



## National Convention Remarks

National Adjutant J. Marc Burgess

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Thank you for all you have done over this past year to ensure DAV continues to provide a lifetime of support to veterans and their families. From various pieces of monumental legislation to assisting our brothers and sisters in need, it has certainly been an eventful year for the veteran community and our organization.

It's been a big year for DAV and the veterans we serve. Looking to the future, your hard work will be as important as ever as we fight to ensure that health care, benefits and services are available to our fellow veterans and their families.

If you want to understand the value we as an organization bring to the veterans community, I would encourage you to look at our ongoing efforts to support Blue Water Navy veterans, which I mentioned in the video. That historic legislation took a concerted effort on behalf of our members and the entire community of veterans groups to get passed through Congress and onto the President's desk.

But unfortunately, as we've seen with the Blue Water Navy legislation, even after being signed into law, our work is far from done. The Department of Veterans Affairs must issue regulations, policies and procedures that can make all the difference in terms of who receives those benefits and when they will be provided. That's why our voice will continue to be needed every step of the way to ensure the law is fully and faithfully implemented.

At the same time, our National, Department, Chapter and Transition Service Officers will be on the frontlines assisting veterans in filing their claims so that justice is finally achieved for these long forgotten Vietnam veterans and their families, many of whom are battling illnesses threatening their very lives.

And should the need arise, we are ready to rally our members once again and for as long as it takes until every veteran – no matter when or where they served – receives all of the benefits he or she has earned.

But we couldn't achieve this or any other victory without the leaders in this room and your fellow veterans and family members back home. While we often highlight what happens in Washington, DC, we know that the real work of DAV takes place across the country – in small towns and large cities – as service officers, volunteers and advocates all play their parts. It's only by working together that we have been able achieve so many victories for veterans.

Next year DAV will mark a century of service. As I think about the many hands, hearts and voices who made DAV the nation's premier veterans service organization, I am confident that our future is secure. As long as all of you continue to lend your time and talents to our cause, DAV will continue to empower our nation's heroes and their families.

Army veteran and author John Holmes once said, "There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up." In towns and communities across the country, you are doing this every day. I'm humbled to serve alongside you and thank you for lifting up your fellow veterans and honoring their sacrifices. Working together, I know that we will achieve many more victories for veterans in the years ahead.

Commander Nixon, this concludes my report.