



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

JANUARY | FEBRUARY 2016

MAGAZINE



The liberation of Kuwait through the eyes of veterans

pg. 28

New research paves path for
treatment of Gulf War illness



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Standing up for veterans

Year after year, DAV members have been fighting for their fellow veterans, spurring meaningful changes and advancements through aggressive, effective grassroots advocacy. The premier event in this ongoing grassroots movement is coming up again soon.

All DAV members are invited to come together at the annual Mid-Winter Conference, slated for Feb. 21–24. The most important part of our battle in Washington is you—our vocal members and active grassroots supporters.

Prepare yourself to be the best advocate possible by attending the conference, which will be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Va. There, you'll get the facts, have an opportunity to visit your lawmakers on Capitol Hill and address your concerns as we work together to improve the treatment of veterans in this country.

We need you to stand beside National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. as he delivers DAV's legislative presentation to Congress. The support and direct action from Chapter and Department leaders from across the country make DAV a strong leader among veterans service organizations, especially when we appear before Congress.

Many of you were with us two years ago when we launched the first Operation: Keep the Promise in 2014. Thanks to your efforts and support beginning at that Mid-Winter Conference, we achieved passage of the Putting Veterans Funding First Act, which protects veterans' benefit payments through advance appropriations. Operation: Keep the Promise 2015 began a renewed push for increased support for caregivers and women veterans. As a result, Congress has introduced several pieces of legislation in line with DAV goals.

Now, with the debate on the future of veterans health care heating up, it is more important than ever that our voices are heard. The 2016 Mid-Winter Conference agenda includes workshops and seminars to help bring you up to speed on this and other critical issues and can help guide you as you engage your fellow veterans back home.

Plan to take part in one of the most crucial gatherings of DAV leaders from across the country. Join us as we march onward together, fighting for veterans' rights and benefits. ■



Get Involved

Reservations can be made by calling 800-266-9432 and mentioning group name "Disabled American Veterans."

DAV Mid-Winter Conference, Feb. 21–24, 2016

For more information, visit

dav.org/events/2016-mid-winter-conference

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER MOSES A. MCINTOSH JR.



Keeping the momentum going for 2016

Ask your indulgence as I recap what the last quarter has been like for DAV. The word “busy,” quite frankly, just doesn’t do it justice.

I had the privilege of attending Employee Appreciation Day at DAV National Headquarters. I saw firsthand the level of dedication across all of the different Departments in support of our mission to veterans and their families. National Adjutant Burgess’ headquarters staff is always leaning forward, whether they are supporting our efforts at the Department or Chapter level, working on issues such as veteran employment or letting the public know about the unique challenges facing our nation’s bravest sons and daughters. I left very impressed.

Shortly thereafter, I attended our DAV Auxiliary’s Fall Conference. Once again, I was amazed and captivated by Auxiliary Commander Linda Stake’s remarks and her steadfast dedication to veterans’ families. She said—and I am in agreement—that two pillars make for greater strength than one. I’m grateful for her support, and she has mine as well.

Then we had the DAV 5K Walk, Roll, Run or Ride in Cincinnati, San Diego and Atlanta, our latest expansion city. I am so proud an expansion city was chosen in my home state. Georgia has a large veteran population and has always supported veteran causes. It’s very fitting Atlanta is one of our expansion cities for

2015, and I very much look forward to our new locations for 2016: Tulsa, Okla., and Tidewater, Va.

The DAV 200—Honoring America’s Veterans was truly amazing. A lot of hard work goes into planning an event like this, but the reward is that DAV’s message of service to veterans and their families was broadcast nationally through NASCAR, whose fan base includes many veterans and veteran supporters.

I would be remiss not to say “Well done!” to the local DAV volunteers who helped with disaster relief efforts caused by the wildfires in California and Alaska, the flooding in South Carolina and Kentucky, and the tornado in Illinois. They truly understand the need for local communities to band together for the greater good.

Ladies and gentlemen, that’s a brief summary of just one quarter. Imagine the momentum we are carrying into the new year! We mustn’t let our foot off the gas or slow our efforts. I hope you will join me in bringing this momentum forward to our 2016 Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, D.C., in February. I will deliver testimony to Congress about issues affecting our veterans and their families. Keep an eye on dav.org for further information on scheduling.

I’m looking forward to continuing our momentum in 2016, and I’m very proud to have you with me as we continue this journey. It’s an honor to serve as your National Commander.

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Cover photo by Joseph Sohm/Shutterstock

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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



New Year wishes for true reform

Happy New Year to you all! I am excited to ring in 2016 side by side with my fellow veterans.

This year will, without question, be pivotal for the future of the Veterans Affairs health care system. The end of 2015 brought numerous reports detailing missteps in the department and recommended corrections. The VA has now issued a plan for reform, and DAV and our partners within the veteran community are committed to the creation and implementation of a forward-looking plan to ensure veterans truly have a world-class health care system of their own, centered directly on their needs.

