopes of Virginia, the newly elected president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association for 1997-1998. Sloan. (Applause)

MR. SLOAN H. HOOPES: Commander Reed, national officers, National Adjutant Wilson and delegates: It's my privilege to reaffirm the principles of support for the national organization, its policies and its programs.

I would now like to introduce the vice-president of the Department Commanders and Adjutants Association, Harry Yaukey (applause); our Executive Committeeman Bill Brzezinski (applause); Irvin Eddy (applause); Jim Stewart (applause); Francis McLaskey (applause); Jim Tanner (applause); Cliff Piersee (applause); our chaplain, George Le Porte (applause); and our secretary-treasurer, David Tannenbaum. (Applause)

I have an additional pleasure to present to the National Service Foundation a check from the Department Commanders and Adjutants Association for $1500.

Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

Will you please welcome the newly elected Imperial Golden Rodent of the National Order of Trench Rats, Harry Warburton. (Applause) Harry, are you in the hall?

Okay. It is now my pleasure to introduce to you Reverend Carl Bergstrom for a presentation from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Thank you, Commander Reed. As most of you know, during World War II, a troopship was sent on its way to Greenland, and on that troopship there were four chaplains in particular: two Protestant, one Catholic and one Jewish, George Fox, John Washington, Alexander Good and Clark Polling.

When the ship was torpedoed, they began to hand out lifejackets to the soldiers, and when they ran out of lifejackets, they took their own off and handed them to four soldiers who otherwise would have perished.

That act of heroism and volunteering their lives for the good of others has resulted in an organization called the Chapel of the Four Chaplains now located in Valley Forge, Pennsylvania. They award a bronze medal to people who have done an extreme sense of volunteering on national or worldwide level.

So it is my pleasure this morning on behalf of the Chapel of the Four Chaplains to award this bronze medal to Greg Reed, our national commander. Commander Reed. (Applause)

They never make this easy. For your wall, we also have this plaque. Commander Reed, congratulations. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

Harry Warburton, are you in the room?

MR. GUIGELAAR: Good morning, Disabled American Veterans. I have a couple of purposes here this morning, and shortly I'm going to introduce our brand-new Imperial Golden Rodent for the year 1997-98, and I think I might as well do that right now, and that is Harry Warburton from the great State of Florida. (Applause)

Tuesday when I was up here, our Imperial Red-Eyed Gnawer promised that we were going to make a donation to the DAV Service and Rehab Fund, and I have that check right here.

COMMANDER REED: It's a donation to the DAV Service Foundation for $2,500. (Applause)

MR. GUIGELAAR: And then we have two resolutions, and I will only read one of the two, and that is:

> WHEREAS, God has seen in His infinite wisdom to call to the great beyond James W. Morgan, Imperial Rodent Number 61; and
>
> WHEREAS, he did, by his acts of diligence as an imperial officer help lead the National Order of Trench Rats to the prominent position it holds in the service to the Disabled American Veterans;
>
> THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED by the National Order of Trench Rats assembled at the 73rd 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 Fund of the Disabled American Veterans Service and Rehab 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 that again was for James W. Morgan, Imperial Rodent 61.

And the other resolution which I will not read is for Alfred W. Nowak, Imperial Rodent 71.

And just before I leave this station, I would like to thank the Disabled American Veterans, Commander Reed and all the national officers and all of my imperial officers for the outstanding cooperation I have received during this membership year. And I thank you all profoundly. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

MR. HARRY WARBURTON: Commander, honored guests, Mr. Wilson, my friend, fellow DAV'ers: It is my honor and pleasure to be elected as your 1997-98 Imperial Golden Rodent. In the past few years, we have made great strides in cooperation between the parent organization and the Imperial NOTR. This I will strive to continue and to bring relations even closer.

The image of the NOTR is changing. This started with a joint session and fun night last night, and the NOAC and NOTR enjoyed a fine night of entertainment. This is a giant step forward.

And, of course, we always talk about membership. I will challenge every member to sign up or reinstate a new member for this year. We have new incentive programs in place.

In closing, I just want to say the NOTR is moving forward, not only as a fun organization but a vital link to supporting the principles of the DAV. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you.

Registration of delegates is now closed. I will now call for

a final report of the Credentials Committee.

MR. HEATH: Comrade Commander, delegates: This is the final report and reflects the total registration as of noon on August 20, 1997. At the present time, we have 663 chapters, 48 departments, 30 national officers, 14 past national commanders, for a total of 1,758 delegates and 50 alternates, for a total vote of 11,955.

At this time, I would like to personally thank the members of the committee for their diligence in carrying out the work of this very important committee in a professional manner. I would like to especially thank the immediate past national commander, Tom McMasters, for his work as secretary for the Credentials Committee. Also thanks to Charlie Luttjohann and Dennis Painter of the national staff for their wise guidance.

This completes the final report of the Credentials Committee, Commander, and I move for its adoption with an expression of thanks from the convention floor. Thank you.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. (Applause)

Mike 1.

MR. ROBERT MILLER: Robert Miller, Department of North Carolina, Chapter 43, moves we accept the Credentials report.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second? Mike 3.

MR. ALAN BOWERS: Alan Bowers, 46, Massachusetts, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've all heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

We will now call for the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers.

MR. JOYNER: Good morning. Comrade Commander and delegates: The National Convention Committee on Nomination of National Officers was called to order for its first business session on August 18th, 1997 by Committee Advisors Gene A. Murphy and William E. Leach.

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. Leo Le Roux was nominated and elected as secretary of the committee.

The committee also met on Tuesday, August 19th at 7:00 a.m. and again at 1:00 p.m. A total of 15 candidates for national office appeared before the Nominating Committee and were interviewed. Following is the Nominating Committee's recommended slate for 1997-98:

For the office of national commander, Harry R. McDonald, Jr. from Florida; for the office of national senior vice-commander, Andrew A. Kistler from Pennsylvania; for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander, Michael E. Dobmeier of North Dakota; for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, Armando C. Albarran from Texas; for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, George H. Steese from California; for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander, Edward R. Heath, Sr. from Maine; for the office of national judge advocate, Edward G. Galian of New York; and for the office of national chaplain, Alfonso Todd, Jr. from Michigan.

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.

COMMANDER REED: The following individuals have been nominated for national elected office: commander, Harry McDonald; senior vice-commander, Andy Kistler; 1st junior vice-commander, Michael Dobmeier; 2nd junior vice-commander, Armando C. Albarran; 3rd junior vice-commander, George H. Steese; 4th junior vice-commander, Edward R. Heath; national judge advocate, Edward G. Galian; national chaplain, Alfonso Todd, Jr.

I will now call for a second that the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers be accepted and that the committee be discharged. Mike Number 3.

MR. CORNELL FLEMING: Cornell Fleming, Maryland, seconds the nomination.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. You've heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it. (Applause)

Thank you, Denny.

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nomination of National Officers, and they have nominated Harry McDonald for national commander. Here to second that nomination is Albert Linden of Florida.

MR. LINDEN: National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers, ladies and gentlemen: It is with great pleasure that the Department of Florida seconds the nomination of Harry R. McDonald for the high office of national commander of the Disabled American Veterans.

Leadership, dedication to our mission and service to our fellow veterans are all necessary qualities to lead our great organization. Harry McDonald has all these qualities and has demonstrated them in an outstanding manner over the past 50 years. Harry is a native of Pensacola, Florida, and the first DAV member from Florida to be nominated for national commander.

He enlisted in the Navy in 1945 and served on three ships in the Far East. In 1949, he left the Navy and launched a 25-year career in the U.S. Army, handling a variety of increasingly responsible assignments around the world, including Korea and Vietnam. Harry began his career as an enlisted man, but his leadership qualities and talents were recognized by the military. He was promoted to the officer ranks. Harry retired with the rank of captain in 1973 due to his service-connected disability. He earned many decorations during his military career, including the Bronze Star.

His dedication to his country for more than a quarter of a century is the same dedication that Harry continues to give his fellow disabled veterans. After leaving the military, Harry became active in DAV Chapter 57 in Crestview, Florida. He continues today to serve his chapter as the adjutant-treasurer, the service officer and the Legislative Committee chairman.

Harry's fellow DAV'ers in Florida recognized his leadership ability, and he was elected state commander for the year 1984-85. He has also served seven years as chairman of the Department of Florida Service Foundation. Harry has served as a member of the National Executive Committee in '85 through '87. He has also served on the National Finance Committee. In addition, he has served as a member of the National Interim Employment Committee in 1992-93.

Harry has been a DAV national officer since 1993 when he was elected national 3rd junior vice-commander, and he currently serves as your national senior vice-commander.

Harry is a dedicated family man. He and his wife, Merallyn, are the proud parents of two grown daughters, who are DAV Auxiliary life members, and a grown son who is an Army sergeant first class and a DAV life member.

In my over ten years as the DAV adjutant for the Department of Florida, I have witnessed first-hand Harry's willingness to serve his fellow veterans. You have also seen Harry's dedication to the purpose and principles of the DAV during his years as a national officer. Service has always been the name of the game to Harry. Harry is a man of deep conviction, a man of proven leadership and administrative skills, and a man determined to ensure that all disabled veterans of our nation's wars and armed conflicts are dealt with fairly and receive the benefits they earned on the field of battle.

It is a great honor for me to second the nomination of Harry R. McDonald, Jr. of Florida for the office of national commander of the Disabled American Veterans. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: The Chair will now call for any further nominations for the office of national commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of national commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of national commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of national commander?

If there are no further nominations, I close nominations and declare Harry McDonald 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 Harry R. McDonald, Jr. for the office of national commander. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: The Nominating Committee has nominated Andrew Kistler for the office of national senior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national senior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of national senior vice-commander? Are there any further nominations for the office of national senior vice-commander? Are there any other further nominations for the office of national senior vice-commander?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Andrew Kistler elected as national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Michael Dobmeier for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any other further nominations for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander? Are there any other further nominations for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander? Are there any other further nominations for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander?

If there are no further nominations, I will now close the nominations and declare Michael Dobmeier elected as national 1st junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Armando C. Albarran for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Armando C. Albarran elected national 2nd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated George H. Steese 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 other nominations for the office of 3rd junior vice-commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of 3rd junior vice-commander?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare George H. Steese elected 3rd national junior vice-commander. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Edward R. Heath for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. I will now call for any further nominations for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations for the office of 4th national junior vice-commander? Are there any other nominations for the office of 4th national junior vice-commander?

If there are no further nominations, I will close the nominations and declare Edward R. Heath elected as 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 any further nominations for the office of national judge advocate. Are there any other further nominations for the office of national judge advocate? Are there any other further nominations for the office of national judge advocate?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Edward G. Galian elected as national judge advocate. (Applause)

The Nominating Committee has nominated Alfonso Todd, Jr. for the office of national chaplain. I will now call for any further nominations for national chaplain. Are there any other further

nominations for the office of national chaplain? Are there any further nominations for the office of national chaplain?

If there are no further nominations, I close the nominations and declare Alfonso Todd, Jr. elected as 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 for Andrew Kistler for national senior vice-commander; Michael E. Dobmeier for 1st national junior vice-commander; Armando C. Albarran for 2nd junior vice-commander; George H. Steese for national 3rd junior vice-commander; Edward R. Heath for national 4th junior vice-commander; Edward G. Galian for national judge advocate; and Alfonso Todd, Jr. for national chaplain.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. (Applause)

I'd like to request that the newly elected officers please be escorted to the stage. I'd like to invite spouses and family to accompany them.

MR. FRED FRANK: Mr. National Commander, if I may have the floor at this time. Fred Frank, DAV 10, New Mexico. I would like to commend the Nominating Committee on their diligence, their intelligence, their devotion to duty in selecting this outstanding slate of officers for our great organization. And I want to say thank you.

COMMANDER REED: Thank you. (Applause)

Harry, would you like to say a word? (Applause)

COMMANDER-ELECT McDONALD: Good morning. Unless you've had the opportunity to stand before 3,000 of your closest friends, excited beyond my wildest expectations, yet humbled by the opportunity that you have provided me, then you have no idea what it feels like to be standing up here before you.

I want to thank Commander Reed for that warm introduction. I have to confess, though, that after listening to Greg, I feel somewhat like an old maid who has never been married. She went to work one morning, and the woman for whom she worked said, "Clara, I understand you're getting married." Clara replied, "No, I'm not getting married, but thank God for the rumor." (Laughter)

Having all these generous things said about me, surely they can't all be true, but thank God for the rumor. (Applause)

National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, national officers, honored guests, friends and delegates to the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans: I have just been given the best job I could ever imagine. But believe me, folks, I am humbled at the prospect of standing before such an impressive group of my peers.

At no time did I believe that I would ever have the opportunity to lead the finest veterans organization on this planet; that is, until Dick Marbes asked me to join his campaign to, as he put it, make things right for the DAV. (Applause) I gladly joined in that endeavor.

And I would like to briefly thank those most responsible for me being here: Past National Commander Dick Marbes for asking me to be part of his campaign; Past National Adjutant Dale Adams for his advice and leadership; National Adjutant Art Wilson for a steady hand who has led us back to sound management and a fiscal position (applause); the Department of Florida for their support over these many years; the McDonald Campaign Committee; Past National Commander Dennis Joyner and Past National Commander Al Linden; and all the DAV members here present for having the faith to elect me as your national commander.

Please allow me to introduce my family, whose love and loyal support have enabled me to reach this milestone in my life: My wife of 47 years, Merallyn Ann. (Applause) Our daughter, Terri could not be here because of unforeseen problems. But my son, Michael or -- I'll be corrected on that -- our son, Michael, who is a DAV life member; his wife, Valerie; their children, Ryan, Joe and Molly. (Applause) Our daughter, Tracy, and her two children, Anna and Sara. (Applause)

I am proud to say that my wife, my daughters, my daughter-in-

law and all of my granddaughters are members of the DAV Auxiliary. (Applause)

At least three things have remained unchanged since the DAV's creation 77 years ago. (1) We cannot assume that Congress or anyone else will look out for disabled veterans. Indeed, we know many legislators have veterans' programs in their gunsights and will cut or eliminate them if we are not vigilant in watching them. It is a reality that politicians have to cater to competing interests, and if we fail to protect our interests, funding for veterans' programs will be diverted elsewhere.

Someone once defined politics this way: Politics is the gentle art of getting votes from the poor and campaign funds from the rich by promising to protect them from each other. (Applause)

In our case, we have to make sure they don't take funds from veterans' programs and give them to some other group that manages to be more aggressive, more determined, more vocal and better organized than we are.

(2) It follows that we have to remain well organized and have strength in numbers to get the attention of our elected officials, the very principle underlying the DAV's foundation. That hasn't changed, and we can safely assume it never will.

(3) The third thing that has remained unchanged, I'm proud to say, is that the DAV has continued to be a leader in the area of veterans' legislation. The DAV was founded on the principle that this nation's first duty is to care for its wartime disabled veterans, their dependents, their survivors, and that mission will never, never change. (Applause)

We will never cease in our goal to make sure veterans are treated fairly and with justice. We are known by the high standards we set, and there will be no compromise. The game they're playing in Washington is hard-hearted and complicated and unforgiving. There is no sentimentality about it. While it's true, we have friends in the VA, in Congress and elsewhere in the government, there are also people, very powerful people, intent on destroying veterans' benefits.

Some of these people can do a great deal of mean-spirited harm to disabled veterans while subscribing to the popular and politically correct idea of a balanced budget. We are talking about people who would not hesitate to step on a war-wounded veteran in their drive to make a name for themselves in Congress. These same politicians talk in vague generalities about how we must all do our fair share as America strives to get its fiscal house in order.

Well, let me just say this. Veterans have done their fair share and not just during the time they were in the military service. Veterans need and deserve a quality and efficient VA medical system, and so do America's taxpayers. Congress shouldn't be looking at ways to lower the quality of veterans' health care. They should instead be looking for ways to improve veterans' health care. (Applause)

Once government officials start tinkering with the VA system, whether it's the rating schedule or the regional office structure or medical centers, questions arise that affect every disabled veteran in America. That's why the DAV is watching developments so closely. We want to make sure that dollar savings alone don't drive the decisions being made in our nation's capital.

After all, if the bottom line is all that matters, disabled veterans and their families can and probably will be hurt. That is something the DAV cannot allow to happen. (Applause)

You and I must stand firm in defense of the rights we've earned. Our departments and chapters must be ready to go into action immediately whenever our legislative team in Washington needs to rally the troops. I'm not worried, because you've proven that you are seasoned troops, prepared for battle on the legislative front.

DAV members across the country have been urging their senators and representatives to reject the drastic cuts called for in the budget blueprint. These cuts would mean hundred of thousands of disabled and needy veterans would be denied health care. Veterans hospitals and clinics would have to eliminate medical and nursing

staff positions and cut back on health care services.

The recommended funding level in the budget agreement leaves the VA at least $1 billion short of what it needs just to keep pace with inflation. And that gap will continue to widen over the next five years.

We did not risk our lives and health for America only to find out that in our time of need, the health care we have earned is now threatened. Congress has a responsibility to provide sufficient federal funding each year to cover the costs of health care for our nation's sick and disabled veterans, and the DAV is here to see that Congress does the right thing. (Applause)

To help get the job done, our department and chapter leaders must take an active part in the DAV's grass-root efforts to maintain the integrity of the VA system, to ensure that VA benefits and services are not further diminished, not only by a budget-minded Congress but by an uninformed one as well. The growing number of nonveterans in Congress is reducing the sensitivity of our elected leaders and requires an ongoing commitment to educating its members.

We must remind Congress that we are a vigorous, responsible, nationwide organization that intends to keep on fighting at the polls and elsewhere for needed veterans' programs. We need you to maintain contact and relationship with your legislators or their staff members. We need you to keep up an established network within your state that remains ready to swing into action when we call on you. And we need you to be knowledgeable and to stay informed on veterans' issues so that you can discuss them convincingly with your government officials.

You and other members like you are essential to our effectiveness, and these things are essential to your effectiveness. Readiness follows, however, from a genuine interest, a willingness, an eagerness and a sense of responsibility to uphold our standard as the leading advocate of America's disabled veterans.

This is a challenge and a goal worthy of our best efforts. I hope each of you will answer our call to action. Are you with me? (Applause)

I also want to praise our chapters and department leaders for the invaluable partnership they have shown in other areas as well. During the past year, we identified problems across areas that need work. We worked on them. We found opportunities, and we went after them. We, you, took the ball and ran with it, and it shows. We didn't do it with mirrors or magic; we did it with imagination, hard work, sound investment in people and programs, and hands-on management. You have every reason to be proud of these accomplishments. (Applause)

As I have often stated: No matter how commendable our cause may be, it is only through the support of the caring, dedicated members of the DAV and Auxiliary that we are capable of protecting and seeking meaningful improvements in the benefits and services earned as a result of our service to America, and because we work hard to be the best, the DAV enjoys the kind of reputation we can all be proud of.

I think you will agree, reputation is important. It affects every aspect of our mission. I don't need to remind you that DAV enjoys a great reputation. As you know, the DAV's greatest asset is its name. There are thousands of nonprofits all vying for the billions of dollars donated each year by a generous American public. We currently enjoy a good reputation with nonprofit watchdog agencies, such as the National Charities Information Bureau, the Philanthropic Advisory Service of the Council of Better Business Bureaus.

I'm sure you would agree that despite all the good work we do for disabled veterans, one unfavorable report from such an agency or one critical news media report could potentially undo all of the good work we strive so hard to provide. We must stand united on issues of common concern to our members, be vigilant against those who would divide us and bring discredit upon our good name. (Applause)

For 77 years, commitment, positive action, has allowed the DAV

to establish an unmatched reputation for service to our nation's veterans and their families. Looking back, our early experience in veterans service work was, in the words of Yogi Berra, "The kind of experience that keeps you from making the wrong mistakes." We learned the hard way that in order to do a better job, we had to embrace change.

That is good, because the DAV will be tested by change and challenged during the coming years. Some of those changes and challenges are evident today. While second-best may be fine for some people and some organizations, it is not okay for the DAV. (Applause) Disabled veterans deserve the best, the best health care delivery system, the best counseling, the best veterans service programs a grateful nation can provide. (Applause)

The DAV is growing in its mission. It is becoming ever more meaningful in the lives of veterans and families we serve. The DAV is bringing new hope into those lives, and it's marching forward with the standard of justice in its hands. And I thank you, each of you in this room, for carrying that standard today and on into the future.

We continue to move forward in all of the other services we provide, whether that be our National Service Program, voluntary services, our Transportation Network, employment, legislation, membership and more. As the DAV builds for the future, I'm certain we'll face more than our fair share of adversity.

A wise man once wrote, "Progress always involves risk. You can't steal first base" -- let me start over again. "You can't steal second base without leaving first." (Applause) Only the national commander is authorized to steal first. (Laughter)

The point is, change is necessary in our lives, and let us grow and move forward. Change provides opportunities to make friends, form new alliances, see a different perspective, change ourselves for the better and make life better for others. But while change is inevitable, DAV members and volunteers will always be central to this nation's obligations to its veterans.

And while I'm on the subject of change, allow me to point out the obvious. The future never just happened; it was created. We're vocal about the status quo. It works, at least to some degree. But we're much more vocal about new ideas that we consider risky. After all, risky can mean wrong.

You've heard it said that two wrongs don't make a right. Well, that may be true when you're talking about ethics, but in matters of productivity, innovation and quality, two wrongs may very well lead us to right.

We need people who are not afraid to be wrong occasionally in order to increase our chances of being right most of the time, when it counts. After all, what's normal? the normal reaction to a new idea is to think of reasons it won't work, but we can't afford normal reactions.

Change has become the status quo. Think of that. Change is the only thing that is the same, and the only thing that's normal. Yes, it takes courage to change, to risk. It takes courage to think creatively about what if. It takes courage to break through barriers.

A famous writer once said, "We all see and understand the need for change, and we instinctively avoid it at all cost."

Taking risks means moving forward while others are waiting for better times. Taking risks means moving forward while others are waiting for proven results. Taking risks means moving forward while others are waiting for applause for their past performance.

The greatest risk of all, however, is to take no risk, make no changes. Ultimately, all that any of us can do is to do our part during our time. We cannot rewrite the past, nor can we guarantee the future, but we can, we must be vigilant to the time given us. (Applause)

As is often said, some people bring happiness wherever they go; others bring happiness whenever they go. In closing, I would like to read a short but historic speech by Abraham Lincoln delivered to an Indiana regiment on March 17, 1865.

> With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see right, let us

strive on to finish the work we are in, bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle, for his widow and orphans, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations.

This morning, one thing is certain, and one thing will never change. There is no substitute for the DAV. (Applause)

I pledge to do my best to insure that the DAV will continue its crusade to make sure that service-connected disabled veterans, their families, receive the full measure of care the government has promised. We have an extraordinary mission in the DAV and Auxiliary. We have been greatly blessed as organizations and as individual members with the opportunity to do an immense amount of good for our fellow disabled veterans. This is a gift, a tremendous privilege, and this extraordinary gift is yours and mine. May we treasure it, use it one full day at a time.

