

# MEMBERSHIP

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**ANNUAL REPORT OF DOUGLAS K. WELLS  
NATIONAL MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR  
SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE  
DAV 94th NATIONAL CONVENTION  
DENVER, COLORADO  
AUGUST 8-11, 2015**

It is with great humility I submit my first report as DAV's new National Membership Director to our 94th National Convention. I am very aware of the responsibility I have to all of you and the trust our members, National Adjutant Burgess and National Commander Hope have placed in me.

In 2007, National Membership Director Tony Baskerville said the loss of World War II veterans nationally was more than 1,000 each day as reported by VA. The nationwide attrition has impacted our ranks, with more than 3,000 DAV members passing monthly.

They represent our Greatest Generation and the foundation of this organization and others. They drew the blueprints that give us the respect we receive on Capitol Hill and the veteran community; a legacy you and I inherited.

It is not within us to squander what was handed down to us. We are DAV. We have been, for more than nine decades, the organization that evolves to meet the needs of its members among ever changing demographics and social changes to ensure all veterans are able to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity.

DAV membership continues to play a vital role as agents of change. With 52 state-level Departments and 1,349 active Chapters nationwide, we closed the 2014-2015 membership year with 1,301,539 veterans in DAV, exceeding our national membership goal.

The state of DAV's membership is excellent! We've made a historical milestone this year by exceeding 1.3 million members. It will take a concerted effort for us to make this a sustained landmark for the organization, but it is clear that DAV is the only established veterans service organization with a growing membership base.

This would not be possible without your help, the dedicated among you who are not afraid to ask the question, "Are you a member of DAV?" DAV's hard working corps of National Service Officers remains the backbone of DAV's recruiting efforts. Along with their other major commitments of service to veterans and their families, they recruited 10,602 part and full life members as well as 68 DAV Auxiliary members.

There are more than 4,000 dedicated members who also contributed to growing our ranks this year. Together, they brought 10,732 part and full life members as well as 3,653 DAV Auxiliary members into our organizations.

When a veteran benefits from our services, he or she is more likely to join. It is for that reason, I believe, that we have been able to maintain and build upon our memberships while our fellow established veterans service organizations face declining ranks.

The DAV 2014/2015 recruiter of the year, who is credited with recruiting 165 part and full life members, is Mr. George Roso from McAlester, Oklahoma, Chapter 20.

Your top NSO recruiter, with 383 part- and full-paid life members is NSO Supervisor Andrew J. Edwards, of the St. Louis National Service Office.

In the area of Division top recruiters, the NSOs who took top honors for 2014-2015 are:

Division I (over 35,000 members); Romaine Barnett, Department of Texas  
Division II (18,000 – 34,999 members); Andrew Edwards, Department of Missouri  
Division IV (5,000 – 9,999 members); James Laverdiere, Department of Maine  
Division V (less than 5,000 members); Robert W. McClellan, Department of Michigan

In the Division race for Commanders of the Year the winners are:

Division I – Edward W. Vandiver, Department of California  
Division II – David P. Valtinson, Department of Minnesota  
Division III – Daniel F. Hall, Department of Arkansas  
Division IV – William T. Anton, Department of Nevada  
Division V – Helen M. Parr, Department of South Dakota

The Jonathan M. Wainwright Award is presented to the Department that closes the year with largest increase in new members. This year's award recipient has taken this trophy home for the past seven consecutive years.

The Department of Texas takes top honors. Commander Jay Johnston, Department of Texas, received this award on behalf of his great state's continued efforts.

The Robert S. Marx Award is presented to the department that completes the year with the highest percentage increase of fully paid life members over goal.

This year's winner is the Department of South Dakota, represented by Commander Helen M. Parr.

Since 1994, DAV has recognized the success of its members who have signed 100 or more new members for three consecutive membership years with a gold lapel pin and entering their names into the Membership Recruiters Hall of Fame. This year's inductees are:

Andrew J. Edwards, Illinois  
Daniel I. Knabe, Illinois  
Albert L. Hughes, Michigan  
George Roso, Oklahoma  
Kwan C. Tillman, Michigan  
Derek W. Norman, Missouri  
Joseph G. Braun, Missouri  
Nicholas Bernardi, New Jersey  
Romaine Barnett, Texas  
James R. Laverdiere, Maine  
Sheila A. Sanders, Florida  
Jason E. Zielke, Michigan  
Thomas W. Herrington, Illinois  
Michael A. Watts, New Jersey  
Guy D. Anastasia, California

Each year recruiters comprised of members and National Service Officers who've signed 100 or more members are randomly selected by the membership system and given the opportunity to select a prize of their choice from a list of wonderful gifts.

This year, the lucky winners are:

Life Member George Roso, McAlester, Oklahoma  
Life Member Sheila A. Sanders, Jacksonville, Florida  
NSO Supervisor Andrew J. Edwards, St. Louis, Missouri  
NSO Trainee Albert L. Hughes, Detroit, Michigan  
Associate NSO Michael A. Watts, Newark, New Jersey

DAV is pushing 1.3 million sustained members and more than 4,000 of them this year asked the question, "Are you a member or would you wish to join?"

Our founders formed DAV because they saw a need and that need continues to exist and will continue to exist as long as there are men and women who stand up and bravely ask, "*Are you a member of DAV?*"

The fight to fulfill our promises to the men and women who served does not end at the VA's rating board. It begins and continues on Capitol Hill where the ongoing battle calls for strength in numbers.

I thank all who have contributed to DAV's legacy by supporting our membership recruiting efforts. We will continue to build and grow at a time when it is of the utmost importance.