2022 Salute to Sacrifice

Disabled American Veterans
Dear Friend of America’s disabled veterans,

There is great power in working together.

When fighting a battle, our service men and women know they must pull together to gain victory. What’s true for them is also true for us as we wage a campaign to provide for the most urgent needs of our disabled veterans. If any of us endeavored to fight the battle alone, we would be defeated all too quickly. But by joining forces and pooling our resources, you and I can help America’s wounded heroes regain a measure of health, hope, dignity, and purpose.

Thank you for your partnership in assisting the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to uphold our freedoms.

For each veteran whose story is shared in this booklet, there are hundreds of thousands of veterans whose stories have yet to be told. It’s an honor for me to share stories of disabled veterans and their families achieving victories … victories that simply wouldn’t have happened if you and others hadn’t partnered with DAV in a Salute to Sacrifice for our wounded heroes. As you read these stories, I hope you see yourself in the background — giving, upholding, and cheering our veterans on.

I’m so proud of you and your commitment to our wounded heroes. Thank you again for working together with DAV in transforming the lives of America’s finest … thank you for making these stories possible.

With sincere appreciation,

J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant/CEO
DAV Benefits Advocacy:
Critical for America’s Disabled Veterans

A crowd of veterans backed DAV National Commander Andy Marshall as he addressed a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee at the 2022 DAV Mid-Winter Conference. Andy shared about his personal encounter with Tom, a Marine combat veteran in crisis, several years ago. Tom was desperate for help. He had considered ending his life as he struggled with the psychological trauma of the Vietnam War and the denial of his claims for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

“I knew he was particularly vulnerable to self-harm, and I accompanied him to a meeting with his Vet Center counselor,” Andy told the Committees. DAV filed an appeal on Tom’s behalf and ultimately won, granting him the benefits, care, and the financial support he needed to recover. Never again did he consider taking his own life. “Tom was saved by the right combination of lifesaving factors,” Andy continued, “but there are far too many similar stories that have ended in tragedy.”

Noting a 35% increase in the number of veterans struggling with mental health issues over the past five years, Andy reasserted the critical need for VA mental health resources, staffing, and funding. He also called on
Growing up during World War II Robert Jordan watched Marines return from the Pacific, admired their presence, and regarded them as “proud, good people.” He knew exactly what he wanted to be when he grew up.

At age 17, he enlisted during the Korean War, then served as a scout observer during the Suez Crisis, joined the Marine Corps Drum and Bugle Corps and provided art to the command for special events. When planning to discharge to attend college, a first sergeant pulled him aside. “You are a good Marine. What will we do if we lose all our good Marines?”

He re-enlisted.

Jordan learned to draft maps and paint portraits which led him to the Training Aids Library at Quantico, Virginia, where he illustrated prototypes for future weapons for the Marine Corps Demonstration Team. He learned photography, writing, and broadcasting. Jordan's artistic skills were being put to good use for his country, but he still felt the need to do his part in Vietnam.
He trained as a combat correspondent and soon was assigned to Danang, South Vietnam, where he participated in multiple combat operations and completed more than 200 close-combat escort missions and 40 air combat missions before returning home.

He was on the verge of retirement when, in 1983, he capped off his military career by heading to Beirut to fill in for a public affairs officer. The carnage he witnessed in Beirut was life-altering, and Jordan dedicated his journalistic skills to fighting terrorism.

After 30 years of service, Maj. Robert T. Jordan (USMC) was honorably discharged in 1984, but shortly thereafter he received a cancer diagnosis resulting from his Agent Orange exposure in Vietnam. He filed a disability claim but found his road to benefits blocked. That’s when he reached out to DAV National Service Officer Don Inns. After taking control of Jordan’s claim, it was only a short month before Inns called Jordan to tell him a service connection had been granted. Jordan could finally focus on healing.

“You’re our hero!” Jordan told Inns when he learned the good news of his claim. “My wife is crying with tears of joy!”

DAV’s advocacy didn’t end with the original claim, however. As age and infirmity crept in, a claim for increase, secondary, and supplemental issues was warranted and successfully completed.

Day after day, DAV benefits experts like Inns enact a Salute to Sacrifice as they help disabled veterans secure their earned benefits.
When Ray Coffey emerged from the basement of his western Kentucky home, he was stunned. “All I saw was sky,” he says.

It was December 10, 2021. A system of tornadoes ravaged parts of Kentucky, Arkansas, Tennessee, and Missouri, killing more than 75 people. “Never in my wildest dreams did I expect to come out of that basement and see nothing but destruction,” says the Army veteran. The only thing left of the place he and his wife had called home for twenty years was a wall of kitchen cabinets.

DAV’s Disaster Relief Program responded immediately as national service officers were dispatched to help veterans like Ray. They distributed hundreds of hygiene kits with toiletries and blankets, as well as 449 grants totaling over $334,000, to help affected veterans get through the crisis.

Ray is grateful he and wife were unharmed. He’s quick to say “We’re not replaceable… She’s not replaceable.” Still, their losses were heavy. Ray’s voice cracks when he talks about the $1,000 check he received from DAV. “It restored my faith in humanity. You realize there are still good people in the world.”

