



**Department of  
Veterans Affairs**

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# **News Release**

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## **World's Largest Disabled Ski Clinic at Snowmass, Colo. *Peake: This Clinic Gives Disabled Veterans a Sense of Purpose***

WASHINGTON -- More than 450 disabled veterans, including nearly 120 recently injured during Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom (OIF/OEF), will ski the Rocky Mountains at the 22<sup>nd</sup> National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, March 30 – April 4, 2008.

“Each year this Clinic enhances the physical, social, and emotional well-being of the veterans who participate in this life changing event,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Dr. James B. Peake. “Not only does the Clinic motivate veterans, young and old, to reach for their full potential and enjoy a higher quality of life, but it also gives them a strong sense of purpose and camaraderie with their fellow veterans.”

The Clinic is an annual rehabilitation program open to U.S. military veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities who receive care at a Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical facility or military treatment facility.

Last year, more than 100 active duty military personnel and veterans from OIF/OEF attended. An estimated 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled, and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team serve as ski instructors to meet the unique needs of the participants.

Co-sponsored by VA and the Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the Clinic is a world leader in promoting rehabilitation by instructing veterans with disabilities in adaptive Alpine and Nordic skiing, and introducing them to a number of other adaptive recreational activities and sports. For many newly injured veterans, the Clinic offers them their first experiences in winter sports and gives them the inspiration for continued self development.

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## Winter Sports Clinic 2/2/22

At the six-day event, veterans will also learn rock climbing, scuba diving, snowmobiling, curling and sled hockey. The U.S. Secret Service will provide a course on self-defense. All activities are designed to help participants develop winter sports skills and take part in a variety of other adaptive sports and workshops, which demonstrate that having a physical or visual disability need not be an obstacle to an active, rewarding life.

This year, the Clinic will again offer an innovative race training and development program designed for elite-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, the Olympic equivalent for world class athletes with disabilities. A number of these elite athletes began their winter sports endeavors through skills they learned at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

“As a disabled veteran and ski instructor at the Winter Sports Clinic, I can personally vouch for the amazing impact it has on the lives of our participants,” said DAV National Commander Robert T. Reynolds. “Thanks to the wonderful partnership between the DAV and the Department of Veterans Affairs, these miracles will once again take place in the lives of many of our deserving wounded warriors.”

Known for inspiring "*Miracles on a Mountainside*," the Clinic shows that the lives of disabled veterans can be changed forever when they discover the challenges they can overcome.

VA is a recognized leader in rehabilitative and recreational therapies. With 153 medical centers, VA operates more than 1,400 sites of care, including 895 ambulatory care and community-based outpatient clinics, 135 nursing homes, 47 residential rehabilitation treatment programs, 209 Vet Centers and 108 comprehensive home-care programs. The DAV is a non-profit, congressionally chartered veterans service organization with a membership of more than one million wartime disabled veterans.

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For further information, contact Jenny Tankersley Ballou, 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.va.gov](http://www.wintersportsclinic.va.gov)