

New bylaws help rural veterans



National Commander Dennis Nixon (left) was present to install the very first chapter officers of DAV Chapter 238 in Granbury, Texas. New national DAV bylaws reduced the number of required new members, to give more communities opportunities to start new chapters.

DAV eases new chapter member requirements to help expand local presence

“I was driving 30-plus miles one way to my nearest DAV chapter in Stephenville, Texas—coming back late and twice almost hit a deer,” said Vietnam and Marine Corps veteran Con Schuck.

For veterans living in more rural locations, it’s not always a simple task to make chapter meetings and be as involved as some would like, which is why Schuck wrote an article in a local Texas newspaper about the difficulty maneuvering the distance to get to and from meetings. As a result, a fellow DAV member got involved to assist.

“I just called and offered my help,” said Air Force veteran Chris Georgopoulos. “We started to look into starting a DAV

chapter closer to home.”

The biggest obstacle the veterans faced was the required threshold of gaining enough new members to be chartered as an official chapter.

“Initially, the 50-new-member requirement was almost impossible,” said Schuck.

That all changed at the 2018 DAV National Convention, when an amendment to the National Constitution and Bylaws was approved, officially lowering the obligatory number of members to 25 to charter a new chapter.

Department of Texas Adjutant Teresa Johniken was in the crowd in Reno, Nev., when the change passed, and she eagerly shared the change with Georgopoulos and Schuck.

“I called Georgopoulos with the news, and through the phone, I could feel his joy and excitement,” Johniken said. “It was as if he had been holding his breath and could finally take in oxygen. I felt like a fairy godmother delivering a wish—it was awesome. I know how much work they had put in.”

DAV Chapter 238 in Granbury, Texas, was launched Aug. 20, 2018.

“We received the news while at a meeting—I made the announcement and everyone was elated,” Schuck said. “I think it was a very positive move. We just need to get local veterans involved and working toward a common goal.”

“This new chapter will benefit this area tremendously because of the retirees and the veterans movement in the area,” said Joel Jimenez, the commander of DAV Chapter 41 in Wichita Falls, Texas, who assisted Georgopoulos and Schuck along the way.

National Commander Dennis Nixon was present for the installation of the new chapter’s officers.

"I was proud to see fellow veterans from my home state of Texas stepping up and finding solutions in their local communities," Nixon said.

"Two dozen motivated veterans are capable of contributing a world of good, particularly in a smaller community. And in time, they'll inspire more of their fellow veterans to get involved."