



**Remarks of J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant  
94<sup>th</sup> DAV National Convention  
Saturday, August 8, 2015  
Denver, Colorado**

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Thank you Commander. Thank you, everyone.

It's truly a great honor to serve as your National Adjutant.

Many of you know – especially those of you here in Denver – this last year has thrown a lot of wrenches into the mix for veterans, and we have all sat under this looming cloud of crisis at the VA, searching for the best answers.

This topic dominated the conversation in 2014, and will continue to do so until solutions are carried out.

But that does not and will not stop us from doing the great work we do. DAV's focus on service work and legislative advocacy, employment initiatives, membership building and volunteerism has only grown more sharp as veterans' need for support has become greater.

Now it's time to take a brief look at DAV's last year of work on behalf of veterans. We have charted a great deal of growth for our organization in the past twelve months, and you should all be proud to have been part of these efforts.

With that...let the show begin. **<Year in Review Video played>**

I think we can all agree that this has been another banner year for DAV and for the men, women and families we serve.

We have had some major successes, and I believe – truly – the best is yet to come.

We could simply not accomplish all we do without your hard work and continued dedication, day in and day out. Every single day you wake up and decide to give it your all for veterans helps us achieve these great feats in the name of our brothers and sisters.

For example, I recently had the pleasure of congratulating Florida's Chapter 86 who took it upon themselves to end veteran homelessness in their county. They sent out what they referred to as "strike teams" comprised of DAV members and other supporting agencies.

They didn't wait for the veterans to come to them. And three years later, veteran homelessness in Flagler County, Florida, is eradicated and they are the first county in the state to achieve that goal.

Kentucky Chapter 19's Robert Maze was asked this past Veteran's Day weekend, for the second year in a row, to be the keynote speaker for a community Veterans Day Observance.

In fact, I know several of you are often delivering speeches on patriotic holidays, proudly representing DAV and your fellow veterans.

In Oklahoma, Chapter 43's Mike Walters found 21 bronze service markers this past February that had sat in storage instead of beside the veterans' graves where they belonged. He charged his Chapter with researching these veterans, finding their survivors, and getting the markers properly placed before this past Memorial Day – a mission I'm pleased to say they accomplished.

Many of you have taken DAV's message to your communities, engaging the media to help inform the public about our services and key issues. In fact, in many communities, local DAV leaders are the first people local journalists think of when they're looking to speak with veterans about a story.

I could go on for hours about the commitments and accomplishments that **you**, the men and women out there in your communities, have taken on because you believe it's the right thing to do. I'm so very, very proud of each and every one of you.

Again, thank you for all you do.

Looking back on the past year, it's remarkable to see how much faith the veteran community places in our organization and in our mission – but it's clear they know DAV has them and their families at the center of our operations.

I'm so grateful to all the men and women out in the field who make what we do possible – it's because of you we were able to represent more than 340 thousand benefits claims for veterans and their families over the past year. It's because of you that so many veterans got the help they needed and the benefits they earned.

It's why – as you just saw – we have been entrusted with more than one million powers-of-attorney for veterans' disability claims. And it's why we stand out among other veterans service organizations for the sheer volume of work we do, and for the quality of service we provide.

And it's why, we can feel good knowing that future generations of veterans will return home to a country that recognizes their service and sacrifices. This is a cause near and dear to all of us. This spring, a Naval Reservist on our Communications team, was deployed to Afghanistan. Here's what she had to say about how DAV has her back while she's deployed.

**<Video: Charity Edgar played>**

Another year of success is in the books, but I know you all well enough to know that doesn't mean resting on our laurels. It means that we look to tomorrow and ask what can we do better? How can we continue to improve what we do?

I encourage you to remain active and engaged. This is one of our greatest strengths – in service, in advocacy, in volunteer work and in our efforts to build our membership.

A strong member base is the foundation of DAV, and as you can see we continue to grow in number. This network of community service and leadership is the framework that allows us to be the best in the business.

Everything you do reflects on our great organization, and I thank you for helping to build and preserve DAV's proud legacy of service and advocacy. You should all be exceptionally proud of your contributions to another incredible year.

Thank you, as well, for the opportunity you have given me to serve. And thank you, Commander, for your leadership and guidance. This concludes my report.

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