

## Officially amazing world record effort

WASHINGTON, D.C.—To celebrate its 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the culmination of the Celebrate America! volunteer service initiative, the National Society, Daughters of the American Revolution channeled its fervor for patriotism and dedicated support of our nation's military service members toward an ambitious goal.

During the week of the 125<sup>th</sup> Continental Congress, held in June at DAR's Washington, D.C., headquarters, the organization set an official Guinness World Records title in patriotism for “most letters to military personnel collected in one month.”

DAR members possess an unwavering patriotic devotion that spans the organization's 125-year history. During the past three years alone, Daughters have devoted more than 2.2 million hours of service to veterans, honored more than 288,000 Vietnam War veterans, and donated more than \$25,000 in support of service members and their families. The Guinness World Records attempt served as a test: Could the membership exceed its already high standards of support for our military?

Overwhelmingly so!

Achieving this ambitious goal required the National Society to collect and then mail at least 10,000 letters to active-duty service members. Daughters across the country, including members of the Hendrick Hudson Chapter in Hudson, NY, rallied in support of the effort, which was governed by strict rules. Many Daughters wrote personal messages, but because individuals could write only one letter each, they also enlisted help from their communities. Girl Scouts, school children, even the governor of Georgia, and many more caring citizens contributed cards and letters to the project.

As dictated by the Guinness World Record guidelines, all letters had to be handwritten, addressed to an active duty service member, placed inside a stamped, unsealed envelope, and delivered in person to one of the designated stations set up at DAR headquarters. Hand-delivered letters of appreciation filled more and more boxes as



the week progressed, and an official Guinness World Records adjudicator arrived to conduct the verification process.

The carefully tallied total was revealed at the National Defense Night ceremony on Saturday, June 18, 2016. As thousands in attendance waited to learn the outcome of the attempt, members surprised them by carrying in box after box to give a visual representation of how many letters were submitted. The adjudicator took the stage to announce the results using a number tally on the big screen. Cheers increased as soon as the number topped 10,000, but then the audience, including the night's special guests, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert McDonald and the USO President and CEO Dr. J.D. Crouch, all went wild when the tally surpassed 100,000. The DAR had collected 100,904 letters, more than 10 times the minimum threshold needed to set the record for most letters to military personnel collected in one month!

“Congratulations—you are officially amazing!” the adjudicator proclaimed.

This record-setting achievement provides the latest measure of the collective force of the DAR's appreciation for the United States military, while simultaneously fostering human connection between the American people and those who defend our freedom. As devoted stewards of the legacy of the Revolutionary War generation, Daughters feel equally compelled to express appreciation for the valor, sacrifice and commitment of today's active-duty service members. Each letter represents the support of a grateful nation, and the National Society is humbled by the opportunity to delivered these missives to the defenders of our country.

Member volunteers worked diligently to seal all of the 100,904 letters by the end of June and send them off to active-duty military personnel serving both at home and abroad. It is hoped that the handwritten messages of gratitude and encouragement cheered the spirits of those who have raised their right hand and sworn to defend and protect the United States of America.

To learn more about the work of the DAR, visit [www.dar.org](http://www.dar.org) or the Hendrick Hudson Chapter at [www.hudsonдар.org](http://www.hudsonдар.org).