

***For Immediate Release***

## **40 Disabled Veterans Honored at Alamo**

### ***Injured Vets Receive Segway to Improve Mobility***

**San Antonio, Texas, November 12, 2014**— Forty wounded warriors will receive Segway personal transporters today to improve their mobility and independence at a ceremony at the historic Alamo as part of the commemoration of Veteran's Day.

The military service members all served in Operation Iraqi Freedom or Operation Enduring Freedom in Iraq and Afghanistan. Twenty five of them lost at least one limb. Although the U.S. has designated December 31, 2014 as the date when our current mission in Afghanistan will be officially over and the last Marine base closed in late October, more than 10,000 troops remain there as part of a NATO force. These wounded warriors carry a permanent reminder of their military service and will live with disabilities for the rest of their lives.

Segs4Vets, ranked as one of America's best charities and recipient of the prestigious Spirit of Hope Award from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, will award the Segways on Wednesday, November 12, at 10:45 a.m. The public is invited to attend the ceremony.

The event takes place during the annual San Antonio Chamber of Commerce's Celebrate America's Military week and is the 14<sup>th</sup> presentation of Segways to take place on the plaza outside of the Alamo. Four of this week's recipients will receive an Ally Chair adapted Segway, a universally designed recreational device which is currently only available through the Segs4Vets program. The program transforms the Segway into a seated device allowing it to be used by those who cannot make productive use of prosthetics.

Segs4Vets is a program of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT). The program is dedicated to restoring independence and productivity to severely injured service members as part of DRAFT's core mission to expand and improve access for all disabled people. Segs4Vets has awarded more than 1,300 Segways since 2005 and plans to continue the program to meet the ongoing needs of the thousands of worthy applicants who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have differed from those of the past in the extraordinarily high survival rate of the American service men and women who were wounded in combat but lived because of advances in battlefield medicine. Many of the most severely wounded would have died on the battlefield just a few years ago. But many survivors live with debilitating injuries and permanent disability, including multiple limb loss.

In addition to those who lost limbs, today's recipients sustained spinal cord injuries, severe burns, developed cancer, and suffered severe orthopedic, neurological and soft tissue damage which makes it difficult or impossible for them to walk without assistance or pain. Studies show the lack of mobility is a greater obstacle to employment than blindness. Many are being treated at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston. Military medical centers have incorporated the Segway into rehabilitation since Segs4Vets began awarding the transporters nine years ago.

Nine of this year's recipients are from Texas.

“When the combat role of the United States in Iraq and Afghanistan is officially over, it is easy to forget the wounded warriors who face a lifetime of challenges because of their service,” said Jerry Kerr, the President and co-founder of Segs4Vets. “Our country may be war weary but our military continues to serve in harm’s way. We must never forget the sacrifice of our brave soldiers, Marines, sailors and airmen and their family members who fell on the battlefield and make certain they have the best possible tools so they can reclaim lives of independence and purpose.”

“Our focus is not so much on what has happened to these American heroes but what lies ahead for them and their families. They *must* rise again and continue to be productive participants both in their families and in our overall society. The Segway helps them do that,” said Kerr. “Our objective is to enhance their mobility, to provide them with role models, and a roadmap, so that they can remove or avoid frustrations that might inhibit their ability to live an independent, meaningful and joyful life. Over the last 9 years we’ve grown to a family of more than 1,300 and we’ve listened and we’ve watched and we’ve learned. And what we’ve learned is that at the end result of our efforts, the most important thing that we do is that which occurs in the minds of our recipients and their family members.”

The Segway, a battery powered two-wheel mobility device, has found an avid following among the disabled because its universal design allows almost anyone to use it without drawing attention to the disability. Recipients use their Segways to attend college, remain on active duty, work in private sector jobs, and engage in recreational activities and everyday tasks like shopping or strolling through a park with their families.

General Hal Hornburg, USAF (Ret) and Congressional Medal of Honor recipient Major General Patrick Brady, USA (Ret) of San Antonio, will be participating in this year’s event. General Hornburg serves on the Segs4Vets Board.

**Recipients will receive final training on Segway use and operation by Segs4Vets volunteers on Monday, Nov. 10 from 8:30 a.m. until noon and 1:00-4:00 p.m. and Tuesday, Nov. 11 from 8:30 a.m. until noon at the Gallery Ballroom of the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center at Alamo and Market Streets. The training sessions offer a good opportunity to see the Segway in action and to interview recipients and volunteers.**

Segs4Vets was started in late 2005 by Disability Rights Advocates for Technology, a 501c3 created to represent people with disabilities who refuse to be defined by their disability and whose passionate enthusiasm for participation in life activities is supported by universal design and new and emerging technologies. The organization is a member of Military Family and Veterans Service Organizations of America and has been certified as one of the best charities in America by the Independent Charities Seal of Excellence, an honor accorded fewer than 2,000 of the more than one million public charities in the United States. DRAFT launched Segs4Vets as a way to thank disabled American veterans of all wars for their sacrifice and for changing the face of disability in the United States.

For more information, visit [www.segs4vets.org](http://www.segs4vets.org) or contact Chris Black. Jerry Kerr will be available at 314-603-4672 in San Antonio.

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