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TO: National Executive Committee  
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FROM: J. Marc Burgess, National Adjutant

DATE: August 16, 2021

SUBJECT: DAV statement on the situation in Afghanistan

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DAV National Commander Andrew Marshall has issued the following statement regarding the situation in Afghanistan:

*Those who have served in war know that it never leaves us, and as a combat-wounded Vietnam veteran, I know all too well the range of emotions that veterans of Afghanistan are feeling today and how it could negatively affect their individual well-being.*

*The anger, hurt and sadness veterans of that war and other conflicts may experience can be overwhelming. Paired with more than a year of personal, social and societal difficulties brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, these factors create alarming potential for countless mental health crises. That's especially true for those who have sacrificed so much over the past two decades.*

*Our nation has always held a solemn duty to care for the men and women who are forever changed by military service. Now—more than ever before—we must redouble those efforts to ensure the Department of Veterans Affairs is equipped to provide timely, high-quality health care to America's heroes.*

*DAV supports efforts made by the Biden Administration, Congress and Secretary McDonough to engage veterans organizations, increase availability and access to mental health services, and ensure these vitally important services are expedited nationwide.*

*DAV urges those who are experiencing mental health issues and in need of immediate attention to call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255. This free, confidential resource is available 24/7 and can get at-risk veterans connected to services they need and have earned. We also urge all veterans to reach out to each other during this difficult time. As an organization of veterans serving veterans, DAV recognizes that our shared connections are invaluable and we encourage our members to perform buddy checks to help one another process their emotions and connect with resources. Nearly 1,300 local DAV chapters and thousands of trained service officers—many of whom are Afghanistan veterans themselves—stand ready nationwide to direct veterans to available resources as well.*

*For nearly 20 years, a generation of American warfighters has sacrificed life, limb and well-being for their fellow countrymen and the people of Afghanistan. For many, witnessing the ongoing situation there will bring about strong and complex emotions that will be difficult to process. Our country owes them nothing less than the best services it has to offer, and DAV will continue working to ensure our nation keeps its promises to this generation of America's veterans, just as we have for all those who came before.*

The statement can be found on DAV's website:

<http://www.dav.org/learn-more/news/2021/dav-statement-on-the-ongoing-situation-in-afghanistan/>

  
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