The importance of getting this right cannot be understated. We will be moving swiftly yet judiciously as the year presses forward, knowing that a once-in-a-generation opportunity to truly transform the VA system is upon us.

You are no doubt watching this discussion closely, as the outcome and subsequent reforms will ultimately determine how our nation intends to keep its promises to veterans. It also could impact one of the most critical aspects of your lives—your health. I share your concerns and desire to

ensure the ship is righted for veterans today and well into the future.

I urge you to stay informed and to ask questions. Your engagement throughout this process, sharing your stories and voicing your opinions or support, is incredibly valuable moving forward. Too many of those now charged with planning the future of the VA are not veterans themselves and do not fully understand our experiences and issues. While they no doubt have the best

interests of veterans at heart, they need your feedback now more than ever.

With that in mind, I hope many of you will be joining us for our annual Mid-Winter Conference at the end of February. This is one of our largest and most visible legislative pushes of the year and has

always been a tremendous opportunity to bring our message forward to Washington and let Congress know what matters most to veterans.

I look forward to seeing you all in Washington at this crucial point in time. For those of you unable to attend, you can always catch our Mid-Winter event coverage on DAV's Facebook page, Twitter feed or at dav.org/events/2016-mid-winter-conference, as well as in the May/June issue of *DAV Magazine*.

I share your concerns and desire to **ensure the ship is righted** for veterans today and well into the future.



Suggested changes to IU would threaten veterans' stability

Regarding the article titled "DAV opposes age limits for Individual Unemployability benefits" in the September/October issue of *DAV Magazine*: Because of the stigma of being a Vietnam vet at the time and what I now know was PTSD, I was never able to fulfill my dream of completing college. Unlike my peers who never served or weren't drafted as I was, I also was never able to get or keep a job long enough to get a pension or invest money for retirement. I long had to live on a 30-percent compensation payment, then 70 percent when PTSD was recognized as a combat disorder. IU for me isn't just about lost wages now; it is about a lifetime of lost wages and the ability to invest in my own retirement. We as veterans did what was asked of us. We are where we are through no fault of our own. **Gene Jaress, Skagit County, Wash.**

I read the article about unemployability in the recent *DAV Magazine*. There is no end result yet, so people like me are sitting on pins and needles wondering what they are going to do with us. If the government were to take away unemployability, I'd probably end up homeless. I think it may cause some to just quit. **Al Carlson**

Debate over Purple Heart for PTSD

In response to letters by G.W. Ohland and G.T. Chavez ("Purple Heart for PTSD," September/October issue) with opposing views, I think you are both right. This issue may never be resolved. There is a possible solution, however. Reissue the Badge of Military Merit for those with lifelong illness or disabilities as a result of war. **Steven E. Skuba, Bristol, R.I.**

PTSD, the result of watching their brothers torn to pieces in front of them, is very real. I know soldiers with PTSD who are still in combat even after being separated. They never leave, don't sleep, always are on the defense and alert.

Most of the time they are alone, away from groups. The minimal reminder of the war brings them right back to the front. Do they deserve the Purple Heart? Yes, they most certainly do. **Ramon Morales, Tucson, Ariz.**

Reading the current criteria for award of the Purple Heart for wounds, I feel both traumatic brain injury (TBI) and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) that coexist qualify for the award. Soldiers with TBI were sent back to the front lines to be reinjured further in their brains because it was an invisible wound. Just because no one can see it doesn't mean it doesn't exist. What is the difference between wounds where one soldier suffers brain trauma from an enemy explosion and the other soldier is visibly wounded? Let's end this discrimination of fellow severely wounded veterans with "invisible" internal injuries now. **Jay A. Soncrant, Aurora, Colo.**

I am writing this as a Korean War veteran with a Purple Heart and PTSD since 1953. I was wounded April 17, 1953. I've been married for 59 years. I give credit to my wife, as I put her through hell all these years. I think a woman who puts up with a man with

PTSD deserves a medal. But as far as getting a Purple Heart for PTSD, I'm against it. It is not a wound from the enemy, as blood was not taken. **Leon J. Clem Sr., Statesville, N.C.**

Facebook

facebook.com/DAV

Politicians need to earn the veteran vote

I take my responsibility as a voter very seriously, as I wish more Americans would do. Veterans are a special group, bonded together because we all stood up for this country before. We need to stand up for it again every election. With the start of yet another presidential election, I am paying special attention. With that, I'm disappointed in the lack of knowledge in veterans' issues the candidates are showing so far. I hope they all call on DAV to learn about what veterans and our families really need from our next commander in chief. To ask me for my vote, the candidate better do more than just read the sensationalized headlines. **Michael Osbourne, Oceanside, Calif.**

We need a VA

The age-old agenda to privatize the VA is back, maybe stronger than ever as far as how much money is being spent to make this happen. Fortunately for veterans and unfortunately for those behind this, the guys pushing for this don't know what they're talking about. And it shows. **Bernard Young, Youngstown, Ohio**

WRITE TO US We welcome letters from our readers. Please mail them to *DAV Magazine*, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076, or submit them via email to feedback@dav.org. We regret we are unable to acknowledge every letter due to the volume received. We also welcome feedback on our Facebook (facebook.com/DAV) and Twitter (twitter.com/davhq) pages. Letters used are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety. Messages involving individual claims are referred to the DAV Service Department.

