

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: David E. Autry
DAV National Convention
Hyatt Regency Atlanta
Telephone: (859) 496-1968

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 1, 2010

Outstanding VA Employees Honored by the DAV

ATLANTA—Three Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) employees will receive the National Commander's Outstanding VA Employee awards from the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) at the organization's 89th National Convention at the Hyatt Regency Atlanta in Atlanta, Ga. The awards will be presented by National Commander Roberto Barrera Sunday, Aug. 1.

Kathleen Hanley, a Decision Review Officer at the Togus, Maine, VA Regional Office, will receive the Outstanding VA employee award for the Veterans Benefits Administration. She has spent 29 years serving veterans. But her association with the VA started when he was a child. Her father was a VA employee, and she grew up on the Togus facility grounds. Today, she trains veteran service rating representatives in delivering earned benefits to veterans as part of the claims process.

Sarah Nowitzke, who will accept the Outstanding VA Health Administration employee award, is the OEF/OIF Program Manager at the Ann Arbor, Mich., VA Healthcare System. She was a military wife for 13 years before her husband was severely injured and later died as a result of an accident. She knows the heart break sometimes suffered by the families of veterans and the vital need for compassion in VA health care systems. All veterans, and especially those who are disabled, have a special place in her heart.

Edward Holmes, who will receive the award for the Outstanding VA employee of the National Cemetery Administration, is a heavy equipment operator at the National Cemetery in Riverside, California. A Marine Corps veteran, Holmes believes in returning good deeds to others. He has tremendous empathy for the families of deceased veterans and feels his work is more than a duty. And he believes that no one can care for a veteran better than another veteran.

"The recipients of the Outstanding VA Employee Awards consider their work much more than a job," said National Commander Barrera. "Each has a personal reason to ensure that veterans receive the best from each branch of the VA. Their work is part of their lives, and their personal experiences are, in large part, a fundamental reason they have chosen to serve our nation's veterans and their families."

The 1.2 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation's disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. For more information, visit the organization's Web site, www.dav.org.

###