

For Immediate Release

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Wounded Warriors Receive Segways Vets Get New Wheels at Alamo Ceremony before Veterans Day

San Antonio November 9, 2011 – Segs4Vets will present Segway personal transporters to wounded warriors to improve their mobility at an outdoor ceremony beginning at 10:45 AM today at the historic Alamo during Celebrate America's Military week which ends with Veterans Day.

The 37 recipients include soldiers, Marines, Airmen and Army National Guardsmen. The warriors come from 23 states and Puerto Rico; six are Texans. Many are still undergoing treatment and rehabilitation at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston where a model training and assessment program for Segway use is operated at the Center for the Intrepid.

Congressional Medal of Honor Recipient Colonel H.C. "Barney" Barnum, USMC (Ret) and General Hal Hornburg, USAF (Ret), Segs4Vets Board members, will participate in the presentation ceremony, the tenth in San Antonio since 2007. Segs4Vets has more recipients living in the San Antonio area than any other section of the country, a reflection of the strong community support of the program

The presentation takes place just days before Segs4Vets receives a highly coveted Spirit of Hope Award from the Secretary of Defense at the Pentagon on November 15. The Spirit of Hope Award is presented to an individual or organization whose patriotism and service to members of the United States Armed Forces reflect the late entertainer Bob Hope who led USO tours to combat troops overseas for 50 years.

Segs4Vets is a project of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT) and is the only organization to ever receive a blanket waiver from the U.S. military allowing a gift in excess to \$1,000 to severely injured active duty military force members serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. The non-profit 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.

Although the U.S. military presence in Iraq is winding down, demand for the Segway remains high because of the large number of military service members suffering extreme injuries in Afghanistan. Segs4Vets has presented more than 750 Segways to qualified warriors in the past five years and continues to award a Segway to a disabled service member at a rate of about one per day. The waiting list of applicants still contains hundreds of injured service members.

Each recipient has sustained serious injuries which limit mobility such as amputation, severe burns, spinal cord injuries and extreme orthopedic injuries. The program's goal is to restore a level of independence so each recipient can continue to serve his family and nation and live a full rewarding life. The Segway is an example of how technology can level the playing field for people with severe disabilities. The Segway significantly improves personal mobility and a sense of wellbeing. Former recipients use the Segway to stay on active duty, attend college classes, work in private sector jobs and engage in recreational activities and shopping with spouses and children.

“After 10 years of war, it is overwhelming to continue to see such commitment, courage and patriotism,” said Jerry Kerr, president and founder of DRAFT. “There is no letup in the number of warriors with catastrophic injuries. When a severely injured warrior returns from Iraq or Afghanistan, our goal is for each of them to rise again, to choose the path of independence rather than dependence and to once again become a productive member of society, a productive member of their family and to continue to serve our nation.

These patriots show through their sacrifice the true value of citizenship and of freedom. If they can continue to fully participate in life, our country benefits greatly. We provide a tool that helps them continue to follow the challenging path of service.

“Our Veterans Day presentation in San Antonio is the highlight of the year for us. This community has been a true partner to us. We cannot express enough our gratitude the TRIAD Fund of the San Antonio Area Foundation, the USAA Federal Savings Bank and local patriots who have turned San Antonio into our premier presentation site. This community shares our belief that valiant warriors with serious injuries deserve whatever is needed to recover and maintain the highest possible quality of life,” he said.

The public is invited to attend the ceremony which will be held on the plaza in front of the Alamo.

The Segway solves many of the mobility issues facing disabled veterans in a manner which is psychologically uplifting and physically beneficial, does not draw attention to their disability and instills in recipients a desire and motivation to continue to serve. The size of the Segs4Vets program in terms of funding in comparison to other nonprofits serving wounded warriors is very small; however, the tangible results achieved by it are among the most dramatic. The impact extends to the spouses, children, parents and other family members whose lives have been turned upside down by the injury because the psychological benefit to recipients is so great it improves family dynamics.

The recipients will receive final training in the use of the Segway by Segs4Vets volunteers on Monday, Nov. 7 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. and 1 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. and on Tuesday, Nov. 8 from 8:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. at the Henry B. Gonzalez Convention Center, Gallery Ballroom A at the corner of Alamo and Market Streets. The training sessions are excellent opportunities to interview recipients and volunteers and see the Segway in action.

Most Segway recipients were victims of IED blasts, the signature weapon of this war. More than 60,000 men and women in uniform have required medical evacuation from Iraq and Afghanistan since the beginning of hostilities. Improvements in combat medicine and better equipment are saving more lives but many warriors are surviving with catastrophic disabilities that challenge conventional treatment protocols. The Segway is not covered by military medical insurance but is a prime example of how universally designed technology can dramatically improve the quality of life of a disabled person.

Segs4Vets, created in late 2005, is run by volunteers as part of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT), a 501c3 created to represent people with disabilities who refuse to be defined by their disability and whose passionate enthusiasm for participation in life's activities is supported by Universal Design and new and emerging technologies.

Today's recipients come from South Carolina, Texas, Puerto Rico, Pennsylvania, New York, Alabama, Mississippi, Colorado, Georgia, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Florida, Iowa, New Mexico, Oregon, California, Utah, Illinois, Kansas, Arizona, Tennessee, Alaska, Minnesota and Michigan. For more information or to schedule an interview, reporters may visit www.Segs4Vets.org or call or email Chris Black (see above contact information) or Jerry Kerr at (314) 603-4672.