Making sense of it all



Quick reference videos make claims process easier to understand

By Joseph R. Chenelly

“The hope is that these [videos] **provide important answers to veterans’ questions** in a way that everyone can easily digest.”

—Jim Marszalek,
National Service Director



Military members and veterans have a new, easy-to-use resource available online for considering whether a claim should be filed and how to proceed.

DAV created five new “quick reference” videos that outline everything from who should file a claim to what to expect after receiving a decision on a claim. The videos are concise, to the point and designed to be free of confusing government jargon.

“The viewer doesn’t need to know anything about the complicated claims processes in order to understand the information in these videos,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “The hope is that these provide important answers to veterans’ questions in a way that everyone can easily digest.”

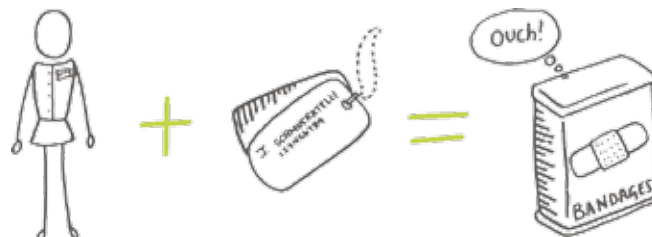
The first video is a minute long and titled “Who Should File a VA Claim?” It offers advice for members of the military and veterans who suspect they may

DAV's 5 new quick reference videos



have an injury or illness caused or aggravated by their military service. The second video, "How to File a VA Claim," lists the basic steps a veteran needs to take to begin a claim and obtain DAV's free representation.

"Assuring the proper steps are taken early is key for the veteran to have a smooth journey through the process," Marszalek said. "Securing an effective date for



the claims and properly filing a power of attorney are important to accomplish right away."

"Seven Ways to Service-Connected Disabilities" is the third video. It is the longest, at just two minutes, because it provides an overview of the various ways veterans' injuries and illnesses qualify as service-connected, compensable conditions.

The fourth video, "What to Expect After Filing a VA Claim," details receiving confirmation that the claim was filed, how DAV can help with screening, what follow-up may be required of the claimant, who makes the official decision and how you will be notified of the outcome.

The final video in the series is "What to Expect After Receiving Your VA Claim Decision." It explains the basics in case a veteran is not happy with a decision.

"These videos are the latest in DAV's efforts to provide helpful information in the most convenient, accessible ways possible," said Dan Clare, National Director of Communications. "Making this available in video format on social networks and searchable online will give millions of veterans access to this important information whenever they need it. It is all part of providing the best service possible to our fellow veterans." ■



Watch Video Online

The videos are available on DAV's YouTube channel at youtube.com/DisabledVeterans. They are also on DAV's Facebook page at facebook.com/DAV/videos. If you have questions regarding the video content or would like to speak with a National Service Officer, visit dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office.

3

CITIES,

2

WEEKENDS,

1

STORY OF
SUCCESS

Run, walk, roll and ride events
impact lives, honor service



San Diego, Nov. 7, 2015

By Bryan G. Lett

Sasha Cantrell—running in her third DAV 5K to honor her late husband Michael Bradford, an Army veteran killed in Afghanistan in 2013—enjoys being a part of any event recognizing and supporting veterans.

“I have been a part of the DAV 5K since its inaugural run in 2013. I love to see the love that comes with being at this event,” Cantrell said. “Everyone is here because they believe in showing support to our military in some way or another. And I think anytime you bring awareness of the continued struggles our military men and women face, you are being effective.”

The DAV 5K—now in its third year—has expanded its walk, run, roll and motorcycle ride to three cities, bringing together thousands of participants and veteran supporters. Cincinnati and San Diego jump-started the 5K series Nov. 7, with the newest host city, Atlanta, following suit on Nov. 14.

“I am extremely proud of our three host cities,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “By adding San Diego last year and by expanding to Atlanta this year, it proves not only the success of the original host city, Cincinnati, but shows how willing people are throughout this nation to support its veterans, and we aim to continue to engage the communities we serve while bringing veterans’ issues to the forefront.”

With nearly 40 percent of the 6,400 participants across the three cities being former military themselves, it was an opportunity to come together with fellow veterans and see the outpouring of community support.



Sasha Cantrell poses with her son, Michael, and her mother on Nov. 7 in Cincinnati. Cantrell was running in her third DAV 5K for her late husband and Army veteran Michael Bradford, who was killed in Afghanistan in 2013.



“Being in the atmosphere of the event was a truly special feeling for me,” said Dustin Lehmann, an Army veteran from both the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts. “First and foremost, I was blown away by the sheer number of people present at the race. I had six family members here, and they were just as taken with the event as I was. It is touching, humbling and invigorating all at the same time.

