

DAV[®]

FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

ROAD TO RECOVERY...

**LEADING
THE WAY**



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES

Nearly a century of service to the men and women who served

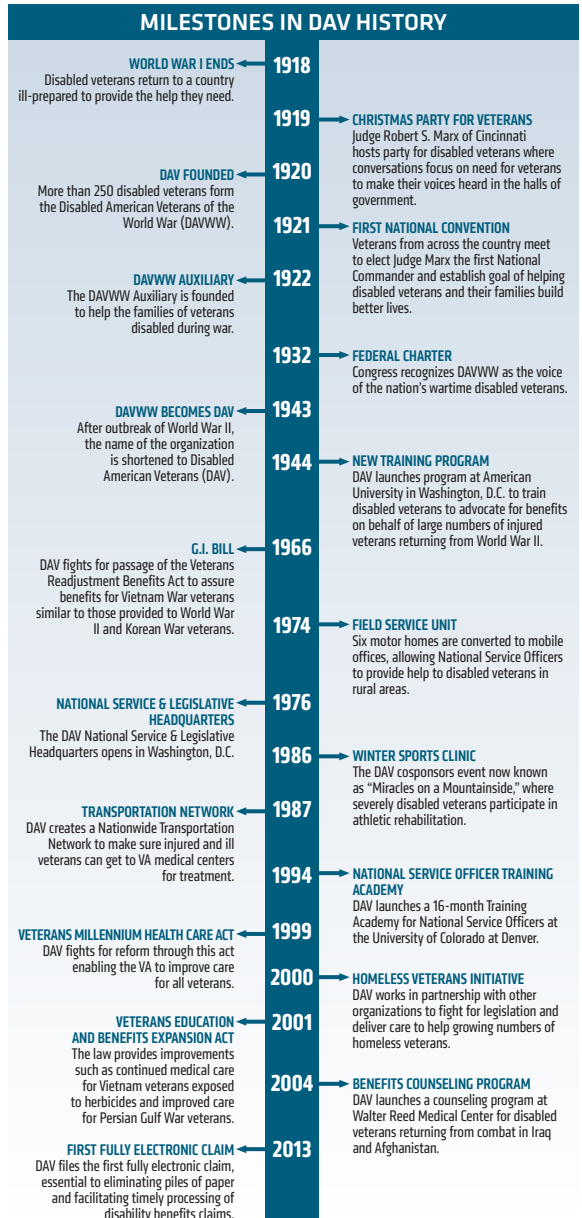
Veterans making the transition back to civilian life must overcome many obstacles, and DAV (Disabled American Veterans) provides programs that address their overall health and well-being. Beyond assisting with more than 300,000 claims for veterans benefits a year, we fund rehabilitation and counseling programs, link veterans to job training programs and work to address homelessness. All of DAV's services are free.

With the strength of 1.2 million members behind us, we represent the voices of ill and injured veterans of all generations before Congress.

Founded in 1920 and chartered by Congress in 1932, DAV is dedicated to empowering our nation's veterans. We stand up for injured heroes, ensuring they have access to the full range of benefits and resources that allow them to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

DAV fills the gap between what these veterans need and what the government can provide.

No other organization has helped more veterans lead high quality lives than DAV.





Dear Friend,

The men and women who serve in America's armed forces train to be physically, mentally and emotionally strong. The hardships they endure in service to our nation require nothing less. In times of war, our military men and women put their very lives on the line to protect the country they love.

Those who suffer service-related injuries and illness must summon new strength as they move from hospital wards to rehabilitation and on to civilian life. The survival rate for veterans has increased in recent years due to advances in protective gear, speedy evacuation and battlefield medicine. However, today's service men and women are returning with **multiple traumatic injuries that are quite severe, resulting in multiple disabilities.**

For injured and ill veterans from all eras, the road to recovery presents the challenge of living the rest of their days with permanent disabilities. DAV helps veterans navigate a complex bureaucracy to receive the benefits they've earned; and we do everything within our power to ensure that injured and ill veterans receive the health care, rehabilitation, skills training and employment opportunities they need to live their lives with dignity and respect.

