



**Department of
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News Release

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VA Helps Disabled Veterans Take to the Slopes *“Examples for Us All” at Winter Sports Clinic: Secretary Nicholson*

WASHINGTON – Recently wounded veterans from the Global War on Terror will be among 350 disabled veterans who will ski the Rocky Mountains at the 21st National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo. from April 1-6.

“The daily courage and determination of these true American heroes are examples for us all,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jim Nicholson. “The men and women of the Department of Veterans Affairs are proud to serve these wounded and disabled veterans on their path to recovery.”

The annual winter clinic is a 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.

Last year, more than 55 newly injured OIF/OEF veterans challenged themselves against the slopes and joined in fellowship with other veterans at the clinic.

During the six-day program, 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.

Most notably, however, the clinic will again offer a training and development program designed for top-level skiers. The program has been made possible through an agreement with the United States Olympic Committee and is used to identify potential Paralympic athletes.

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Winter Sports Clinic 2/2/2/2

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.

“Once again, our friends in DAV are lending their compassion and their first-hand experiences to help at this special event,” Nicholson said. “VA relies on strong partners like DAV to maintain the high quality of our services.”

Known for inspiring "Miracles on the Mountainside," the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic shows that the lives of veterans who have a variety of disabilities can be changed forever when they discover the challenges they can overcome, Nicholson added.

“The DAV is proud to team with the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide this opportunity for so many brave, wounded warriors,” said DAV National Commander Bradley S. Barton. “It is truly a miracle to see the transformation take place on that mountain as these men and women push themselves to the limit and rehabilitate both body and mind.”

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitation, with recreational therapy programs at each of its 155 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.

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Further Information:

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Or log on to the event's web site at: www.wintersportsclinic.org.