“Most races support the runners involved, but there was something a little different about this one,” he added. “Being one of the black shirt wearers (worn by veterans), I felt that I developed an instant bond with those around me during the run. Good work, DAV.”

“This was simply a jaw-dropping experience for me...All throughout the course, I kept thinking how inspiring of an event this is.”

—Brandon Marchioni

“For many veterans, they miss the camaraderie of being a part of their unit, and I am no different,” said former Marine and Iraq and Afghanistan veteran Robert Sherman. “There is a bond that you cannot put into words, and being in the moment of the race and the celebration of the day is a way for many to reconnect with who they were as an active-duty service member.”

“It’s important for veterans to know that they are not alone,” said National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. “That’s why there are so many people at these events in these three cities. They’re here to stand up for veterans and help our ill and injured heroes regain a sense of normalcy in their communities.”

In addition to the three host cities stateside, deployed service members in Afghanistan took part in the event with a DAV 5K “shadow run.” The roughly 80 registered runners



DAV National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. expresses his appreciation to the thousands of runners, volunteers, sponsors and supporters who took part in the DAV 5K in Cincinnati Nov. 7.



Navy reservist Cmdr. Mike Brown, who participated in the DAV 5K “shadow run” in Kabul, Afghanistan, holds a “Thank you!” sign honoring World War II veterans and his fellow Navy reservists who have deployed under him since 2008.

in Kabul dedicated their run to a fellow veteran or active-duty service member.

“I ran in honor of two groups,” said Cmdr. Mike Brown, a Navy reservist who took part in the shadow run. “First, the World War II veterans who touched me deeply through the Honor Flight program, as I was privileged to meet over 300 of these veterans over the course of a half-dozen visits to Washington National Airport to greet them when they arrived. Second are my 80-plus Reserve shipmates who have deployed forward since 2008 from five different Reserve units in which I served as either executive officer or commanding officer.

“I am humbled by them and honored to share my current experience with them,” he added.

No matter where or why they took part in this year’s DAV 5K events, for participants like Marine veteran Brandon Marchioni, the event left a lasting impression.

“This was simply a jaw-dropping experience for me,” said Marchioni, a veteran of the Iraq War. “I was blown away about being here. All throughout the course, I kept thinking how inspiring of an event this is, and then you get to the finish and there’s guys on motorcycles cheering for you.

“As a veteran myself, I appreciate all of the hard work that DAV does to assist veterans and their families,” Marchioni added. “The DAV 5K is a great event for all of us to come together to show support of veterans and service members and celebrate all that they do for our country.” ■



View More Photos

Visit [flickr.com/photos/thedav/collections/72157637913355946](https://www.flickr.com/photos/thedav/collections/72157637913355946) to view more photos of the DAV 5K.



2015 DAV 5K Demographics

	CINCINNATI	SAN DIEGO	ATLANTA
APPROXIMATE PARTICIPANTS*	3,600	1,200	1,600
CIVILIAN	59%	22%	41%
VETERAN	28%	53%	52%
YOUTH	11%	21%	5%
MOTORCYCLE	2%	4%	2%

*Numbers include registrants, volunteers and sponsors.



From the NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

JOY J. ILEM

Putting veterans first

Another new year is upon us, DAV's 95th in our remarkable history of supporting wounded, ill and injured veterans. I sincerely hope each of you had a wonderful holiday season and that you are well-rested and ready for another busy year.

In 2016, there will be federal elections for president, the entire House of Representatives and one third of the United States Senate. Given the intense focus on the VA that has occurred over the past 18 months, this will be a critical year for the future direction of the VA system of care and benefits.

We have already heard some candidates call for the VA to shift its role from providing comprehensive health care for veterans to simply paying private-sector providers. Others have suggested that the VA focus solely on specialized services for service-related injuries—or combat injuries—leaving millions of veterans on their own to navigate for-profit health systems to meet the rest of their medical needs.

There is no doubt that the VA health care system is in need of reform—serious reform—and the VA has already begun system-wide transformation through its MyVA initiative. While there is still much to be fixed and modernized inside the VA, we must be vigilant to ensure untested ideas and plans don't threaten the promises made to the men and women who served.

Our nation owes veterans more than just a voucher or plastic card; we have

earned and deserve a system capable of providing high-quality, accessible and comprehensive care. A healthy and robust VA capable of coordinating routine and specialized health care needs of veterans must be the core of the solution.

As required by Congress, the VA has proposed a new plan to consolidate its community care programs, including the Choice program. The VA proposal calls for the creation of an integrated, high-performing national network for veterans' care by strengthening the VA's core competencies and partnering with other federal and private-sector health care systems to ensure seamless access for veterans. This is a good first step, but there remains more to do.

As Congress deliberates these and other VA reform proposals, including the recommendations from the special Commission on Care set up by the Choice Act last year, it will be essential for DAV members to be involved in this debate.

We need you to stand with us during the 2016 DAV Mid-Winter Conference as Commander McIntosh presents DAV's key legislative priorities to Congress. Join us either in person in Washington, or virtually as part of our DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network), which you can join at dav.org/can.

