West Virginia volunteer named national Disabled Veteran of the Year

DAV (Disabled American Veterans) has named Army veteran Adam Greathouse of Kenna, West Virginia, the 2020 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. A compassionate volunteer who has donated more than 5,100 hours at the Hershel “Woody” Williams VA Medical Center in Huntington, West Virginia, Greathouse will be recognized at the DAV & Auxiliary Virtual Salute scheduled for Aug. 26 at 7 p.m. Eastern time at dav.org/virtualsalute.

Greathouse enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1999 and quickly fell in love with military life, but fate had other plans when he breathed an unknown chemical substance while deployed to Kosovo in 2001. The chemical, which could have been left over from the conflicts in the former Yugoslavia, severely burned his lungs. Doctors gave him a paltry 2% chance of survival after he woke up from a two-month medically induced coma weighing 100 pounds lighter. As a result, he’d sustained a traumatic brain injury.
Following a strenuous recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Greathouse left military service and quickly found himself struggling to find his new place in life as a civilian. In the decade that followed, Greathouse wrestled with alcohol abuse and suicidal thoughts, until participating in recreational therapy through the Department of Veterans Affairs in 2011. Since then, Greathouse has found his life’s purpose in helping his fellow veterans at his local VA medical center, where he continues to serve as a DAV volunteer.

In addition to logging thousands of volunteer hours, Greathouse has told his story to over 1,700 veterans and VA staff members, providing valuable insight into what disabled veterans experience in their recovery.

“Time and again, Adam has shown that, no matter how hard the fight, you can always come out stronger with the right attitude and support system,” said fellow Army veteran and DAV National Commander Stephen “Butch” Whitehead. “We are blessed to have Adam within our ranks. He is an inspiration to all veterans, from ones just now stepping off the battlefield to those currently battling in their recovery and beyond.”

Greathouse continues to participate in recreational therapy, including at the annual National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass, Colorado. In 2017, he was the recipient of the event’s DAV Freedom Award for his remarkable spirit in the face of injury. A few months later, DAV honored Greathouse again with the Victories for Veterans Award, presented during the Carolina Country Music Fest in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. The award is reserved for veterans who overcome tremendous challenges and serve as an inspiration for others.

About DAV
DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling
our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them, fighting for the interests of America’s injured heroes on Capitol Hill, providing employment resources to veterans and their families, and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a nonprofit organization with more than 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at www.dav.org.