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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Congressman Bob Dole (R-Kans), along with other Members of Congress, paid tribute today to the Disabled American Veterans as they celebrated their 34th anniversary as a Congressionally Chartered national veterans organization.

In his remarks on the House Floor, Dole said, "These are the facts today: There are an estimated four-million wartime-disabled veterans in this country -- plus countless widows and orphans of those who died on the battlefields or as the result of service-connected ailments. The progress and welfare of the men who fought so valiantly for our country in time of trouble should be of concern to every thinking American man and woman today. When we remember, we should back up with action our debt of gratitude to those who never came back and to those who did come back -- ill, maimed, crippled.

"Those cold-blooded critics who term war veterans and war widows of both past wars and present "cold" wars -- as welfare or relief cases are far, far astray from the American tradition. The fact is -- veterans' benefits are equally as much a part of the direct cost of war as the cost of making bullets, tanks, airplanes and rockets. We must remember the terrible cost of war -- including the cost in men's lives and disabilities and make certain theirs was not a useless sacrifice."

"The DAV," said Dole, "has entered the picture as the guardian and protector of disabled veterans in every corner of the land. To perform this service requires considerable ^{power} manpower, money, and facilities -- an immense cost. But the DAV does it all, and without Federal financial aid. Over the past 46 years, since the founding of the DAV, almost all legislation

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beneficial to the wartime disabled has been sponsored by the DAV."

In conclusion, Dole stated, "It is with the greatest respect that I salute on this occasion the administration and the membership of that great and good organization, the Disabled American Veterans. They are unquestionably among the best possible of all Americans, and I am proud to be a member of this organization and to have had the opportunity today to honor the ~~organization~~^{DAV}, America's fighting men, America's disabled, the widows, children, and dependents of those who made the supreme sacrifice in our Nation's wars."

A Congressional luncheon was held at 12:30 P.M. this noon in the Cannon House Office Building. Honored guests were 15 servicemen from Bethesda Naval Hospital and Walter Reed Army Hospital, all of whom are hospitalized because of injuries and wounds ~~received~~ sustained in the Vietnam conflict.

Hosting the luncheon were Congressmen Gerald R. Ford; Leslie C. Arends; Melvin R. Laird, Arch A. Moore, John W. Stanton, Bob Dole, Bob Michel, Edward J. Gurney, Burt L. Talcott, all holders of the Purple Heart from past wars; Richard L. Roudebush, a past National Commander of the Veterans of Foreign Wars; and Frank J. Horton, a co-sponsor with W. J. Bryan Dorn of DAV Day on the Hill, and also a WWII veteran.