DAV Disaster Relief grants range from $500 to $1,000 and are intended to help with immediate needs for food, clothing, or temporary lodging.

Disaster Relief Program
Immediate Aid When Disaster Strikes

DAV provided a total of $1,389,200 emergency relief drafts and roughly 550 supply kits to the disaster relief program.

Since 1968, over $17.5 million has been disbursed to victims.
National Service Office Assistant Supervisor, Al Hughes, adds perspective. “These grants have a tremendous impact due to the fact that survivors have nothing but the clothes on their backs.” In addition to urgently-needed financial assistance, Al and other officers offered a listening ear and a shoulder to cry on.

“It just helped with the day-to-day of getting our lives back on track,” Ray explains. He is now determined to show the same generosity to others in need. “I wasn’t the guy that got in my truck and drove to wherever disaster struck,” says Al, “but I will become that guy.”

On August 29, 2021, Hurricane Ida — a deadly and destructive Category 4 hurricane — made landfall in Louisiana. As the storm swept further north through the Eastern United States, it spawned tornadoes and flash floods and caused unexpectedly severe damage in Northeastern states. DAV was on the ground immediately to help our nation’s heroes, providing financial assistance as well as supply kits to veterans and their families.

DAV Disaster Relief issued 2,100 grants totaling nearly $1.4 million to recipients in 22 states in 2021. Thank you for your Salute to Sacrifice.
DAV provided nearly $1.4 million to more than 2100 veterans affected by natural disasters, including hurricanes, tornados, floods and fires throughout 22 states. Since 1968, over $17.5 million in emergency relief has been disbursed to victims.

3,420 trained benefits experts in over 100 offices throughout the nation helped disabled veterans successfully transition to civilian life and receive the benefits they earned.

Over 155,000 pending benefits claims represented by DAV before the Veterans Benefits Administration.

More than 19,100 transitioning, active-duty, reserve and guard members, veterans and spouses attended 82 traditional and virtual DAV job fairs. Since 2014, there have been 258,729 attendees and 158,171 job offers.
Volunteers logged 508,650 hours and 7.9 million miles offering no-cost rides to and from VA medical facilities for ill and injured veterans. Since the program’s inception in 1987:

- More than 19 million veterans have been transported over 730 million miles.
- DAV has donated 3,618 vehicles, and
- Ford Motor Company has donated 248 vehicles at a cost of over $90 million.

$1 donated equals $179 in direct benefits for veterans.

We help send 1,000 kids to camp each year. Since the inception of the program, we have helped more than 5,500 children of injured and fallen veterans attend camp for free.
DAV Job Fairs:  
Meaningful Employment for Successful Transition

What started as a four-year commitment to help pay for college turned into a 30-year career in the Army. “I kept seeing opportunities and things kept working out,” says Alston Cleary. At the time of his retirement, he was a chief warrant officer 5, the highest rank in the technical foundation of the Army. And although he was retiring from one career, Alston still felt he had a lot to give, and wanted to keep working in a new setting.

Alston attended a virtual DAV job fair where he was introduced to an organization that helps connect businesses with qualified veterans. He submitted his resume and was soon contacted by John Deere, the American manufacturer of tractors and other agricultural equipment.

“The person I spoke to was someone who had also served in the military, who could relate to my goals and where I was in life. I really felt like I’d made a connection … like I belonged already.”

Alston is now a Total Productive Maintenance coordinator for the John Deere plant in East Moline, Illinois. He ensures factory equipment is operational, plans for preventive maintenance, and helps solve equipment issues when they arise.

“The position is exactly what I needed,” says the life member of DAV Chapter 2 in Davenport, Iowa. “Some aspects remind me of the military, because I’m working with another great team.”

Finding meaningful employment is crucial to a veteran’s successful transition from the military into civilian life. DAV job fairs connect veterans with employers who understand their value and offer them fulfilling opportunities.

Approximately 100 DAV Job Fairs — both in-person and virtual — are held throughout the country each year. We are grateful to the many employers who salute the sacrifice of disabled veterans by recruiting them to fulfill meaningful positions in the work force.”

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DAV Transportation Network:
More Than Just a Ride

After retiring from the Army, Dan Wilcox became a volunteer for the DAV Transportation Network. Two days a week, he takes disabled veterans to and from their appointments at the Cincinnati VA hospital. Since he drives a regular route, he’s become familiar with the faces and habits of his riders. “After a while, you get to know them pretty well,” he comments.

When one of his regulars didn’t answer the door one January day, Dan was concerned. “He’s usually already outside waiting, or inside ready to go. I knocked loudly for a while with no response.”

After discussing the incident with a friend and a VA social worker, Dan followed his instincts, reported the situation to the local police, and asked them to do a wellness check.

The police found the man unconscious. He was rushed to the hospital where he was diagnosed with a large pulmonary embolism. He’d been unresponsive in his home for four days.

Thanks to Dan, the man survived.

“The first time I picked him up after that happened, he just broke down crying and gave me a big hug.”

