



**Report of
Larry A. Polzin,
National Commander
To the
DAV
92nd National Convention
Orlando, FL
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Thank you. It is great to be with you again.

We have some busy days ahead. But please take time to enjoy the company of your friends and the wonderful entertainment in store for us.

While I stand before some of our most respected leaders and past national commanders, I'd like to recognize a special guest. Here today is Past National Commander Paul E. Frederick who served from 1957 to 1958 during the tenure of Past National Adjutant Vivian D. "Crab" Corbly. At 90 years young, Commander Frederick is our oldest surviving PNC.

(pause)

As I look back on my year as your National Commander, I am inspired by the wonderful work DAV does. It's been amazing to see first-hand all the great work we do.

Our service program is woven into the fabric of DAV – from our Chapters through our Departments to the national level. For those of you who make it your mission to serve, I thank you.

Today we're helping more veterans than ever learn about and access their earned benefits.

And we have the best-trained, most knowledgeable Service Officers fighting for our fellow veterans.

As a retired NSO myself, I am well-aware of the dedication and knowledge it takes to do the job.

I have seen the pride our Chapter and Department Service Officers take in completing our Service Officer Certification Program. It is designed to strengthen their knowledge and expertise in serving veterans and their families.

Would all of our National, Department, Chapter and Transition Service Officers please stand to be recognized...

(Service Officers stand for recognition)

During my year as National Commander, one of the most moving moments came during visits to military and VA hospitals.

Talking with those veterans was a very special experience. It gave me a chance to help ease their burdens as they and their families deal with the trauma of war.

Maybe the most challenging assignment I faced was testifying before a joint session of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees.

I was pretty nervous representing you at such an important hearing. But I had so much strength and support that it did not matter, thanks to you, my fellow veterans.

Of course, the most heart-warming event has to be at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Colorado.

The Miracle on a Mountainside is truly an experience of a lifetime. Being there filled us with joy as we witnessed the rebuilding of lives shattered by wounds and illness.

And some of the most inspiring moments came when meeting our dedicated volunteers everywhere I went. The comfort and compassion they bring to disabled veterans warmed my heart.

DAV is honored to have the largest volunteer presence among those serving at VA medical centers. We are the leader, and we set the example for others to follow.

My thanks go to our volunteers, Transportation Network drivers and Hospital Service Coordinators. Please stand and be recognized.

And I want to thank each member for what you do. With your support, we speak with a powerful voice on behalf of those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom.

Serving as National Commander, I certainly grew as an individual. This is especially true in the area of leadership.

I treasured working with Art Wilson. And I welcome National Adjutant Marc Burgess to his role as the leader of our national organization's staff.

I hated to see such a wise and effective leader as Art retire, but I have the greatest confidence in Marc. And I am happy to report that DAV is in good hands with him at the helm.

I also want to commend Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski for his leadership in watching over our Service and Legislative programs. He's done a heck of a job.

On a daily basis, Marc and Barry have managed our organization with unmatched skill and professionalism.

They and their staffs have made my job easier and quite enjoyable. So please join me in thanking them and their staffs for a job well done.

I want to thank Auxiliary National Commander Donna Adams. We had a lot of fun together this year in service to veterans. She and the Auxiliary are true partners and I'm grateful for Donna's friendship and commitment to our cause.

Last but not least, I want to thank my wife, Judy, and my family for all the support they gave me during this very busy year.

I have had the pleasure of meeting thousands of members during my journey as a National Officer.

I have found your support uplifting. You gave me the strength to do what must be done and to do what is right. Thank you for all you have given me.

As we look to the future, I know you will continue to serve your fellow disabled veterans with pride and dignity.

Thank you for allowing me the honor of serving you.

As I leave you this week, please know that I will always be a part of this organization. I'm here to help carry on our finest traditions.

I'm grateful for your trust, support and service. I could not have asked for anything more gratifying or satisfying than to serve all of you.

Thank you, and may God bless all of you.