This fight to protect veterans' health care cannot be won without your help and that of all those who support DAV and the needs of veterans disabled in service.

Orientation, mentorship guide helps onboard veterans

By Bryan G. Lett

When a new recruit first joins the military, they aren't simply thrown into uniform and expected to know their role within their respective branch of service. There is a transition period, or an orientation of sorts, better known as boot camp or basic training. There, they learn how to dress and act, their roles and—perhaps most importantly—what is expected of them.

The same approach to acclimating new members to roles and operations of the organization holds true in DAV's 1,351 Chapters. Mentoring and nurturing new members through orientation provides them with a clear understanding of their Chapter's mission, history and goals, and the newly released DAV New Member Orientation/Mentoring Guide is a resource tool that Chapter leaders can use to accomplish this.

"The importance of new member orientation cannot be emphasized enough," said DAV National Membership Director Doug Wells. "When new members are properly informed, they are more likely to feel comfortable with the organization and become actively involved in Chapter activities right away."

The guide touches on all the important steps of not only implementing the program but how to do so effectively.

"Successful new member orientation does more than inform the member; it inspires and motivates them to be the best DAV member or volunteer they can be," said Wells. "This pamphlet is intended to help fraternal leaders conduct new member orientation successfully. When new members are properly introduced to DAV, they are more likely to remain involved for years to come."

The guide touches on numerous important topics, such as the value of training and who should conduct it, the core curriculum, what a successful orientation looks like, and where to find products and materials.

"The DAV new member orientation/mentoring guide makes a substantial contribution to the continued operation and growth of this organization," said Tom Dempster, Commander of Chapter 114,

To download the new member orientation documents, visit dav.org/membership/members/new-members and log in with your DAV membership number.



Livonia, Mich. "The rewards are great knowing that you can help a veteran and his family in need, and with knowledge, you can produce measurable results. As a new member, you'll have more knowledge about the DAV organization and what our mission statement is about and how important our legislation is for our injured heroes on Capitol Hill."

The New Member Orientation Guide was the brain-child of an interim membership committee that was formed to identify the needs of new members and help local Chapter leaders successfully bring in new members.

"When I joined DAV, there was a World War II veteran who mentored me for six months," said Warren Tobin, Chairman of the Interim Membership Committee and Department of North Dakota Adjutant and Treasurer. "He provided a lot of guidance and encouragement. Each Chapter is a little different, and the New Member Orientation Guide is meant to give each Chapter some tips and some ideas, as this was our opportunity to help our Chapters."

"How new members are introduced to DAV is important," said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "Their time is their most precious commodity. If we can show them they are making substantive impact through DAV, if they feel like they are encouraged and heard, they're more likely to get involved. The new members' sense of belonging is vital to their direction within the organization, and a successful orientation is the first step in this process." ■



1

DAV voices support for legislation

DAV offered testimony for the record on several bills under consideration in the Senate in early October. Deputy National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado told lawmakers that DAV strongly supported the Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015, in accordance with DAV’s resolution calling for sustained and sufficient funding to improve services to homeless veterans.

Atizado also testified about the Veterans Court of Appeals Support Act of 2015 (S. 1754) to permanently expand the number of judges authorized to preside over the United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims (CAVC) from seven to nine. “The CAVC has had one of the highest, if not the highest, caseloads per active judge of any federal appellate court in the country,” Atizado testified. “Expanding the number of judges would be in the best interest of veterans who rely on the court to resolve their claims.”

Also under consideration is S. 2022, a bill to increase the amount of special pension for Medal of Honor recipients. Atizado testified that, if enacted, the measure would provide an “increased benefit to these deserving members of our armed forces who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for our country.”



Learn More Online

To view the full testimony, visit dav.org/wp-content/uploads/Atizado20151006.pdf.

No COLA increase for 2016

Disabled veterans, alongside millions of Social Security recipients and federal retirees, will enter 2016 without an increase in the annual cost-of-living adjustment (COLA).

This is the third time the COLA has remained flat since 2010.

In July, both the House and Senate passed legislation without opposition to increase COLA rates for disabled veterans to ensure the benefit is keeping pace with inflation. The government measure of inflation that determines COLA rates, however, has been dragged down by lower gas prices this year, resulting in the stagnant rate.

DAV testified earlier in the year in support of legislation to increase COLA rates for veterans, while opposing any round-down provisions. DAV members also passed a resolution calling on Congress to support the enactment of legislation to provide a realistic increase in VA compensation rates to bring the standard of living of disabled veterans in line with that which they would have enjoyed, had they not suffered their service-connected disabilities.

2

2016 DAV resolution book now available

The full listing of this year's legislative resolutions is now available to help better inform and engage members in support of DAV's mission of advocacy for veterans.



The 2016 DAV resolution book, which includes the 138 resolutions adopted by the delegates attending our most recent National Convention in Denver, was sent to Department- and national-level DAV and DAV Auxiliary leaders and committee members.

