May 6, 2025 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**

**85th DEPARTMENT & 73rd AUXILIARY OF SOUTH DAKOTA STATE CONVENTION**

The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) 85th Department and 73rd Auxiliary of South Dakota Convention was held at The AmericInn, in Aberdeen SD April 25 – 26, 2025.

The convention was very productive and many important issues affecting veterans and their families were discussed and the delegates made many recommendations. The delegates elected the following officers to lead the DAV Department of South Dakota for FY 2025-2026.

Commander ………………………. Tim Walsh of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

Sr. Vice Commander………............. Amy Lucas of DAV Aberdeen Chapter No. 13

1st Jr. Vice Commander ………….... Matthew Kistler of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

2nd Jr. Vice Commander …………... Dave Meltz of DAV Rapid City Chapter No. 3

Treasurer …………………………... Gene A. Murphy of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

Judge Advocate/Inspector ………… Robert Hill of DAV Brookings Chapter No. 22

Trustee…………………………….. Dan Francis of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

Trustee…………………………….. H.G. Krosschell of DAV Rapid City Chapter No. 3

Commander Tim Walsh made the following Commander Appointments:

Adjutant …………………………… Marty Pennock of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

Chaplain …………………………… Gaylord Helmbrecht of DAV Sioux Falls Chapter No. 1

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**(R TO L DAV- Left Photo) Commander Tim Walsh, Senior Vice Commander Amy Lucas, 1st Jr. Vice Commander Matt Kistler, 2nd Jr. Vice Dave Meltz, Treasurer/PNC Gene Murhpy, Judge Advocate/Inspector Robert Hill, Trustee Dan Francis and Trustee H.G. Krosschell taking the Oath of Office.**

Awards were presented at the Commander’s Award Luncheon to the following:

**DAV Convention Awards Recipients 2025**

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**From Left to Right**

1. Clarence Kooistra – Disabled American Veteran of the Year
2. Chivilla Bay (Bruce May): Outstanding Business
3. Noreen Lloyd: Outstanding Support in VA Health System
4. Chivilla Bay (Rhonda May): Outstanding Business
5. Amy Lucas: Disabled American Veteran of the Year
6. Brian Slack: Outstanding Employee at a VA Hospital
7. Marvin E. Holmgren: Outstanding Volunteer Chapter 11, SFVAHCS
8. Rich Siegmenn: Superior VA Employee
9. Dick Turnwall - Disabled American Veteran of the Year
10. (Not Pictured) Dr. Stephen A. Skaleski: Outstanding SFVAHCS Employee

Our special guests were Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs, Jeremiah Schneider; Mayor of Aberdeen, Mayor Travis Schaunaman; DAV 1st Jr. Vice Commander John Donovan and DAV Auxiliary National 1st Jr. Vice Commander Kathleen Wenthe, Past 14th District National Executive Committee Chairperson Warren Tobin and DAV Adjutant for Montana Chase Natalie, Commander of The American Legion Kevin Morello, Commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars Glynis Collier. The delegates heard firsthand information from these individuals about important issues facing veterans and their families.

The delegates at the convention contributed $1,200.00 for the Bulletin Booster, $11,250.00 for the DAV Hospital Transportation Network, $1,360.00 for the DAV Service Foundation and $1,160.00 for the DAV Service and Legislation Programs. The Department, with the help of members, Chapters, Auxiliary Units, and friends were able to raise $28,105.00 for the DAV Annual Convention Raffle Program with all the profit for the DAV Hospital Transportation Network.

The delegates received the following reports at the convention business sessions: Budget and Finance; Membership; Legislation; Publicity; Awards; National Service Officers Report; Hospital Transportation Network; Constitution and Bylaws; Veterans Employment; Judge Advocate/Inspector Reports; Time and Place; Chaplains Report; Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP); South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs; Michael J. Fitzmaurice South Dakota State Home; South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery; and Income Committee Report. If any members are interested in reading these reports, they should contact their local Chapter Headquarters as they were provided for each chapter.

The delegates approved 60 resolutions to improve benefits and services to disabled veterans and their families. 60 of the resolutions will be forwarded to DAV National Headquarters for the upcoming National Convention in Las Vegas. These resolutions, if passed by the National Convention Delegates, would be introduced into Congress to improve the benefits and services for our veterans.

The Department conducted a Veterans Town Hall Meeting with the following individuals: Jeremiah Schneider, Secretary, SD Department of Veterans Affairs; Sara Ackert, Director Sioux Falls VA Health Care System; Spencer Mion, Director, Black Hills VA Medical Center; Shawn Bohn, Director VA Dakotas Regional Office; Aaron Pollard, Deputy Secretary, SD Department of Veterans Affairs, and Ronald (Matt) Twitchell, Chief Experience Officer Sioux Falls VA Health Care System.

Senator John Thune’s NE Regional Director Judy Vrchota and Senator Michael Rounds’ NE Regional Director Jennifer Hieb gave reports for the Congressional representatives and answered questions one on one with veterans and their families.

The delegates approved the DAV Department Convention Hosts:

1. 2026 Department Convention: DAV Arthur H. Muchow Chapter No. 1 (Sioux Falls)

2. 2027 Department Convention: DAV Rapid City Chapter No. 3 (Rapid City)

3. 2028 Department Convention: DAV Davison County Chapter No. 27 (Mitchell)

4. 2029 Department Convention: DAV Northern Hills Chapter 11(Northern Hills)

Founded on Sept. 25, 1920, DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: “Keeping Our Promise to America’s Veterans”. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; assisting them with employment; 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. DAV, a non-profit organization that was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).

**THE DAV DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS AND THE DELEGATES WHO**

**ATTENDED THE CONVENTION WOULD LIKE TO SAY A SPECIAL THANK YOU**

**TO THE DAV ABERDEEN CHAPTER NO. 13**

**AND AUXILIARY UNIT NO. 13 FOR HOSTING THIS OUTSTANDING CONVENTION.**

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