



*Air Force pilot George M. Moore, Jr. smiles from the cockpit of his F-100 Super Sabre during his second tour of duty during the Vietnam War.*

## A Winner Who Never Stops Trying

The journey to becoming the DAV Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year began on March 9, 1970, during Moore's second tour of duty in the Vietnam War. A 26-year-old, U.S. Air Force Captain, George was piloting his F-100 Super Sabre fighter-bomber through the pitch black skies over the Republic of Vietnam returning from a night mission, when he was diverted from his home air base to the American air base at Chu Lai.

Unknown to Capt. Moore, he was vectored to land on a runway with construction at the approach end. The construction included a ditch across the runway. It was approximately 3:30 a.m. when his F-100, traveling at nearly 170 miles per hour hit the ditch ... "I thought I had hit a vehicle or something crossing the runway," Moore said.

Capt. Moore's instinct, training and experience instantaneously reacted to control the aircraft, as the landing gear was ripped away. He knew he had to keep his fighter on the airstrip and out of the sand off the edge of the runway... keep it from flipping. Even as he struggled to control the craft, too many forces were out of control. The plane plowed off the edge of the runway and began to flip and cartwheel 13 times before grinding to a mangled, burning halt.

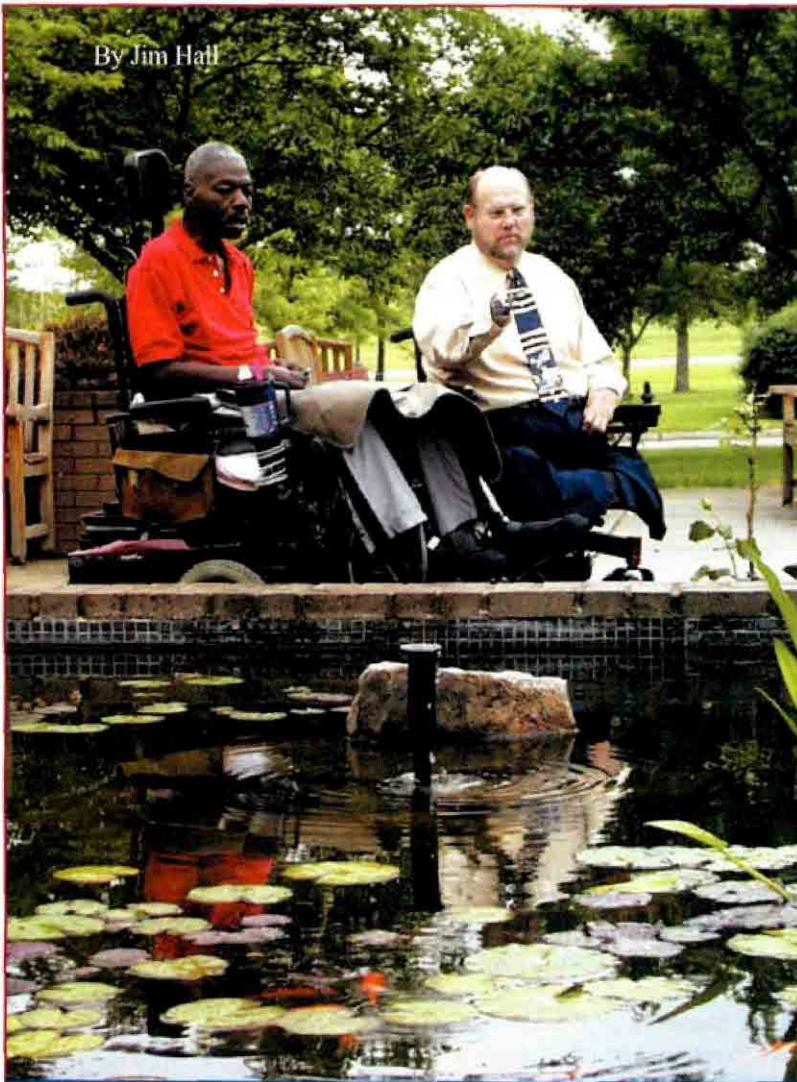
Ground crews raced to extinguish the fire and cut Moore from the wreckage of his aircraft.