The resolutions, passed Aug. 8–11, 2015, represent DAV's 2016 Legislative Program and help shape the organization's advocacy efforts in Washington.



Learn More Online


The resolutions are also posted on the DAV website at dav.org/learn-more/legislation/resolutions.

3

Year-End Legislative Updates

At time of publication, several pending pieces of legislation concerning DAV priorities were awaiting further progress through Congress. Check current DAV news at dav.org/learn-more/news for updated information.

Career fairs go **virtual**



DAV, new partner set goal to help 10,000 disabled veterans get work

By Steven Wilson

DAV has announced a new relationship that will make the job search process more accessible for veterans with disabling injuries.

Through an exclusive partnership with Veteran Recruiting, DAV will help facilitate 10 virtual career fairs in 2016 and create an online resource to connect them with DAV's free services.

In addition to the expansion of services, DAV and Veteran Recruiting are working with employers on a pledge to ensure a minimum of 10,000 service-connected disabled veterans are hired. Four of the virtual fairs are devoted exclusively to disabled veterans and the growing number of companies on board to hire them.

"Since we launched our employment initiative, we've wanted to make employment as accessible as possible for veterans and their spouses—especially veterans who are dealing with disabling injuries," said National Employment Director Jeff Hall. "Between the opportunities we create through traditional career fairs and our online efforts, DAV will be the most prolific conduit for employment for those who've served."

According to Hall, the online fairs, which are free to veterans and spouses, allow attendees to navigate a job fair in a virtual setting much like they would at a traditional brick-and-mortar fair.

"The veteran will basically appear as a walking résumé to the recruiters seeking veteran talent," Hall explained. "An employer can hover their cursor over

the veteran's information, résumé and cover letter and, with a click of their mouse button, invite them to an interview or private chat right away."

The 10K DAV Hiring Challenge, sponsored by Veteran Recruiting and DAV, was developed to challenge businesses nationwide to provide 10,000 disabled veterans with meaningful employment by 2018.

"We feel that the community DAV serves is a natural fit," said Kevin O'Brien, founder of Veteran Recruiting. "DAV helps a diverse population, but for severely disabled veterans, it's very helpful if we can bring a career fair to them in the comfort of their own homes."

O'Brien also noted that transitioning service members have the advantage of looking for employers located across the country, no matter where they are stationed in the world. The virtual environment is always open for employers, service members and veterans, whether Veteran Recruiting is hosting an "active" career fair or not.

The DAV/RecruitMilitary All Veteran Career Fairs will also return in 2016. Hall said he expects DAV to host more than 60 traditional veteran job fairs nationwide.

The combined total support between the traditional career fairs and the virtual career fairs for veterans and spouses in 2016 is estimated to be nearly 70,000 people.

DAV's online job search board currently lists more than 800,000 job opportunities, and this free resource continues to see more than 5,000 visitors each month. ■



Learn More Online

The job search board and other veteran employment resources can be found at jobs.dav.org.

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER LINDA S. STAKE



Membership matters

We leave 2015 with lots to be proud of, and as we make our way into 2016, we can look forward to a busy yet exciting road ahead.

In October, DAV National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. spoke at our DAV Auxiliary Fall Conference. I'm very pleased that he is on board with our mission of caring for a group of special heroes—the families of veterans. He made it quite clear the DAV Auxiliary has his support, and I'm very grateful to have such a compassionate partner and leader to stand with us.

As 2016 unfolds, I would like everyone to think about the importance of expanding our ranks. Membership is vital to our cause. It takes many voices to make an organization heard, and I need your help in bringing new members into our fold.

Many of you probably know someone who supports veteran-related causes but may be unaware they're eligible to be part of a powerful body like ours. It's very likely someone from their family or extended family once served, is serving or has since passed on after their service. Any of those things makes someone eligible to join our organization.

DAV Auxiliary members are leaders in their respective communities, but as I learned a long time ago, good leaders are mentors who are committed to

ensuring the legacy of their service lives on. If we're going to stay strong in our mission of caring for veterans' spouses, widows and widowers, children and caregivers, we have to bring new members in to ensure we keep moving forward in these endeavors.

Please work through your networks of coworkers, family, friends and neighbors to invite them to join the DAV Auxiliary. Tell them about the joy you've gained from being involved, and explain to them that they can be part of that great feeling as well.

Our 2016 Mid-Winter Conference is rapidly approaching. I hope you'll join me in Washington, D.C., as we bring issues affecting veterans and their families to our lawmakers' doorstep. I intend to let my elected

representatives know that, with your votes, we will hold them accountable for ensuring positive legislation is enacted for injured and ill veterans and their families. I hope to see you there!