I thank you again for the confidence you have placed in me, and I'm looking forward to working with you this coming year. All of you have a safe trip home. God bless you, and God bless the United States of America. (Rising applause)

COMMANDER REED: Andy.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ANDREW A. KISTLER: National Commander Reed, National Commander-Elect McDonald, life officers, Adjutant Wilson, members of the DAV staff and all you DAV members in the audience: I want to thank you for the confidence you've placed in me, and I particularly want to thank Pennsylvania for the confidence they placed in me.

National Commander McDonald and national staff, be assured of my complete cooperation in our goals to offer service to our disabled veterans and to all veterans.

I also would like to introduce you to my wife, Jean, who lovingly sends me off to the various assignments at National, who dresses me properly and meets me when I return home. Thank you. (Applause)

Thank you very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Thank you, Andy.

1st Junior Vice-Commander Michael Dobmeier. Mike.

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT MICHAEL E. DOBMEIER: Thank you. Commander Greg, National Adjutant Art Wilson, my fellow officers, friends: I would especially like to thank my wife, Sandy, who is here, by the way. (Applause) Sandy is not behind me a hundred percent. She's beside me a hundred percent. (Applause)

We have a small Election Committee but a very effective one, and I'd like to thank them. (Applause) As well as the mighty 14th District, the Department of North Dakota, but most especially you, the fellow members of the DAV. You've placed your faith in me. I'll do my best to earn it. And yes, Commander Harry, we are with you. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Armando C. Albarron. Armando. (Applause)

2ND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT ARMANDO C. ALBARRON: National Commander Reed, National Adjutant Art Wilson, fellow national officers, fellow delegates: I would like to say 32 years ago, a National Service Officer came to me at Brook Army Medical Center while I was recuperating from my wounds and assisted me in my benefits. At that time, I knew I wanted to become a member of this great organization.

I pledge to you that I will continue to promote the goals and the mission of the Disabled American Veterans.

At this time, I'd like to introduce my wife, Tillie. Tillie, will you come up here, please? (Applause)

I'd like to also give special thanks to my Election Committee members. Bruce Burgess, will you please stand up. I'd like to recognize you for all your efforts. (Applause) The other members of my committee: Bill Morin, Joe Garcia and Dick Sarrazin. And will the Department of Texas please stand also for your endorsement. Thank you very much. (Applause)

As I said, I pledge to you that I will be a team member. Commander McDonald, you can count on me. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: 3rd Junior Vice-Commander George Steese. (Applause)

3RD JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT GEORGE STEESE: Good morning. Commander Reed, Adjutant Wilson, Commander McDonald, congratulations. First of all, it's a very humbling experience for me today. I have a few thank-yous. One to the delegation of California, the 16th District, Ken Musselmann, Dick Cosgriff, but especially Mike Tempesta. Thank you for your vote of confidence. Trust me, California, the stage is wider here.

Okay. Coming to an office of this prominence is very eye-opening. You pledge your support to the officers and all, but I want to pledge my support to you, the delegation. I will continue to support and defend this organization and help carry it into the future. Most of all, I want to let you know that I will still be very involved in VAVS in the State of California and throughout the country.

Thank you for your confidence, and I will be seeing all of you a little later. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: 4th Junior Vice-Commander Edward R. Heath. (Applause)

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER-ELECT EDWARD R. HEATH: Thank you. I'm really overwhelmed. But Commander Reed, National Adjutant Wilson, line officers and fellow delegates: I really appreciate being here. My wife expresses her regrets that she couldn't be here this morning because the Nevada Gaming Commission is having a breakfast in honor of the contribution she's been giving to the casinos the last few days. (Laughter) She'll be with us tonight, I can assure you.

I would like to say thank you for the support I received from the 3rd District, especially the Department of Maine, especially National Service Officer Gary Burns. Their efforts were really worthwhile in getting me here. I still don't know how it happened.

I also would be remiss if I didn't thank my former colleagues in Florida for all their support. My thanks. (Applause)

And thanks to all the rest of you, and I will certainly try to do my best and be worthy of the position that you have put me in. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: We'll now hear from our national judge advocate, Edward G. Galian.

JUDGE ADVOCATE GALIAN: Commander Greg Reed, Commander-Elect Harry McDonald, national officers, our esteemed national adjutant, Art Wilson, and the entire national staff, and all you great delegates and friends and guests of this organization: I don't know how to begin. I've been here so many times. But I guess I'm the old man of the mountain. I think I'm even older than you, Harry. He readily agreed.

But it's great. I thank you all for your confidence in me, in reelecting me as the judge advocate of this great organization. I personally want to thank the New York delegation, my Amputation Chapter 76. I want to thank the 2nd District, which is also the Department of New York.

And I would like at this time to introduce you to my beautiful wife, Janet. Come up. (Applause) She keeps telling me, "Don't remind them that we've been married 50 years." (Applause) I think she looks better now than she did 50 years ago. The thing is, she has a way of making me or keeping me with my feet on the ground.

I remember when I first became an officer, I think I came in as 3rd junior vice-commander. And at that time, we had young children. She wasn't with me at the convention. I went home, and I said to her, "I just got elected." And she said, "To what?" I said, "3rd junior vice-commander." She says, "Congratulations. By the way, we need some milk. Would you mind going down to the corner?" (Laughter)

A few years later, I think I made it to senior vice-commander, and I went home, and I explained to her that it's a great office, and I'd just been reelected to a national office, "Isn't that great?" She said, "Yes, it is really great, but would you please get on the phone. Somebody just stole our car." (Laughter) "Get that insurance company over here." So that kept my feet on the ground, too.

Then we became very active because I became the national commander of this great organization. You're going to go through

this, Harry. It's the greatest thing in the world. And so she traveled with me throughout the country. She gave up her job for the year. She's a schoolteacher. And she got to know conventions pretty well. And so she became very active in the Auxiliary, too.

Years later, when I ascended to this great office of judge advocate, I explained to her, "It's a wonderful position, and you know what this is all about." She said, "Not really. What exactly does the judge advocate do?" And I said, "Well, I guess I'm the parliamentarian, Robert's Rules of Order, and all that stuff." And I said, "Don't you think that's an important position?" She said, "Yes." And I said, "Don't you think I deserve a kiss?" And she says, "Well, from now on, if you want anything from me, put it in the form of a motion." (Laughter)

So, I did, but it died for lack of a second. (Laughter) And ever since, it's been dying for lack of a second.

But in any event, folks, thanks very much for everything you've given me, and I will continue to serve to the best of my ability. Thank you again. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: Our national chaplain, Alfonso Todd, Jr.

CHAPLAIN-ELECT ALFONSO TODD, JR.: It gives me great pleasure to stand before you this day. Ultimately being the spiritual part of DAV and representing the spiritual part of the DAV, it gives me the type of inspiration to say to our commander that we will be praying for you.

It gives me great pleasure to say to our adjutant, we'll be praying for you. And ultimately it gives us great pleasure to say to our commander also, we're praying for you. And to each one of you is our responsibility to go daily before the throne of grace to pray for our great organization and for our veterans, so that truly we can be all that we can be in representing God's Kingdom right here on earth.

I'd like to say to the 10th District -- will you please stand, the men and women of the 10th District -- I want to say to each one of you, thank you for your prayers. (Applause)

Then I'd like to say to each one of you, thank you for your vote of confidence in me to stand before God's throne to pray on your behalf day by day.

Then I'd like to introduce my wife, Jerlean. (Applause) There is so much that can be said for wives, I'm sure, and especially for wives of men of the cloth, for it's here that she is the one that keeps me going, not only going forward but going with the grace of God in my heart and mind in knowing that all things truly work together for the good, and she's my good. (Applause)

And I'd like to say to each one of you, God bless America and God bless our DAV. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: We will continue with the unfinished business of the convention.

I will now entertain a motion to discharge the Credentials Committee. Don't everybody rush at once. Mike 3.

MR. ALAN BOWERS: Alan Bowers, Chapter 46, Massachusetts, so moves.

COMMANDER REED: You've heard the motion. Is there a second on that motion?

MR. JOHN REGAN: John Regan, Department of Massachusetts commander, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER REED: You've all heard the motion. It's been duly seconded. All those in favor, signify by saying Aye; opposed. The Ayes have it.

We will now have a presentation of POW/MIA flag by Rick Newell and Al Faticoni of Connecticut.

MR. ALFRED FATICONI: First of all, congratulations, Newly Elected Commander and your line officers. Good morning to you, comrades, and good morning to everybody at the dais. We would like to present our national commander with this POW flag, and we'd like for him to accept it for the national organization. And hopefully at the next National Convention, it'll be staffed and posted. Thank you, sir. (Applause)

COMMANDER REED: I will now call on our national adjutant to read the list of newly elected members of the National Executive Committee.

ADJUTANT WILSON: Thank you, Commander. District 1, Alan W. Bowers; alternate, John F. Gilpin. District 3, Edward S. Lastowski; alternate, Harold F. Smith. District 5, James E. Turner, Jr.; alternate, John M. Hoden. District 7, Jimmy Meeks; alternate, Frank Tracy. District 9, Wallace E. Tyson; alternate, James R. Murphy. District 11, David A. Goliver; alternate, Andrew J. Offutt. District 13, James T. Ashby; alternate, Frank D. Littleton. District 15, Franklin C. Bergquist; alternate, Mick Jones. District 17, Benjamin Palomino; alternate, Michael H. Terry. District 19, Harold Wiley; alternate, Lloyd LaPlante. District 21, Robert Cohoon; alternate, Irvin Eddy.

COMMANDER REED: As many of you are no doubt aware, Reverend Carl Bergstrom did not seek reelection as our national chaplain.

Carl, would you please step forward for closing prayer? But before you do that, sir, I want to make just a few comments. It's a long way from Danville, Indiana to New Hampshire, but I want to tell you, sir, that I speak for everyone in this hall how much we appreciate your spiritual leadership, your commitment to your fellow disabled veteran, and just being a very, very nice person.

And I'd like everyone to stand and give him a round of applause, please. (Rising applause)

Please stand for the closing prayer.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: Rather than comment on what was said, which I deeply appreciate, it's easier just to say a prayer. Let us pray. Almighty and Eternal God, You have been with us through this convention as You've been with us each day of our lives. Many of us, You've been with us through very trying times, very painful times, and we remember that the Disabled American Veterans and its Auxiliary were born in pain.

We have risen from that moment to the strength that we have today. We pray that that strength will continue in each one of us. We pray that You will guide our officers through another year that the Disabled American Veterans may once again fulfill its obligation to disabled veterans and their families. And remembering those who are still listed as missing in action, bless them and their families, and bless our nation now and always. Amen.

Thank you all very much.

COMMANDER REED: Please remain standing. I will now ask the Department of Arizona Honor Guard to retire the Colors.

(Retirement of Colors.)

COMMANDER REED: To everyone in the hall, on a personal note, thank you for your support for the past 12 months.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 76th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans is now adjourned.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned at 10:35 o'clock a.m., August 21, 1997.)

P R O C E E D I N G S

of the

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

75TH NATIONAL CONVENTION

August 16-21, 1997
Las Vegas Hilton Hotel
Las Vegas, Nevada

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DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS AUXILIARY

OPENING BUSINESS SESSION

August 18, 1997

The Opening Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 75th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Monday morning, August 18, 1997, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Adjutant Maria M. Tedrow.

ADJUTANT MARIA M. TEDROW: National Sergeant-at-Arms, please present National Commander Margaret Hass to the platform. Let's give her a big hand. (Applause)

Will the national sergeant-at-arms have the national officers escorted to the platform? Senior Vice-Commander Evelynne Dunn; National 1st Junior Vice-Commander Evelyn Dorsey; National 2nd Junior Vice-Commander Paula Raymond; National 4th Junior Vice-Commander Esther Westlake; National Chaplain Carol Gray; wheeling and dealing, National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred; Immediate Past National Commander Barbara Hicks.

Will the national sergeant-at-arms present the National Convention chairman, Helen Parcelle.

Will the national sergeant-at-arms have the past national commanders escorted to the chairs in front of the room. Past National Commander Lucille McCarthy, Florida; Past National Commander Pauline Wright, Colorado; Past National Commander Nelda Wilson, Illinois; Past National Commander Dorothy Van Hoy, Missouri; Past National Commander Mary Beth Schulze of Ohio.

Past National Commander Marjorie Vincent of Arizona, formerly of California; Florence Valgardson, past national commander from Utah; Past National Commander Betty Hall from Texas; Past National Commander Sally Wilton, Arizona; Past National Commander Loneita Shoemaker of Arkansas; Past National Commander Katherine Pearson from Minnesota; Past National Commander Rose Marie Schilpp from Missouri; Past National Commander Myrtice Vinson from Georgia; Past National Commander Claudia Roy, Vermont; Past National Commander Jane Troutman from North Carolina.

Will the national sergeant-at-arms present the National Colors?

(Presentation of Colors.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: And now we will present the states with their colors. First will be North Dakota, home state of our national commander.

(Presentation of state Colors.)

Will the national sergeant-at-arms now post the national colors.

(Presentation of national Colors.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: We will now have the prayer by National Chaplain Carol Gray.

CHAPLAIN CAROL GRAY: Would you all join hands for a moment of silence as we remember those who are no longer with us, for those who are sick and suffering wherever they may be.

Thank You, Lord, for this new day You have given to us and for the privilege we have to be here and see friends we have made over the years and for the opportunity to make new friends. We ask for peace and comfort for all who are sick and suffering. Heal them if it is Your will. You have blessed America, and we pray for continued blessings.

Be with Commander Margaret as she guides us through this convention that all we say and do here will make us a stronger, even more loving organization to better serve our veterans and their families. Bring us through this day to a better tomorrow. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Due to the fact that our 4th National Junior Vice is not present, we are going to ask Joi Kern, junior member from Unit Number 60 in Oklahoma to lead us in the Pledge of Allegiance. Joi.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

Erna B. Smith will now play the National Anthem, and can we

all join in? Erna B.

(Singing of National Anthem.)

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Will the national sergeant-at-arms now dismiss the national and state Color bearers, and would everybody else be seated? Let's give them a big hand. (Applause)

(Dismissal of Color bearers.)

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 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary to 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.

One of the highlights of my year is always to introduce the commander.

This year we have had a commander that has a warm smile that just lights up everybody when they meet her. And, you know, a gracious lady who has all the capabilities of leading an organization such as this, because she is warm-hearted, she is compassionate, she's willing to listen and understand.

At this time, it gives me the greatest honor to introduce to you our national commander, Margaret Hass. (Applause)

COMMANDER MARGARET E. HASS: Thank you, thank you. This is truly a grand morning, the beginning of our 75th diamond anniversary convention of we, the Auxiliary, and the beautiful flags, beautiful pages coming in this morning was a grand start. It was very, very beautiful, and I thank each and every one of you for your hard work.

Each of you makes our convention what it is, and it will be a grand one, and I extend a thank-you to you for being here. I see many of you smiling, and I know you all have a big smile some place, and I want you to get it ready, because the very first thing I'm going to do is ask for those of you who have the first time at being at convention, if you would please stand. And we want to welcome them so warmly so that they'll come back again and again and again. Oh, look at that! (Applause) Isn't that wonderful?

Now, please remain standing. We want to get a good look at you, because when we are seeing you around the convention -- everybody look at them, and when you see them, be sure and make them feel welcome, because we want them to come back. And I'm sure that when you experience the caring and sharing that's going on at this convention, you will want to come back, and when you come, you will make our convention even better than what it is today.

So I thank you so much for being here. Now you may be seated.

And to all of you that have brought our organization to what it is at this place in time, I want to thank you, too, because working together with you and with the new ones here, we will have a fitting closure to our diamond anniversary year, I'm sure. We're all here for that reason, and I'm sure that it will be a very fitting convention to our grand and glorious 75th year.

And now I have the honor to bring someone to bring you greetings. It's someone that you know, but I'm going to introduce you to her anyway: Helen Parcelle. She's our National Convention chairman, and she has been doing this job before. And any of you that have been involved in the preparation of a state convention know how much work there is into making it a successful convention. We know that Helen can do the job, because we've had a beautiful National Convention here before, and she's been working very diligently in making plans for this.

And it's indeed my honor to present to you right now Helen Parcelle, the National Convention chairman. (Applause)

MRS. HELEN PARCELLE: Thank you for that wonderful, wonderful speech. And good morning, everybody.

Commander Margaret, national officers, past national commanders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: On behalf of the State Department of Nevada, I'd like to welcome all of you to Las Vegas, Nevada, the entertainment capital of the world. Our city has grown since our last convention here. There are more casinos to entertain you with more in the process of being built.

We have other attractions, and we hope you have time to visit them, such as the Visitors Center at the Boulder Dam, the Red Rock Canyon, and the lovely Lake Meade, also, Laughlin, Nevada, which is about an hour and a half drive from here. We do have a great university which we have our famous Running Rebels, UNLV.

For the young and the young at heart, we have water attractions like Wet 'N Wild and Circus Circus, the Grand Slam and both are on the Las Vegas Strip.

I hope that you will enjoy the many amenities of our great city. I could go on and on, but we need to get to our business session.

At this time, I would like to introduce my Convention Committee. I have been very fortunate to have a wonderful group of ladies to work with, as they have been most supportive. Will these ladies please stand as I call their names: Lesley Chambers, Carola Murray, Erin Murray, Donna Sellers, Rosie McDuffie, Jan Bennett, Peggy Baker, Dorothy Otts, Carol Murray. Give them a nice hand. (Applause)

And also my right hand. This lady has been my inspiration all year. Never once did she refuse to help me in any, any situation. And that is my very dear friend, Evelynne Dunn. (Applause)

I would like to briefly go over the coming events. Monday night is our Nevada Fun Night. Please join us in a wild and wacky time. We have great entertainment planned, so we hope you will make it a point to be there.

Wednesday afternoon is our Prairie Rose Forget-Me-Not Luncheon in honor of our dear Prairie Rose, Margaret. Join us in honor of Prairie Rose Margaret.

In closing, I'd like to say that we hope you enjoy yourself in Nevada and, National Commander Margaret, I hope you will have a successful and a productive convention. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Helen. I know we will together.

There is a group of women with us today that we, the Auxiliary, owe a debt of gratitude. They are our mentors, the women who came before us to follow. Their leadership and wise counsel helped mold the Auxiliary into a great organization. I'm referring to past national commanders who have joined us today, and we also remember lovingly those that could not be with us.

Past national commanders, would you please stand as I call your name, and remain standing, if you will, so we can welcome you and show our appreciation of you after all have been introduced. Please stand as I call your name. Lucille McCarthy, Pauline Wright, Nelda Wilson, Dorothy Van Hoy, Mary Beth Schulze, Marjorie Vincent, Florence Valgardson, Maria Tedrow, Betty Hall, Sally Wilton, Loneita Shoemaker, Katherine Pearson, Rose Marie Schilpp, Shelia Allred, Myrtice Vinson, Claudia Roy, Barbara Maldet, Jane Troutman and Barbara Hicks. (Applause)

Thank you so much, ladies. We love you all, and thank you for being here, because we know that we need your help, and you're so gracious and generous with us, and I just am so happy to see each and every one of you. Enjoy the convention, but work a little with us, too, okay? Thank you.

At this time, I would like to call Maria Tedrow to the podium to bring greetings.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I was asked by the chairman of the past national commanders, Bonita Newell, who could not be here, to make a special presentation to our national commander on behalf of the past national commanders who sit here and who are not able to be here. All year long, Margaret has been a gracious lady, as I have said before, and always had a smile, but she also always had a question.

"Maria, do I get one of those beautiful paperweights that I give out to conventions?" And I said, "No, Margaret. They only go

to state commanders when you travel to that state." And she said, "Oh, they're so beautiful."

Well, we want to tell you, Margaret, that the past national commanders understand when you want something badly that it's nice if somebody can fulfill your dream. So on behalf of all these lovely ladies here, I would like to make this special presentation to you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Oh, this is really, truly wonderful, because they are beautiful, and I've admired them, and it's just really great. Thank you, ladies. I just appreciate this so much. It'll be a beautiful memento this year. It has the forget-me-not on it, and it's just -- it's a beautiful thing that represents our organization. Thank you so much. (Applause)

We have had some beautiful ladies that have been awarded past commanders' awards, and I was wondering how many of them are with us? I have seen a few, so those that have received that award, would you please stand, and with Maria's help, we're going to call you by name and introduce you.

I know I've seen Mary Webber, and Hazel Myers is one of the awardees. And you deserved it.

Thank you, ladies, very much.

A preliminary report of the Credentials Committee by the Credentials chairman at this time, please.

MRS. DOROTHY OTTS: Good morning. The Credentials report is as follows: Total units registered, 344; total departments registered, 44. The total is 388. Delegates registered, 720; alternates registered, 63; guests, 75, for a total of 858. Total unit votes, 2,172; total department votes, 44; national officers, 7; PNCs, 16. Grand total of votes, 2,239. Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Dorothy.

At this time, do I hear a motion that the preliminary report of the Credentials Committee be accepted as read?

NEC 8TH DISTRICT ELAINE MAJORS: (Away from microphone) So move.

NEC 10TH DISTRICT GWEN A. McCRACKEN: (Away from microphone) Second.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. All those in favor; opposed. Motion carried. Thank you very much.

I'm going to ask that when you make a motion or a second that you go to a mike, because the recorder has to know who it is.

Thank you, Dorothy, for that report. We'll be calling on you again later.

The first order of business is the adoption of the National Convention Rules. Printed copies of the Convention Rules have been furnished to all the registered delegates. The Chair will now entertain a motion for adoption of these Rules. Leona Sharp, Michigan. And a second? Linda Trulio, Department of New Jersey. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion, any changes?

If not, I will ask all those in favor of accepting the Rules; opposed. The Rules are accepted.

At this time, I would like to ask the senior vice, Evelynne Dunn, to take over the chair.

(Whereupon, Senior Vice-Commander Evelynne Dunn assumed the chair.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER EVELYNNE DUNN: Good morning everyone. National officers, past national commanders, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: Our country is filled with so many beautiful sights, and one of the most beautiful of all is in the Dakotas in the spring when the prairie roses bloom. It is my privilege and honor to introduce for the purpose of presenting her commander's report our very own prairie rose, who has led this organization with dedication, competence and grace: National Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Commander, our very own prairie rose, Margaret Hass. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. National officers, national chairmen, National Executive Committeewomen, past national commanders, members of our Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: My election August 1, 1996 as your national commander during the 75th diamond anniversary National Convention at the Riverwalk

Hilton in New Orleans was a gift to me from you that will last a lifetime.

I knew from that moment that I would give everything I had and enjoy every minute of it. Every day was like a holiday full of expectations and many joys and experiencing first-hand your love, concern and dedication to our organization.

Each year as a member or an officer or a chairman has been an enjoyable learning venture for me, and as your commander, this year has been undescribable.

After convention, I returned home to a joyous reunion with my unit and friends in the airport. They came carrying flowers and congratulatory banners, and there were more posters in my yard and on Main Street of my Bowbells. The wonderful year had begun for me. What an exciting year to be a national commander for our Auxiliary's 75th diamond anniversary.