Burned over 70% of his body, the young captain had somehow survived the devastating crash. But, surviving was only the beginning. Moore spent the next 43 months hospitalized. He endured 49 surgeries, which included the amputation of both of his legs, his right arm and little finger of his left hand. His left arm did not require amputation, but was substantially damaged.

The man whose first words were "app-pane;" the man who dreamed of flying and made his dream come true as a U.S. Air Force pilot, the man who loved to fly was medically retired from the Air Force, but, he refused to be grounded.

"A winner is just a loser who tried one more time," is George Moore's motto, and he is living proof of a true winner, because he has never stopped trying.

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*Army veteran Robert E. Johnson, left, a nursing home resident at the VA Medical Center, Martinsburg, W.Va., shares a few fish stories with Medical Center Director George M. Moore, Jr., during a visit at the center's fishpond. Moore is the recipient of the DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year Award for 2003.*

The little boy looked to the sky above his Oxford, Miss., home and shouted, "App-pane! App-pane!" The military planes passing overhead were on their way to Biloxi and Gulfport to be ferried off to join the other war birds of World War II.

As George M. Moore, Jr. grew up, his mother often recounted to him and others that "app-pane" was the first word he learned to say.

Airplanes and love of flying became an exciting part of George's life, until a nearly fatal flying accident left him a triple amputee. That accident also started George on the road to being named the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2003, the highest individual award presented to a veteran by the DAV.

DAV National Commander Edward R. Heath, Sr. presents the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award to Mr. Moore during the opening session of the 82nd National Convention of the DAV and Auxiliary held in New Orleans, Aug. 15-19.

## Disabled Veteran

*(Continued from page 1)*

Following his retirement, Moore returned to school. He had already earned a bachelor's degree in public administration from the University of Mississippi in 1966. He followed it with a second bachelor's in business and finance at Arizona State University in 1976.

Moore also met LuAnn Graber while in Arizona. she was working as a bank teller in Glendale, when George asked her out the first time. She declined the first invitation, but George stuck to his motto and asked her out again months later. This time she said yes. On Dec. 7, 2002, LuAnn and George celebrated their 28th wedding anniversary.

The Moores adopted and raised a son, Dalen, who is currently attending college. As he was growing up George was dad and pal. Being an Eagle Scout himself, George was active in Scouting with Dalen, and he helped coach his son's baseball teams, in addition to other father and son activities.

George Moore is a person involved with enthusiasm in all he does. He doesn't half step and he doesn't back up.

In addition to an active family life that includes dog breeding and showing (he has several first place ribbons for showing dogs), George is an active hunter and marksman. The same excellent hand-eye coordination that made him a fighter pilot makes him an excellent shot. Combine good shooting with the all-terrain vehicle he takes to the field in and he becomes a formidable hunter. And, while he could no longer fly for the Air Force after his accident, he continued his love of flying, obtained a pilot license, and eventually owned and flew his own specially equipped aircraft until selling it two years ago.

Moore returned to school and earned a master's degree in health care administration from Carnegie-Mellon University in 1986, the same year he became a life member of DAV National Amputee Chapter 76 in New York.

