



**Department of
Veterans Affairs**

Office of Public Affairs
Media Relations

Washington, DC 20420
(202) 273-6000
www.va.gov

News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 25, 2005

Disabled Veterans Take to the Slopes at Winter Sports Clinic

WASHINGTON – More than 350 disabled veterans will ski the Rocky Mountains at the 19th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village at Aspen, Colo., April 3-8, 2005.

The clinic is an annual rehabilitation program open to all U.S. military veterans with spinal cord injuries or disease, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions, orthopedic amputations or other disabilities, who receive care at any Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) health care facility.

A number of newly injured veterans from Operation Enduring Freedom and Operation Iraqi Freedom have signed up to join their fellow veterans at the clinic this year to challenge themselves at this special event.

During the six-day program, the veterans will learn adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing and be introduced to a variety of other adaptive activities and sports, such as rock climbing, scuba diving, snowmobiling and sled hockey. The U.S. Secret Service will also teach a course on self-defense for people with disabilities.

Jointly sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the clinic is hosted each year by the Grand Junction (Colo.) VA Medical Center and VA's Rocky Mountain Network.

"VA continues to be a recognized leader in providing disabled veterans with comprehensive rehabilitation programs, allowing them to challenge themselves both physically and mentally," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi. "These veterans demonstrate to all of us that it is ability, not disability, that counts. Their strength of spirit and determination to overcome adversity encourage all Americans who face challenges in their lives."

- More -

Winter Sports Clinic 2/2/2/2

Known for inspiring "Miracles on the Mountainside," the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic shows that the lives of disabled veterans can be changed forever when they discover the challenges they can overcome.

“The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is a fantastic example of partnership between DAV and VA, with both organizations committed to serving the rehabilitative needs of our nation’s disabled veterans,” said DAV National Commander James E. Sursely. “I have been a participant in this event and eagerly anticipate returning to Snowmass to represent DAV as its national commander. I know this year’s Winter Sports Clinic will be a life-changing experience for everyone involved.”

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with recreational therapy programs at each of its 158 hospitals. DAV, which has co-sponsored the event since 1991, is a nonprofit, congressionally chartered veterans service organization, with a membership of more than one million wartime disabled veterans.

#

For further information, contact Jenny Shafer Tankersley, VA public affairs coordinator, Winter Sports Clinic, at (757) 728-3450; or Rob Lewis, DAV communications, at (859) 442-2049. Or, log on to the event’s web site at: www.wintersportsclinic.org

People wishing to receive e-mail from VA with the latest news releases and updated fact sheets can subscribe at the following Internet address:

http://www.va.gov/opa/pressrel/opalist_listserv.cfm