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## **Wounded Warriors to Receive Segways Segs4Vets Marks Veterans Day at the Alamo Time to Offer Benefit to All Disabled Veterans**

**San Antonio, Tx. November 11, 2009** – In a Veteran's Day celebration at the historic Alamo, Segs4Vets will present Segways, personal mobility devices, to 38 wounded warriors who lost legs or sustained other serious injuries in combat.

“Veteran's Day is a day when our nation pauses to remember the sacrifice and service of our military,” said Jerry Kerr, President of Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT), the non-profit sponsor of the Segs4Vets program. “There is no better time to honor and say thank you to these courageous wounded warriors.”

The recipients come from 21 states, including Texas; Puerto Rico and Micronesia. Fifteen of the recipients lost a leg to amputation, five lost both legs. The other recipients sustained spinal cord injuries, soft tissue damage and debilitating burns which limit their ability to walk. The Segway dramatically improves personal mobility without the need of a wheelchair.

With this presentation, Segs4Vets will have presented more than 400 of the mobility devices to military service members injured in Iraq and Afghanistan in the last four years. Demand for the device dramatically outstrips the ability of the all-volunteer charity to meet the need. The 38 San Antonio recipients were chosen from a qualified pool of more than 600 applicants.

Disability Rights Advocates for Technology (DRAFT) says the time has come for Congress to recognize the value of the assistive device and provide it to all disabled veterans who need it. Because of limited resources, the charity has been unable to award Segways to all qualified applicants from the current conflict or to veterans who became disabled in Vietnam and other conflicts. The program receives repeated requests from many older veterans who became disabled in combat and feel strongly they deserve the Segway as much as younger vets.

“The brave warriors who become disabled while serving our nation deserve the best tools to live fulfilling and productive lives,” said Kerr. “The Segway has proven its value and helped restore dignity, independence and mobility to hundreds. It is time to extend this benefit to all disabled veterans who need it.”

“DRAFT created this program to say thank you to generations of disabled veterans whose collective sacrifice transformed treatment of the disabled in the United States,” said Kerr. “We are proud to be associated with these valiant military service members and take enormous satisfaction in showing how this tool can help many fulfill their dreams.”

“As veterans from previous wars age, many are increasingly limited by mobility issues related to their war injuries. It is a great frustration to us that we simply lack the resources to provide this device to them as well,” said Kerr. “What better time than Veteran’s Day to call on our government to provide this benefit to all veterans who need it.”

Many of today’s recipients are still undergoing rehabilitation and treatment at the Brooke Army Medical Center at Fort Sam Houston where medical personnel and therapists work closely with DRAFT to determine which applicants are best able to use the Segway.

Former recipients have used the Segway to return to active duty, begin new civilian careers and attend college. Recipients include Major Tammy Duckworth, a double amputee who is now the assistant Secretary of the Veterans Administration; staff assistants to the Secretary of the Army, and a former White House domestic policy aide. Two early recipients used Segways to complete work on undergraduate degree at Georgetown University and are now using their Segways to attend law school.

Although the Segway was not originally intended to be an assistive device for the disabled, it has found an avid following among many disabled people including those with spinal cord injuries and who suffer from MS and Parkinson’s disease. Segs4Vets recipients use the Segway instead of a wheelchair and say the Segway allows them to stand tall in their prosthetic legs, improves their mobility and lets them appear less disabled in public.

**The recipients will receive final training in the use of the Segway by Segs4Vets volunteers at an all day session at the San Antonio Convention Center, 200 E. Market Street, San Antonio between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>.**

A disproportionate number of Segway recipients were victims of IED blasts, the signature weapon of this war. More than 33,000 men and women in uniform have been wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan since the beginning of hostilities. The Segway is not covered by military medical insurance.

Segs4Vets, created in late 2005, is run entirely by volunteers as part of 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’s activities is supported by Universal Design and new and emerging technologies. The organization is a member of Military, Veterans & Patriotic 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 is also 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.

Today’s recipients come from the U.S. Army (27), Marine Corps (3), Navy (2), and National Guard (6). Seven recipients are from Texas.

For more information, including a list of veterans who will receive Segways, or to schedule an interview, reporters may visit [www.Segs4Vets.org](http://www.Segs4Vets.org) or call Chris Black (see above contact information) or Jerry Kerr at (314) 603-4672.