



David Riley
National Convention Remarks
August 3, 2016
Atlanta, Georgia

Thanks so much.

First, I want to express my deepest thanks and appreciation to Moses McIntosh. Serving with you on the national line is an honor. I want you to know that I believe our organization is in a great place because of your leadership.

The position of trust our members have placed in me is a distinction I will never take for granted.

Moses, thank you for your mentorship, friendship and for an incredible year of service as National Commander.

I'd also like to thank National Adjutant Marc Burgess for his leadership and for the work he and his team have done, alongside our members, for crafting the opportunity we have to build upon our legacy.

I've been blessed throughout the years to have great mentors. Some from my days in the Coast Guard are here with me tonight and I'd like them to stand. Coasties sometimes feel a little neglected. But these guys are my brothers. Please put your hands – or, *in my case*, hooks – together for them.

Others, like Commander McIntosh, Ron Hope, Chad Richmond, Bill Baker and Adjutant Burgess have encouraged and inspired me to better serve the organization.

Since my injury, I've made a conscious attempt to reach out to younger veterans with similar injuries to try and mentor and help them through the road I've already traveled. They too are in my thoughts and in my heart as I speak to you today.

I think it's important to tell everyone about my goals in representing DAV.

First, and most importantly, we will continue providing a lifetime of support to veterans and their families. Our services, provided at no cost to veterans, are our beacon. That's the heart of why we exist. DAV Service Officers and our volunteers on the frontline are the foundation of what we do.

We will continue to be the leading voice for the unique issues concerning our sisters-in-arms—our returning female veterans.

We will march forward with new innovations surrounding the needs of returning veterans and their search for meaningful employment.

With Adjutant Burgess' help, it's my intent to continue the fight on behalf of a group of veterans currently being left behind.

Our veterans who were injured prior to 9/11 are not entitled to the same caregiver benefits as those injured after under current law. But we will not rest until that is changed.

During the coming year we must remain a powerful force of advocacy for veterans. We'll make every effort to keep the promises made by our country to ill and injured veterans and their families to ensure they receive the benefits they've earned and deserve.

We must continue to use the voices of our 1.3 million members to plainly tell lawmakers that we expect them to fully fund the VA to provide the healthcare and benefits veterans have earned.

When a man or woman raises their hand and says "Send me" when our nation calls, no one here knows better than us that they're writing a blank check to our country.

The ultimate payment could be their lives. For those who have sacrificed for our country and their survivors, we must insist on a strong VA and healthcare system to meet their needs.

When our nation's bravest return changed from military service DAV is here to help shoulder the load. We ensure veterans do not get left behind.

I intend to continue addressing subjects like access to quality health care, accurate and timely disposition of disability claims and improving programs that strengthen the lives of veterans and their families.

DAV, beyond any measure, is the absolute best veterans' service organization in the world. That mission is accomplished through our service offices, Chapters and volunteers. But I must thank the National Executive Committee, DAV Board of Directors, our professional staff, members and our partners in the Auxiliary for providing the strength needed to accomplish our mission.

I have confidence in each of you and I will count on your support and expertise as we continue fighting for veterans and their families. I'm depending on you as colleagues and fellow veterans to help us all succeed.

You all have my deepest thanks for your continuing work of service and advocacy for veterans and their families and I hope you'll join with me as we continue to move forward.

May we continue to succeed in our sacred mission and may God bless DAV and who we represent. Thank you very much.

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