



National Disabled Veterans

# *Winter Sports Clinic*

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## History of the Clinic

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic started in 1987 with roughly 90 veterans who were eager to learn to ski using adaptive ski equipment, and 20 staff members who helped them participate in a variety of other adaptive activities and workshops. The idea for the Clinic originated in the early 1980s when Sandy Trombetta, founder and director of the Clinic, began bringing VA patients to a nearby mountain resort to participate in disabled ski programs. As a recreation therapist at the VA Medical Center in Grand Junction, Colorado, he recognized the physical and mental healing that skiing and other winter sports can provide to veterans with disabilities.

The popularity of the program became apparent by the steady climb in its participant base, and in 1991, the Disabled American Veterans became a co-sponsor of the event. This milestone allowed the Clinic to grow and become the jewel in the crown of disabled sports that it is today. In 2008, 409 participants attended from across the country, along with 200 certified disabled ski instructors and several members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team. Several participants who learned to ski at the Clinic are now members of the U.S. team.

Co-sponsored by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Disabled American Veterans (DAV), the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic attracts veterans from across the country to participate in this annual learn-to-ski clinic for disabled veterans. Ensuring that veterans receive world-class healthcare and rehabilitation is a primary goal of VA and DAV; the Winter Sport Clinic complements those efforts by providing opportunities for self-development and challenge through sports and leisure activities. The Clinic proves that a disability need not be an obstacle to an active, rewarding life.

Veterans learn Alpine and Nordic skiing and are introduced to a variety of other activities and sports such as rock climbing, scuba diving, trap shooting, curling, snowmobiling and sled hockey. This year, U.S. Secret Service instructors will teach self-defense to participants who are in wheelchairs or are visually impaired.

Participation is open to male and female U.S. military service veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological problems and other disabilities. Participants include veterans from all eras, from WW II right up to and including veterans from the current war in Iraq and Afghanistan. In fact, more than 100 veterans from the current conflicts overseas participated in the clinic in 2008.

*Miracles on a Mountainside!*



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## **Number of Veterans Participating in the**

### **National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic -- 1987- 2008**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Number of Participants</b>
1987	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	90
1988	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	106
1989	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	151
1990	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	171
1991	Powderhorn Mountain, Colo.	186
1992	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	226
1993	Crested Butte, Colo.	238
1994	Crested Butte, Colo.	256
1995	Crested Butte, Colo.	279
1996	Crested Butte, Colo.	287
1997	Crested Butte, Colo.	294
1998	Crested Butte, Colo.	313
1999	Crested Butte, Colo.	303
2000	Crested Butte, Colo.	331
2001	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	351
2002	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	350
2003	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	305
2004	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	325
2005	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	323
2006	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	340
2007	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	370
2008	Snowmass Village -- Aspen, Colo.	409

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## DAV Freedom Award

Every year, one participant is chosen for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Freedom Award for Outstanding Courage and Achievement. This award is given to the veteran who makes the most progress during the week, and who shows outstanding courage and accomplishment in taking a giant step forward in his or her rehabilitation process. This is the veteran who proves to the world that having a physical disability does not bar the doors to freedom.

The award is inscribed: "We salute your desire to excel so that others may follow." Previous recipients are:

1992	Eric Tate	2008 Centra Mazyck
1993	Kevin Moellenberndt	
1994	Christopher Reid	
1995	Darol Kubacz	
1996	Martin Begosh	
1997	Karoline Martin	
1998	Butch Cooke	
1999	James Milliken	
2000	Timothy Doyle	
2001	Jim Sursley	
2002	Ryan Etier	
2003	David Owens	
2004	Eric Castro	
2005	Oscar Olguin	
2006	Joey Bozik	
2007	Luke Murphy	

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## **Linnie Howard Spirit Award**

Each year since 1987, the Linnie Howard Spirit Award has been presented to one individual who captures the true essence of spirit the way that its namesake exhibited at the Clinic. Howard attended the Clinic in 1987 and 1988. At 69 years young, he was the oldest participant at the time – but he never let that stop him for a moment. He enjoyed every activity and gave it his all. Howard truly represented the spirit of what the Clinic is all about – striving to be the best you can be with the ability you have. Howard died in 1988, but his spirit lives on through this award, which was initiated by Sandy Trombetta, National Director of the Clinic. Every year, the winner is a model for everyone, someone who represents the true spirit of the Clinic – just as Linnie Howard did.

Previous recipients of this award are:

1987 — Louis Martinez

1999 — Joe Jackson

1988 — Urban Miyares

2000 — Frank Harmon

1989 — Steve Powell

2001 — Todd Russel

1990 — Steve Soper

2002 — Gus Sorenson

1991 — Pete Morelli

2003 — Linda Kearbey

1992 — Kelly Rambo

2004 — Gloria Kennedy

1993 — Alton Davenport

2005 — Ruth Kult

1994 — Elizabeth Keitel

2006 — Joey Bozik

1995 — Tony Barriga

2007 — Christopher Semple

1996 — Cyril “Sonny” Johnson

2008 — Russell Worth

1997 — Dana Bullock

1998 — Mary Robertson

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