

National Memorial to Honor Disabled Vets

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington, D.C., will honor all U.S. vets disabled during service. Construction will begin as soon as the \$86 million fundraising goal is met.



by Kelly Lanigan

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial—the first permanent national memorial to the estimated three million living disabled U.S. veterans—is scheduled to be dedicated in 2010.

The memorial was authorized in 2000. In July 2008, President Bush signed into law *H.R. 634, the American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act*, under which the U.S. Mint is allowed to issue up to 350,000 proof and uncirculated coins during 2010. The \$1 silver coins will be sold for \$10, which will go to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation (DVLMF).

More than \$70 million of the \$86 million needed has been raised so far. Philanthropist Lois Pope—who was the 2001 *VFW James E. Van Zandt Citizenship Award* winner—has donated more than \$8.6 million to date to the DVLMF. The foundation raised \$5 million from private philanthropic sources, which Pope matched.

"All of these courageous men and women, these unsung heroes, have sacrificed parts of their bodies, and in some cases their minds, upholding the democratic freedoms we so cherish and enjoy," Pope said. "We owe them our deepest thanks."

Pope and Arthur H. Wilson founded the DVLMF in 1998 with the sole mission of raising the funds for the memorial. "Now it's even more important than ever with the number of people

coming back wounded, maimed and in some cases disabled for life," Wilson told *The Kansas City Star*. "This will be the only war memorial that will honor the living as opposed to the deceased."

Four DVLMF board members are VFW members, including Adjutant General Allen "Gunner" Kent. VFW donated \$100,000 in December 2005.

"We are proud to have made this contribution on behalf of all VFW members," Kent said. "As we have done


with so many other memorials in the past, it is an honor for the organization to support this worthy cause."

Past Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller said at the time: "This memorial will honor the service and sacrifice of ... disabled veterans living amongst us today. It will serve as a constant reminder to all Americans that there's a cost to war that continues long after the last shots have sounded."

The memorial will be located in Washington, D.C., on two acres across from the U.S. Botanic Garden and within full view of the Capitol Building.

The design currently includes a marble-and-glass memorial with a star-shaped fountain representing the five services, with an eternal flame in the center. A reflecting pool will fan out from the fountain, reflecting the Capitol dome on its surface. The memorial will stand amidst a grove of trees.

The memorial will be wheelchair accessible, and accommodations will be made for individuals with disabilities such as visual and hearing impairment.

Once the memorial is dedicated, it will be transferred to the National Park Service for management, operation, maintenance and preservation. 

E-mail klanigan@vfw.org



Lois Pope, co-founder and chairwoman of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, accepts a check for \$100,000 from then-Commander-in-Chief Jim Mueller on Dec. 1, 2005.

For More Information

Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation

6290 Linton Blvd., Suite 104

Delray Beach, FL 33484

(800) 331-7590, info@dvlmf.org, www.dvlmf.org