In order to build the capacity required to serve America's 3.6 million disabled veterans—a **number expected to grow to 4 million by 2020**—DAV has launched a special funding initiative themed "Road to Recovery...Leading the Way."

They fought for us. **Now we must fight for them.**

With your help, DAV's services will ensure that America's ill and injured veterans and their families live life to the fullest. I ask you to carefully consider how you can partner with DAV today to help fulfill our promises to the men and women who served.

Our returning heroes deserve no less.



With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Marc Burgess".

J. Marc Burgess
National Adjutant/CEO

WELCOME HOME HEROES

DAV's Transition Service Officers visit **nearly 100 military installations and hospitals such as Walter Reed National Military Medical Center** to provide essential benefits counseling and claims assistance to veterans as they leave military service.

During World War I and World War II, for every soldier killed, approximately two were injured. Today with enhanced body armor and battlefield medicine, for every soldier killed, seven are injured. When an improvised explosive device penetrates a soldier's protective gear or causes a traumatic brain injury, he or she returns to an uncertain future. It may be a 19-year-old who has sacrificed a leg or a hand or eyesight. As the soldier returns home to begin life all over again, DAV provides expert counsel, encouragement and support.



In addition to providing immediate assistance to these most deserving veterans, Transition Service Officers, who themselves served, offer the assurance that should complications set in or conditions worsen over time, DAV will be there for them and their families.



The Montgomery Family's Legacy of Service

Mark Montgomery was injured by a roadside bomb while serving with the Army's 101st Airborne Division during the Gulf War. He tells of the gruesome event that led to his need for DAV's services:

"I was in a Humvee that was part of a convoy of fuel trucks. The Iraqis had booby traps set up in camels, and along the way a roadside bomb exploded. It was horrifying to have a roadside bomb go off near the fuel trucks."

When he returned home from war, Mark couldn't sleep more than two hours at a time.

"I reacted to every loud sound. The war came home with me, and it is still there. I try to control it, but it gets triggered by different things. I exhausted every resource in the civilian world, but nothing helped. My dad told me about DAV...it was the best choice."

Mark's dad, Mike, is a Vietnam veteran who fought more than 22 combat missions. His Marine unit battled their way into the Que Son Valley to drive out the enemy in 1965. For 11 days the violent struggle raged. Mike recalls, "I saw villages burning and women and children crying and yelling. I saw shooting and people dying. It was the stuff that happened on a daily basis." The Marines lost 45 killed and 18 wounded. The toll on the Viet Cong was much greater—407 killed.

The toll on Mike Montgomery was severe as well. After his tour of duty, he suffered from malaria, post-traumatic stress disorder and the effects of Agent Orange exposure. It was then that he began to rely on DAV.

"DAV improved the quality of my life. I believe DAV is the best."

DAV's National Service Director, Jim Marszalek, adds: "The Montgomery family is a DAV history in microcosm. Part of the family's pride in service in the defense of our liberties includes knowing that DAV always had their backs."



A Marine's Long Wait

Peter Kamysz, a World War II-era rifleman with the 2nd Marine Division Fleet Force, suffered severe hearing loss and endured constant ringing in his ears which, in his words, “nearly drove me crazy.” Over the years, the hearing loss grew worse, and he eventually had to step down from a 20-year career in accounting.

Finally in 2004, Peter spoke with a DAV National Service Officer and applied for benefits through the Department of Veterans Affairs. Soon after, he was granted a significant disability rating. His gratitude led him to join DAV and to contribute generously. He shared his thoughts in a letter:

“I shall be forever grateful for DAV’s efforts in obtaining substantial assistance from the Department of Veterans Affairs regarding my disability which, incidentally, went ignored for 58 years. Fortunately, my circumstances allowed me to add strength to your wonderful mission.

“I know that Vilma, my recently departed wife of 63 years, would have strongly supported my action. After all, she’s the one who had to endure all those years of my saying, “Huh? What’s that?”

“Getting those good hearing aids from the VA was a blessing, albeit somewhat late in life, along with the benefits of my disability rating. May God bless you in helping our beautiful heroes. It will be my distinct privilege to do more later on.”

HEROES HELPING HEROES

The need for DAV services has never been so great. The number of veterans with service-related injuries and illnesses has skyrocketed to more than 3.6 million men and women today, up from 2 million just 12 years ago. By the year 2020, the number is expected to grow to 4 million.

