aaidd
American Association
on Intellectual and
Developmental Disabilities

November 2, 2026

Dear AAIDD Colleagues and Friends:

November is National Veterans and Military Families Month and home to our annual holiday of Thanksgiving. As the American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD) reflects on its sesquicentennial, let us pause to honor the strength, sacrifice, and service of veterans and their families, caregivers, and survivors.

Since its founding 150 years ago, AAIDD has counted among its members people who served in times of war and peace. Many served in medical and healthcare roles, bringing healing and compassion to those wounded by conflict. Their service reflected a profound commitment to humanity, often undertaken amid extraordinary hardship, uncertainty, and personal sacrifice.

We also recognize the sacrifices of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities who were conscripted into the armed forces at a time when their rights, abilities, and dignity were not adequately respected. Their experiences, often overlooked by society, deserve acknowledgment as part of the historical record.

In honoring those who served, we hold fast to the hope of a world in which peace prevails over conflict, healing triumphs over suffering, and future generations are spared the burdens of war. Such hope does not diminish the courage or sacrifice of those who answered the call to serve. Rather, it gives deeper meaning to their service by affirming the enduring value of the lives they sought to protect and the humanity they endeavored to preserve.

As we commemorate AAIDD's 150 years of research, practice, and policy, may this occasion inspire gratitude for those who served, compassion for those who suffered, and a renewed dedication to building a world in which the instruments of healing are needed more often than the instruments of harm.

Their service is part of our history. Their sacrifice is part of our country's story. Their humanity remains central to our mission.

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