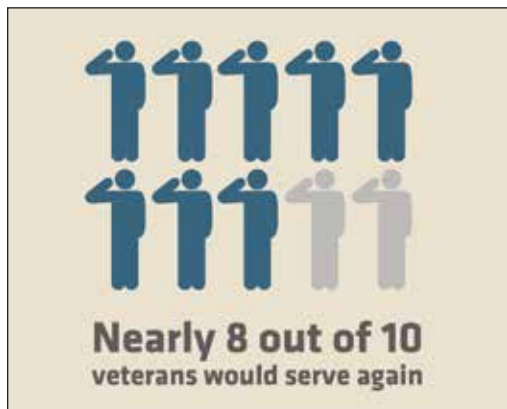
It's an honor to work beside each and every one of you, and I hope you're looking forward to continuing our work in the coming year.

Always keep our veterans who are in harm's way close to your hearts. God bless you, God bless our veterans, and God bless the United States of America.

Membership is vital to our cause. I need your help in bringing new members into our fold.

THE DAV VETERANS PULSE SURVEY

An unprecedented look at veterans' opinions



This year on Veterans Day, DAV released the findings from “The DAV Veterans Pulse Survey,” the largest, most comprehensive assessment ever taken to reveal how veterans of all generations view their military experience, benefits and overall quality of life.

“We conducted this survey to promote deeper understanding of veterans’ perceptions and experiences, so DAV, the government and the American public can do a better job helping veterans succeed,” said Marc Burgess, DAV National Adjutant. “What we learned is that while veterans are proud of their military service, there are major gaps in the support and benefits they receive.”

The survey, which is nationally representative of America’s 22 million veterans and was featured in *The Wall Street Journal*, found that veterans believe their service had a positive impact on their lives. In fact, 79 percent said they would “do it all over again.” However, the survey findings also reveal that only one in five veterans feel the government treats them well.

Veterans believe their service had a positive impact on their lives. In fact, 79 percent said they would **“do it all over again.”**



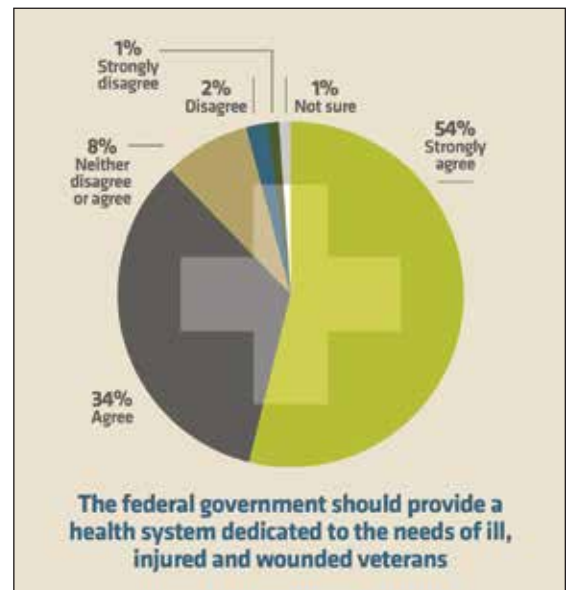
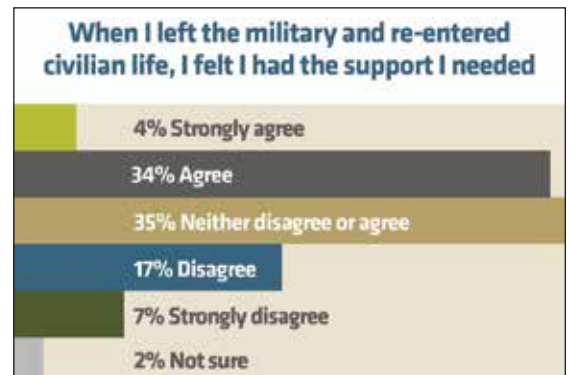
Less than half, just 44 percent of veterans, reported they have received the health, disability, financial and education benefits they were promised. And only 18 percent believe that disabled veterans have received promised benefits.

In terms of health care, 87 percent of veterans agree that the federal government should provide a system dedicated to the needs of ill, injured and wounded veterans.

When it came to making the transition back to civilian life, just 38 percent of veterans feel they had the support needed. Younger veterans, in particular, said they face challenges finding employment.

“These survey findings remind us just how critical it is to support our veterans—from ensuring they have the benefits they need to be productive and successful, to hiring veterans, to volunteering,” Burgess said. “It’s clear that our country can and should do more.”

“This is really the most comprehensive assessment ever taken to reveal how all generations of veterans view their military experience, benefits and overall quality of life. DAV members should look closely at these results, as they’re nationally representative of the thoughts and opinions of the entire veteran community,” said National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. “The data we gathered also gives us some nuanced information about how genders and generations view the veteran experience.” ■



 [Learn More Online](#)

To see the entire survey, go to www.VeteransPulse.com.



Left:
Ernest Houser III (right) takes the oath of enlistment at the Oklahoma City Military Entrance Processing Station. Houser is joining the Marine Corps Reserve and will attend boot camp at Marine Corps Recruit Depot San Diego.



Right:
Ernest Houser III (left) at the Oklahoma Fall Conference in Lawton.