DAV receives no city, state or federal government funds. Rather, the essential services provided by DAV to injured and ill veterans are made possible by the extraordinary generosity of caring individuals who want to ensure that America fulfills its promises to the men and women who served.

DAV places highly skilled veterans' benefits experts throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. **Our National Service Officers are themselves**

wartime, service-connected veterans.

They truly understand and care for the veterans they serve. Their training includes rigorous coursework that accredited by the American Council on Education, 16 months of intensive on-the-job training and rigorous continuing education.

DAV National Service Officers assist our wounded heroes in navigating the VA claims processes. They respond not just to the needs of returning veterans, but also to the needs of their families—**all at no cost to the veteran.** Last year, DAV professionals provided expert assistance with more than 300,000 claims for VA benefits. Each of those claims represents a sacrifice that was made in defense of our American way of life.



REACHING HEROES WHERE THEY LIVE

Many veterans who need our services live far from a DAV National Service Office. DAV has expanded outreach to these veterans by deploying personnel in specially equipped Mobile Service Offices. These are self-contained vehicles capable of generating their own electrical power when local power is not available. Each Mobile Service Office is fully equipped for conducting interviews, obtaining and distributing information and initiating claims for veterans' benefits on behalf of veterans and their families.

Mobile Service Offices also are used to provide onsite DAV emergency relief to veterans and their families who are in need of immediate assistance resulting from disasters, such as tornadoes and floods.

Last year, DAV Mobile Service Offices traveled more than 108,000 miles, offering free services to veterans and their families in nearly 900 communities and resulting in assistance to more than 17,000 veterans.

Ten state-of-the-art, Mobile Service Offices are specifically designed and equipped with laptop computers to accommodate two National Service Officers per vehicle. **Our Mobile Service Offices rack up mileage quickly and must be maintained and replaced over time.**

In addition, portable tents provide flexible space for DAV personnel reaching out to veterans at fairs, shopping centers and other venues.





Mobile Service Offices make it possible for DAV staff to assist veterans wherever they live.



DISASTER RELIEF

In the wake of disaster, DAV rushes to stricken communities to help our ill and injured heroes. As those veterans begin to cope with extreme destruction, DAV service officers and volunteers arrive with immediate disaster relief.

Floods, tornadoes, fires, earthquakes, hurricanes—whatever the cause of devastation—when tragedy strikes, DAV is there to help injured and ill veterans who face daunting challenges that are suddenly compounded by the loss of their home and property.

Most often through our Mobile Service Offices, DAV provides immediate relief by distributing small grants of up to \$500 to disabled veterans affected by disaster. Since the inception of DAV's Disaster Relief program in 1968, more than \$7 million have been disbursed to veterans and their families who have suffered devastating losses.

Thousands of disabled veterans suffered loss when Hurricane Sandy struck the East Coast in the fall of 2012 and again when a series of powerful tornadoes demolished communities in Oklahoma and other parts of the Midwest in the spring of 2013.

As of 2013, DAV's Disaster Response Fund was nearly depleted and in dire need of being replenished. **A reserve of \$1 million is needed to ensure sufficient funds for future disaster relief.**





DAV staff and volunteers are quick to respond to the needs of veterans with disabilities when disaster strikes. Here, DAV rushes aid to eligible veterans and their families after tornadoes devastated communities in Oklahoma.





A Hero Falls on Hard Times

Oliver Pettry, Jr., served in Vietnam as an Army machine-gun squad leader. “I was disabled when I was struck in the chest with splinters from a tree shattered by an explosion,” he said. Oliver was sent to a hospital to heal and then returned to his unit. “I was sent out on patrol the day I got back. I was still bandaged and oozing with blood, but they sent me out.”

When Oliver was discharged, he came home with the Vietnam Gallantry Cross and memories of nearly constant combat. As years passed, his wounds and Agent Orange exposure began to worsen his health. In 2007, DAV helped Oliver get care and compensation for his service-related deteriorating health. Four years later, he would again need DAV’s help.

