

HON. ROBERT A. MCDONALD'S REMARKS AT THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL DEDICATION

**Thank you, Mr. LaHood [Ray; former Sec of Transportation].
President Obama—**

Secretary Jewell [Sally; Sec of the Interior]—

Mrs. Pope [Lois; Chair, Disabled Veterans for Life Memorial Fund
(DVLMF)]—

Mr. Sinise [Gary; National Spokesman, DVLMF] —

Mr. Wilson [Art; President, DVLMF]—

Mr. Joyner [Dennis; Secretary, DVLMF]—

Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen:

A heartfelt welcome to our Veterans, and to their families.
I am deeply honored to help dedicate a grateful Nation's memorial to
Veterans disabled for life.

Individually and collectively, they are the lifeblood of democracy. As
President Obama recently reminded us, "When the world is
threatened ... it calls on America. And we call on our troops."
Because of them, our country's highest principles and ideals
endure. Our Nation stands as the world's foremost example of
freedom, justice, and opportunity. And because of them, we can
ensure a more secure future for all Americans.

The men and women we honor today—and whom this memorial
honors in perpetuity—endure the pain and meet the challenges of
lifelong disability.

Through their sacrifices and perseverance, they have contributed not

only to the freedoms we all enjoy, but also to medical advances that benefit so many people.

More than any others, VA exists to serve them.

They are VA's most important focus, and their disabilities and needs continue to drive progress across our triad of care:

In VA research that advances medical science.

In our training that prepares doctors and nurses to treat Veteran-patients according to the highest standards of excellence, advocacy, and respect.

And in leading-edge clinical care that promotes treatment, healing, and, ultimately, cures.

As the Nation's healthcare leader, all Americans have benefited from VA's successes in treating disabled Veterans. The work of VA's medical professionals has been recognized by three Nobel Prizes, among many other honors.

Few are aware that VA research developed the cardiac pacemaker, the first successful liver transplant, the nicotine patch, and the world's most advanced prosthetics—including VA's revolutionary "Braingate" breakthrough that makes it possible for totally paralyzed patients to control robotic arms using only their thoughts.

Affiliated with over 1,800 educational institutions, VA has no equal in training America's healthcare professionals. More than 70% of all U.S. doctors have trained with us, and each year, VA educates 62,000 medical students and residents, 23,000 nurses, and 33,000 trainees in other health fields.

Every day, from Maine to Manila, VA professionals deliver quality, compassionate care using state-of-the-art, patient-centric systems— Like the electronic medical records that VA pioneered ... and its error-reducing bar-code software that ensures the correct medications, in the correct dosage, are administered to the correct patient.

All this is carried out in the knowledge that Veterans disabled in service to our country are at the heart of VA's mission. Few have given more to America. And here in the shadow of the Nation's Capitol, this imposing memorial stands as a powerful reminder of their service and sacrifice.

At VA, we are reminded every day of their outsized contributions to our country, and it's our pride and privilege to claim the honor of caring for those "who have borne the battle." Without question, it is the most noble and inspiring mission in government. Thank you, and God bless you all.