Last year, DAV volunteers saluted the sacrifice of our wounded heroes. Drivers spent 508,000 hours and logged over 7.9 million miles, offering no-cost rides to and from VA medical facilities to ill and injured veterans.

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DAV Volunteer Programs:

More Than Just a Ride

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Since 1987, drivers have traveled over 730 million miles transporting more than 19 million veterans.

Since 1987, at a cost over $90 million, DAV has donated 3,618 vehicles. Ford donated 248 vehicles.

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Horseback riding ... canoeing ... hiking ... rock-climbing. At Camp Corral, children of wounded, ill and fallen military heroes build peer networks and develop coping skills through outdoor recreation and group activities.

For little Landon, Maddie, and Tori, the news of their daddy’s death in Afghanistan left them feeling shellshocked. “The older ones felt it the most,” their grandma recalls. “Maddie withdrew from others. Landon had to learn how to trust people again.”

Camp Corral has been a huge factor in their healing. “Camp Corral was life-changing for my grandkids. The support and experiences of those camps have given us back our kids,” she continues. “The first thing Landon said when he came home from camp was, “They get it, Grandma! They get it!”

Our country’s most vulnerable children serve this nation in their own way and deserve the same level of respect that we pay to their parents. DAV’s Just B Kids scholarship program has enabled 5,500 children of wounded, disabled, or fallen veterans to attend Camp Corral for free.

Another grandmother reflected on how Camp Corral had helped her grandson. She told us, “The most important part of Camp Corral is making friends, seeing old friends, and hearing their stories. I feel the kids who attend Camp Corral have a lot in common and are blessed to have people like Camp Corral and the DAV to support them.”

To find out more about DAV and Camp Corral’s unique Salute to Sacrifice, visit justbkids.org.
Flanking the patio of DAV’s new headquarters, a Salute to Sacrifice is built in the form of an Honor Garden to remember our wounded heroes and those who support them.

Ribbons of brick walkways lead through a grove of trees to another patio that invites one to pause and reflect on the courage and sacrifice of our nation’s veterans. Bricks in the walkway will be inscribed with the names of men and women — veterans, DAV volunteers, Auxiliary members, or other individuals — being honored or remembered by loved ones.

You are invited to join our DAV community in creating a sacred sanctuary of remembrance for the courageous men and women who have served our country with honor. By purchasing a brick, you can honor a loved one and offer your personal Salute to Sacrifice. Simply visit dav.org/bricks.
Troy Brown was so pleased with DAV’s Vehicle Donation Program he followed up his first donation with a second. A veteran himself, Troy found the program to be a wonderful way of supporting our nation’s heroes while paying forward the invaluable lessons he’d learned while serving in the Navy. A bonus was the quick, no-contact towing away of his 15-year-old cars.

“It’s a simple, easy process and the people I worked with were awesome!” says Troy.

Our Vehicle Donation Program accepts all types of vehicles — running or not — including cars, truck, trailers, boats, RVs, motorcycles, off-road vehicles, planes, heavy equipment, and farm machinery. A licensed tow company is scheduled to pick up the vehicle, usually within 72 hours of completing the donation. At the time of pickup, the driver provides a donation receipt to authorize a tax deduction.

By donating your vehicle, you avoid the hassle of selling a vehicle you no longer want while empowering disabled veterans to lives of dignity and respect. To find out more about this unique way of offering a Salute to Sacrifice, please visit dav.careasy.org/blog or call 844-440-4267.
A Legacy of Care
Planning for a Future Gift

Nearly half of DAV’s work is supported by legacy gifts. Individuals who include DAV in their estate plans offer a long-lasting Salute to Sacrifice, helping us assist more than one million veterans each year.

When Marge Barron, the widow of a World War II veteran was planning the legacy she would one day leave behind, she was looking for “a good home” for her home. Then she realized the answer was obvious: leave her home to DAV through her will. “My husband always spoke so highly of DAV,” she recalls. “I know he would be all for this.”

Remembering DAV in your will or trust is a fitting testimony of your belief in our mission. When you name DAV as a beneficiary, you have many choices. One possibility is a bequest of a fixed dollar amount. Another is to give a percentage of the estate. Be sure to seek the counsel of an attorney who specializes in estate planning to ensure your wishes will be carried out as intended.

When including DAV in your will or trust, the following language may be helpful in ensuring your wishes are carried out as planned: “I give, devise, and bequeath to DAV (Disabled American Veterans), P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250, Tax ID: 31-0263158, ___% of my estate, or the sum or $_________; or the following described property _______________; or ___% of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate.”

DAV now accepts many different kinds of property donations. More information may be found at dav.org/real-estate-donation/.

Please plan today to leave a legacy gift for tomorrow. Rest assured, your future gift to DAV will improve the lives of America’s disabled veterans.
DAV Mission Statement

We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish 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.

This mission is carried forward by:

• Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service;

• Providing outreach concerning DAV program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically;

• Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;

• Extending DAV’s mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live.

• Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

Of course, none of this is possible without your generous support. So please, make a generous gift today and help us achieve our “2022 Salute to Sacrifice” campaign goal!

Give now at www.dav.org/salute

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