In 2011, Oliver was injured in an automobile accident, suffering several broken bones in his leg, hip and chest. He recalls:

“I couldn’t even walk around the house, and I lived alone. I had no food in the house because I couldn’t get to the supermarket. I was starving. I dropped to 140 pounds.”

Oliver’s children lived too far away to provide daily care, but his son—also a veteran—sent an email to DAV pleading for help. Upon learning of the dire conditions, the local DAV Commander obtained groceries, a wheelchair and a walker with a seat, courtesy of his Chapter. He then alerted a social worker at the VA medical center, who assigned Oliver a caregiver.

Oliver is now connected with benefits and receives delivered meals. He’s seen at the VA and the state provides a caregiver on a regular basis. His son expressed his gratitude, saying, “I didn’t know if we could find help for my father. DAV stepped up, and it was reassuring. I felt the thanks of a grateful nation had been realized by DAV.”

AID FOR RECOVERING HEROES

Transportation Network

Many veterans needing medical care also need transportation to and from medical appointments. Last year, DAV volunteers donated 1.9 million hours to drive **over 27 million miles as they provided more than 780,000 rides.**

Voluntary Services Program

The DAV volunteer network also encompasses a large number of men and women who extend their appreciation to veterans by providing direct assistance and augmenting care in VA facilities. Our volunteers bring

friendship and a touch of home to veterans during difficult days of illness and therapy in hospitals, nursing homes and clinics. Others may assist VA professional staff in ways that involve little patient contact. Last year DAV volunteers donated more than 100,000 additional hours of service to veterans in VA medical centers, clinics and nursing homes.

Local and State Volunteers

DAV's commitment to veterans includes special initiatives for homeless veterans, household assistance and meeting other pressing needs.



DAV'S 2013 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Working with partner veterans service organizations and relying upon the strength of our grassroots members and supporters, DAV is working aggressively and proactively to advance these key legislative priorities.

Sustain a Robust VA Health Care System for All Eligible Veterans

- Work with Congress and VA to ensure sufficient funding for VA health care programs.
- Develop and promote new legislation and policies that will strengthen and expand advance appropriations for all VA programs and services.
- Develop and build support for a comprehensive long-term plan to address VA's aging health care infrastructure needs, including research facilities.

Improve Access to and Quality of VA Health Care Services

- Expand caregiver services to meet the needs of veterans' caregivers from all eras.
- Improve timely access to mental health care and counseling services, with particular focus on newer veterans in transition.
- Strengthen and expand women veterans health care programs and services.
- Develop a comprehensive plan reforming VA long-term support and services.

Help Veterans Gain Access to Employment Opportunities

- Work with Congress to develop and enact legislation to transfer veterans employment programs from the Department of Labor to VA as part of a new Veterans Economic Opportunity Administration, that also includes vocational, rehabilitation, education and business programs.

Improve the Delivery of Benefits to Veterans, Dependents and Survivors

- Work with VA and Congress to complete the ongoing reform of VA's benefits claims processing system to reduce the claims backlog, while sustaining the focus on quality, accuracy and accountability.
- Develop and promote legislation and policies to expand the use of interim ratings for veterans filing complex and multi-issue disability compensation claims.
- Work with VA and Congress to ensure that any revisions to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities remain faithful to longstanding statutory policy underlying the purpose of the VA disability compensation system.
- Work with Congress to eliminate inequitable policies that prohibit the concurrent receipt of VA disability compensation and military retired pay and that require dependency indemnity compensation and military Survivor Benefit Plan payments to be offset.



President Obama signs a veterans jobs bill at a White House ceremony. On hand to witness the signing are, from left, DAV's National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski, Senate Veterans Affairs Committee Chairman Patti Murray (D-Wash.), Sen. Scott Brown (R-Mass.), Sen. Max Baucus (D-Mont.) and First Lady Michelle Obama.



Then-Senior Vice Commander Joseph Johnston, left, meets with Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), right, as the Department of Ohio delegation urges support for DAV's legislative agenda at a Capitol Hill meeting during the 2013 Mid-Winter Conference.



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TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS
3725 Alexandria Pike
Cold Spring, KY 41076
859-441-7300
Toll Free 877-426-2838

**NATIONAL SERVICE AND
LEGISLATIVE HEADQUARTERS**
807 Maine Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20024
202-554-3501

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