



J. Marc Burgess
National Convention Remarks
July 31, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

Thank you Commander. Thank you, everyone.

It's truly a great honor to serve as your National Adjutant. It's been a momentous year and the hard work we're doing around the country has been paying off in the lives we've improved and the promises that were kept for our nation's heroes.

It is only through their sacrifices that our nation can enjoy the tremendous liberties and prosperity we take for granted.

Through your dedication to our cause 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 many of you know, our country has a presidential election coming up – one that may very well decide the future of the VA and the benefits and services our veterans receive.

It can be easy to get caught up in the back-and-forth between candidates when it's nearly all that is being discussed in the media. At a time when so much is on the line and candidates push to show their leadership on key issues, I'm asking for your help in bringing our causes to light.

DAV's focus on service, legislative advocacy, employment, membership and volunteerism have only grown sharper as veterans' need for support has become greater.

I'm remiss if I don't join my fellow DAV and Auxiliary members in voicing our sympathies to the family of Linda Stake. Linda was a true friend and advocate for her fellow Auxiliary members and DAV. Her passing is devastating to all of us who knew and admired her.

She'll remain in our hearts and our accomplishments over the last year honor her service and advocacy on behalf of all who serve.

Though with heavy hearts, now let's take a brief look at DAV's last year of work on behalf of veterans. We have charted a great deal of growth and progress for our organization and you should all be proud to have been part of these efforts.

With that...let the show begin. <Year in Review Video played,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JRmRtXP7rdI&index=8&list=PLUHbfbDZQkcyhrrv4nL1msgUbIRUW0GCB>

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 – 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 that must continue to be our focus for our next century of service and advocacy.

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 300 thousand benefits claims for veterans and their families over the past year.

It's why – as you just saw – we have been entrusted with more than one million powers-of-attorney for veterans' disability claims.

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 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 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 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.

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