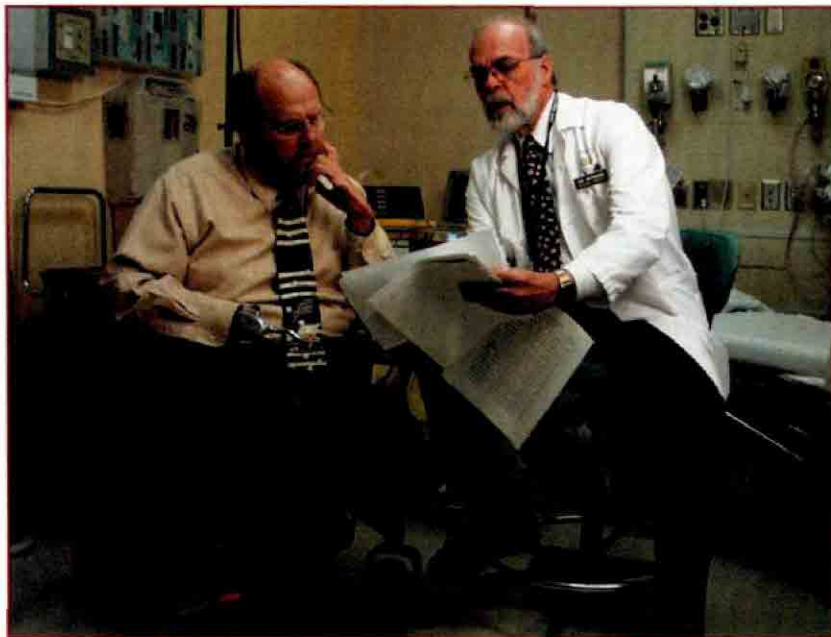
By the time he earned his master's degree, George was five years into a career with the Department of Veterans Affairs. Prior to joining the VA as a Prosthetics Representative trainee at the

Memphis VA Medical Center (VAMC), he served nearly two years as a National Service Officer for the Paralyzed Veterans of America in Arizona and Mississippi.

Moore's career took flight in the VA health care system. He advanced from trainee at Memphis to Chief of Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service at the Pittsburgh VAMC; from Staff Assistant to the Center Director, to Assistant Director at the Cleveland VAMC; from Director of Operations to Acting Associate Regional Director of the Veterans Health Administration, Southern Region, in Jackson, Miss.; and, in January 1997, he was promoted to Director/Operations Manager at the VAMC in Bonham, Texas. A year and a half later he was appointed to his current position as Medical Center Director for the VAMC at Martinsburg, W.Va.

As director, Moore's duties include operational management of the center's 99-bed hospital, 148-bed nursing home care unit, a 312-bed domiciliary care program, and area VA outpatient clinics. He also manages the \$115 million operating budget for the center and the 1,100, fulltime employees who work there. Additionally, he serves as Veterans Integrated Service Network (VISN) 5 Prosthetics Line Manager, responsible for all prosthetics services at Martinsburg VAMC, the VAMC in Washington, D.C., and the VA Maryland Health Care System.

During his life and career, George Moore has received many awards and medals for his accomplishments. They include the Air Force Bronze Star and Air Medal, with four oak leaf clusters; Arizona Handicapped Employee of the Year, 1980; DAV Department of Pennsylvania Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, 1986; Presidential Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employee of the Year, 1987; American Hospital Association Federal Health Care Executive's Special Achievement Award, 1989; 1996 H.J. Heinz, II Public Service Award, H.J. Heinz School of Public Management, Carnegie-Mellon University; West Virginia Hospital Association Excellence in Leadership Award, 2001; Honorary West Virginian Award, 2002; and numerous other awards and commendations for service excellence. Additionally, Moore is an avid speaker and has served on a variety of speaker's bureaus inspiring, motivating, and teaching audiences nationwide.



*George M. Moore, Jr., second row, left, joins son, Dalen, and other Little Leaguers for a photo with the team he helped coach. Left, Medical Center Director George M. Moore, Jr., left, the DAV Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2003, confers with Dr. John Morgan, Medical Director of Primary Care at the VA Medical Center, Martinsburg, W.Va.*

Moore is also an enthusiastic supporter of Olympic events. He served as an Olympic Torch Bearer for the 1984 Olympics. In 1986, he was the State of Pennsylvania's Torch Run Chairman and a State Olympic Torch Bearer. He continued his Olympic participation serving as an Olympic Torch Bearer at the 2002 Olympics.

For George Moore, helping veterans is more than a job or career. It's a passion. The same passion that made him a fighter pilot fuels his leadership as a medical center director. George Moore has experienced VA health care from both sides—patient and director.

