



Press Release

For Immediate Release

Constance A. Burns Honored by Worldwide Who's Who or Excellence in Veterans Advocacy and Healthcare Services

Constance A. Burns is a Tireless Proponent of U.S. Veterans Rights

Washington, DC, March 13, 2015, Constance A. Burns, president, chief executive officer and founder of the National Association of American Veterans, Inc., has been recognized by Worldwide Who's Who for demonstrating dedication, leadership and excellence in veterans advocacy and healthcare services.



Ms. Burns is an educator, historian, author, professional meeting planner, trainer, program analyst and manager, and veteran service officer, with more than 25 years of experience working for the private industries, federal government, nonprofit organizations, and as a consultant.

Ms. Burns served as advisor for the National World War II Reunion, D-Day to France, and A Salute Parade to WWII Veterans in May 2004. Most recently, she served as advisor to the co-chairs for the President's Commission on Care of America's Returning Wounded Warriors and the Mental Health Task Force for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder in 2007 in support of our nation's service members and combat veterans. She managed, researched, and authored major parts of three books namely the 2d Ranger Infantry Company's history (2009), the Autobiography of Captain Evelyn Decker (2008), and the Quick Series Guide to Healthy Caregiving in (2008). She is also the sponsor of several documentaries about African American in military history.

Since 1990, she has also served as a volunteer researcher for the National Museum of Natural History and docent at the National Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution. At the national level, in 1994 she appeared in the Two Thousand Notable American Women in recognition of past achievement and outstanding service to the community, state and nation. In 1996, she was awarded the Certificate of Special Congressional Recognition for outstanding and invaluable services to the community. Since 1995, she also served on the Research Board of Advisors for the American Biographical Institute. Since 1980, she has published about history and women's issues. She is author of several articles in the "Encyclopedia of African-American Education" (Greenwood Press, 1996). NAAV is one of the founding partners of the Veterans History Project.

Ms. Burns attended the University of Alabama in Birmingham and received a bachelor of science. She holds a master of arts and post-master's degrees in secondary education and history. She attended Carnegie-Mellon University from 1975-1976 as a doctoral fellow in history, teaching, and curriculum development. She later enrolled in the Ph.D. program at the University of Pittsburgh in 1976 and completed course work leading to a Ph.D. in history in 1979.

Ms. Burns presented at several forums and conferences about the challenges of veterans of the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq and prior wars, and of their dependents. In addition, Ms. Burns was honored and recognized by the National Association of Professional Women in May 2010-2010 among outstanding women business professionals and entrepreneurs.

Ms. Burns was honored by First Lady Michelle Obama, Dr. Jill Biden at the Vice President's Home on Veterans Day in 2015 in recognition of support for military families nationwide in the same year Ms. Burns received a Congressional Award for her work through NAAV for the Homeless Veterans nationwide and in June 2016 she was honored by the Veterans for Foreign Wars with the "Commitment to Service Award" at their 83rd Convention held in Arlington, Virginia. In September 2016, she was presented with the "Certificate of Appreciation Award" by the Director of the DC VA Medical Center and its mission and vision.

Constance Burns values the honorable and selfless service of our nation's service members and disabled veterans. She aspires for NAAV to be a leader in advocating for the needs of U.S. soldiers, veterans and their families.

She established the National Association of American Veterans, Inc. (NAAV) and incorporated it in 2005 to provide emergency assistance and referrals, counseling, training, employment, and housing assistance and referrals to severely wounded service members, and veterans and their families. NAAV is committed to this population, particularly severely injured single-parent service members, and veterans of the wars in Iraq, Afghanistan and prior wars, by helping them to access their benefits. Additionally, she is responsible for improving collaboration, communication and coordination with the VA, and other veterans groups, health agencies, medical professional organizations, educational organizations, and the public, in support of veterans and their families. Furthermore, she provides training and respite, distribution of pertinent information and resources, and social networking for the loved ones who serve as their primary caregivers.

