

April 2011



## **NATIONAL VOLUNTEER MONTH**

Volunteers are people who give and receive. If you are one of those people who would like to give more but can't quite figure out how to do it, then the DAV Voluntary Services Program is for you. April is national volunteer month and the people, places, and events all around you will eagerly accept your interest, abilities, time and talent.

But it all starts with you and what you'd like to do. Are you passionate about working with people? The contributions DAV volunteers make are more than generous. Last year, our volunteers donated 2,196,061 hours of service to veterans at VA hospitals, clinics and nursing homes through the VA Voluntary Service Program. Meanwhile, a corps of 9,163 DAV Transportation Network volunteers contributed 1,899,792 hours and drove 24,307,165 miles providing transportation to over 630,000 sick or disabled veterans to and from their VA medical appointments.

It is vitally important that everyone knows that the DAV is there to provide even more opportunities for members of the public and veterans to serve. If you know someone who is interested in contributing to the DAV's mission, please put them in contact with our Voluntary Services Department.

Prospective volunteers who may not be near a VA hospital and want to provide "freelance" assistance in their communities or who have specialized skills and training can help the DAV by keeping track of their hours through the Local Veterans Assistance Program. Contact your local chapter or department to find areas where assistance is needed or for assistance in keeping track of your time.

The generous souls who selflessly give of themselves and go above and beyond the call of duty to honor our disabled veterans and their families deserve our utmost respect, and this month, were honored to recognize all they do on behalf of our nation and our organization.

With the rising needs and challenging financial times, the opportunities to help have never been greater. When we open our minds and our hearts to the possibilities of what we can do for others, we're amazed by how easy it is to make great things happen. Happy giving and receiving!

## **DAV VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION PROGRAM**

As you are aware, DAV provides awards to our volunteers who reach certain milestones of achievement. Awards are provided at the 250 hours or 10,000 mile level up through 7,500

hours or 150,000 miles. These awards may be viewed on our web site at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org) by clicking on Voluntary Services and following the links.

At the recently completed Mid-Winter Conference it was brought to our attention that several of these awards do not contain the DAV logo imprinted or sewn on the item. The reasons for this are simple. The items may be too small to hold the logo or it is just not cost effective to have the logo placed on the items. Most clothing items will carry the DAV logo, while the remaining items will not. However these items may carry the logo of the product or brand name.

## **CELEBRITY ENTERTAINMENT PROGRAM**

### **Major League Baseball Umpire Visits VA Medical Centers**

Major League Baseball Umpire Jerry Layne visited the following VA medical centers in April: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Long Beach, California; Phoenix, Arizona; Denver Colorado and Dallas, Texas.

### **25th NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WINTER SPORTS CLINIC**

We want to thank the sponsors of the 2011 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic for their generous support. A special note of thanks to the DAV Department of Illinois, DAV Department of Missouri and DAV Missouri Chapter 2; DAV; DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation; DAV Chapter #1, Portland, Oregon; DAV Department of New Jersey; DAV H.H. MacKenzie Chapter 3, Virginia; Knob Hill Chapter 26, DAV; DAV Auxiliary; DAV Department of Colorado; DAV Department of Florida; DAV Department of Maryland; DAV Department of Virginia; DAV 9<sup>th</sup> District and the DAV State Commanders and Adjutants Association.

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***DAV Freedom Award***

In 1992 we instituted the DAV Freedom Award at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic. This award is given to the veteran whose outstanding courage and achievement is an example to all disabled veteran athletes. The award recognizes the veteran who excels while taking a giant step forward in their rehabilitation process. This is the veteran who proves to the world that physical disability does not bar the doors to freedom.

The award's inscription reads: "Your accomplishments during the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic have proved to the world that physical disability does not bar the

doors to freedom. We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow.” Every year, one participant is chosen for The Disabled American Veterans Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement.

A native of Tennessee, this year’s Freedom Award winner started his journey while serving in the Army ROTC at the University of Tennessee. In May of 2002, he began his career as a US Army Cavalry Officer and was assigned to A Troop, 4th Squadron, 14th Cavalry, 172 Stryker Brigade Team at Fort Wainwright, Alaska.

From there, our Freedom Award recipient, now a Captain, was deployed to Iraq to lead a platoon of infantry soldiers in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

On April 11, 2006, the Captain was leading a foot patrol in Anbar province in a town called Rawah on the Euphrates River. In an instant, his life was forever changed. A suicide bomber detonated explosives, claiming the life of his fellow soldier and inflicting violent damage to his brain and body.

Beyond survival, the road to recovery was difficult. With warrior spirit and amazing medical care, he set out on a path toward recovery. While his wife encountered what she described as something out of a horror film when she first encountered her husband after his injury, he was put back together again.

Though nearly losing his arm and having half of his skull removed to allow his brain to swell, the process of recovery restored his good looks. His speech came back relatively quickly. Though he completely lost hearing in his left ear as a result of his injury and endures traumatic stress, most people never know the extent of his recovery or the sacrifices he’s made on behalf of our nation.

Despite the challenges he faces, he and his wife have gone out of their way to bring light to the TBI issue and give the veterans who suffer in silence a voice. From the halls of congress to leadership in veterans service organizations, they have selflessly given of themselves to ensure our nation owes up to its obligation to those who’ve sacrificed in service.

At the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, this brave soldier has shown his warrior spirit on the slopes and in his interactions with his fellow veterans. He has put his leadership on display. He’s contributed to our community and shown the true extent of his character.

In recognizing this soldier who suffers from an invisible wound, we also recognize his spouse, Sunny, and all the caregivers who so valiantly give of themselves to ensure the morale and quality of life for the ones they love. Not enough can be said about the efforts they undertake to make worthwhile lives and support our participants and cause.

The 2011 DAV Freedom Award was presented to retired Army Captain Mark Brogan, a soldier whose energy, enthusiasm and spirit have been inspirational to coaches, volunteers and – most importantly – fellow participants.

*Clinic Statistics***Veteran Participants:**

Total veterans: 335  
 Male veterans: 296  
 Youngest participant: 23

New veterans: 101  
 Women veterans: 39  
 Oldest participant: 89

New OIF veterans: 20

**Branch of Service:**

Army: 164  
 Navy: 67

Air Force: 55  
 Marines: 48

Coast Guard: 8

**Periods of War:**

World War II: 4  
 Korean War: 7  
 Vietnam War: 62

Gulf War: 37  
 Operation Iraqi Freedom: 60  
 Operation Enduring Freedom: 29

**Locations:**

State Represented: 46

VA Medical Centers represented: 86

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you should have any questions about the information in this bulletin.



MICHAEL J. WALSH  
 National Director of Voluntary Services

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