Our National Fall Conference began September 26 at the Galt House in Kentucky, less than two months after convention, but the National Office was ready, and with the good participation of the National Executive Committeewomen, the NEC meeting was both productive and successful. There were many members who were attending their first conference, and they, as all in attendance, benefited and also were entertained with fine programs presented by our national chairman.

A 200,000 membership was the goal set for this year. Our year ended with 198,811, 541 over quota, for our quota was 198,270. The following 11 states achieved their department quota: Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Vermont and Puerto Rico. Congratulations to these states. (Applause) I know you all worked hard, and I thank each and every one of you.

My first official visit was to Montana's Fall Conference on October 18th, and on October 19th, the 14th District Fall Conference in Billings, Montana.

The 50th anniversary of the founding of the Voluntary Service of the Department of Veterans Affairs was celebrated in Tampa, Florida, October 22nd to 27th. Fifty years of "Keeping the Promise" to those who have already served us is an accomplishment to celebrate. I was delighted to recognize those who serve as volunteers in service programs across the country.

Over the past five decades, VA volunteers have contributed millions of hours of service to veterans under VA care. Their friendship, love and humanity in that service are beyond value. The DAV and our Auxiliary were presented with beautiful trophies for their 50-year charter membership by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown. I was so proud to accept it for you, and I only wish that you could have been there to share in that special moment with me.

I was invited to participate in the 49th annual celebration of National Veterans Day in Birmingham, Alabama. The speaker for the award dinner was DAV Commander Reed. The event this year was hosted beautifully by the DAV and the United States Army. Riding in the Veterans Day parade with my name and title on the car was a great experience. Many along the parade route waved and said, "Hi, Margaret," and I gave them a real big DAVA smile and a friendly wave. It was a wonderful three days.

Attending the inauguration of our nation's President was indeed an American journey, rejoicing in the spirit of democracy that for 200 years has united individuals of diverse origins in the pursuit of common ideals. We were showing the world that we, the people in America, can elect our nation's leader in an orderly, joyful manner. And what a gala event it was.

The state visits and conventions I was privileged to make were all simply beyond my belief. The tours of the VA hospitals, veteran rehabs, homeless veterans homes, it just proved that we are providing the quality care we want for our veterans and their families. Each installation and memorial program was beautiful. In each visit and convention we enjoyed together historical and interesting sites, delicious dinners, good programs, full of long, hard hours of work, but it was all worth it. We were building relationships so important to the success of our Auxiliary, and it

will be memories for us to share always.

My first state visitation was to Massachusetts, October 31st to November 3rd. November 15th, I was to go to Louisiana for their conference, but the plane didn't come because of the weather. How could it snow on my parade?

The holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas were spent at home with my family.

My travels began again January 8th with the Florida Conference in Orlando. While I was there, I missed an 80-degree below wind chill at home. The storm gates were closed for travel in and out of my Minot. California's Conference was in San Diego, February 4th to 9th. February 26th to March 2nd, I was in Missouri at Unit Number 2 Americanism Program in Kansas City. March 6th to 10th, a visitation to Little Rock, Arkansas.

I was invited to speak to the delegation of the C/A Midwinter Conference in Crystal City, Washington, D.C., March 15th to 19th. I attended their informative seminars and discussions to learn and bring back the information to the Auxiliary units. We want to be part of the solution, and I was very honored to sit at the table with Commander Reed as he gave his impressive testimony before the Joint House and Senate Committee.

Volunteering at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sport Clinic in Crested Butte, Colorado March 23rd to 28th moved me greatly. The indomitable spirit and determination of those participants inspired all of us there to exceed our own limits.

I attended Commander Reed's testimonial April 5th in Indiana. It has been a joy to serve with him this year. I look forward to meeting his family and friends. He has a deep appreciation of the Auxiliary and has truly championed us all throughout his year.

My testimonial was in Minot, North Dakota on April 12th. I was simply amazed and delighted to see so many there, because it's so hard to get to North Dakota any time, and with the forecast of snow every other day, travel had been dubious all winter. And then there was the flood, too. But the weather turned out beautiful for that weekend in Minot, and it was a beautiful special weekend for me, and thanks to all of you that made it so.

Travel began in earnest again. I went to Baltimore, Maryland for a visitation April 17th to the 21st; Utah State visitation in Salt Lake City, April 24th to 27th.

My first state convention was Nevada's convention in Las Vegas, May 1 to 4; Iowa state convention, May 8 to 11th; Louisiana, May 15th to the 19th; Oklahoma, May 29th to June 2nd; North Dakota, June 5th to 6th; Indiana, June 12th to 15th; Massachusetts, June 19th to the 22nd; New York, June 23rd to the 26th; and Puerto Rico, June 26th to the 29th. Through all of my travels, the auxiliaries expressed their thanks for the National Return Label Program. They enjoy the beautiful labels and most certainly the money to help them serve the veteran even better.

And I think we're going to thank National for that program right now. (Applause)

The National Finance Committee met April 28th, and our wonderful Education and Loan Program meeting was May 5th. Both were held at the Drawbridge Inn in Kentucky. They are important special meetings for our Auxiliary, and it was a privilege for me to be part of both of those with the dedicated committee members.

A very special thanks to you, national officers, National Committeewomen and chairmen, and to National Adjutant Maria, Assistant Adjutant Judy Hezlep and the office staff for all their help in making this a very special anniversary year for us all. It was my pleasure to serve with you. You were definitely a dream team. And thank you, Miriam Kiser, for being my page all these years.

And to each and every member, thank you, thank you very, very much for all your support, love and your understanding and for being "We, the Auxiliary." Thank you. (Applause)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DUNN: Commander Margaret, what a wonderful report that was.

Ladies, she is such a dedicated lady, our commander. She's a very good friend of mine, and I just love her dearly.

At this time, I'll entertain a motion to accept her report.

(Motion made and seconded from the floor.)

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DUNN: Ellen Griggs from West Virginia. We have a first and a second. Is there any discussion? All those in favor of accepting. Motion carried. (Applause) Thank you, ladies.

(Whereupon, Commander Hass resumed the chair.)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Evelynne.

(Inaudible comment from the floor.)

COMMANDER HASS: Yes. Please bring the chaplain forward. This is Reverend Carl E. Bergstrom, our national chaplain. I am delighted to have you come and visit us, Carl.

DAV CHAPLAIN CARL E. BERGSTROM: Thank you, Commander Margaret. I have to tell you that back in 1972 when we had the convention in St. Louis, Missouri, I was so moved by the partnership between the DAV and its Auxiliary at the memorial service, I said, "I've got to go thank somebody." Well, the men I never caught up with, but the women were here -- well, they weren't here; they were in St. Louis. But at any rate, I stood before them. I thought that was going to be my only year as chaplain.

So the next time I was elected chaplain, which was a couple of years later, I said, "Well, I did it once; I'd better at least do it to this group." Well, this is my 12th time. (Applause) And it's important to me, because I want you to know that I appreciate the support that the Auxiliary gives. I have always felt that the Auxiliary was standing side by side with us, and it's just a nice feeling.

Now, over the years, I've always come empty-handed, and this year they said, "No, you can't come empty-handed. Come empty-handed, you can't come in." (Laughter) So, I have something. It is my pleasure -- and I have it all wrapped up. I've been asked by the Chapel of the Four Chaplains to make a presentation to the commander. And if the box is all fouled up, it's because of my excitement at being able to do this, and I think I crushed it.

The Chapel of the Four Chaplains, for those of you who don't know -- and I don't think there are too many people who don't know these days --- is in Pennsylvania, and it was founded as a result of an act of heroism and volunteerism when four chaplains, one Catholic, two Protestant and a Jew, surrendered their life jackets on the troopship Dorchester as it was sailing up off the coast of Greenland: Chaplains George Fox, John Washington, Alexander Good and Clark Polling. And they gave up their life jackets, and then in a circle, each gave a prayer from their own faith and, of course, they went down with the Dorchester.

And because of that, now they have set up this Chapel of the Four Chaplains, and an award is given to someone who they deem has given, in a spirit of volunteering, on a national level or world basis. And I am really pleased this morning to be here to present to your commander, Margaret Hass, this bronze medal from the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. Margaret. (Applause)

That's not all. This has to be an act of love. I carried this all the way from New England, and it wasn't light. This is the award, which I am now pleased to present to you. (Applause)

Thank you very much for allowing me to take some time from your busy schedule, and I'm going to get out of here now, so you can continue. Thank you very much.

COMMANDER HASS: Not right away. I have a few words to say. This is a delightful man, and I've been very privileged to get to know him a little bit better in my travels this year. And we knew you were doing a good job. When you come back 12 times, you know you are. And I thank you so much for this beautiful thing. That's very touching to receive something like that and from a fine gentleman like you. Thank you, Carl, and I'm so glad you came in, and don't forget to do that again.

CHAPLAIN BERGSTROM: If I'm back, I'm back. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Monetary awards are given in each category of each program to the first-place winner, and checks will be mailed out from National Headquarters after convention. And at this time, we will have the Membership Awards. Membership chairman, Evelyn Dorsey.

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER EVELYN B. DORSEY: Good morning. Just before I do that, though, we're celebrating the close of our 75th year, which is indeed a tremendous milestone in the history of the Auxiliary, and then this past year we're going to celebrate this morning meeting our quota. So we're going to make a little noise, Maria, if that's okay, and I want everybody to get into this.

This is celebration time. And if you can't stand with us, then wave your hand, pat your foot, do whatever, put on your hats. Got your little noise-makers? We have a few more coming. Unfortunately, we don't have enough for everybody. But you have whistles in your packs. Get them out. We're going to celebrate meeting our quota.

Well, I hope that got the adrenalin flowing and a few other things. Thank you, ladies, for being such good sports. But I just thought we needed to loosen up a bit, have a little fun and celebrate making our quota. I sincerely thank each of you for what you did, the hard work, and for those of you who made quota, share your secrets with those who did not. And for those of you who made quota this year, we're looking for you to do it again next year. You've got the formula, so we know that we're going to continue this.

Before I go forward, just let me mention we have several ladies here who are wearing hearing aids, and the whistles can be a little annoying to them. So if you'll be considerate of that when you're using them. Let's not go overboard. I think we've had our little celebration now. So let's be considerate of our sisters.

We had nine states to meet quota this year, and I think -- yes, a hand of applause. (Applause) I would like for them to stand as I call their names. The Department of Colorado; the Department of Delaware; the Department of Florida; the Department of Indiana; the Department of Iowa; the Department of New Jersey; the Department of New York; Department of North Carolina, who had the distinction of meeting quota first before anybody else; Department of North Dakota; Department of Vermont; and the Department of Puerto Rico. Let's give them all a hand for a job well done. (Applause)

At this time, we're going to give the Membership Awards to the units in the various groups, the categories of 10 to 50 members. First place goes to Longmont Number 16 of Colorado. (Applause)

As I call your unit, would you come forward.

While she's coming, Group 2 category, 51 to 100 members, Colonel Charles Young Unit Number 70 of Alabama. (Applause)

Group 3 of 101 to 200 members, Dallas Unit Number 31 of Texas. (Applause)

Group 4, 201 plus members, Walter Rohr Memorial Unit Number 35 of New York. (Applause)

We also have a Group 5, and this is a new unit who has the most new members, and that goes to Monroe Powers Unit Number 15, also of New York, so you can take both of them. Thank you. (Applause)

MEMBER: I would like to give a special thanks to our past state commander, Jeanne LePorte, because she made this all possible. Thank you. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: Our next group award, Group Number 6, is the department with the largest percentage increase, and that goes to the State Department of North Carolina. (Applause) Whatever you're doing in the tarheel state, keep it up, keep it up.

MRS. RENEE JONES: I'm the immediate past state commander from North Carolina, Renee Jones, and I would like to introduce the Membership chairman for 1996-97, Joyce Wardrip, who helped make this possible. Thanks, North Carolina. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: We have a Group 7, and this is the department with the largest new numerical increase, and that is the State Department of New York, the big apple. (Applause)

And we have two special membership awards. These are plaques, and they are awarded to members of units. The first one is Marcia J. Mills of Ohio Unit Number 43, who recruited 45 new senior

members. (Applause) Is Ms. Mills here? We will see that it's mailed to her.

And our next winner is Janet Walters, Indiana Unit Number 19. She recruited 18 new senior members. (Applause) Is Janet here?

MRS. JANET WALTERS: I'm very proud to receive this. I can't believe it's the second time in a row here. Thank you very much to everyone. (Applause)

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: Ladies, again, we sincerely thank you for all that you did to keep our membership at a pretty good level. We certainly want to one day reach that goal of 200,000 members, and, as I said, those of you who have the winning formula, please pass it on. And to those of you who know what you need to do, please continue to get those new members in. We need them.

Thank you so very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: With Evelyn's consent, I would like to invite you award winners, if you would like to come up and be at the side of the stage, she would come down, and you could have your picture taken with her.

And that is the procedure that we will use during the convention as the awards are given out. If you receive an award, if you'd just wait over there until the chairman can be with you or whatever. You can have your picture. Because we do like to have them for our history books.

So if you would like to come back and bring your photographer with you, why, we'll have your picture.

I will now ask that E. Jimi Hayes come forward to give us the Finance Committee report and budget adoption. E. Jimi Hayes, chairman.

NEC 5TH DISTRICT E. JIMI HAYES: Before I begin this report, I would like to thank a couple of our KOPODs in the back, Frances and Dolores. They are serving beautifully. I am going to ask the commander, if you see them leaving the building with any packages, please notify security. KOPOD are keeper of purses of the day. (Laughter)

I am really here to give this report in place of our Vicky Grier, who is not with us because of her husband's very serious illness, and our thoughts and prayers are with Vicky, as I know she is thinking of us at this time.

Commander Margaret, national officers, delegates and guests: The National Auxiliary Finance Committee met at the Drawbridge Inn, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky, on April 28th, 1997. This was the working committee which prepared the 1998 budget, and work we did. We also reviewed the audit. The voting members of the committee who were present were NEC Vicky L. Grier, District 9; NEC Joan Fletcher, District 18; Jimi Hayes, District 5. Present without vote were Evelynne Dunn, senior vice-commander; Sandy Smith, comptroller; Judy Hezlep, assistant adjutant; Barbara Maldet, administrative assistant; and Maria M. Tedrow, National Auxiliary adjutant and secretary for the meeting. NEC Gwen McCracken was not able to be with us due to an unfortunate accident.

Now, being on the Finance Committee was a rewarding learning experience, and the committee worked diligently. Gwen and I will be leaving, and we say to the incoming NECs, prepare yourselves to learn and work, and you will really enjoy being part of a wonderful committee.

Madam Commander, I ask for an adoption of this report. I move the adoption of this report.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. BARBARA McVICKER: (Away from microphone) Barbara McVicker, Unit 2, Kansas City, Missouri. I second.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? If not, I ask for those who are in favor by saying Aye; opposed by the same sign. Motion carried.

Thank you, E. Jimi Hayes.

At this time, I'm going to ask that Phyllis Greaney, our Education and Loan chairman, proceed to the podium, and while she is doing that, Maria has some things to say. And as soon as Phyllis is here, anyone that has donations for the Education and Loan Program, we would ask that you start coming up to the front of

the convention.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I don't really have anything to say at this time. I have a presentation to make. I brought it in this morning and turned it upside-down, and the next time I looked at it, it was right side up and sitting in front of Margaret. Then I had to take it and turn it upside-down. The next time I saw it, it was sitting right side up in front of Margaret. It has Margaret's name on it, but it's a presentation that I am supposed to give.

Margaret, as you know, has a soul mate and a partner, and his name is Vic, and he has been supportive. Oh, has he been supportive of her this year! And, of course, Vic was having a problem. He wasn't feeling that great, but never did he say, "Margaret, you've got to stay home with me." He went ahead and did his thing.

And he's feeling really great now, and he is very proud of his wife, as he should be, and he wanted to make this special presentation, and he gave it to me. And I said, "Vic, you come in and do it." "Oh, no, no, no. You're not going to get me to do it."

So Margaret, I want you to know that it's with love that he brought this for you. It's with love that he gives it to you. He just didn't want to come up in front of the ladies and do it personally. Would you please accept this from your husband? (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Maria. He knows you will do it right, and you know how husbands are around their wives. I will have to open this up and share it with you. It's a great big "Betty Boop" watch. (Applause)

Here is our Phyllis, our Director of our Education and Loan; her report was in the packet, but I'm sure she has a few things to say to you lovely people. And I see they are lining up, and it looks like money, money, money.

MRS. PHYLLIS GREANEY: As Margaret already told you, and you know, the report is in your packet, so I will be very brief. And if you have any questions in regard to the report or the Ed. Loan, you can see me any time during the convention or write to me at National Headquarters.

I would like to thank Margaret, the Executive Committee, and members of the committee and staff at National for their help and for appointing me to this position. It's a very important program, the Ed. Loan, and it's been going on now since the early '30s. And it is very important to families, especially in this day and age when the cost of college education or any education beyond high school, the tuitions, the fees, the room and boards when they have to stay at college or want to stay at college, are -- well, in some places, they could be $30,000 a year. In others, the state colleges are less, and they are very good. But it's very expensive, and you get more out into the Midwest, you find that colleges are not close to home, so they do have to live there.

It's been a rewarding experience for me to be on this committee and to be able to see what these students are doing and to hear from them as they pay back their loan. You will find, too, that in this day and age, most people need an education, be it college or technical school, beyond high school, and it's very difficult for families. And some families have more than one child going to college at the same time, so they do have to look to federal loans and also to private organizations for help.

One student who had called me a few years ago and said, "I want to know when I have to pay back my loan," and I said, "You have 60 days beyond after you finish." And I said, "Do you have a lot of loans to pay back?" And she said, "About $40,000." And this is a girl who went to state college for two years and then transferred to a pharmaceutical college in the Boston area, where they don't have any housing for the students. So it meant even extra money for her living expenses. But she said, "I do want to start paying back the loan as soon as I can."

And so I want you to know that the students are very dedicated, very nice people. And I appreciate your help you're giving them, and I know that you do.

And as you know, every year I come up here and say, "Come on,

let's give some money to the Ed. Loan," so I'm not going to disappoint you this year by not mentioning it.

I thank all of you who have given to the Ed. Loan. It's been greatly appreciated.

MEMBER: I want to give this -- I've been doing this every year since my husband died -- in his memory. And I have one for Maria for the Service Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

MRS. MARJORIE VINCENT: Maria, I have a check for $200 from Arizona's Past Department Commanders Club of the Auxiliary.

Phyllis, I have a hundred-dollar bill from Charles and I for Education Loan Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you. Marj and Chuck have been very kind to me and to the Ed Loan. Thank you.

MEMBER: On behalf of the State of New York, for the Educational Loan Fund, I have a check for you, Phyllis. And for the National Service Fund for Maria.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MEMBER: I have a check from the State of Vermont for the Education and Loan Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Oh, thank you.

MEMBER: I have a check for the Educational Loan Fund from the State of Georgia.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

COMMANDER HASS: We have a request from the recorder, ladies, to say your name loud and distinctly so she can put it in the record book.

MRS. ALIENE WARCHAK: Aliene Warchak, department commander, State of Georgia.

MRS. MARIAN WRIGHT: I'm Marian Wright, commander of Unit 7 of Colorado, and I'd like to give this $200 for the Scholarship Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

MRS. VIRGINIA REINAGEL: I'm Virginia Reinagel, Chapter 70, Tennessee. I have one check for the Educational Loan Fund, $500; I have $200 for the Freedom Foundation; I have a $300 check for the Service Foundation; and a $200 check for the POW/MIA.

MRS. GREANEY: Very good. Thank you.

MRS. REINAGEL: It's Chapter 70, Memphis.

MRS. LINETTA JOHNSON: I am Linetta Johnson from the State of Ohio. I am the commander of the State of Ohio, and I have a thousand dollars each for the Flood Relief Fund, the Auxiliary Service Support Fund, the Educational Fund, and the Freedoms Foundation.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

MRS. ETHEL WHITE: Ethel White, Department of Michigan, and I have a check for the Service Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. WILMA CHRISTENSEN: Wilma Christensen, Department of Indiana. We have a hundred dollars for the Education Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

MRS. FRANCES CLEVETTE: Frances Clevette from the State of New Hampshire. I have a check for the Educational Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

MRS. PHYLLIS GORDON: Phyllis Gordon from the State of Arkansas and Unit 57. I have a check from our unit for the Service Foundation and one from the state for the Service Foundation and one for the National Education Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

MRS. BRENDA GODFREY: My name is Brenda Godfrey. I'm the commander for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Unit 1, Phoenix, Arizona. We have a check here for the Scholarship Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

MRS. DOROTHY KASHNER: I'm Dorothy Kashner from the Department of Delaware, the small wonder, and I have a check for the Educational Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. MARILYN HESS: Marilyn Hess, commander, Department of Iowa. I have a check here for the Veterans Writing Program, the Educational Loan Fund, the Freedom's Foundation and the Service Program.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you so much.

MRS. BARBARA GENTRY: I'm Barbara Gentry, commander of the State of Arizona. I have a check here for the Education Loan Fund and one for Freedom's Foundation.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

MRS. THERESA DOWNEY: Terry Downey, state commander of Massachusetts. I have a check here for the Educational Loan Fund from the Department of Massachusetts. I also have my own personal gift in memory of my niece, Deena Louise Downey, who was a life member of the DAV Auxiliary. I also have two checks for the National Service Fund, one from the Department of Massachusetts and one from myself in memory of my niece again.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. JANINE HENSON: I am Janine Henson, Department of Idaho commander. I have two checks, one for the Education Fund and the Support Program.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

NEC 1ST DISTRICT JACQUELINE M. FOSSIANO: Jacki Fossiano, District 1. I have a personal check for the Ed. Loan.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you, Jacki.

MRS. RHEA LYNN: I am Rhea Lynn, commander of the Department of Pennsylvania. I have a check for the Education Loan Fund and a check for the Service Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. ALPHA BARNHOUSE: Alpha Barnhouse, Unit 17, Missouri. We brought a small check to the National Education Loan Fund, but my neighbor said, "Every little bit counts, so bring the small ones with the big ones."

MRS. GREANEY: Yes, that's right. Thank you.

MRS. DOROTHY FOSTER: Dorothy Foster, commander for the great State of Florida. I have a check for the National Service Support Fund for a thousand dollars.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. LINDA TRULIO: I'm Linda Trulio, the department commander for the State of New Jersey. I'd like to give my personal check for a hundred dollars to Ed. Loan in honor of my dad who's celebrating 50 years as a life member DAV.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. NICKI HENNINGER: Hi! I'm Nicki Henninger from Arizona, Glendale Unit 20, and I have the honor of being able to give you $500 for the National Service Foundation and $250 for the Educational Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. KAREN ROYBAL: Karen Roybal, State Department of New Mexico, presents you with this check for the Education Loan Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

MRS. ANNETTE GERSH: I'm Annette Gersh, Unit 57, Dallas, Texas. I have a check for the Education Fund and a check for the Service Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. MAXINE HORTON: Maxine Horton, commander of the Department of Kansas. I have a check for the Service Foundation and for Freedom's Foundation from our department.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

MRS. CORNELIA COBB: Cornelia Cobb, Unit 70, Bessemer. I have a personal check for the Service Fund.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

JUDGE ADVOCATE SHELIA ALLRED: Shelia Allred, judge advocate. In September when our house burned, you members were so kind to take up a love offering to help Jim and myself out. So in honor of you, the membership, that helped us when we needed it, I'd like to give a hundred dollars back to the Service Fund to help somebody else.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you very much.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DUNN: Madam Commander, I would like to present a hundred dollars in memory of three special people, three special men in my life: my late husband, Fred; my son, Monty, whom I lost last year; and to Helen Parcelle's very dear husband, William Parcelle. These men were very special in my life, and I'd like to honor their memories.