Ultimately, their mission is to empower stakeholders and constituents through advocacy, service, support, education outreach programs, and stewardship. Their vision is to serve our nation's service members, military caregivers, veterans, and combat veterans who answered the call to serve in America's armed forces, with a special focus on military caregivers, single parent service members, and combat veterans. NAAV, Inc. is envisioned as a comprehensive nonprofit 501 (c) (3) veterans' service organization that values the honorable and selfless service of current and former members of America's armed forces, that is committed to assisting with the re-acculturation of all veterans into the mainstream of American life.

Primary objectives center on helping all who served and are serving in the U.S. Armed Forces with the following: The assistance of eligible veterans with obtaining due benefits, counseling, single parenting,

and emergency assistance and referrals; the empowerment of service members and disabled veterans by giving them access to information on education, housing, medical care, and job training and career coaching; service as an advocate for veterans' rights; support for the timely processing of VA disability claims and appeals for all veterans through partnerships with other veterans' groups; and support for the primary caregivers of severely wounded service members and veterans.

Services include: emergency assistance referrals; counseling referrals for (anxiety, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, bereavement, and pain management through guided imagery); bus transportation to medical care, rehabilitation, and counseling; legal, housing, and employment assistance; medical care information, and VA benefits and claims assistance; education programs for service members, veterans, and their family members; and training, respite care, and access to resources and social networking for primary caregivers.

Many service members, veterans, and their families are struggling financially and emotionally during lengthy periods of hospitalization or rehabilitation due to injuries received while serving in the theater.

In addition to the recovery challenges a service member or veteran may face, many families endure additional challenges such as a spouse's loss of employment. Many face bankruptcy, homelessness, divorce, and may even be at risk for suicide. NAAV offers avenues for service members, combat veterans, military caregivers, and their families to address the issues they face while in recovery and transition to life after their injuries and while seeking employment in a work force outside of the military.

By offering educational, financial, housing, employment, and post-traumatic stress counseling referrals to both service members or veterans and their spouses, NAAV assures that our constituents will receive the most current information on where to find financial aid, housing, and employment – all the while receiving the support they need during their job and/or housing search. NAAV will work to bring military job seekers and military-friendly employers together, to place needy veterans in meaningful employment or in an entrepreneurial business venture.

NAAV's programs will begin with a skill assessment. They will work to identify a constituent's job skill set and translate those skills so they can be used in the civilian workforce. NAAV will identify the housing and employment goals of our constituents, which will include the type of job and/or housing desired, salary and housing requirements, and work region. NAAV also provides counseling in the areas of resume building, interviewing skills and techniques, and where to look for employment, while working to bring together prospective employers with our constituents.

NAAV will evaluate the employment and housing assistance program using feedback tools such surveys from their users and partners, in order to improve on their services. NAAV will monitor the newly-employed and newly-housed constituents on a quarterly and biannual basis to see how our clients are progressing. NAAV will work to identify how to improve or revise our services based on feedback received.

Military Primary Caregiver Training:

In 2008, NAAV provided the outline and text for "The Quick Series Guide to Healthy Caregiving" published by Quick Series Publisher and based on the caregiving experience of NAAV's president and chief executive officer Constance A. Burns, and her work with military caregivers and the President's

Commission on Care of America's Returning Wounded Warriors in 2007. NAAV wants to improve the caregiver support services at the Fisher Houses and VA Medical Centers throughout the country; however, they will start in the Washington Capital area. They want to provide training and support services, specific individualized family-oriented education about relationship building and coping with changes in family dynamics, and information about available treatment programs for the caregivers of severely injured, single parent, and aging veterans.



Their main activities will include evaluation in one year via feedback from surveys, along with developing and printing the most effective information about caregiver-specific resources and educational materials from the VA and Fisher Houses projects. NAAV will distribute caregiver-specific training resources/education materials in the greater Washington, D.C. area, especially in geographically isolated areas, and at neighborhood venues and events frequented by caregivers and their families.

