



**Remarks of Moses A. McIntosh, Jr.,  
National Cmdr. Elect  
94<sup>th</sup> DAV National Convention  
Tuesday, August 11, 2015  
Denver, Colorado**

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Thank you everyone for that very warm welcome.

I think it is important for you to all know how humbled I am by the responsibility you've bestowed upon me here today. To me, leadership is service rendered to your organization, and I promise to serve and represent all of you to the best of my ability during the course of the year.

Commander Hope, National Adjutant Burgess, and most importantly, my fellow veterans, I want you to know I will never take for granted the honor and privilege of working for our members, their families and all of our nation's veterans.

Now, normally I'd say something about having big boots to fill, but since Commander Hope and I are both aviators, I'll say I know I have a big flight suit to fill.

Ron...I'm not too sure I can actually get into yours but you get what I mean.

On a serious note, you've been a friend, coach and mentor to me through the years and that's a debt I can never repay.

Thank you for your contributions and commitment to DAV and to our members. Your leadership has been absolutely inspirational during your entire tenure and we're beginning on a high note this year because of that.

Fellow veterans, families and friends, DAV has had a busy year. It's my intent to make sure we get even busier. Let me explain why.

Last year at this time, we came together and discussed, among many things, how we would best serve veterans transitioning from military service as our weary nation was beginning to wind down from nearly 13 years of non-stop battle.

But, events occurring in the world in just the past few months reminded me that the tactical situation on any battlefield is always in flux, always in motion, always fluid.

Not long ago, the news reported that we had more than 4,000 American service members back in Iraq. There's also talk of extending our commitments in Afghanistan.

While there's no guessing what the political process will yield for our men and women in uniform, this is a stark reminder that our legacy of service to veterans and their families will continue. It must continue. That's why we exist. We still have men and women deployed in harm's way and many will come home with their lives changed forever.

But that's where we come in. That's where DAV is at its best. We've all been there before. DAV was there for us when many in this very room didn't know who to turn to.

Now, we owe it to those who brought us into the DAV family to ensure we're reaching out to all veterans of all eras still today. That includes older generations who may not know about us, up to and including those currently serving.

Many of today's veterans are returning from war with what will be life-changing illnesses and injuries. They're struggling to get the help they were promised in the form of disability payments, jobs and health care.

In the nearly 14 years since American troops first deployed to Afghanistan and Iraq, more than 2.6 million veterans have returned home to a country largely unprepared to meet their needs.

At the same time, many Vietnam Veterans are just now entering the VA healthcare system and their needs are greater than ever.

DAV knows the VA operates the largest health care system in the country and offers some of the finest health care in the world. But the continued mismatch of funding and demand have led directly to the problems we're seeing today.

Last year, several issues came to light that rightly disappointed and angered a lot of veterans. Access and funding remain the central issues at hand.

DAV will continue not only to tell our elected leaders we expect them to fully fund the VA so our country's bravest men and women receive the healthcare and benefits they **have earned**, but we will continue to promote our plans for **true and lasting VA reform**.

I have spoken with Secretary McDonald and I truly believe he cares deeply for veterans and is fully committed to fixing the issues within the VA – not just with short-term “quick fixes,” but with the intention of genuine, long-term reform.

Along these lines, as we work to reshape the VA, we must be cognizant of **all** the veterans it served.

Right now, our veterans who were injured prior to 9/11 are not entitled to the same caregiver benefits as those injured after. This fight goes to the core of what we believe: **disabled veterans have earned the same benefits, no matter when they served**. This is an issue near and dear to DAV, and one we'll continue to push for.

And for too long, the word “veteran” has been seen as a purely masculine term. And while women veterans served with distinction in times of war, they did not receive the benefits they needed and had earned.

The contract between our nation and her veterans does not distinguish between genders.

We need to welcome our sisters into our ranks, and give them the opportunities to lead and advocate for them with a single, unified voice.

DAV is leading the advocacy effort for women veterans and I promise you we'll continue to do so. Family, friends and fellow veterans, it will indeed be a busy year for DAV. But, I want to leave you with something I learned a long time ago – the power of **hope**.

Hope, of all the forces that make for a better world, none is as powerful as hope. With hope, one can think, one can work, one can dream.

Remember if you have hope you have everything.

We have a few fights ahead of us – but let me tell you this. If I have to go into a fight, there's no one I'd rather have beside me than the people right here in this room.

I look forward to working with you all this year. It's an honor and a privilege to serve as your National Commander. I pledge to you I'll work tirelessly to ensure your voices are heard as we continue our ninety-five year mission of service to the men and women who raised their hand, said "send me," and went forward to conduct America's business when called.

Thank you.

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