MRS. GREANEY: Thank you.

On behalf of the Ed. Loan, the students, the committee, all of us, thank you very much for your generosity. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Phyllis, for serving us so well on this committee.

Maria, please come forward.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: There will be a count given to you each day as more contributions come in. Phyllis has already thanked you on behalf of the Education Loan. I deeply appreciate any donations that are made to the Service Support Program. It is a program that is growing. There are more and more needs out there. Some of them we can't help. And as I've said before, as the generosity and the mandates come in and this fund builds up, hopefully we can extend it to anyone within our membership who may have a need.

I thank you on behalf of those you have helped that you do not know about, and I thank you on behalf of those that may need help yet to come. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: I want to thank you, too, for the time and energy that you and your office uses to keep this program, a well-worth program that we have to help our ladies.

And now I'd like to have Maria Tedrow, our national adjutant come again and give us our committee assignments. We've all been waiting for that, haven't we?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: With bated breath, but first I'm going to give you a few announcements. I have been asked to read this invitation, and it is an invitation to everyone in the room, everyone is welcome, and it states, "The Department of Florida cordially invites you to attend a reception honoring Harry R. McDonald, national senior vice-commander, on Tuesday evening, August the 19th, 1997, from 7:30 to 9:00 at the Las Vegas Hilton Ballroom E and F, First Floor."

The invitation is extended to everyone who's attending this convention. And his wife is sitting in the audience. Let's have her stand up. Merallyn, would you like to stand? (Applause)

This morning you have probably noticed that at the podium or on the stage this morning, my assistant adjutant, Judy Hezlep, is not present, and my administrative assistant, Barbara Maldet, is not present. They are both working at registration and sales. I felt that it was important this year that two of the people who come to every convention, Pat Kemper and Sandy Smith, be given the privilege of seeing an opening session, since they have never had that opportunity. (Applause)

The flags, of course, will come down after this meeting, and for those that do not know, it was brought before the National Executive Committee and adopted, and because of their recommendation, we will not ask the states to bring their flags from this day on. You will not be bringing your state flags nor the American flags to any other National Convention. The only flags that will be present at the National Conventions in the future will be our National Colors, the flags of the state in which we are having our convention, and the flags of the national commander herself.

I don't like to take anything away, and I know it's tradition, but our women are getting older, it's getting harder to find people to carry the flags. This morning I had six cancellations of flags that were going to be presented and cancelled out at the last minute. Flags were lost on an airplane the other day and recovered yesterday.

So it's a great responsibility, and a lot of people don't like to get saddled with it. So because we are going to break that tradition, next year we're going to start a new one, and next year whoever is casting the state department vote, whether it be your state commander, your immediate past state commander, senior vice, whoever it may be that is casting the state vote, will be escorted into the room with her page. Her name and the state she represents will be announced. And that's what we're going to do in place of the flags.

This way, we can give some acknowledgement to the state commanders who served all year long.

There's going to be a Nor'easter Luncheon at 12:00 o'clock, I

believe, and I think it's on this floor, probably in this area for those that are planning to attend.

Another thing I want to talk to you about just for a minute is we are getting ready for a Fall Conference, and a lot of you have not gotten your mail yet. I am setting up plans for a tour of the National Headquarters, so if you do come to the Fall Conference and you have never been to National Headquarters, I would like to see that you send your name in, or your unit sends a name in, or the state sends a name in, so that we know how many there will be, so I know how many busses to get. Because we would like you to come to National Headquarters. It would be on Thursday afternoon.

Our agenda right now is the National Executive Committee meeting would start on Thursday morning at 10:00. We would have the bus trips to the National Headquarters in the afternoon, and our regular opening business session would be at 7:00 o'clock on Thursday evening. The next day would be two business sessions, which would be Friday, and Friday night we will have an open reception to all attendees. And anybody that's been there, I think, can say that it's an enjoyable reception, and we have a lot of fun.

On Saturday morning, we usually have some remarks from some of the DAV personnel. And we wind up our conference Saturday morning, followed by a banquet on Saturday night, and there again, we'll have a lot of fun at our banquet. We have a very informal conference. We believe in trying to instruct and trying to make members aware of some of the things that are going on in the various programs. Your chairmen will be presenting their programs. You can ask questions, make suggestions.

It's an open conference, open to any member who wishes to attend. They do not have to be a commander or an adjutant or a treasurer, although we certainly welcome them. But we don't want those members that would like to come feel that they are not eligible to come because they're not an officer.

That is the schedule so far.

We have sales. If anybody hasn't been out to our Sales Department, they'd better get out there. We will be closing down sales 12:00 o'clock Wednesday.

Forget-Me-Not tickets. If you are going to buy Forget-Me-Not tickets, you need to buy them today. We're going to cut off the sale of Forget-Me-Not tickets tomorrow morning at 10:00 o'clock.

Now let's get to the committees. The first committee we're going to have is the Americanism Committee. Now, I'm going to call your names out, and please listen. And if I get a name wrong, I want to apologize.

This is for the Americanism Committee. District 1, Susan Stulsky, Massachusetts; District 2, Kathy Luciani, New York; District 3, Wanda Furbish, New Hampshire; District 4, Merrilee Hickman, Delaware; District 5, Gloria Rexrode, Pennsylvania; District 6, Marianne Piekielniak, Virginia; District 7, Dolly Hartman, Florida; District 8, Virginia Mitchell, Alabama; District 9, Barbara Smeal, North Carolina; District 10, Bernice Sebring, Michigan; District 11, Linetta Johnson, Ohio; District 12, Nancy Colby, Illinois; District 13, Norma Zeimet, Indiana; District 14, Sandy Dobmeier, North Dakota; District 15, Donna Piersee, Kansas; District 16, Elsa McCoy, California; District 17, Afton Ficarra; District 18, Ellie Williams; District 19, Janet Guise; District 20, Ida Foster; District 21, Phyllis Gordon.

And because our Americanism chairman is not available, and our Membership chairman has already done her work, Evelyn Dorsey will be the advisor and Gloria Rexrode will be the chairman. Gloria, will you please stand? Gloria Rexrode will be the chairman, and your meeting room will be Conference Room 8. You have a little bible in your packet; it's called an "Agenda of Events" or a "Calendar of Events." It will tell you what level the rooms are on, but I believe that one is on the second floor.

The next one is the Convention Committee on Community Service. District 1, Maureen Fluet, Massachusetts; District 2, Anita Tears, New York; District 3, Marie Clancy of Maine; District 4, Doris Martelli of New Jersey; District 5, Fran Miller of Pennsylvania; District 6, Roberta McKinney of Maryland; District 7, Henrietta

Condon of Florida; District 8, Lecy Jackson, Tennessee; District 9, Aliene Warchak, Georgia; District 10, Rosie Kazmier, Michigan; District 11, Judy Lenhart, Ohio; District 12, Betty Buck of Illinois; District 13, Edith Jackson of Kentucky; District 14, Catena Piti of South Dakota; District 15, Martha Meeks of Nebraska; District 16, Isabel Provensal; District 17, Maxine Wells; District 18, Judy Leiby; District 19, Janine Henson; District 20, Clara Lewis; and District 21, Anita Baley.

The advisor is Esther Westlake. The chairman is Betty Buck. Betty, are you in the room? Would you please stand? Betty Buck is the chairman, and your meeting will be in Conference Room 7.

History Committee to judge the state department history books. District 1, Maxine Tapley, Massachusetts; District 2, Barbara Yenzer, New York; District 3, Mary Gamble, New Hampshire; District 4, Rose Henn, New Jersey; District 5, Sonia Baldwin, Pennsylvania; District 6, Justine Dingus, Virginia; District 7, Agnes Gomis, Florida; District 8, Linda Ricks, Alabama; District 9, Tara Dahle, North Carolina; District 10, Ruth Hindes, Michigan; District 11, Diane Akers, Ohio; District 12, Wilma Dortch, Illinois; District 13, Maxine Archer, Indiana; District 14, Elaine Fagerstrom, North Dakota; District 15, Alpha Barnhouse, Missouri; District 16, Cheryl Whitlock of California; District 17, Jean Jackson of Colorado; District 18, Mary Condos of Nevada; District 19, Pearl Loterbauer, Washington; District 20, Joyce Humes, Texas; District 21, Sharon Eddy, Oklahoma.

The advisor is Renee Jones, and the chairman is Jean Jackson. Jean, can you stand? There she is way back there. And that's in Conference Room 10.

We now have the Committee on Hospital. District 1, Lenore Tullie, Massachusetts; District 2, Mamie Foster, New York; District 3, Frances Clevette, New Hampshire; District 4, Linda Trulio, New Jersey; District 5, Catherine Clinton, Pennsylvania; District 6, Ellen Griggs, West Virginia; District 7, Peggy Warren, Florida; District 8, Laura Blaylock, Mississippi; District 9, Barbara Wingo, South Carolina; District 10, Deborah Emery, Michigan; District 11, Bonnie Roberts, Ohio; District 12, Jeanette Nuspl, Wisconsin; District 13, Ruth Kimball, Indiana; District 14, Sharon Kramer, Minnesota; District 15, Alice Herman, Nebraska; District 16, Joan Christensen, California; District 17, Susan Miller, Colorado; District 18, Lisa Acosta, Nevada; District 19, Mary O'Connell of Idaho; District 20, Dorothea Turner of Texas; District 21, Mary Pinney of Oklahoma.

The advisor is Eunice Eledge, and the chairman will be Linda Trulio. Linda, would you stand, please? Conference Room 9.

Junior Activities. I'm sorry to say that we don't have someone from every district, but I know you're going to be a good committee anyway. District 1, Pat Tait from Massachusetts; District 3, Mary Bessette from Vermont; District 4, Dorothy Kashner, Delaware; District 5, Sadie Turner, Pennsylvania; District 6, Rosalyn Skidmore, West Virginia; District 7, Bernadette Sorrentino; District 8, Elizabeth Ketchum; District 9, Dot Cooke, North Carolina; District 10, Heidi Flack of Michigan; District 12, Carolyn Fudge, Illinois; District 13, Beverly Napier of Kentucky; District 14, Lucy Bradbury, South Dakota; District 15, Lettie Warchola, Missouri; District 16, Connie Salisbury of California; District 17, Karen Roybal, New Mexico; District 18, Marcia Henderson, Arizona; District 19, Debbie Mazza, Oregon; District 20, Earlene Cole, Texas; and District 21 is Angela Cheatham of Arkansas.

The advisor to this committee is Sara Douglass. The chairman will be Beverly Napier. Beverly, are you here? Would you stand, please, so they can see you? Okay. And that's in Conference Room 13.

Let's go to the Convention Committee on Legislation. District 1, Donna Tanner, Massachusetts; District 3, Donna Folcarelli, Rhode Island; District 4, Frances Banghardt, New Jersey; District 5, Mary Peluse, Pennsylvania; District 6, Eutha Larew, West Virginia; District 7, Millie Douglas, Florida; District 8, Juanita Upton, Mississippi; District 9, Doris Hoffman, Georgia; District 10, Barbara McComb, Michigan; District 11, Tommie Lewis, Ohio; District

12, Karen Green, Wisconsin; District 13, Wilma Christensen, Indiana; District 14, Karen Haan, Minnesota; District 15, Kathy Weatherly, Iowa; District 16, Geneva Fox, California; District 17, Carol Ann Chapman, Colorado; District 18, Ruth Ann Tucker, Arizona; District 19, Betty Caldwell, Oregon; District 20, Mary Choate, Texas; District 21, Mamie Painter of Oklahoma.

The advisor to this Committee on Legislation is Paula Raymond. The chairman will be Kathy Weatherly. Kathy, are you here? Over there. And your meeting will be in Conference Room 14.

The Committee on VAVS. District 1, Annetta Boisvert, Massachusetts; District 2, Jeanne LePorte, New York; District 3, Harriet Anderson of Rhode Island; District 4, Melva Matlack of New Jersey; District 5, Jimi Hayes of Pennsylvania; District 6, Marye Hoeflein, Virginia; District 7, Catherine Neuburg, Florida; District 8, Cornelia Cobb, Alabama; District 9, Betty Bryant, North Carolina; District 10, Zona McNeal, Michigan; District 11, Ann Offutt of Ohio; District 12, Betty Bumpus of Illinois; District 13, Doris Stanfill of Indiana; District 14, Frances Benkovics of Minnesota; District 15, Maxine Horton of Kansas; District 16, Yvonne Oden, California; District 17, Arlene Snider, Colorado; District 18, Rose Thomas of Nevada; District 19, Karen Haltiner of Oregon; District 20, Ocie Henze of Texas; District 21, Frances Rutledge of Oklahoma.

The advisor to the VAVS is Lillian Nason, and the chairman will be Jeanne LePorte. It's Conference Room 11.

Let's go down to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee. From District 1, we have Fran Costa from Massachusetts; District 2, Lucita Christian from New York; District 3, Ann Young of New Hampshire; District 4, June Becker of New Jersey; District 5, Rhea Lynn, Pennsylvania; District 6, Hazel Meyers, Maryland; District 7, Lucille McCarthy, Florida; District 8, Julia Hutchins, Louisiana; District 9, Anne Krause, Georgia; District 10, Addie White, Michigan; District 11, Florence McGovern, Ohio; District 12, Zona Schalow of Wisconsin; District 13, Joanne Laws of Kentucky; District 14, Katherine Pearson of Minnesota; District 15, Rose Schilpp, Missouri; District 16, Marlis Jackson, California; District 17, Olive Tomlin, Colorado; District 18, Sally Wilton of Arizona; District 19, Elvie Owens of Washington; District 20, Betty Hall of Texas; District 21, Loneita Shoemaker of Arkansas.

The advisor to the Constitution and Bylaws Committee will be the national judge advocate, Shelia C. Allred, and they will elect their own chairman. And they will meet in Pavilion 4, which is in this area.

We can change that. District 17. Florence Valgardson, you are on Constitution and Bylaws? And Olive Tomlin, you are on Nominating?

I would hope that the advisor made note of that.

The Nominating Committee. District 1 is Phyllis Greaney from Massachusetts; District 2 is Betty Nelson from New York; District 3, Claudia Roy, Vermont; District 4, Dorothea Campanelli of New Jersey; District 5, Catherine Watkins of Pennsylvania; District 6, Mary Parrish of D.C.; District 7, Sunny Barzelogna of Florida; District 8, Dorothy Pearce, Louisiana; District 9, Jane Troutman of North Carolina; District 10, Leona Sharp of Michigan; District 11, Mary Beth Schulze of Ohio; District 12, Nelda Wilson of Illinois; District 13, Ella Tyler of Indiana; District 14, Karlette Rizzi of Minnesota; District 15, Dorothy Van Hoy of Missouri; District 16, Joan Turbeville of California; District 17, Olive Tomlin of Colorado; District 18, Jan Bennett from Nevada; District 19, Juanita Wiley of Washington; District 20, Louise Rapisand of Texas; and District 21, Mary Roden from Arkansas.

The advisor is the immediate past national commander, Barbara Hicks, and the Nominating Committee will also elect their chairman. The Nominating Committee meets in the Boardroom.

Mae Holmes. Mary Bixby of Massachusetts from District 1; District 2, Dolores Robidoux from New York; District 3, Claudette Hendrickson from New Hampshire; District 4, Idella Hosier of New Jersey; District 5, Rebecca Anderson of Pennsylvania; District 6, Lila Hughes of West Virginia; District 7, Grace McLaughlin from Florida; District 8, Jimmie Franklin from Mississippi; District 9,

Joyce Wardrip from North Carolina; District 10, Ethel White from Michigan; District 11, Jane Wood from Ohio; District 12, Carole Ellis from Illinois; District 13, Mildred Brown from Kentucky; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson from Montana; District 15, Marilyn Hess from Iowa; District 16, June Adema of California; District 17, Kathy Phelps of Colorado; District 18, Beverly Leichty of Arizona; District 19, Carolyn Minor of Washington; and District 20, Beverly Barron of Texas.

And the advisor for that committee, Mae Holmes, is our senior vice-commander, Evelynne Dunn, and the chairman will be Rebecca Anderson.

Conference Room 12 will be on the second floor. That's where the Mae Holmes will meet.

Final announcement, at the end of this meeting will be the Nor'easters Luncheon across the lobby in Pavilion 6

District 21 didn't hear the name of who's going to represent them on the Mae Holmes. Peggy Nye of Oklahoma. Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: We are recessed until tomorrow morning at 9:00 o'clock, and we want to see each and every one of you. You are all wonderful. Remember your flags. You are to take your flags with you now.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:00 o'clock noon, August 18, 1997.)

SECOND BUSINESS SESSION

The Second Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 75th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Tuesday morning, August 19, 1997, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Margaret E. Hass.

COMMANDER MARGARET E. HASS: Would the Second Session of our convention please come to order at this time. Would you please take your seats. I would like to call the Second Session of our convention to order. Thank you.

We'll have our prayer at this time by Carol Gray. Would you please stand.

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Would you all join hands, please. O Lord, Our God, for this beautiful new day, we the Auxiliary thank You. Protect all who are defending freedom for all Your people in this world. We ask for Your Presence in this convention to guide and lead us.

Rejoice with us as we honor our Auxiliary units for the work they have done for our veterans and their families. Forgive us our shortcomings and give us a new song to sing. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Chaplain Carol.

And now we will have the Pledge of Allegiance led by Joi Kern.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Joi. I appreciate the juniors so much in our organization, and you're a fine representative. She's from Oklahoma. (Applause)

You may be seated.

We'll now have the Credentials report.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Ladies, I have another announcement. The Junior Activities Committee needs to meet again. They must meet in the area outside of the back of the room where the vans are immediately, please. Junior Activities Committee.

MRS. OTTS: Good morning. The Credentials report is as follows: Total units registered, 351; total departments registered, 44, for a total of 395. Delegates registered, 755; alternates registered, 65; guests, 83. The total is 903. Total unit votes, 2,203; total department votes, 44; national officers, 7; PNCs, 16; grand total of votes, 2,270.

At this time, I make a motion to accept this report.

(Motion seconded from the floor.)

COMMANDER HASS: I'm going to ask that when we second or make a motion, that we go to the microphone so that you can be acknowledged, because the recorder needs to hear who is doing this, and I like to hear it, too. So I'm going to ask that all

throughout the convention, please, when you make a motion or a second, go to the mike and be recognized, and then we will proceed. Thank you.

We do have a motion on the floor to accept this Credentials report by Dorothy. Thank you, Dorothy. Do we have a second?

MRS. ANN JONES: Ann Jones, Arizona. I second.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Ann. It's seconded. Any discussion? All those in -- all right, Miriam.

MRS. MIRIAM DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts. The total vote was read as 2,207?

MRS. OTTS: Seventy.

MRS. DALEY: Seventy?

MRS. OTTS: Two two seven 0.

MRS. DALEY: Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Any other questions or discussion? All right. All those in favor, give a sign of Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion accepted. Thank you, Dorothy.

Before we begin getting into our business, I would like to express on behalf of myself and all the delegates and guests here a thank-you to those that gave us that beautiful opening ceremony yesterday, the flags and the pages. And I want to thank Judy Steinhouse, the sergeant-at-arms, for her work and for all the girls that were in that. It was absolutely beautiful.

And the musician over there, Erna B. We'd like to acknowledge you, too. You're doing a fabulous job. We enjoy the music. (Applause)

And not least of all, I want to thank you all, all you beautiful people, for being here yesterday and for being back here today. It's going to be a great convention.

Our next order of business is to have the first reading of the Constitution and Bylaws. There'll be no action on these at this time, but you will be seeing your person from the district, and they'll be talking to you in the caucus immediately following this meeting. Is that right, Maria?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Right.

COMMANDER HASS: We will now have the reading of the Constitution and Bylaws by Sally Wilton, past national commander. Welcome, Sally.

MRS. SALLY WILTON: National Commander Margaret, national officers, past national commanders and delegates and guests: The Convention Committee on Constitution and Bylaws met on Monday, August 18th at 2:00 p.m. in Pavilion Room 4 at the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel. The meeting was called to order by the advisor, National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred, and the first order of business was the nomination and election of Sally Wilton as chairman, and Lucille McCarthy as secretary.

The committee voted to present the following Bylaw amendments. This reading is to be considered the first reading. You all should have a copy of these with you. The first amendment, Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention, Rule 16: Delete and substitute a new Rule 16 to read:

> 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.

This rule was amended to make it clear that a roll call vote must be completed.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, Section 1, Paragraph 4: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 4 to read:

> The national commander shall appoint a National Education Loan Fund director who shall direct the activities of the Loan Fund Committee. The committee shall be composed of the National Auxiliary commander, the national senior vice-commander and the immediate past national commander. The Education Loan Fund director shall submit a report to the National Convention.

This change is proposed to clarify the composition of the Education Loan Fund Committee.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, Section 2, National Vice-Commanders, Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

> The national senior vice-commander shall be responsible for the Mae Holmes Program and shall serve on the National Education Loan Fund Committee. In the absence of the national commander, she shall serve in her stead.

This change is proposed to delete the phrase beginning, "she shall assume such duties," and establish that she is a member of the Education Loan Fund Committee.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, Section 3: Delete and substitute a new Section 3 to read:

> Section 3: Immediate Past National Commander
> The immediate past national commander shall serve on the National Education Loan Fund Committee.

This section is added to have all the members of the National Education Loan Fund Committee defined. If this change is approved, the remaining sections would be renumbered 5 to 6, 6 to 7, 7 to 8, and so forth.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, old Section 7: Delete, substitute and renumber a new Section 8 to read:

> Section 8: National Education Loan Fund
> The National Education Loan Fund shall be administered through the Auxiliary National Headquarters.

The reason for this, the National Education Loan Fund director is already indicated in the Bylaws; therefore, it is necessary to acknowledge the long-standing existence of the National Education Loan Fund, which was established in 1930.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, old Section 8: Delete, substitute and renumber a new Section 9 to read:

> Auxiliary Service Support Fund.
> The National Service/Support Fund shall be administered through the Auxiliary National Headquarters under the direction of the national adjutant.

This is to clarify the procedure that has been established to expedite a request and maintain the privacy of the recipient.

Page N-21, Article VII, Membership, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 4: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 4 to read:

> Effective July 1, 1998, life membership fees will be as follows: 71 or older - $75; 61 through 70 - $100; 41 through 60 - $125; under 41 - $150. Minimum down payment is $25. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application.

Since people are living longer, it is imperative that a raise in life membership be considered. Distributions must be available to local units and state departments now and in the future.