ICARE System

In 2013, NAAV donated the ICARE System to the VA Medical Center of Washington, D.C. ICARE is a fully integrated system that provides a safe, effective method for enabling patients with neuromuscular disorders resulting from stroke, TBI, partial SACI, and other injuries or diseases to regain the ability to walk. Relearning to walk and remaining physically active are important rehabilitation goals for individuals with weakness, numbness, balance problems and/or those recovering from a disabling injury or illness. Delivered and installed on April 16, 2014, the ICARE System retails at \$47,000.00.



Financial/Emergency Assistance:

Many families are struggling to survive financially and emotionally during the lengthy periods of hospitalization required for their veterans' recovery. As a result, many family members face bankruptcy, homelessness, divorce, unemployment, and the tragedy of suicide. We owe those who have risked their lives in serving this great country the care and services they so richly deserve and have earned. Their response has been a reinvestment of time, funds, and energy to develop and revitalize core programs to address these problems. NAAV works with other nonprofits organizations to provide grants up to \$1,500 to support those service members and combat veterans in financial need, such as help with rent, utilities, and transportation for medical reasons. Applications will be provided and placed online. Currently, NAAV partners with Operation First Response, VA Medical Centers, Operation Home Front, All American Solutions, Tracfone Wireless, Inc., Xerox Foundation, Wal-Mart, Home Depot, Corner Bakery Café, Washington, D.C., National Veterans Services Fund, Inc., Veterans Upward Bound Program of Prince George's County, DC Employment Services Empowerment Project; DC Office of Veterans Affairs, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Paralyzed Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America, and other organizations.

VA Claims and Benefits Assistance:

NAAV provides assistance with veterans' claims and benefits at the DC VA Medical Center on the second and third Monday of each month and for homeless veterans at the Winterheaven Homeless Stand Down held yearly. In addition, NAAV participates in Ladies' Night for women veterans sponsored yearly by the DC VA Medical Center in support of women veterans who served in America's armed forces and residing in the greater Washington metropolitan area. NAAV's trained and accredited veterans' service officer and volunteers are ready to assist those who need help through the challenging processes – inevitably complex and bureaucratic – of gaining access to the benefits they have earned and deserve. For the most injured veterans, timely processing of disability claims is essential. For some returning service members, especially in inner cities – with literacy and other problems on top of their disabilities – coping with paperwork is a daunting task. A modest investment of time and attention can make a major difference. NAAV proposes training at least two individuals as veterans' service officers if funding permits.

Counseling and Building Relationships:

NAAV utilizes the services of Guided Imagery, Inc., Health, Healing and Wellness Center (www.guidedimageryinc.com). Guided Imagery, Inc. provides CDs and training sessions on managing anxiety, stress, post-traumatic stress disorder, grief, limb loss, and pain management. Diane Tusek, a registered nurse and founder and president of Guided Imagery, Inc., has more than 25 years of experience and is recognized as one of the world's most compelling experts on guided imagery, stress management, and life coaching. Ms. Tusek serves on the advisory council for the National Association of American Veterans and uses guided imagery to work with those veterans returning from Operation Iraq and Operation Enduring Freedom combat. She worked closely with veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center now Walter Reed National Military Medical Center (Bethesda, Maryland) and the Armed Forces Retirement Home (Washington, D.C.), with funds provided by NAAV. Plans are under way to produce two CDs – one for caregivers and another for service members and veterans – help with anxiety, stress, and spiritual wellness.

