



J. Marc Burgess
National Convention Remarks
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It's truly a great honor to serve as your National Adjutant. It's been a momentous year and the hard work we are doing around the country has been paying off in the lives we've improved and the promises that were kept for the men and women who served.

It is only through their sacrifices that our nation can enjoy the unrivaled liberties and prosperity that have come to define the American way of life.

Through your dedication to DAV's mission and the will of our fellow citizens, we've come a great distance in terms of recognizing those sacrifices. There is more work to be done, but it is equally important for us to focus on defending the advancement we've made after nearly a century of service and advocacy.

As Commander Riley noted, this year our organization has been witness to tremendous change: a new president, Congress and Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

For nearly a century, DAV has continued to adapt and remain a pivotal voice for veterans – in our communities and on Capitol Hill.

The party affiliation of our president or other elected leaders does not matter to us, however. Our organization is not one of Democrats and Republicans. We have much more in common than partisan ideas. We are a group of men and women committed to promoting policies that keep the promises to our brothers and sisters in arms.

Of course our focus on supporting those who served reaches far beyond the city limits of Washington, DC. Our commitment to employment, membership, volunteerism and of course service, has only grown sharper as veterans' need for support has become greater.

As you will see momentarily, this past year under Commander Riley's guidance, we charted a great deal of growth and progress for our organization, and you should all be proud to have been part of these efforts.

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

We have had some major successes, and I believe – truly – as we approach 100 years of service, that the best is yet to come. We could simply not accomplish all we do without your hard work and continued dedication.

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. Veterans, their families and survivors are the driving force behind every decision we make. And positive and fair outcomes for them must continue to be our focus.

As we stand at the precipice of our next century of service and advocacy, I want to share my gratitude 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 help veterans and family members obtain more than four *billion* dollars in new and retroactive benefits.

It's why – as you just saw – we were able to provide our brothers and sisters in greatest need with nearly a half a million dollars in support through our disaster relief program.

It's why veterans are able to get to their hospital appointments and receive a special thank-you in VA facilities by volunteers who recognize their contributions.

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.

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. This network of community service and leadership is the framework that allows us to be the best in the business.

However, as men and women continue to raise their right hand and write a blank check to their country – up to and including their lives – we must continue to focus on outreach and bring these young veterans into our chapters.

Everything you do reflects credit upon 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 yet another incredible year.

Thank you, as well, for the opportunity you have given me to serve. And thank you, Commander, for your leadership and service representing our great cause.

This concludes my report.