Page N-21, Article VII, Membership, Section 2, E. Dual or Multiple Membership, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 2 to read:

> Members shall not vote or hold an office, chairmanship or serve on a committee in a unit and/or state department in more than one state.

The reason is, members are moving and becoming active in a new state while still participating in their home state, especially during state conventions. This change would make their

participation and voting position clear.

Page N-32, Article XI, Probation. Now, this article, when we go tomorrow, when we vote on it, we will be reading the whole article, and then we'll take a vote on it. So, Page 3.

Section 1: Probation

The Auxiliary national commander may, for cause, place on probation any state department or unit.

Upon probation of a state department or unit, said body shall continue to operate as a state department or unit in accordance with directives provided by the Auxiliary national commander.

Section 2: Suspension

The Auxiliary national commander may suspend the charter of any state department or unit pending the action of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee.

Upon suspension of a state department or a local unit, no meetings shall be held in the name of the state department or unit except for the sole purpose of discussion of the cause, effect, or removal of the penalty. No funds of the state department or unit shall be expended or obligations incurred during and while the order of suspension is in force and effect.

Section 3: Revocation

Unit or state department charters may be revoked by the Auxiliary national commander with the approval of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee.

Upon revocation of a local unit charter or a local unit becoming inactive, the charter shall revert to National Headquarters. All other property, money and effects of the unit shall revert to the Auxiliary state department to be held in trust for a period of 18 months. In the event the unit charter is not reissued within a period of 18 months, said property shall become the absolute property of the Auxiliary state department.

A member of a revoked unit shall be transferred into the state-at-large. Upon request, she may transfer her membership to a chartered unit or remain a member-at-large.

Upon revocation of an Auxiliary state department charter or the charter of a local unit where there is no Auxiliary state department, the charter and all property, money and effects shall revert to Auxiliary National Headquarters to be held in trust for a period of 18 months. In the event the charter of the Auxiliary state department or local unit is not reissued within a period of 18 months, said property shall become the absolute property of the Auxiliary National Headquarters.

Upon revocation of a DAV chapter, the Auxiliary may retain its charter upon the approval of the unit membership.

Go to Page 4.

Section 4.

No DAV chapter shall have the authority to place on probation or to suspend or revoke the charter of any Auxiliary unit.

The reason is, this provides the necessary information in reference to probation, and sections are then rearranged to indicate the severity of the penalties that can be taken prior to the final step of revocation.

Page S-1, Article II, Section 2: Composition: Delete and substitute a new Section 2 to read:

The state convention shall be composed of the elected state officers, the state's past state commanders, any active resident past national commander, and the elected delegates or alternates representing chartered units within the state.

This is to clarify the past state commanders shall vote only as past state commanders in the state in which they served as state commander.

Page S-1, Article II, State Convention, Section 3, Paragraph 6: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 6 to read:

> In the election of state officers, voting shall be by voice vote when there is no contest; or by roll call when there are two or more candidates 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.

This paragraph was amended to make it more clear that a roll call must be completed.

Page S-9, Article VI, Section 5, State Committees: Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

> Financial records of the state department shall be reviewed and verified by an Audit Committee appointed by the state commander or by an independent or certified public accountant. If an Audit Committee is appointed, the committee shall consist of three members appointed by the state commander, excluding the state commander, state senior vice-commander, state treasurer, state adjutant and members of the state Finance Committee.

To clarify, should the state commander appoint an Audit Committee, how many members and who is to be excluded.

We're on Page 5. Page S-9, Article VI, Section 5, State Committees: Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 3 to read:

> All members of the Audit Committee shall be present when reviewing or verifying the state department's financial records at the close of the fiscal year. The financial report form provided by National Headquarters shall be completed by the state treasurer or the Audit Committee and sent to National Headquarters within ten days after adjournment of the state convention.

This is to clarify that at the time of an audit, all members of the Audit Committee must be present and must participate in reviewing the financial records.

Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2: State Finance Committee, Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

> The state Finance Committee shall consist of at least three and no more than seven members elected from various units in the state. The number of members serving on the committee shall be provided in the 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 information deleted in this section was a duplication. Refer to Section 5, State Audit Committee, Paragraph 3.

Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2: State Finance Committee, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 2 to read:

> The state Finance Committee shall review and verify all revenue, expenditures and investments of the state department between state conventions. The committee shall also prepare a budget which shall be submitted and distributed to the state convention delegates for adoption.

This is to clarify the duties of a state Finance Committee.

Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2: State Finance Committee, Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 3 to read:

> The state Finance Committee shall review and verify the records of the DAVA-VAVS representative(s) and associate representative(s) annually.

This is to clarify the duties of the state Finance Committee.

We are now on Page 6. Page S-12, Article VII, VAVS Representatives and Associate Representatives, Section 1: Duties, Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute the following Paragraph 3 to read:

> Each state department shall provide in their state Standing Rules as to how many signatures shall be required on a check. Accurate records shall be kept by the representative and the associate representative. Records are to show the source of income and amount, funds deposited (if a bank account is maintained), and expenditures with receipts attached. State Standing Rules shall also provide for the retention of VAVS financial records.

The Bylaws state what happens to records when one officer succeeds another or a unit should be revoked. However, it does not make allowances for the VAVS records, and that's the reason this was put in.

Page S-12, Article VII, VAVS Representatives and Associate Representatives, Section 1, Duties: Add a new Paragraph 6 to read:

> VAVS representatives and associate VAVS representatives shall not serve on the state Finance Committee.

Since the state Finance Committee audits the VAVS records, it would not be sound financial policy to allow them to audit their own books.

Page U-2, Article II, Unit Officers, Section 2, Paragraph 2, Line 5: Delete "may" after "senior members" and insert "shall." Paragraph 2 will then read, as amended:

> If a unit desires to have an Executive Board and such unit has 50 senior members or less, two members shall be elected from the floor to serve on the unit's Executive Board. Units with more than 50 senior members shall elect four members to serve on the unit's Executive Board. Units may elect alternates, if desired.

This is to correct an error in the final reading of the 1991 Bylaws.

Page U-9, Article VI, Unit Committees, Section 2, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 2 to read:

> Prior to the installation of the newly elected treasurer, all members of the Audit Committee shall be present to audit the financial records of the unit.

This is the same reason as above. It's to correct a printing that was incorrect. All members of the Audit Committee must be present at the time of the audit.

That completes the reading of the amendments. I wish to thank Committee Advisor Shelia those serving on the Convention Constitution and Bylaws Committee.

Would you please stand and remain standing, and when we're finished, we'll give you a good applause. District 1, Fran Costa from Massachusetts; District 2, Lucita Christian; District 3, Ann Young; District 4, June Becker; District 5, Rhea Lyn; District 6, Hazel Meyers; District 7, Lucille McCarthy; District 8, Julia Hutchins; District 9, Anne Krause; District 10, Addie White; District 11, Florence McGovern; District 12, Zona Schalow; District 13, Joanne Laws; District 14, Katherine Pearson; District 15, Rose

Schilpp; District 16, Marlis Jackson; District 17, Florence Valgardson; District 18, Sally Wilton; District 19, Elvie Owen; District 20, Betty Hall; District 21, Loneita Shoemaker.

Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: And we want to thank you, Chairman Sally, for the fine reading of those Constitution and Bylaws.

At this time, we will have the Americanism Awards given, and Evelyn Dorsey was the advisor. Would you please come? Thank you, Evelyn.

1ST JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER DORSEY: Good morning. At this time, I'd like to call up the secretary, Sandy Dobmeier. Why don't you come up and give me a hand?

MRS. SANDY DOBMEIER: The National Americanism Committee Convention report. The National Americanism Convention Committee met in the Las Vegas Hilton Conference Room 8 at 2:00 p.m. on August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Evelyn Dorsey. Sandy Dobmeier was appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for National Americanism Awards. Group Number 1, 10 to 50 members. The winner is Michael J. Thomas Unit Number 5, North Carolina. Please come forward for your award. (Applause) Is a representative from that unit or North Carolina that could come forward, please? State commander otherwise?

COMMANDER HASS: Let me remind you when they're coming forward, that if you'd like a picture, after you receive your award, just stay at the side of the stage until all the awards are given for that category, and then you can have your picture taken with the chairman and the advisor, and the stand-in, Sandy Dobmeier, this time.

MRS. DOBMEIER: Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, Charles Gustafson Unit 94, Florida. (Applause)

Group Number 3, 101 to 200 members, John T. Hensley Unit 96, Florida. (Applause)

Group Number 4, 201 members and over, Tampa Unit Number 4, Florida. (Applause) Is someone coming up from Tampa?

And the Special Americanism Award goes to Tri-City Unit Number 8, Arizona. Please come forward. (Applause)

Recommendations for this committee were to delete Question 8, "Did you assist anyone in becoming a U.S. citizen?" And the second recommendation, remove flag poles from Question Number 2. Third one, judge the four categories only on the first ten questions and judge the Special Americanism Project totally separate. Number 4, on Question Number 4, delete "government or citizenship" and include it as an example for Question Number 10. And Number 5, much discussion was held, and a decision needs to be made on the size of flags to be considered on the report.

These are recommendations that will be given to the chairman.

If the committee members who served on this could please stand as I call your name, and I apologize for the pronunciation. District Number 1, Susan Stulsky from Massachusetts; District 2, Kathy Luciani from New York; Number 3, Wanda Furbish from New Hampshire; Number 4, Merrilee Hickman from Delaware. Please stand as I call your name.

District 5, Gloria Rexrode from Pennsylvania; District 6, Marianne Piekielniak from Virginia; District Number 7, Dolly Hartman from Florida; District Number 8, Virginia Mitchell from Alabama; District Number 9, Barbara Smeal from North Carolina; District 10, Bernice Sebring from Michigan; District 11, Linetta Johnson from Ohio; District 12, Nancy Colby from Illinois; District 13, Norma Zeimet from Indiana; District 14, Sandy Dobmeier, North Dakota; District 15, Donna Piersee from Kansas; District 16, Elsa McCoy from California; District 17, Afton Ficarra from Utah; District 18, Ellie Williams from Arizona; District 19, Janet Guise from Oregon; District 20, Ida Foster from Texas; and District Number 21, Phyllis Gordon from Arkansas.

I thank all of you for serving on this committee. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Sandy and Evelyn for serving on that committee for us.

Community Service, Esther Westlake, 4th junior vice, and Betty Buck as chairman.

4TH JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER ESTHER L. WESTLAKE: I would like to introduce Betty Buck, who served as the chairman for this committee, and she will give the report.

MRS. BETTY BUCK: The National Community Service Convention Committee met in Conference Room 7 at 2:00 p.m., August 18th. Our advisor was Esther Westlake. Anita Tears was appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Community Service Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Millington Unit 116, Tennessee. (Applause) Would you please come up if anybody's here? Unit 116, Tennessee.

Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Peace Rivers Unit 111, Florida. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Sonoma County Unit 48, California. (Applause)

Group Number 4, 201 members or over, Greater Daytona Unit 84, Florida. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations. The report should be simplified and broken into just two categories: service to veterans and their families, and services to the general public. All financial considerations shall be deleted. Copies of winning reports shall be sent to be used as guidelines.

And I'd like to give the committee names. Would you please stand as I call your districts. District Number 1, Maureen Fluet; District Number 22, Anita Tears; District Number 3, Maria Clancy; District Number 4, Doris Martelli; District Number 5, Fran Miller; District Number 6, Roberta McKinney; District Number 7, Henrietta Condon; District Number 8, Lecy Jackson; District Number 9, Aliene Warchak; District Number 10, Rosie Kazmier; District Number 11, Judy Lenhart; District Number 12, Betty Buck; District Number 13, Edith Jackson; District Number 14, Catena Piti; Number 15, Martha Meeks; District Number 16, Isabel Provensal; District Number 17, Maxine Wells; District Number 18, Judy Leiby; District Number 19, Janine Henson; District Number 20, Clara Lewis; District Number 21, Anita Baley.

Thank you so much for serving on this committee. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, ladies.

History chairman, Renee Jones and Jeannie Jackson.

MRS. RENEE JONES: Good morning. I'm going to turn the podium over to Jean Jackson, who is the chairman of the History Committee.

MRS. JEAN JACKSON: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of this 75th National Auxiliary Convention: The National State Department History Book Convention Committee met in Conference Room 10 at 2:00 o'clock on August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Renee Jones, which was a very good advisor. Our secretary was Tara Dahle, which was a very good secretary. And we had a very good committee.

The following state department was elected to receive the National State Department History Book Award: The State Department of Texas. (Applause)

And I would like you to know that we had five very good books. They were all good books.

MEMBER: I thank all of you that were on the committee. It was my pleasure to do this, and I hope to get to do it again some time. (Applause)

MRS. JACKSON: The committee submitted the following recommendations. We are getting ready to enter the year 2000 with a country for caring for Mother Earth and recycling. The history book directions should be redone for conserving paper. Articles should be allowed to be placed on both sides of a sheet of paper, therefore eliminating excess paper. Be careful with a book. No more than six inches.

All of our members were in attendance, and they were: District 1 -- is that a Tapley, District 1? All right. Barbara from District 2. (Laughter) Where are you, Barbara? Okay. Is that Mary or May from District 3? Mary. I'm reading from their writing. Okay. This is a little better. (Laughter) Four, Rose Henn. We'll get it together now. Sonia Baldwin, Number 5; Justine Dingus, Number 6. And please remain standing so everybody can see this beautiful committee.

Number 7, Agnes Gomis; Number 8, Linda Ricks; Number 9, Tara Dahle, which was our secretary; Number 10, Ruth Hindes; Number 11, Diane Akers; Number 12, Wilma Dortch; Number 13, Maxine Archer; Number 14, Elaine Fagerstrom; Number 15, Alpha Barnhouse; Number 16, Cheryl Whitlock; Number 17, me, Jean Jackson; Number 18, Mary Condos; Number 19, Pearl Loterbauer; Number 20, Joyce Humes; and Number 21, Sharon Eddy.

And this was our committee. (Applause)

And you will need to pick up your books in the office as soon as possible.

COMMANDER HASS: Hospital, Eunice Eledge and Linda Trulio.

MRS. EUNICE ELEDGE: As your National Hospital chairman this year, it was my privilege to be the advisor for the Hospital Report Committee yesterday, and a very able chairman, Linda Trulio, did a good job, and I will ask her to give the report.

MRS. LINDA TRULIO: Good morning, ladies. First of all, I would like to thank the convention for giving me this opportunity to serve as the chairman of the Hospital Committee.

Madam Commander Margaret, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, Auxiliary members and guests: The Hospital Committee met in Conference Room 9 at 2:05 p.m., August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Eunice Eledge. Deborah Emery of Michigan volunteered to be the secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Hospital Awards. Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Unit Number 29, Mountain Top, Maryland. (Applause)

Group 2, 51 to 100 members, Unit 57, Dallas, Texas. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Unit Number 48, Santa Rosa, California. (Applause)

And Group 4, 201 members or over, Unit Number 41, Trenton, New Jersey. (Applause)

I would like to acknowledge the members who served on the committee, and when I call your name, would you please stand? District 1, Lenore Tullie; District 2, Mamie Foster; District 3, Frances Clevette; District 4, myself; District 5, Catherine Clinton; District 6, Ellen Griggs; District 7, Peggy Warren; District 8, Laura Blaylock; District 9, Barbara Wingo; District 10, Deborah Emery, also served as our secretary; District 11 was absent, Bonnie Roberts; District 12, Jeanette Nuspl; District 13, Ruth Kimball; District 14, Sharon Kramer; District 15, Alice Herman; District 16, Joan Christensen; District 17, Susan Miller; District 18, Lisa Acosta; District 19, Mary O'Connell, absent; District 20, Dorothea Turner; and District 21, Mary Pinney.

May I have a round of applause for these ladies? (Applause)

We had five new members serving on the Hospital Committee who had never served on a convention committee before, and we encourage these ladies to come back again and continue with your enthusiasm.

The committee submitted the following recommendations. We would like to see Numbers 6 and 7, the actual and total costs combined as one figure with itemized statement and explanation attached, notwithstanding the thousand dollar figure. It is difficult to estimate actual cost and donated items.

Thank you very much for this honor and privilege. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Junior Activities, Sara Douglass and Beverly Napier.

MRS. SARA DOUGLASS: Good morning, ladies. It has been my honor and privilege to serve on this committee this year, and I would like to present Beverly Napier, our chairman, to give the report.

MRS. BEVERLY NAPIER: National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests to this 75th National Auxiliary Convention: The National Junior Activities Convention Committee in Conference Room 14 at 2:00 p.m. on August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Sara Douglass, and Debbie Mazza was appointed secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Junior Activities Award: Group 1, with 1 to 25 members, Braintree Number 29, Maine. (Applause) I'm sorry. It's Massachusetts. Sorry about that. It was Braintree

Number 29, Massachusetts.

Group 2, 26 to 50 members, Kingman Number 10, Arizona. (Applause)

Group 3, 51 to 100 members, Clarence Tom Lemley Number 24, Valley City, North Dakota. (Applause)

Group 4, 101 and over members, E. A. Twomey, Senior Number 40, Newburyport, Massachusetts.

Our Junior Activities Book winner is Unit 10, Arizona. (Applause)

This was our history book that was presented from Arizona, a gorgeous history book. We could tell that a lot of hard work had been done to present this book.

Our National Miss Teenage Award goes to Miss Sunshine Lucas from Fort Barbee Number 119, Ohio. (Applause)

The National Junior Miss goes to Michelle Tasker from Mountain Top, Maryland, Number 29. (Applause)

The National Mini Miss goes to Sarah Ann Coursey, Number 20, Glendale, Arizona. (Applause)

Before I let you know our recommendations, I want you to know each one of these categories from the units to the Miss Teenage and the Junior Miss and Mini Miss were really hard to judge. All these young girls had worked so hard this past year. I mean, it took us hours -- I'm honest -- hours to judge these reports.

Is there anyone from Arizona to come and get the award for the history book?

The committee does have four recommendations for the future chairperson. Our first recommendation is that in the future, on the form after you ask the number of active years of participating, we need to have an age breakdown. This way we would know the ages of the juniors that do the work, because before it has, for example, zero to seven -- if it's a two-year-old or a seven-year-old, or even could have been a 16-year-old. So we need to know the ages of the juniors that are doing the work.

Also, in the future, the committee felt the age breakdown should be changed to the following age groups: Zero to 4, 5 to 7, 7 to 12 and 13 to 17.

The committee also felt like in the future, there be a question on the form asking, "Have you ever been a DAV Miss before?"

Also, in the future, the committee recommends that there also be an honorable mention. Since there are so many hard-working young girls that participate, they felt that more needed to be recognized. (Applause)

When I call your name, please stand from each district, and I apologize in advance for the pronunciation. District 1, Pat Tait; District 3, Mary Bessette; District 4, Dorothy Kashner; District 5, Sadie Turner; District 6, Rosalyn Skidmore; District 7, Bernadette Sorrentino; District 8, Elizabeth Ketchum; District 9, Dot Cooke; District 10, Heidi Flack; District 12, Carolyn Fudge; District 13, myself, Beverly Napier; District 14, Lucy Bradbury; District 15, Lettie Warchola; District 16, Connie Salisbury; District 17, Karen Roybal; District 18, Marcia Henderson; District 19, our secretary, Debbie Mazza; District 20, Earlene Cole; District 21 Angela Cheatham.

Thank you, ladies. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Legislation, Paula Raymond and Kathy Weatherly.

2ND JUNIOR VICE-COMMANDER PAULA RAYMOND: Good morning. While Kathy's coming up here, I would like to tell you that the Legislative Committee worked very hard and very long. There were several legislative reports that were submitted that were excellent. Unfortunately, not everybody can win, and it was a tough decision for the committee members to make.

This is Kathy Weatherly from Iowa, and she was our committee chairman. (Applause)

MRS. KATHY WEATHERLY: Good morning. Hope I can get through this okay; I'm kind of squeaky today. National Commander Margaret, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 75th National Convention: The National Legislative Committee met in Conference Room 14 at

2:07 p.m. on August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Paula Raymond. Barbara McComb from Michigan, Unit 3, was appointed our secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Legislative Awards: Group 1, 10 to 50 members, S. R. Pyne Unit Number 20 of Oregon. (Applause)

Group Number 2, 51 to 100 members, North Hudson Unit Number 9, New Jersey. (Applause)

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Las Vegas Unit Number 11, Nevada. (Applause)

Group Number 4, 201 members and over, Glendale Unit Number 20, Arizona. (Applause)

Our group also wanted to recognize, without an award, some honorable mentions: Unit Number 80 of Auburn -- is that California? Overland Park Unit Number 34 of Kansas; John T. Hensley Unit Number 96 of Florida; and Nob Hill Unit Number 26 of Colorado. They were real hard to judge, but we picked out the other winners first.

I'd like the other members of our committee, if they'd stand, please, when they're called. District 1, Donna Tanner; District 3, Donna Folcarelli; District 4, Frances Banghardt; District 5, Mary Peluse; District 6, Eutha Larew; 7, Millie Douglas; 8 was absent; 9, Doris Hoffman; 10, Barbara McComb, secretary; 11, Tommie Lewis; 12, Karen Green; 13, Wilma Christensen; 14, Karen Haan; 15, myself; 16, Geneva Fox; 17, Carol Ann Chapman; 18, Ruth Ann Tucker; 19, Betty Caldwell; 20, Mary Choate; 21, Mamie Painter. And we had a guest in our meeting, Dee Jascur of Arizona. (Applause) Thank you to everybody who helped on the committee.

The following recommendations were made: To please type or print eligibly on the reports. Make sure the bill number and title of the bill are on there. No attachments. Clarify the definition "legislative" for veterans bills only. At least one section must be filled in. Specify your information on your report. And it was recommended to remove the zeroes reports with no information or no activities. And what types of legislative programs meetings did you hold during the year, and the number of meetings and programs and type of activities.

Thank you to everyone that helped. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you very much.

VAVS, Lil Nason and Olive Tomlin and Jeanne LePorte.

MRS. LILLIAN V. NASON: Good morning everyone. The VAVS Convention Committee met yesterday afternoon and what a wonderful group of ladies. They worked hard and diligently, and we had several new members and there were a lot of questions. And I want to personally thank each of them for their hard work. I would like also to thank all of the VAVS volunteers and representatives who have served this great organization for the many years of service in the VA facilities in support of our veterans.

And at this time, I'd like to introduce to you our chairman, Jeanne LePorte, who will give us the following convention committee members and resolutions. (Applause)

MRS. JEANNE LePORTE: Good morning, ladies. First of all, thank you very much, Commander Margaret, for having appointed me as chairperson. I appreciate that. National Commander Margaret, national officers, past national commanders, members and guests: The National VAVS Committee met in Conference Room 11 at 2:00 p.m. on August 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Lillian Nason, and Melva Matlack was very kind to be our secretary.

The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National VAVS Awards. And ladies, when you come up to get your awards, please wait over at the side so we can get some pictures at the end.

Group 1, 10 to 50, S. R. Pyne Number 20, Brookings, Oregon. (Applause)

We also had an honorable mention in Group 1 that we could not give an award to, but we were extremely impressed by all the work these ladies from 10 to 50 members had done, and that's Gilbert Number 33 from Gilbert, Arizona. (Applause)

Group 2, 51 to a hundred members, Caesar Rodney Number 3, Wilmington, Delaware. (Applause) Would you please come up here and get your award?

