

NEWS RELEASE

Vice President Joe Biden Addresses DAV National Convention *Actors J.R. Martinez and Gary Sinise to receive special recognition for their contributions to the veteran community*

LAS VEGAS (July 31, 2012) – DAV will convene its national body to address the needs of injured and ill veterans of all generations when the organization meets at Bally's Hotel in Las Vegas for its 91st National Convention Aug. 4-7. On Saturday, the expected 4,000 attendees will have the opportunity to hear Vice President Joseph R. Biden, Jr., discuss key policies affecting the veteran community.

Thousands of delegates will also draw up legislative initiatives aimed at fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. The major issues to be addressed at the Convention include: the need to improve mental health care for the psychologically wounded and their families; eliminating the lengthy delays veterans encounter when submitting disability claims to the Department of Veterans Affairs; and increased funding for construction projects to maintain the VA's critical infrastructure.

“We look forward to creating a united front of veterans to achieve our legislative goals,” said DAV National Commander Donald L. Samuels. “It is important that lawmakers understand that some areas of the VA are facing inadequate funding. This is our health care system, and it is struggling to meet the needs of our nation's veterans.”

A special moment will be the presentation of DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year Award to J.R. Martinez, whose remarkable accomplishments in service to veterans inspired the nation and advanced the causes of America's veterans. Despite suffering severe burns to more than 40 percent of his body when his Humvee hit a land mine in Iraq, Martinez has helped lift the spirits of other ill and injured veterans by sharing his story and listening to theirs.

On Sunday morning, actor and long-time veteran supporter, Gary Sinise will also receive a special recognition for speaking out on issues affecting veterans and military men and women. Perhaps best-known for playing the iconic character, Lieutenant Dan in the movie *Forrest Gump*, Sinise has a long track record of proactively supporting the troops and veterans – from being featured in PSAs to performing for the troops in his band, *The Lieutenant Dan Band*. The band will be performing for Convention attendees on Sunday evening.

DAV delegates will also elect national officers at the Convention, get the latest information on veterans issues and renew our commitment to serving those who have sacrificed for our freedoms and way of life.

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; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a non-profit organization with 1.2 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U. S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at www.dav.org.

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