Web Site Enhancement:

NAAV enhanced its website to enable maximum exposure for their mission and to receive donations. On our website we have a unified giving system through iDonate that allows you to donate not only with credit cards but also with ACH/echecks and noncash gifts such as vehicles, stocks, bonds, and real estate. You can choose to support NAAV with a weekly, monthly, semimonthly, quarterly, or annual gift. Unlike many online giving forms, you have the option of choosing the billing date on which your donation is processed. NAAV can also provide reporting analysis for large donations. Phase 5 of NAAV website includes videos, posting of veterans' stories, veteran memorials, partners' ads, caregiver of veterans information, testimonials of satisfied clients, "Contact Us" information, and a list of staff and volunteers, the board of directors, and national advisory council to strengthen the organization's credibility on the website. What NAAV expects to gain is a marked improvement in traffic, donations, and exposure before our audience nationally and worldwide. As with any venture, such growth usually takes time. But they will explore different features and measure NAAV's results, and they believe their time will not be wasted.

Making a Difference:

Military family caregivers make great sacrifices without complaint, and as you know they don't usually ask for assistance, because they're trained to face the challenges and get the job done. To them, caregiving is a labor of love and devotion, but that alone does not ease the burden and personal stress placed on those who provide daily for the disabled. That is why NAAV's mission is to reach out to military families and encourage them as they help their loved ones move toward a healthy reintegration into society.

Here's what one recipient of NAAV's rental assistance support had to say in honor of giving thanks: "OMG...Words can't describe the feeling that I am feeling right now (literally in tears). Thank you soooooo very much. Today is my birthday and you have made me the happiest woman alive. I was sad this morning but you have brought joy to my heart."

For Angela Williams of Fayetteville, North Carolina, the assistance provided by NAAV helped her head off a potential eviction appearance in court between her and her landlord. NAAV paid over \$1,000 in support of this American Veteran in conjunction with other assisted funds provided by Darien Connecticut through the National Veterans Services Fund.

Benjamin W. Moore and his family wrote to say: "The Moore family would like to express our gratitude for the laptop computer and printer your organization has provided. Your kindness is much appreciated; our family desperately needed the machines for school projects, college papers, research, and business ventures; it was quite difficult to manage without the laptop computer and printer. Our family deeply appreciates the work your organization does on behalf of Veterans. The Moore family is grateful for the positive impact you've had on our lives; it's a blessing to have the tools required to participate in school and work in the twenty-first-century, please accept our deepest gratitude."

NAAV is seeking partners to support its Military Family Program to help build strong families and provide continued support to caregivers of Veterans. In the last year alone, through our partners more than 14,000 veterans from across the nation contacted NAAV's corporate office for our listing of emergency financial aid resources; hundreds have given online contributions via NAAV's website and US mail; caregivers of veterans in more than 1,000 households have been equipped to help their loved ones who served in the wars in the Middle East and prior to a resilient quality life.

Collaborative Partnerships and Relationships:

NAAV collaborates with other veterans' organizations, and private and public agencies/organizations that share common concerns for improving the health and social status of veterans and their caregivers. In particular, NAAV maintains ongoing collaborating relationships with the Torres Foundation for the Blind; Paralyzed Veterans of America, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Vietnam Veterans of America; Disabled American Veterans; Wise Health of Maryland; All American Solutions of Miami Florida; Veterans Upward Bound Program of Prince George's County, Maryland; Street Wise Partners; National Area Health Education Council; DC VA Medical Center; DC Employment Services and Empowerment Program; DC Office of Veterans Affairs; Veterans and Military Families for Progress; DC VA Caregiver Support Program; Went Center for Loss and Healing; TracFone Wireless, Inc.; Xerox Foundation; Corner Bakery Café 18th Street, NW, Washington, DC; MicroTech; Open Technology Group, Silver Spring, MD; K&L Gates, Washington, DC; George Washington University; the University of Maryland; and Howard University, and other organizations.

For more information about the National Association of American Veterans, Inc., please visit www.naavets.org and <http://worldwidehumanitarian.com/2013/08/28/constance-a-burns>

About Worldwide Who's Who

With over 500,000 members representing every major industry, Worldwide Who's Who is a powerful networking resource that enables professionals to outshine their competition, in part through branding and marketing. Worldwide Who's Who employs similar public relations techniques to those utilized by Fortune 500 companies, making them cost-effective for members who seek to take advantage of its career enhancement and business advancement services.

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