Group 3, 101 to 200 members, Clyde Seiler Number 21, Aurora, Colorado. (Applause)

Group 4, 201 members or over, George G. Klumker Number 22, Wheatridge, Colorado. (Applause)

And we have a special award in VAVS called the Thelma Feighner Award, and that's for people who live too far from a hospital to travel to and from the hospital, and therefore only make contributions either by mail or by check to the facilities. And the Thelma Feighner Award goes to Cook County Number 30, Adel, Georgia. (Applause)

The committee submitted the following recommendations:

Number 1. The location and name of the VAMC and/or satellite clinic be included on location line. Sometimes it's hard to tell if a nursing home is attached to a VAMC or they just accidentally put it on the wrong form.

Number 2. All donations of clothing and personal items be completely itemized.

Number 3. Each state adjutant include a list of eligible VAMC facilities either in the state mailings or with the reports when they're mailed out.

Number 4. Lines 3 and 4 having to do with the van program and the writing program be deleted from the report.

We also had a recommendation that said the VAVS report is fast becoming obsolete as the VAVS title. Perhaps it would be better to see it combined into the hospital report as VAVS centers are undergoing a great change and satellite clinics are entering the picture, and hospitalization stays are being shortened, and many veterans are being sent to community health care facilities.

I would like to introduce the members of the committee, and when I call your name, would you please stand and wait until everyone has stood, and then we'll applaud for everyone at once. District 1, Annetta Boisvert from Massachusetts 13; District 2, Jeanne LePorte, that's me; District 3, Harriet Anderson, Rhode Island Number 13; Number 4, Melva Matlack, our secretary from New Jersey; Number 5, Jimi Hayes from Pennsylvania; District 6, Marye Hoeflein from Virginia; District 7, Catherine Neuburg from Florida; District 8, Cornelia Cobb from Alabama; District 9, Betty Bryant from North Carolina; District 10, Zona McNeal from Michigan; District 11, Ann Offutt from Ohio; District 12, Betty Bumpus from Illinois; District 13, Doris Stanfill from Indiana; District 14, Frances Benkovics from Minnesota; District 15, Maxine Horton from Kansas; District 16, Yvonne Oden from California; District 17, Arlene Snider from Colorado; District 18, Rose Thomas from Nevada; District 19, Karen Haltiner from Oregon; District 20, Ocie Henze from Texas; and District 21, Frances Rutledge from Oklahoma.

Ladies, thank you for a job very well done. (Applause)

And thank you again, very much. Our advisor was most helpful. Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Mae Holmes, Evelynne Dunn and Rebecca Anderson.

SENIOR VICE-COMMANDER DUNN: Good morning, ladies. While Becky's coming up, what I would like to say is something that I have said before, that the Mae Holmes Award is the most prestigious award that our organization offers. It is the pinnacle of excellence. And so I would like to introduce the chairman and have her present her awards.

MRS. REBECCA ANDERSON: Good morning, everybody. National commander, national adjutant, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests of the 75th National Auxiliary Convention: The National Mae Holmes Convention Committee met in Conference Room Number 12 at 2:00 p.m. -- we really got started about 2:10 -- on August the 18th, 1997. Our advisor was Evelynne Dunn, and our secretary, who graciously accepted the position, was Dolores Robidoux.

I know you're real anxious to know who won. The following units were judged to be the best in their category for the National Mae Holmes Awards. Unfortunately, not every unit can win, but they all did good work and keep it up, and next year, you'll be the winner.

Group 1, 10 to 50 members, Unit 98 from Weakley, Sharon,

Tennessee. (Applause)

Fifty-one to 100 members, Unit 116, Millington, Tennessee. (Applause)

One hundred to 200 members, Unit 120 Roll of Honor, Kenmore, New York. (Applause)

Two hundred and one members or over, Unit 63, Clermont County, Batavia, Ohio. (Applause)

I would like to express my appreciation to our advisor, Evelynne Dunn and to the representatives of the 21 districts who had expertise, knowledge and common sense to perform a great job. We also had a member observing us, who is the first time to be at this convention, and I was very happy to have her.

If I pronounce your name right, stand up.

Is there anyone here from Millington, Tennessee? Come on down.

District 1, Mary Bixby. Please stand. District 2, Dolores Robidoux; District 3, Claudette Hendrickson; District 4, Idella Hosier; District 6, Lila Hughes; District 7, Grace McLaughlin; District 8, Jimmie Franklin; District 9, Joyce Wardrip; District 10, Ethel White; District 11, Jane Wood; District 12, Carole Ellis; District 13, Mildred Brown; District 14, Annette Bain-Wilson; District 15, Marilyn Hess; District 16, June Adema; District 17, Kathy Phelps; District 18, Beverly Leichty; District 19, Carolyn Minor; District 20, Beverly Barron; District 21, Peggy Nye. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: We thank each advisor, chairman and each delegate that served on these committees. It was a job well done.

And at this time, I would ask for a motion to adopt all of these committee reports.

MRS. MARIANNE PIEKIELNIAK: I really just want to do it so you know how my name is pronounced. Marianne Piekielniak, Unit 2, Department of Virginia.

COMMANDER HASS: Would you like to make that motion?

MRS. PIEKIELNIAK: Oh, yes, of course I will. I move that we accept the reports.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made. Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. ANN JONES: Ann Jones, Arizona. Second.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been seconded. Is there any discussion? Any questions? Hearing none, those in favor, say Aye; opposed by the same sign. Motion carried.

Thank you very much, each and every one of you, and thank you for your kind attention. It's an important time in the lives of these units, and we all do a great job, and there's always someone that does a little better. It gives us something to strive for next year. Thank you. (Applause)

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Madam Commander, have we addressed all the business for this session?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: May I have your permission to address the assembly?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes, you may.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: 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. (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 business session for the second reading of the Constitution and Bylaws.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to that motion?

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Madam Commander, Maria Tedrow, past national commander. I so second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there any discussion? All those in favor, say Aye; opposed. The motion carried. Thank you.

(Whereupon, a short recess was taken.)

COMMANDER HASS: Could we please come to order? Thank you very much.

Our order of business is the reading of the Constitution and Bylaws. And I want to ask you again, if you want to make a motion and a second or discussion, you must go to the microphone, state who you are and delegate by unit, state or whatever, so that we can get this done properly. This is very important business. Thank you very much.

Sally Wilton, past national commander, chairman of the Constitution and Bylaws.

MRS. WILTON: Thank you, Commander Margaret. I'll do the best I can, ladies, to try to get through this as quickly as we can. All right. We're going to start on Page 1, top of the page. It's Page N-5, Article I, National Convention, Section 5, Official Rules of the National Convention, Rule 16: Delete and substitute a new Rule 16 to read:

> 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.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. BETTY BOYD: Betty Boyd, Unit 1, Arizona. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Betty. Is there any discussion?

MRS. KAREN GREEN: Karen Green, state commander of Wisconsin. I have a problem with "shall continue until completed." First of all, if you already have a majority, why continue? It'd be wasting time. You obviously have a winner. And also, if there's a big difference, why humiliate the woman that's way behind by continuing? Once you have a majority, it's a majority, and one person has won, so why continue?

COMMANDER HASS: If you have a majority vote and the other lady who does not receive the most votes concedes, then you do not have to continue because you have one person.

MRS. GREEN: But I mean, does she absolutely have to concede? You can't just say, "Well, there's a majority"?

COMMANDER HASS: No, she doesn't have to concede.

MRS. GREEN: So then, should that be clarified that, "unless she concedes" should be added in there maybe? Or that's just understood?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: There's two things here. Unless you continue through your completed roll call, you don't know what your majority is. Number 2, when you pay your way to get to a state convention or a National Convention, you want to vote, you want to be a part of what's going on. That way, that will give you a chance to be able to cast your vote as a delegate in your state convention.

MRS. GREEN: Okay. Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Any other discussion or questions? The mike back there.

MRS. FRAN COSTA: Fran Costa, District 1. Several people have expressed a desire to have that printed, "unless that person concede to discontinue the roll call vote," so that it will clarify any situations at a state convention, to avoid embarrassment or discomfort of the losing person.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there other discussion on this motion?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: You know, if somebody withdraws, concedes or withdraws, you've got one candidate. That would stop it right there. You do not have another candidate. You would be left with one candidate. Is that correct? I personally don't think it needs to be in there, because I think it goes without saying, when one candidate withdraws, you're left with one candidate. Automatically, she is going to be the one that's elected.

MRS. MIRIAM DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27 in Massachusetts. When I read it this way, even if I was running and I wanted to concede, the way it's written is I could not concede because the

whole roll call has to go on. I would like to amend it to read: "In the event two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll call shall continue until completed, unless one candidate concedes." I'd like to amend it to that.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. NUSPL: -- Wisconsin, 12th District. I agree. I've done a lot of legal papers in my real estate career, and that is not the way I would word the thing. Unless she succeeded would be something that I would insist go into any legal document that I would be writing.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to the amendment to the motion that Miriam made that we do add "unless she concedes"? Miriam, would you please repeat the amendment that you'd like to make?

MRS. DALEY: "In the event two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll call shall continue until completed, or if one candidate concedes. The candidate receiving a majority of the roll call votes shall be elected."

COMMANDER HASS: Okay. You've heard the amendment now, and is there a second to that?

MRS. GREEN: Karen Green, Wisconsin. I'll second it.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any more discussion on the amendment?

MRS. ANN JONES: Then the wording's going to have to change, because you could have actually three candidates, you know, and I think we're making this more complex than we need to.

COMMANDER HASS: Did everyone hear what she said? I think -- speak just a little bit louder on that mike, please.

MRS. JONES: Well, I thought I was pretty loud, but I guess not. What I said is that you could have two or more candidates, so if you had three candidates running for a position and one dropped out, you are still going to have to continue with the roll call. So unless one candidate concedes is not going to cut it.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you.

MRS. DALEY: May I remove my movement?

(Inaudible comment from the floor.)

COMMANDER HASS: I don't know. I didn't hear what you said, Miriam.

MRS. DALEY: Would you like me to remove my movement?

COMMANDER HASS: Withdraw? Yes, you may withdraw your amendment if you wish, Miriam.

MRS. DALEY: May I remake it? Reword it. All right?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes, go ahead.

MRS. DALEY: Leave the first sentence, "In the event two or more candidates are nominated for any one office, roll call shall continue until completed. In the event of only two candidates" --

(Cries of, "No.")

MRS. DALEY: "If there's more than two candidates, the roll call shall continue until completed. In the event there's only two candidates, one may concede." All right?

MRS. PIEKIELNIAK: Marianne Piekielniak, Unit 2, Virginia. I move we leave it as it is. If one candidate gets the majority of the votes and the other one is embarrassed, why doesn't she use common sense and just get out? (Laughter and applause)

MRS. LUCILLE O. McCARTHY: Madam Commander, Lucille McCarthy, Tampa Number 4. May I make a recommendation, that this Rule 16 be referred to the interim committee, should there be one appointed next year for further clarification. (Applause)

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Number 1, the lady down here, did you call for the question by moving that we leave it as it was? So you were calling for the question.

And Lucille, were you wanting to lay this on the table for consideration by the interim committee?

All right. Now, we're going to call for the question, and let's go ahead and get this solved. She's wanting to call for the question for this, and then we'll go with Lucille's recommendation that it be laid on the table for further consideration.

MRS. GREEN: In order to maybe save more time, you probably want to take from Page 4 the same -- it's the same --

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Excuse me, excuse me. The question's

been called for. The commander has to move on this.

MRS. GREEN: I just thought maybe we could group them both for tabling, because the same issue's going to come up.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: This pending question has to be addressed.

COMMANDER HASS: Okay. The question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Thank you.

Okay. The motion has been made that we refer this to the incoming interim committee next year for consideration. That motion was made. Is there a second to that?

MRS. BETTY HALL: Madam Commander, Betty Hall, District 20. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: She seconds. Is there any discussion?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: What we've done is adopted the original amendment. As it is right now, it stays like it is right now. Only the amendments that were so confusing for clarification has been referred to the interim committee. Do you understand that?

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Judge Advocate.

All right. We had a second. And now, is there any more discussion? I'll call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; same sign, opposed. Thank you. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: All right, ladies, we'll go to the next amendment. Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, Section 1, Paragraph 4: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 4 to read:

> The national commander shall appoint a National Education Loan Fund director who shall direct the activities of the Loan Fund Committee. The committee shall be composed of the National Auxiliary commander, the national senior vice-commander and the immediate past national commander. The Education Loan Fund director shall submit a report to the National Convention.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. HAZEL MEYERS: Hazel Meyers, Unit 29, Maryland. I second it.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Phyllis.

MRS. GREANEY: Yes. There are two things. It says, "The committee shall be composed of the National Auxiliary commander, the national senior vice-commander and the immediate past national commander." As director, I'm also on that committee.

COMMANDER HASS: Maria.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Phyllis, we're talking about a composition of the committee itself. There is still a National Education Loan Fund director, and it so specifies in another section, though it's never been made really clear as to how that committee is laid out. All we are discussing right now is the committee, and the director is the director of that committee, because this does not affect a director's appointment.

MRS. GREANEY: There is a second thing I'd like to question, too. It says, "The Educational Loan Fund director shall submit a report to the National Convention." I also submit a report to the Fall Conference.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: That is correct. "Shall submit to the National Convention," which is the governing body. If that is not submitted, the director is in violation. So that spells it out. That has to be done. And, of course, the director always gives some type of a temporary report at the Fall Conference. But she must give a yearly report, and it must be presented to the National Convention.

MRS. GREANEY: All right. Thanks.

COMMANDER HASS: Any other questions? If not, I call -- discussion is what I meant. I ask for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. The motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National

Officers, Section 2, National Vice-Commanders, Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

> The national senior vice-commander shall be responsible for the Mae Holmes Program and shall serve on the National Education Loan Fund Committee. In the absence of the national commander, she shall serve in her stead.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. JOANNE LAWS: Madam Commander, Joanne Laws from Kentucky 19. I second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. Is there any discussion? If not, I'll call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried.

MRS. WILTON: The next amendment is Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, Section 3: Delete and substitute a new Section 3 to read:

> Immediate Past National Commander
>
> The immediate past national commander shall serve on the National Education Loan Fund Committee.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. RHEA G. LYNN: Rhea Lynn, State Department of Pennsylvania. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

MRS. MERILEE HICKMAN: Merilee Hickman, Department of Delaware. The only thing I have to ask about this is -- and it's a sad thing, but what would happen if we didn't have a past national commander, perhaps through illness or something? Should some other person or position be put in there? I mean, it's a dreadful thing to think about, but at our age, perhaps we ought to.

MRS. WILTON: There would still be three members which would be a majority of that committee, and they could still operate.

MRS. HICKMAN: Thank you very much.

MRS. RUTH ANNA WARNOCK: I have a question. I'm Ruth Warnock. I'm with Oregon Unit 5. I have one thing I would like to suggest. If we lose an immediate past president, then the previous one to that, or back one year beyond that, would automatically fall into that place, would she not? That is my question.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: The immediate past is the immediate past.

MRS. WARNOCK: But if she passed away, then would the one previously take her place?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: No. The committee could still function. You would still have enough on that committee to still be a functioning committee.

MRS. WARNOCK: Okay.

COMMANDER HASS: Yes.

MRS. FLORENCE MERRIFIELD: Madam Commander, Florence Merrifield from Louisville Number 6, Kentucky. If the immediate past national commander is not available to serve on this committee, could the national commander appoint someone to serve on that committee and be approved by the executive body of National?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: No, we wouldn't need that. We've got enough people on the committee to do what the committee needs to be done. Provisions were made for that. To have to do that, then you're going to have to bow to the NECs and everything. That's why we would still have enough people on the committee for the committee to be operational.

COMMANDER HASS: I will call for the question. All those in favor of the motion; opposed, same sign. Thank you. Motion carried.

MRS. WILTON: I'm not sure I should thank this committee for electing me chairman. (Laughter)

All right. At the bottom of the page, N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, old Section 7: Delete, substitute and

renumber a new Section 8 to read -- Page 2:

National Education Loan Fund

The National Education Loan Fund shall be administered through the Auxiliary National Headquarters.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. ELLEN RIGGS: Ellen Riggs, State Department of West Virginia. I second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. Any discussion? Hearing none, I will ask, all those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried.

MRS. WILTON: Thank you.

Page N-12, Article III, Duties of National Officers, old Section 8: Delete, substitute and renumber a new Section 9 to read:

Auxiliary Service Support Fund.

The National Service/Support Fund shall be administered through the Auxiliary National Headquarters under the direction of the national adjutant.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. ADDIE WHITE: Madam Commander, Addie White from Unit 1, Detroit, Michigan, seconds the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; same sign, opposed. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page N-21, Article VII, Membership, B. Life Membership, Paragraph 4: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 4 to read:

Effective July 1, 1998, life membership fees will be as follows: 71 or older - $75; 61 through 70 - $100; 41 through 60 - $125; under 41 - $150. Minimum down payment is $25. Birth date must be indicated on the membership application.

I move the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. FLORENCE McGOVERN: Florence McGovern from Ohio. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. Any discussion?

MRS. BARBARA WINGO: Madam Chairman, Barbara Wingo, Unit 54, South Carolina. I object to the first part of this, where it says, "life membership fees will be as follows: 71 or older - $75." I think for that age group, that's a big jump, and I would like to see it stay $50 for that age group.

COMMANDER HASS: Maria.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: I would like to comment on that. These fees are the same as the DAV charges.

This is being utilized for one good reason, and that is because we went into the reserve this year better than $50,000. That's into our reserve. And if it continues, there will not be a life membership in the future to be distributed.

If you have some members that maybe want to join, now's the time for them to join. And if you do feel that it might be a hardship for a member, there's a lot of the units out there that have money. Let's start spending it on helping some of these members pay their dues and keep them active. (Applause)

MRS. WINGO: Madam Chairman, I understand that, but we still have some small units that would not have the money to pay $75 for an 80-year-old member. The smaller units would really be at a disadvantage for that.

COMMANDER HASS: Are you discussing, or are you making an amendment to the motion?

MRS. WINGO: I'm just adding to the discussion. If I were changing it, I would leave the first part -- I would change it to

say, "Effective" --

COMMANDER HASS: Pardon me. What are you doing now? Are you still discussing or what are you doing?

MRS. WINGO: I would be glad to make the motion that we leave 71 or older at $50.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second to that amendment to the motion? Please go to a microphone.

MRS. FRANCES BANGHARDT: (Away from microphone) Banghardt, New Jersey. I go along with the change.

COMMANDER HASS: Okay. Frances Banghardt of New Jersey seconds that motion.

All right. More discussion?

MEMBER: Madam Commander, one of the other things I wanted to mention about this, some of the units have a lot of widowed women that only get, like five- or six hundred dollars a month as income. A lot of them really can't afford this. Is there a way that we could possibly take and make the membership fee still at $50 and somehow or the other, maybe either National or a state could maybe compensate them for a little bit of the cost?

COMMANDER HASS: Is there any other discussion?

MRS. GRIGGS: Ellen Griggs, State Department of West Virginia. If you delete and leave "71 and over" and leave that at 50, it's going to change the others. They're going to feel bad about that, because you have left that at 50. It's not going to be right for the others if you raise theirs. And my belief is leave it. If you want to raise them all, raise them all. Because you're giving us three years to pay that life membership up. And if you start at $25, you have three years to finish it. So I believe we should leave it the way it is written.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you.

One more discussion.

MRS. BETTY BOYD: Madam Commander, Betty Boyd, Unit 1, Arizona. I feel that this not only could be paid off, as she said, in three years without too much hardship, it also is an incentive for them to become life members before they get to be 71.

MRS. ANN JONES: Ann Jones, Arizona. I call for the question.

COMMANDER HASS: Okay. The question is on the question of the amendment, if we should change the over 71 to 50. All those in favor of that motion that we should change it from 75 to 50 for the over 71, please give me the sign of Aye; opposed. Thank you. Motion denied on the amendment.

And now we'll go back to the original motion. We had a second. Is there any more discussion on that? Hearing none, I ask for the question. All those in favor on the previous motion, please say Aye; opposed, same sign. Thank you. Motion carried.

MRS. WILTON: Page N-21, Article VII, Membership, Section 2, E. Dual or Multiple Membership, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new paragraph.

> Members shall not vote or hold an office, chairmanship or serve on a committee in a unit and/or state department in more than one state.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made. Is there a second to that motion?

MRS. DIANA HARRIS: Madam Commander, from the State of Kansas, Diana Harris. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. Okay. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

MRS. SADA HEIDKAMP: Madam Chairman, Sada Heidkamp, junior vice-commander, Number 10, Billings, Montana. I understand the intent of this paragraph. However, to avoid any ambiguity, I would suggest greater specificity by the addition of the phrase at the end of "at any one time." If you were reading it legally, it would mean that even if you transferred to another state, you have already held office in one state; therefore, that would make two states. And I'm just trying to make it clear.

MRS. WILTON: Ladies, you do have that. If you want to stay in your old state and be active there, you can do that, but you

can't do that and into the new state that you move.

MRS. HEIDKAMP: That's precisely why I suggest the addition of "at any one time."

MRS. WILTON: This has been in the Bylaws all the time, and the only thing that we are changing is "serve on a committee." That's the only change there is from the national book.

COMMANDER HASS: Anyone else? Any other discussion? I will ask for the question. All those in favor of this motion, say Aye; opposed. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page N-32, Article XI, Probation, Suspension and Revocation of Charters. Delete Article XI and substitute a new Article XI to read. Now, ladies, we're going to read this whole section and vote on the whole section at one time. Page 3, Section 1 on the top of the page, Probation.

> The Auxiliary national commander may, for cause, place on probation any state department or unit.
>
> Upon probation of a state department or unit, said body shall continue to operate as a state department or unit in accordance with the directives provided by the Auxiliary national commander.
>
> Section 2: Suspension
>
> The Auxiliary national commander may suspend the charter of any state department or unit pending the action of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee.
>
> Upon suspension of a state department or a local unit, no meetings shall be held in the name of the state department or unit except for the sole purpose of discussion of the cause, effect, or removal of the penalty. No funds of the state department or unit shall be expended or obligations incurred during and while the order of suspension is in force and effect.
>
> Section 3: Revocation
>
> Unit or state department charters may be revoked by the Auxiliary national commander with the approval of the DAV Auxiliary National Executive Committee.
>
> Upon revocation of a local unit charter or a local unit becoming inactive, the charter shall revert to National Headquarters. All other property, money and effects of the unit shall revert to the Auxiliary state department to be held in trust for a period of 18 months. In the event the unit charter is not reissued within a period of the 18 months, said property shall become the absolute property of the Auxiliary state department.
>
> A member of a revoked unit shall be transferred into the state-at-large. Upon request, she may transfer her membership to a chartered unit or remain a member-at-large.
>
> Upon revocation of an Auxiliary state department charter or the charter of a local unit where there is no Auxiliary state department, the charter and all property, money and effects shall revert to Auxiliary National Headquarters to be held in trust for a period of 18 months. In the event the charter of the Auxiliary state department or local unit is not reissued within a period of 18 months, said property shall become the absolute property of the Auxiliary National Headquarters.
>
> Upon revocation of a DAV chapter, the Auxiliary may retain its charter upon the approval of the unit membership.
>
> Section 4.
>
> No DAV chapter shall have the authority to place on probation or to suspend or revoke the charter of any Auxiliary unit.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. GRIGGS: Ellen Griggs, State Department of West Virginia. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been seconded. Is there discussion?