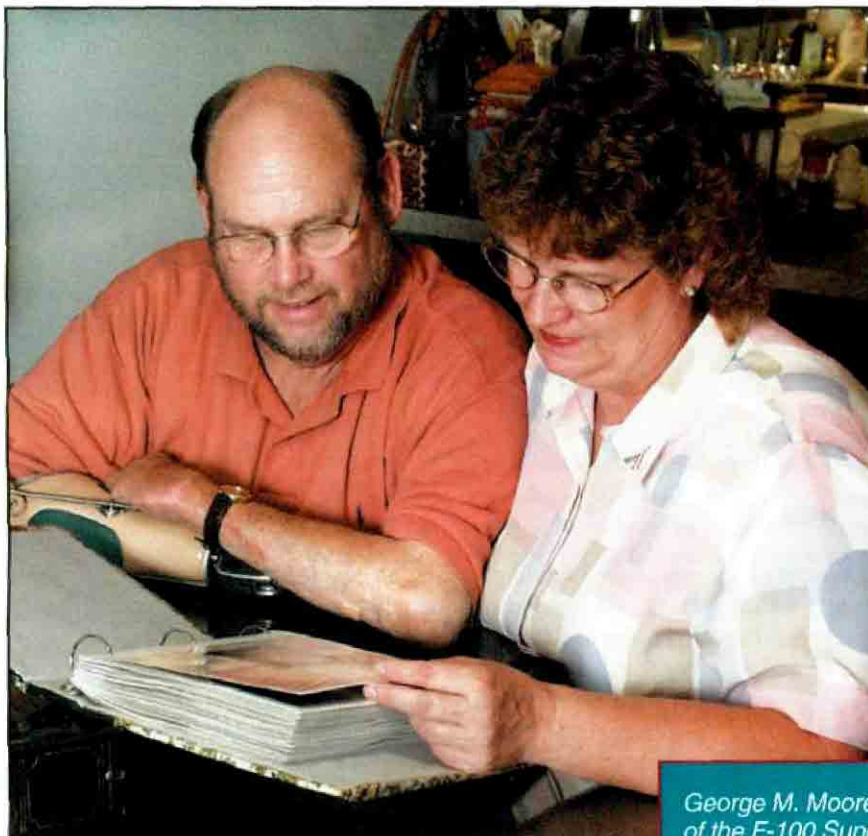
When asked how he wants to be remembered by veterans, he answers without hesitation and with calm conviction: "I want veterans to remember me as a person who got the things done that needed to be done— that I didn't back off from any challenges,"

Moore said. "I hope they remember me as a compassionate leader who tried to meld their desires with their medical needs to deliver a product to best take care of their needs. I would like veterans to believe the hospital is better as a result of my having been here."

Moore's philosophy of care is simple and powerful, and it applies to everyone under his direction: "Would you like your mother or your father to be treated the way you just treated that last veteran?"

Working 10-hour days and weekends are not unusual for Moore, but at the end of each day he stops in the emergency room to see how things are going for the staff and patients there. It's one last stop to check the pulse of his medical center—to be sure his hospital is doing well. For George Moore, the DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2003, it's the way he would want to be treated.

DAV



DAV National Commander (1987-'88) Gene A. Murphy, right, congratulates George M. Moore, Jr. on being selected the 1987 Presidential Outstanding Handicapped Federal Employee of the Year. Moore is a life member of DAV National Amputee Chapter 76. Left, Paging through a family photo album, George M. Moore, Jr., shares memories with his wife, LuAnn.

George M. Moore recuperating from the crash of the F-100 Super Sabre he was piloting during the Vietnam War in 1970. The crash left the 26-year-old, Air Force captain burned over 70 % of his body. During 43 months of hospitalization, he endured 49 surgeries, including amputation of his legs and right arm. Moore is the DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2003.



Tiger Lilly, a Brussels Griffon owned By George M. Moore, Jr., Medical Center Director at the VA Medical Center in Martinsburg, W. Va., gets the news from her master that he has been named the DAV Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2003.