MRS. MIRIAM DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27, Massachusetts. I'd like a clarification upon when a member of a revoked unit shall be transferred. "Upon request, she may transfer her membership to a chartered unit." Does she need approval from the receiving unit?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes.

MRS. DALEY: Because this year in our state, we had a person who said, "It doesn't say here, so I can transfer into any place I want."

MRS. WILTON: Our National Constitution and Bylaws says that all transfer members need to be voted on.

MRS. DALEY: Right.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: If you'll refer to Page N-26, it says, "The receiving unit shall notify National Headquarters of its approval of the transfer, whereupon the national organization shall notify both units and the state departments that the transfer has been processed." So what that leaves off, takes off in N-25 in a transfer.

MRS. DALEY: Okay. Fine. Because we had a question on it this year, and this is what she used to try and fight for it. Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Any others? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor of the motion, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page S-1, Article II, Section 2: Composition: Delete and substitute a new Section 2 to read:

> The state convention shall be composed of the elected state officers, the state's past state commanders, any active resident past national commander, and the elected delegates or alternates representing chartered units within the state.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. MEYERS: Hazel Meyers, Unit 29, Maryland. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion?

I call for the question then. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Hearing none, the motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page S-1, Article II, State Convention, Section 3, Paragraph 6: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 6 to read:

> In the election of state officers, voting shall be by voice vote when there is no contest; or by roll call when there are two or more candidates 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.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. SHIRLEY MURPHY: Shirley Murphy, Unit 28, Arizona. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion? Shelia, our judge advocate.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Since this pertains to the amendment that was referred to the committee, anything that the committee came up with, they would certainly address this amendment to coincide with the first one that was referred to them.

MRS. GREEN: Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Anyone else? If not, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. The motion carried.

MRS. WILTON: Page S-9, Article VI, Section 5, State Committees: Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

> Financial records of the state department shall be reviewed and verified by an Audit Committee appointed by the

state commander or by an independent or certified public accountant. If an Audit Committee is appointed, the committee shall consist of three members appointed by the state commander, excluding the state commander, state senior vice-commander, state treasurer, state adjutant and members of the state Finance Committee.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. LUCITA CHRISTIAN: Lucita Christian, State of New York, Unit 35. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion?

MRS. GREEN: Sorry, ladies. This is not an amendment. I have just some discussion. In Wisconsin, I had to appoint an Audit Committee this year, and it was very difficult to find three ladies that were capable of doing this, because we had had accountants doing it before. So we have a first-year, a second-year and a third-year member on our Audit Committee, and the state commander is to appoint one each year, and then you'll have two experienced people on it.

So what I need to know, are we now in violation of this, or should I be asking for a motion -- it's a very tough committee. I think you should keep experience on it, in my personal opinion. But for the sake of my state, I need to know, are we in violation now, or what should I do about this? Or maybe this isn't the place to bring it up, but I need to know.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: So what you're saying, you have like a rotating committee?

MRS. GREEN: Right. A first-year, second-year, third-year.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: As long as one of those aren't of the four that were listed here, you're still fine.

MRS. GREEN: Okay.

COMMANDER HASS: I will call for the question. All those in favor of the motion, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: We're going over to Page 5. Page S-9, Article VI, Section 5, State Committees: Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 3 to read:

All members of the Audit Committee shall be present when reviewing or verifying the state department's financial records at the close of each fiscal year. The financial report form provided by National Headquarters shall be completed by the state treasurer or the Audit Committee and sent to National Headquarters within ten days after adjournment of the state convention.

I move for the adoption of this report.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. BONITA MITCHELL: Madam Commander, Bonita Mitchell, Unit 2, Kansas City, Missouri. I second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2, State Finance Committee, Paragraph 1: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 1 to read:

The state Finance Committee shall consist of at least three and no more than seven members elected from various units in the state. The number of members serving on the committee shall be provided in the 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.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?
MRS. ELLEN GRIGGS: Ellen Griggs, State Department of West Virginia. I second the motion.
COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, the question: All in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. The motion carried. Thank you.
MRS. WILTON: Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2: State Finance Committee, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 2 to read:

> The state Finance Committee shall review and verify all revenue, expenditures and investments of the state department between state conventions. The committee shall also prepare a budget which shall be submitted and distributed to the state convention delegates for adoption.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.
COMMANDER HASS: Second, please?
MRS. BETTY NELSON: Betty Nelson, New York, Unit Number 47. I second it.
COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.
MRS. WILTON: Page S-9, Article VI, State Committees, Section 2: State Finance Committee, Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 3 to read:

> The state Finance Committee shall review and verify the records of the DAVA-VAVS representative(s) and associate representative(s) annually.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.
COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?
MRS. MARY RODEN: Mary Roden, Unit 62, Arkansas, I second the motion.
COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Thank you. Motion carried.
MRS. WILTON: We are at the top of Page 6. Page S-12, Article VII, VAVS Representatives and Associate Representatives, Section 1: Duties, Paragraph 3: Delete and substitute the following Paragraph 3 to read:

> Each state department shall provide in their state Standing Rules as to how many signatures shall be required on a check. Accurate records shall be kept by the representative and the associate representative. Records are to show the source of income and amount, funds deposited (if a bank account is maintained), and expenditures with receipts attached. State Standing Rules shall also provide for the retention of VAVS financial records.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.
COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?
MRS. RHEA LYNN: Rhea Lynn, State Department of Pennsylvania. I second that motion.
COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Hearing none, the motion carried. Thank you.
MRS. WILTON: Page S-12, Article VII, VAVS Representatives and Associate Representatives, Section 1, Duties: Add a new Paragraph 6 to read:

> **VAVS representatives and associate VAVS representatives shall not serve on the state Finance Committee.**

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. JEANETTE NUSPL: Jeanette Nuspl, Wisconsin. I'll second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Any discussion?

MRS. MIRIAM DALEY: Miriam Daley, Unit 27 in Somerville, Massachusetts. I would like to see it amended to read: "If handling VAVS monies in excess of $200, VAVS reps cannot serve on the state Finance Committee." In our state alone, we'd lose two people because we don't have enough people to -- we'd either have two deputies quit or we'd have two people come off the Finance Committee. Our VAVS people do not handle money over $200, so there'd be no reason for them to be audited. So if it was amended, if they handled more than $200.

MRS. WILTON: These records of the VAVS representatives and the other ones, associate representatives, have to be audited anyway.

MRS. DALEY: All right. In our state, our VAVS money goes right to our state treasury. She does not have her own books.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: Whoever is receiving the money is supposed to be listing who they're getting it from and what it's being used for. So even if the money is going right out of their hands, they still need a record.

MRS. DALEY: We don't have enough people to fill these spots, so this is why I feel upset about it, because we can't get deputy reps or, you know, people to do it.

COMMANDER HASS: Yes.

MRS. CAROL ANN CHAPMAN: Carol Ann Chapman, Unit Number 21, Denver, Colorado. I would like to agree with the lady over here. We have two members on our Finance Committee. They do not handle any money of their own personal money. It just turns over to the VA Hospital. The VA Hospital, in turn, sends a receipt to the unit that they've received the money. We don't handle any money at all.

You do that, I lose two Finance Committees or two representatives in one. They're so small at that VA Hospital, we won't fill it. We're going to be without a VAVS representative because she can't be on the Finance Committee or vice versa. This is not fair to the small unit.

COMMANDER HASS: Unit or state, are you saying?

MRS. CHAPMAN: It's not fair to the small state, for us to have to do that and lose a representative at a hospital, because she's on the Finance Committee and can't be at a VA Hospital.

COMMANDER HASS: Judy.

MRS. JUDITH McLASKEY: Judy McLaskey, Unit 10, Cedar Rapids, Iowa. I have a question. In our state department, our hospital funding is run through the parent organization. That is our VAVS representatives. When they voucher their money, it's on the men's books. Can our VAVS representatives in that instance serve on the Finance Committee? Because they do not literally handle funds. It is not on our books. It is on the men's side, the parent's side.

MRS. WILTON: Why are the men handling your money? You're an Auxiliary; handle it. (Applause)

MRS. McLASKEY: Because that's the way it's been done for years. I realize that's the way it's been done for years is not an explanation. But we have always only had one hospital chairman. It's been on the parent organization's side. We have had so few funds to work with that our chapters support our Auxiliary programs and therefore that's why the money is coming from that side.

MRS. DIANA HARRIS: Madam Commander, I'm Diana Harris from Unit Number 1, Kansas City, Kansas, and I want to apologize for getting so frustrated or flustered earlier. My thoughts on this. We need to recruit. If we're not large enough to hold the different offices, let's recruit. (Applause) Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you.

And the back mike.

MRS. CHARLIE MILLER: Madam Commander, I'm Charlie Miller from Unit 43 in Morganton, North Carolina. I'm the VAVS representative at Asheville VA Medical Center in North Carolina. I recently resigned from a Finance Committee because I felt as if it was conflicting. It just wasn't right. I didn't work on my own books.

I worked on the other VAVS reps, but still it was a conflict of interest.

I handle money that's from our department, and as well I send out letters requesting funds from units to use in my hospital. I also handle those funds. So I should not be on a Finance Committee, and I don't think any VAVS representative should. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you.

MRS. JEANNE ZWICK: Jeanne Zwick, past commander for the State of Pennsylvania. I'm a deputy at Wilkes-Barre VA Hospital, and as it happens, this year I'm Finance chairman for the State of Pennsylvania. But as a deputy, I do not handle any of the representatives' money. I don't see her records unless she chooses to show me something. But on the Finance Committee, I would have an opportunity to review her records, and I know they're right and correct.

But we're sort of short for people to fill these different offices. Now, next year it won't pertain to me but it might pertain to somebody else. We're penalizing the deputies, and I don't think many of them have anything to do with the funds, that they can't be on a Finance Committee. It should be just the VAVS, I think.

COMMANDER HASS: And the back mike, please.

MRS. OLIVE TOMLIN: Olive Tomlin, Unit 6, Colorado. In the first place, on this, it says, "VAVS representative and associate representative." It does not say anything about a deputy. There is a difference between a deputy representative and an associate representative. Also, I would like to see it amended to, "VAVS representative and associate VAVS representative shall not serve on the state Finance Committee if any funds are handled by them."

But there is a difference between associate representative and deputy representatives.

COMMANDER HASS: Any other discussion?

NEC 2ND DISTRICT DOLORES U. ROBIDOUX: Madam Commander, Dolores Robidoux, District Number 2. If this should be voted on to accept, our state convention has already taken place, and we do have a couple of VAVS reps on the Finance Committee. How do we handle this after this convention, if this is adopted?

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: Seeing all the controversy in this, I personally think it needs to be a little more work, so I would like at this time to move that the main motion, which is what was made on this, be laid on the table, referred to a committee to come out at convention next year. (Applause)

NEC ROBIDOUX: I second that.

COMMANDER HASS: Motion to table. All right.

Is there any discussion?

MRS. DEBORAH MAZZA: The only thing I have to say -- I'm Deborah Mazza, Department of Oregon. By tabling this motion like that, you're still allowing these representatives and deputy representatives and associate representatives to handle the money, and also to audit their own books. And somehow I cannot -- I'm also a VAVS representative, and I don't feel that if they are auditing their own books, they have any right being on that Finance Committee.

I mean, I totally agree with the fact that they do not need to be there. If they're going to stay on the Finance Committee, then they need to have their deputies taking care of this money, and the representatives themselves not doing it.

JUDGE ADVOCATE ALLRED: All right. If this amendment to lay on the table -- I mean, the motion I made to lay it on the table, if it passes, then you're going to have, the state departments, use your own discretion about what to do with these representatives serving on that committee. Just like the little girl over there from North Carolina. She felt like it wasn't right for her to audit those books, so she resigned.

You know that this is coming out of the committee because it was tabled to the next convention, so you know what's coming up, and it's going to give you a chance to go back and try to, you know, get everything together within your department.

MRS. MAZZA: I just feel like you're still giving them too

much power. Sorry.

MRS. KATHY WEATHERLY: Kathy Weatherly, Unit 20, Des Moines, Iowa. I just want to make a comment. Everybody kind of ooh'd and aah'd when Judy said that our parent organization handles all the money for Iowa. But I'm the treasurer of Iowa, and I handle our money, except we don't get the money from the hospital fund. So we do have our own money, so don't worry. (Laughter)

COMMANDER HASS: All right. I'll call for the question then. All those in favor of the motion to lay this aside, would you please say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Page U-2, Article II, Unit Officers, Section, Paragraph 2, Line 5: Delete "may" after "senior members" and insert "shall." Paragraph 2 will then read, as amended:

> If a unit desires to have an Executive Board and such unit has 50 senior members or less, two members shall be elected from the floor to serve on the unit's Executive Board. Units with more than 50 senior members shall elect four members to serve on the unit's Executive Board. Units may elect alternates, if desired.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. LESLIE DUMAS: Leslie Dumas, Tucson, Unit 28. I second the motion.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you. The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Motion carried. Thank you.

MRS. WILTON: Okay. We are getting there. Page U-9, Article VI, Unit Committees, Section 2, Paragraph 2: Delete and substitute a new Paragraph 2 to read:

> Prior to the installation of the newly elected treasurer, all members of the Audit Committee shall be present to audit the financial records of the unit.

I move for the adoption of this amendment.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there a second?

MRS. FLORENCE McGOVERN: Florence McGovern from Ohio. I'll second that motion.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded. Is there any discussion? Hearing none, I call for the question. All those in favor of the motion, say Aye; opposed, same sign. Hearing none, motion carried. And thank you very much. (Applause)

MRS. WILTON: Ladies, believe it or not, I truly like it when the members of our Auxiliary feel free to get up and ask questions. There are no dumb questions. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: And we certainly do want to thank the women of our Auxiliary that have worked so hard on these, and we do appreciate your input, and I'll be back next year and we'll see that we've got it right.

MRS. ETTA B. WOODSON: Just before you leave, can I say something? Madam Commander, I'm Etta B. Woodson from Washington, D.C. I have about 15 kids, children to join, but nobody said anything about them, although they are under 41, but do they have to pay that $150 just like we do? See, we are getting old. We need children to come in so they can take over what we have done. Most of all of us are over 55 and 60. So the children that we have are young from 2 to 15.

COMMANDER HASS: They are junior members, and they would pay the junior fee.

MRS. WOODSON: Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Sophie.

MRS. SOPHIE BEUTLER: Madam Commander, may I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes.

MRS. BEUTLER: Margie -- she's our national commander, but to us she's a devoted sister and partner. I am Sophie Beutler of the Minot Unit, North Dakota, and we wish to present this gift to the

Education and Loan Fund as an honor to Margie, $150. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you so much. Sophie. that's very nice. And this is a great program, Educational Loan Fund.

MRS. WILTON: Madam Commander, before we close, I'm sorry I didn't have my checkbook and things with me yesterday, but I know Maria and many other people know that my husband loved this Auxiliary, and I want to make a donation to the Service Fund this year. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Sally. We are ready for a recess, and we reconvene on Thursday at 9:00 o'clock, and we want to see you all here.

(Whereupon, the meeting recessed at 12:50 o'clock p.m., August 19. 1997.)

FINAL BUSINESS SESSION

The Final Business Session of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary 75th National Convention convened in Pavilion Rooms 9-10-11 of the Las Vegas Hilton Hotel, Las Vegas, Nevada, Thursday morning, August 21, 1997, and was called to order at 9:00 o'clock a.m. by Commander Margaret E. Hass.

COMMANDER MARGARET E. HASS: Will you please be seated. We need to start. It is with a great deal of pleasure that I call to order this last session of our diamond jubilee anniversary convention. Thank you all for being here.

We will begin with a prayer from our national chaplain, Carol Gray.

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Would you all join hands and remember someone who has had to leave this convention because of tragedies at home. O Lord, Our God, we the Auxiliary come to You on this last day of our convention and ask for Your blessings on all of our Auxiliaries and all of our members. We thank You for giving us compassion and strength to accomplish our goals.

We thank You for giving Commander Margaret to us and for her dedication and her graciousness. We ask for blessings on the leaders who will be elected today. Give them guidance in all that they do. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Carol.

The Pledge of Allegiance will be led by Joi Kern, Oklahoma.

(Pledge of Allegiance.)

COMMANDER HASS: I would like to call the Credentials chairman, Dorothy Otts, to the podium, please.

MRS. OTTS: Good morning. I don't know whether these two lovely escorts are to make sure I showed up, or everyone's just saying, "Well, maybe we want to push it on," or something.

The Credentials report is as follows for our last day: Total units registered, 357; total departments registered, 44, for a total of 401. Delegates registered, 763; alternates registered, 65; guests, 86; total, 913. Total unit votes, 2,229; total department votes, 44; national officers, 7; PNCs, 15. The grand total of votes, 2,295.

I make a motion to accept this report, please.

MRS. MERRILEE HICKMAN: I second the motion. Merrilee Hickman, Delaware.

COMMANDER HASS: The motion has been made and seconded that we accept this Credentials report. Is there any discussion? If not, all those in favor, say Aye; same sign, opposed. Motion carried.

MRS. OTTS: Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Dorothy. You've done a fine job, and I thank you very much. (Applause)

I call now for the Nominating report, and Louise Rapisand, the chairman, would she please come forward.

MRS. LOUISE RAPISAND: Good morning, ladies. Before I read the report, the committee asked me to please tell each and every candidate that came before us that we appreciate the fact that they have an interest in our organization and that they want to continue their work, and we encourage everyone, whether you came this year or you would like to come next year, please get a resume fact sheet from National Headquarters, and send it in on time and have it

there in the folders for next year's committee.

The Nominating Committee of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary held their first meeting on Monday, August the 19th, 1997, and we met forever. We are pleased to submit the following slate for your consideration to serve as the 1997-98 officers.

For commander, Evelynne Dunn from Nevada, District 18; senior vice-commander, Evelyn Dorsey, District of Columbia, District 6; 1st junior vice-commander, Paula Raymond, Illinois, District 12; 2nd junior vice-commander, Carol Gray, Michigan, District 10; 3rd junior vice-commander -- this one is going to throw us -- Jacqueline Fossiano, Massachusetts, District 1; 4th junior vice-commander, Renee Jones, North Carolina, District 9; chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell, Oklahoma, District 21; judge advocate, Shelia Allred, North Carolina, District 9.

The secretary who served for the committee was Jane Troutman. Our advisor was Barbara Hicks, immediate past national commander. From District 1 -- would you stand, and you all have to share in this, too -- Phyllis Greaney from Massachusetts; Number 2 is Betty Nelson; 3, Claudia Roy; 4, Dorothea Campanelli; 5, Catherine Watkins; 6, Mary Parrish; 7, Sunny Barzelogna; 8, Dorothy Pearce; 9, Jane Troutman; 10, Leona Sharp; Mary Beth Schulze; 12, Nelda Wilson; 13, Ella Tyler; 14, Karlette Rizzi; 15, Dorothy Van Hoy; 16, Joan Turbeville; 17, Olive Tomlin; 18, Janet Bennett; 19, Juanita Wiley; 20, Louise Rapisand; 21, Mary Roden. And the chairman was Louise Rapisand. (Applause)

We've had a request from the audience that the candidates -- I'll read their names again and please stand and remain standing. Evelynne Dunn; Evelyn Dorsey; Paula Raymond; Carol Gray; Jacqueline Fossiano; Renee Jones; Gertrude Tidwell; Shelia Allred, who's up here. All right.

They tell me I'm finished. Bye.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, Louise, for that fine report. Thank you.

I wish to thank the members of the Nominating Committee for their efforts and 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 your respective districts for the purpose of nomination and election.

You have heard the report of the Committee on Nominations. Evelynne has been nominated by the committee for the office of national commander. Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national commander. All those in favor of Evelynne for the office of national commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Evelynne Dunn has been -- excuse me.

MRS. JOANNE MOLEN: Madam Commander, we had a seconding nomination for Evelynne, if we'd be allowed to give that, please?

COMMANDER HASS: Please.

MRS. MOLEN: Thank you. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Please come up.

MRS. MOLEN: Caught me kind of unawares there. I am Joanne Molen from Unit 11, Las Vegas, Nevada. National Commander Margaret, National Adjutant Maria, national officers and past national officers, members and guests of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary: I am humbled and proud to second the nomination of Evelynne Dunn from the great service State of Nevada for the office of national commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary for the year 1997-98.

Evelynne's membership eligibility is through her late husband, Fred, a veteran of World War II, who suffered injuries in the Battle of Bulge. She is also eligible through her late son, Monty, a Vietnam veteran.

Evelynne is a charter and life member of Sunrise Mountain Unit 13 in Las Vegas, has served her unit in all offices, serving as commander twice. Evelynne is Executive Committeewoman for her unit and has served in all elective offices on the state level. She served as state commander in 1986-87 and has readily accepted appointments to committees, conducted workshops throughout the state, and always made herself available to lessen the hardship of

her fellow members. Her understanding and compassion have become well known by Auxiliary members in the State of Nevada.

Nationally, Evelynne has served on the Mae Holmes Convention Committee, Constitution and Bylaws Committee and served as co-chair of the 1989, 1995 National Conventions held in Las Vegas. Evelynne served as the 18th District National Executive Committeewoman, 1990-1992; chaired the National Finance Committee in 1991-1992. In 1992-1993, she served as the national chaplain in a truly exemplary fashion.

She served as your 3rd junior vice-commander, 1993-94, and was National Americanism chairman. She has also served as 1st junior vice and has been our Membership chairman, 1994-95 and 1995-96. Evelynne is currently national senior vice-commander of the Auxiliary and chairs the Mae Holmes Committee.

Evelynne is a volunteer at the newly opened Adler Guy Veterans and Military Care Facility in Las Vegas. She's previously spent many hours making the waits more bearable at the old Las Vegas Veterans Outpatient Clinic. The new facility was opened earlier this month and is a true example of veterans working together to assure the needs of the veteran are addressed by Congress.

Due to the great increases in the veteran population in the Las Vegas area, there was a definite need for additional staff, space and services. Again, Evelynne was there championing the need of Nevada veterans.

Evelynne is a volunteer driver of the vans which still transport many area veterans to California for medical treatment. Evelynne is a dedicated volunteer from seeking legislation, visiting and aiding the ill and bereaved, fund-raising efforts and all of the behind-the-scenes activities that pursue the goals of Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Evelynne is proud of her heritage as an American, a true patriot in every way.

As past state commander, on behalf of the delegation and membership of the State of Nevada, it is indeed an honor to second the nomination of Evelynne Dunn for the esteemed office of national commander, 1997-1998. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Evelynne Dunn has been elected to the office of national commander. Thank you.

And would you please, when you have a second, would you please get to the mike so that I don't pass you by. We want to move on as quickly as we can, but we want to take care of whatever should be. So get there so that we know that you want to come up, please.

Evelyn Dorsey 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 -- okay.

MRS. REGINA COATES: Madam Commander, Regina Coates, Federal Unit 1, Washington, D.C. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Yes, please.

MRS. COATES: Good morning. Evelyn Dorsey has been a life member of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary since 1976 and is eligible for membership through her late husband, Garnett. A member of Federal Unit 1 in Washington, D.C., she has held most unit officer positions, including commander, senior, junior vice-commander and adjutant, and served on various committees.

On the state department level, she has served as treasurer and state commander and is currently adjutant-treasurer.

At the national level, Evelyn has served as National Executive Committeewoman for the 6th District and is chairman of the National Finance Committee. Since being elected a national junior vice-commander, she has chaired the Community Service and Legislative Programs. She is now National Membership chairman.

A native Washingtonian, Evelyn received her formal education in the nation's capital. For over 35 years, she was employed by the U.S. Army Material Command and the D.C. Department of Human Services. Now retired -- I wouldn't know -- she devoted much of her time and energy to church, Auxiliary and community services. She's never at home. (Laughter)

She is chairman of the Board of Trustees of her church. She serves on the Board of Directors of the Phyllis Wheatly Young Women's Christian Association; the Board of Directors of the

Starter Baptist Home; and is a member of the Mayor's Committee on Persons With Disabilities.

Evelyn is the proud mother of four children and the doting grandmother of nine. And I'm the oldest and the cutest. (Laughter and applause)

I am deeply honored to second the nomination of my grandmother, Evelyn B. Dorsey, for national senior vice-commander of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national senior vice-commander. All those in favor of Evelyn Dorsey for the office of national senior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Evelyn Dorsey has been elected to the office of national senior vice-commander. (Applause)

Paula Raymond has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. Are there any other nominations? Yes.

MRS. TRUDIE PIERCE: Commander Margaret, Trudie Pierce, Boyd O. Biehl Unit 1, Peoria, Illinois. May I approach the podium for a second?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. PIERCE: Commander Margaret Hass, National Adjutant Maria Tedrow, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: It is my pleasure and pride that I second the nomination for Paula Raymond for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander.

Paula is a life member of Alton Number 3 in Alton, Illinois. She is currently serving her unit as treasurer and as a member of the state department Finance Committee. She has served as National Community Service chairman, Americanism chairman, Legislative chairman. This year she has held the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

Any job she has tackled, she has handled superbly. She is active in her church, the Elm Street Presbyterian Church in Alton and the Exchange adds an auxiliary to an Exchange Club.

If you ask her, she will proudly tell you she has a son, Darren. He is a six-year veteran in the U.S. Navy. She also has a daughter, Karen Sue, who serves this convention as a page. Karen is a sophomore at Lewis Clark Community College this fall. Her husband, Byron, is a purchasing agent for a firm called Coplastics at their corporate office in Godfrey, Illinois. Paula herself is employed as an administrative assistant for the VNA Home Care, Incorporated.

We, the States of Illinois and Wisconsin, the National 12th District, are proud of Paula and hope that you will feel as we do, that she has earned and deserves the office of 1st junior vice-commander. In the past, you have heard from Paula's mother. Last year, you heard from her daughter, Karen. Now this year, it's my turn, so you think, what is my relationship with Paula? We have worked side by side on many DAV and DAVA projects and functions. We've shared the joys and the griefs and sorrows. Through all this, we have become best friends. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Paula Raymond for the office of national 1st junior vice-commander signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Paula Raymond has been elected to the office of national 1st junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Carol Gray has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander.

MRS. ETHEL WHITE: Madam Commander, may I approach the podium, please?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. WHITE: National commander and National Adjutant Maria, national line officers, national past commanders, guests and members: It is really my pleasure to second the nomination for Carol Gray.

She really is one gal that is very willing to do anything

that's asked of her. Carol is a life member of Wood-Tazelaar Unit Number 11, and she's serving as senior vice right now. She started as a junior member 50 years ago. Her eligibility is through her grandfather.

She has held all unit offices. She has held all state offices except judge advocate, and is currently on the state Standing Rules, and she's my History Book chairman. She was state commander from 1987 to 1988. She has been on the National History Committee as chairman, two years. She was national chaplain for two years.

She's been married for 37 years. She and her husband, Ken, have operated their own business for 15 years. She has three grown children: one daughter, who's a life member; two sons; seven grandchildren. Two granddaughters are junior members.

And she's a very, very dedicated person. She will tackle anything. And if you elect her, you'll be proud of her like we are in the State of Michigan. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 2nd junior vice. All those in favor of Carol Gray for the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Carol Gray has been elected to the office of national 2nd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Jacqueline Fossiano has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander.

MRS. GREANEY: Madam Commander, Phyllis Greaney from Unit 10, Massachusetts. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. GREANEY: National Commander Margaret, national officers, past national officers and delegates: I am very proud to second the nomination for Jacki Fossiano from Hyannis, Massachusetts for 3rd junior vice-commander.

I have known Jacki for a long time. She joined the DAVA in Massachusetts in 1977. She is eligible through her husband, William Fossiano, who is now deceased. She has two grown children and both live out of the state. Jacki's daughter and her mother are both life members of the DAVA.

Jacki is a registered nurse with a master's degree in education. For the past ten years, she has been employed at the Education Center in the Town of Hyannis on Cape Cod as a treatment coordinator. In addition to her employment, she has been very active in her unit, the state department and in her community.

Presently, she is senior vice-commander of her unit. She had been commander in Hyannis, unit commander in Hyannis, as well as our state commander, and she was state commander in 1990-91. And for the past two years, Jacki has been NEC from District 1.

Also, for a number of years, she has been involved in a Joint Veterans Service Committee on Cape Cod, as well as the Vietnam Association. She has been very active in activities of the DAV at the state level.

As you can see, Jacki is a devoted member of the DAVA. She is dedicated to the principles of our organization. She approaches each problem with thoughtfulness and sincerity and dignity. She supports and works well with her unit, chapter and state department. She is a person that I, as well as others, often turn to for information that we're not too clear about.

I feel that she will represent all of us very proudly, and I'm again glad to second her nomination for 3rd junior vice. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Jacki Fossiano for the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Jacki Fossiano has been elected to the office of national 3rd junior vice-commander. (Applause)

Renee Jones has been nominated by the committee for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander.

MRS. MARGARET SNELLING: Madam Commander, Margaret Snelling, Unit 1, North Carolina. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. SNELLING: Good morning. National Commander Hass, national officers, National Executive Committeewomen and alternates, past national commanders, members and guests: On behalf of the State Department of North Carolina, I am pleased to stand before you and give the seconding speech for Renee Jones for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander for 1997 and '98.

Renee is a life member of the National Mae Holmes winning unit, Byers Moorhead Glover Number 18, Shelby, North Carolina. She is eligible for membership through her grandmother, the late Ruby Worley.

I would like to share with you just a few things that I've noticed while Renee has been growing up in our organization. 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 several times and is currently serving her eighth year as unit adjutant. Renee has also served as chairman in all positions on the unit level.

She was chosen a Ruth Graham Member of the Year award winner. This is a unit award presented to a unit Auxiliary member for outstanding service to the organization and to the community.

On the state level, Renee has served as treasurer, 2nd junior vice-commander, 1st junior vice-commander, senior vice and state commander. She has served as chairman of the Forget-Me-Not, Fund-Raising, Legislative, Membership, Convention and Credentials Committees.

Renee has also served as district commander two terms, and as district adjutant. She was elected as District Commander of the Year, Membership Recruiter of the Year, State Chairman of the Year, and as the past state commander, Woman of the Year for the State Department of North Carolina in 1991.

During her year as state commander, the State Department of North Carolina was the first state department to reach membership quota, and it was the first time ever for North Carolina when every unit in North Carolina reached quota on their own. Currently, Renee is serving as state adjutant.

Renee is a doer. When she attends the last eight 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. At this convention, she has served as advisor to the History Committee.

She served as the national banner bearer under National Commanders Shelia Allred and Jane Troutman. She has served as a personal page to Past National Commander Myrtice Vinson and National Judge Advocate Shelia Allred. She was appointed as National History chairman by National Commander Margaret Hass in 1996.

At the 1991 National Convention, Renee was selected as Membership Recruiter of the Year.

Renee has also attended the last eight National Fall Conferences, taken an active part in the Auxiliary by learning and sharing that knowledge with other members of the organization.

In addition to her work with the DAV Auxiliary, Renee has served on the Cleveland County Youth Assistance Program, a program like Big Brother/Big Sister. During her first year, she was a volunteer and spent time with a young boy who was having an attention deficiency disorder. During her second year, she was elected to the Board of Directors.

Currently, Renee is involved with the Clover Chamber of Commerce's School-to-Work Committee, which assists today's youth with guidance in selecting a career path.

Renee is employed as the office manager of Performance Friction Corporation. This is an automotive brake supplier located in South Carolina. Renee earned her bachelor of science degree in business administration from the Gardner-Webb University, and is a member of the Loray Baptist Church.

North Carolina is proud to have Renee as a member of the Tarheel state. When we elect our officers, we always want to have

the best, because the best is all that can serve a great organization like ours, the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. That is why we are pleased in North Carolina that Renee has made the decision to serve the Auxiliary, and we hope that you will picture our candidate as we have pictured her as the national 4th junior vice-commander for 1997 and '98. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander. All those in favor of Renee Jones for the office of national 4th junior vice-commander, signify by saying Aye; those opposed. The Ayes have it, and Renee Jones 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.

MRS. LONEITA SHOEMAKER: Loneita Shoemaker, past national commander. May I approach the podium, please?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. SHOEMAKER: Thank you, Commander. Commander Margaret, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and guests: It is an honor to second the nomination of Gertrude Tidwell for the position of Auxiliary national chaplain. Gertrude is eligible for membership through her late husband, Claude, who was a Korean War veteran and received a Bronze Star, also a brother who was a Vietnam veteran and received the Purple Heart.

Gertrude and Claude are the parents of two daughters, Margaret Sue and Yolanda and three grandchildren of whom, if you just listen to her, you'll know she is very, very proud. In addition, they raised four foster sons.

Gertrude is a life member of Unit Number 60 in Atoka, Oklahoma. She has served her unit in all line offices, and on the state level, she has served all line offices and as a judge advocate. Gertrude has served as an alternate 21st District NEC and two separate terms as NEC of the 21st District.

She serves in her community on veterans affairs, volunteers as the DAV medical center and is a driver of the Van Program in Muskogee, Oklahoma. She's active in her community, serving with the volunteer fireman, a hospice program for five counties, plays taps at military funerals, and is involved with a widows program in her local church.

If elected Auxiliary national chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell will serve this organization with much dignity and grace, and I can truly say she is a lovely person. Thank you. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national chaplain. 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.

MRS. JANE TROUTMAN: Madam Commander, Jane Troutman, past national commander. May I approach the podium?

COMMANDER HASS: Please do.

MRS. TROUTMAN: National Commander Margaret, national officers, past national commanders, delegates, alternates and guests: On behalf of the State of North Carolina, I am very proud to read the seconding speech for Shelia C. Allred for the office of national judge advocate based on her qualifications and many years of experience in this organization.

Shelia first became a member of the Junior Auxiliary at age nine and has remained active throughout the years. She has attended 68 state conventions throughout the United States and 23 National Fall Conferences.

She is a life member of Unit 27 in Concord. She has held all local unit offices. On the state level, she has served as state junior and senior vice-commander, state commander for one year and five months, also state judge advocate for nine years, and state adjutant for the Department of North Carolina for five years.

Shelia was a National Executive Committeewoman for the

National 5th District for two years. She has served on various committees during the 21 conventions she has attended, including the National Finance Committee for three years. Shelia served as national 4th junior vice-commander, National Community Service chairman, national 3rd junior vice-commander, National Americanism chairman, national 2nd junior vice-commander, National Membership chairman, National Constitution and Bylaws advisor for five years, national senior vice-commander, and advisor to the Mae Holmes Committee.

Shelia was elected National Auxiliary commander at the 1989 Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada and has just completed her fifth term as national judge advocate.

Shelia is president of Allco Research and Consultants of North Carolina. Shelia holds membership in the American Legion Auxiliary and is a charter member of the American Businesswomen's Association. She is active in the community with "A History in the Making", the North Carolina Museum of History Association, a member of the National and North Carolina Genealogy Society and a past member of the Board of Trustees for the Greater Piedmont Chapter of the National Sudden Infant Death Syndrome.

Shelia is a graduate of the Cabarrus County School System and Rowan Cabarrus Community College. She attended the University of North Carolina and holds a certificate in early childhood development. She also holds a certificate in training on effective speaking and human relations. And she instructed as a graduate assistant for the Dale Carnegie Association.

For Shelia, the Disabled American Veterans is really a family organization. Her mother is a past state department commander. Her husband, Jim, served two terms as state department commander of the DAV, and he was also NEC for the 9th District. Their daughter, Tara Dahle is a life member of the Auxiliary. Shelia has one granddaughter, Brittany Michaela, who has been a junior member since birth.

An article was written last year about Shelia for a nonprofit world newspaper by DAV National Communications Director Tom Keller. This article was accepted for publication by the Society of Nonprofit Organizations. Tom was quoted as saying, "Shelia was the kind of leader that speech writers dream about, because she's not afraid to speak from her heart."

Shelia's life and works enfolds a record of achievement. This was obtained because of her devotion and dedication to you, the members of this organization. If elected, Shelia will fulfill her obligations as national judge advocate with knowledge, dedication, honor and dignity.

It is an honor and personal privilege for me to second the nomination of my best friend, Shelia C. Allred, for national judge advocate. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Are there any other nominations? Hearing none, I declare the nominations closed for the office of national judge advocate. All those in favor of Shelia Allred 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)

And now I'm going to ask each one of these ladies where they are to stand so that we can acknowledge them again, the newly elected national commander, Evelynne Dunn (applause); senior vice-commander, Evelyn Dorsey (applause); national 1st junior vice-commander, Paula Raymond (applause); national 2nd junior vice-commander, Carol Gray (applause); national 3rd junior vice-commander, Jacki Fossiano (applause); and national 4th junior vice-commander, Renee Jones (applause); national chaplain, Gertrude Tidwell (applause); and national judge advocate, Shelia Allred. (Applause) Thank you very much.

All the delegates here and all the members all over our organization wish you well in the coming year, and I know you'll have a fantastic year with these officers. Thank you. (Applause)

The election having been completed, will all the officers return to their former stations on the podium?

National Sergeant-at-Arms, would you care to come to the podium for the purpose of introducing the pages and the National

Executive Committeewomen?

MRS. JUDY STEINHOUSE: National Commander Margaret, National Adjutant Maria, national officers, past national commanders, delegates and friends: If I could please have all my pages and NECs' personal pages to come up here on the stage please.

COMMANDER HASS: While they're coming up here behind to be acknowledged, I have some more thank-yous, and I want to thank you all again for coming and being so attentive and making this a grand, grand convention. And I want to thank Judy Steinhouse for being national sergeant-at-arms this year. Thank you, Judy, so much.

And Erna B, I know they want to give you a round of applause for that beautiful, beautiful music. (Applause)

And I want to thank all those committees again that worked so hard, Constitution and Bylaws and the interim committee that met on those during the year, and all the convention chairmen. Just thank you to all of you. It takes each and every one of us to make a success like we've had, and thank you very, very much.

All right, Judy, are we all present and accounted for?

MRS. STEINHOUSE: I want to thank Margaret for the privilege of being her national sergeant-at-arms. Thank you so much for asking me to be this. It's a difficult job, but it's been made a whole lot easier because of all the wonderful ladies standing behind me. I have worked with a lot of people, and I can definitely say that this group of ladies rates right there at the top, and I thank them very much for their support and assistance. (Applause)

The personal pages for the national commander were Vickie McIntyre, Miriam Kiser and Tori Thompson. (Applause)

Let's hold our applause until the end and then give everybody one big hand. Okay? For Evelynne Dunn, her personal page was Erin Murray. For Evelyn Dorsey, personal page was Regina Coates. For Paula Raymond, personal page was Karen Eccles. For Esther Westlake, personal page was Erin Pressley. For Shelia Allred, her personal page was Betty Bryant. For Carol Gray, personal page was Bernice Sebring. And Past National Commander Barbara Hicks' personal page was Joan Fletcher. (Applause)

We had five junior pages this year, which we love to see and hope that you enjoyed their participation. We had Sarah Ann Coursey, Joi Kern, Tamara Kern, Anna Hollingsworth and Erica Cheatham. (Applause)

Our NECs that served this year: From District Number 1, Jacki Fossiano; from District Number 2, Dolores Robidoux; District Number 3, Grace Boland; District Number 4, Beatrice Albanese; District Number 5, E. Jimi Hayes; District Number 6, Mildred Velazquez; District Number 7, Frances Fabregas; District Number 8, Elaine Majors. District Number 9, Vicky Grier was unable to be here, but her alternate, Ruth Koon, was with us.

District Number 10, Gwen McCracken; District Number 11, Jane Wood; District Number 12, Beraldine Errett; District Number 13, Esther Houston; District Number 14, Sharon Kramer; District Number 15, Dee Staples; District Number 16, Alma Fowlkes; District Number 17, Dorothy Dudoich; District Number 18, Joan Fletcher; District Number 19, Kathryn Wiley; District Number 20, June Bradford; and District Number 21, Gertrude Tidwell.

I'd like to thank these ladies, and I'd like to have you thank them for their participation. (Applause)

Thank you, National Commander.

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you.

Sharon Kramer would like to make a presentation to our sergeant-at-arms, Judy Steinhouse.

NEC 14TH DISTRICT SHARON KRAMER: Poor Judy, trying to keep us in gear, getting us to the right places at the right time and keeping us organized has been a tremendous effort, and we want to thank her for all of her patience, and this is from all of the NECs and the national musician and we wish you the best. (Applause)

MRS. STEINHOUSE: Thank you so much. This is so nice. A lovely card. I won't tell you what's in it, but thank you ladies so very much. (Applause)

COMMANDER HASS: Thank you, ladies, for coming up. You've

done a great job keeping our floor exercises and our convention in order and helpful to the ladies coming up here. We really appreciate you.

The national adjutant 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: Thank you, Madam Commander. Only the newly elected will be called forward, because the other ones had their installation last year.

From District 1, Miriam Daley, National Executive Committeewoman; Dorothy Young her alternate. District 1. From District 3, Ann Kelley, and her alternate is Marie Clancy. District 5, Rebecca Anderson, and her alternate is Jean Zwick. District 7, Grace McLaughlin, and her alternate, Sunny Barzelogna. District 9, Betty Bryant, and her alternate, Barbara Wingo. District 11, Florence McGovern, and her alternate, Jane Wood. District 13, Edith Jackson, and her alternate is Mildred Brown. District 15, E. Bonita Mitchell, and her alternate is Rosemary Gallagher. District 17, Jean Jackson; her alternate, Arlene Snider. District 19, Norma Parker; her alternate, Glenna Finley. District 21, Sara Douglass; her alternate, Sue Hollingsworth.

Are all the NECs present? Are all the alternates here?

Madam Commander.

COMMANDER HASS: You are requested to remain silent during the ceremony of installation. All the newly elected National Executivewomen and alternates, are you willing to assume the oath of your office?

(Response of, "I am.")

COMMANDER HASS: Members, please stand. Place your right hand over your heart and pronounce your name and repeat after me the oath of your office, I, Margaret Hass, 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 the duties of the office I'm 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.

You may lower your hands.

Members, be seated. Delegates, members and guests, I now present to you the National Executive Committeewomen and alternates of the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary. I trust you will aid them in the performance of their duties. With your help, their term of office will be highly successful.

Please turn around, greet the people. (Applause)

Would the newly installed officers and committeewomen please return to their seats. Thank you. (Applause)

The national adjutant will now give us some announcements.

ADJUTANT TEDROW: To the newly elected national commander, make a note that we had an alternate who was not here that will have to be installed.

Immediately following the adjournment of this convention, we will go into the post National Executive Committee meeting. All NECs and alternates are to remain.

Officers and NEC line-up for the Grand Ball will take place -- this is the lineup -- will take place in Ballroom F, and you are to be there between 6:45 and 7:30. The presentation of national officers and the Grand Ball will be held in the Conrad Room at 7:30.

Fall Conference. The Auxiliary Fall Conference will be September the 25th to the 27th, only a month away, at the Drawbridge Inn, Fort Mitchell, Kentucky. As I stated before, we are planning a tour to National Headquarters, since we are going to be so close, and it will be the end of our 75th year. The room rate at the Drawbridge will be $65 single or double if it's in the Garrison Building and $72 single or double if it's in the main building.

The 1998 National Convention will be held in Las Vegas, Nevada, and the dates are August the 22nd to the 27th.

Those that have been approached to be chairmen for the coming year, please remain for the NEC meeting. There will be forms to fill out that we need to take back to our office. Please make sure you complete the forms and give them back to us, so that we can get some of this information ready for the Fall Conference, because we only have a month.

To the officers that have been elected and the chairmen who will be appointed, I cannot impress upon you how much and how important it is when deadlines are sent out to please meet those deadlines, please. We can't expect state departments and units to do it if the national officers don't do it. So we're going to set a good example on our level.

Now, one more time, in case anybody was not made aware of it, this was the last year that we were going to present the flags. The flags will no longer be coming to the National Convention. However, I did say that we would have a ceremony bringing the -- remember this, whoever has been elected to cast the department vote -- is that understood by everybody? Whoever has been elected to cast the department vote will be presented at the opening session instead of having the flags. And she will need to have a page with her, because we want her escorted in.

A new form will go out to the state department, and it is imperative that we have that back so that we can get the names properly typed up, and that we can get the procession correct.

Other than that, believe it or not, that's it. Thank you. (Applause)

Monies collected from the generous people in this delegation. I told you we'd get back to you with a total. Education and Loan, $4,288 was collected. (Applause) The Service Fund, $5,228.91 was collected. (Applause) Freedom Foundation, $1,425. (Applause) The Flood or Disaster Program, $1,000. (Applause) Hospital Veterans Writing Project, $125. (Applause) POW/MIA, $200. (Applause) Making a grand total received at this convention of $12,266.91. (Applause) Thank you.

COMMANDER HASS: Is there any other business to come before this convention? If not, at this time, I will ask the national chaplain to give the closing prayer, at which time the convention will be adjourned. We will then go immediately into the National Executive Committee meeting and the installation of our new elected officers.

CHAPLAIN GRAY: Would you all please rise and join hands. Our Father, as we come to the end of our 75th anniversary year, we ask that You continue to bless this Auxiliary for many more years. Although we will be going our separate ways, keep us together in spirit. In Your Name we pray. Amen.

COMMANDER HASS: Be seated, please. Will you please be seated a moment.

May I have your attention, please? The 75th National Convention of the Disabled American Veterans, we the Auxiliary, is hereby adjourned. (Applause) I'll see you all next year.

(Whereupon, the meeting adjourned.)

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