Oklahoma youth transformed through Junior Auxiliary experience

By M. Todd Hunter

Quiet. Rebellious. Directionless. Those are the words Auxiliary Department of Oklahoma Adjutant Linda Oliver used to describe 14-year-old Ernest Houser III, whose grandfather—an Army veteran of World War II and DAV life member—began bringing him to Chapter 88’s meetings in Coweta six years ago.

“Whether it was community service or a bake sale, we just started including him in whatever projects we did,” said Oliver. “And like any of our other kids, he went through that transition of ‘Why do I have to do this?’ or ‘What’s the purpose?’”

But Houser’s initial reluctance eventually faded as his involvement as a junior member of the DAV Auxiliary grew.

“Like any child, you instill good manners and traits and let them know why we pledge allegiance and respect our flag and our veterans,” Oliver explained.

“Just sitting around and hearing some of the older veterans telling stories about what they had been through was really eye-opening,” Houser, now 20, explained. “DAV helped me get out of my comfort zone, and being around veterans has helped me take pride in what I’m doing now.”

Houser began taking on increased responsibilities both at his family’s cattle ranch and within the organization after his grandfather passed away in 2012—an apt illustration of the young man Houser has become through his involvement with the Department of

Oklahoma’s Auxiliary, where he now serves as the Junior Vice Commander. In addition to the statewide role, he also serves on the local level as the Senior Vice Commander of Chapter 88’s Auxiliary.

“He’s always there when you need him,” praised Oliver.

Houser, though, is now taking his service and appreciation for veterans one step further. In August 2015, he took the oath of enlistment to enter the Marine Corps’ delayed entry program. He leaves for boot camp in January, preparing to become an anti-tank infantryman in the Marine Corps Reserve.

“To find out he was going into the service was like, ‘Oh my gosh, your grandpa is going to be smiling down on you,’ because I don’t think his grandpa would’ve ever thought he’d do that,” said Oliver.

“Without DAV, I probably would’ve never really known about the military,” Houser admitted. “But I’m glad I do, and I hope it helps me accomplish some things down the road.”

Specifically, Houser hopes to continue gaining the confidence to remove himself from his comfort zone and become a more vocal, outgoing person. He also hopes to earn his college degree while in the reserves and eventually become an active-duty commissioned officer.

While only time will tell if he accomplishes these goals, Oliver now uses three different words to describe Houser since he became involved with the DAV Auxiliary: Proud. Responsible. Leader. ■



Golden Corral cooks up a thank-you for veterans

Military Appreciation Night honors veterans with free meal while supporting grassroots initiatives

By Bryan G. Lett

Roger Wagner knows the value of DAV’s services. A few years ago, he was undergoing dialysis, and getting to the hospital for the treatment he needed to live became challenging. “My wife would have to come and pick me up,” he explained. “There was no prior ambulatory service in Northern Kentucky.”

Fortunately for Wagner and other veterans in his community, enough funds were raised from Golden Corral Military Appreciation events to purchase a 12-passenger Ford van that was donated to the VA medical center in Cincinnati. Now for Wagner, and many others, transportation is just a call away.

“We have this van to take veterans to and from their appointments,” said Wagner, who serves as the Adjutant and Chaplain of Chapter 19 in Cold Spring, Ky. Through the opportunity Golden Corral created and the generosity of its customers, the event continues daily to make a positive difference in the lives of those who’ve served.



Golden Corral restaurants hosted their 15th Annual Military Appreciation Night Nov. 11, 2015, at all of their locations nationwide, serving up a free “thank-you” meal to current and former service members. The event honors veterans and helps raise funds for DAV Chapters and Departments, supporting initiatives that help veterans lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

“This is a wonderful way for the men and women of the local Chapters to reach out to other veterans who come through the same lines and a good way to reach out to the community,” said Wagner.

“The entire Golden Corral system is very passionate about supporting our military service men and women, and we believe thanking them with a free dinner buffet is one way to show our immense appreciation for their service to our country,” said Lance Trenary, President and CEO of Golden Corral.

“We’re all about helping veterans, and the funds we raise here help us do that.”

–Mattie Whitfield
Chapter 33 Commander, Odenton, Md.

For the past 15 years, Golden Corral and DAV have seen the impact of the partnership, and veterans have benefitted from the local veteran programs supported by this fundraiser. Since the program began, Golden Corral has served more than 4.7 million free dinners to veterans and has raised more than \$11.5 million in donations to



DAV Chapter 33, Odenton, Md., raised funds and reached out to veterans in their community at the Golden Corral in Hanover for Military Appreciation Night. Chapter 33 was the top fundraiser for Military Appreciation Night in 2014. Chapter Commander Mattie Whitfield (left) said Chapter 33 members are very passionate about helping veterans, active service members and military families in the community.

support local DAV Chapters and their community veteran programs throughout the nation. The 2015 Military Appreciation Night events collected over \$1.3 million for Departments and Chapters while serving more than 336,000 free meals to veterans and service members.

“We are very honored to have raised more than \$11.5 million for DAV over the years and look forward to continuing our partnership in the coming years,” said Trenary.

“In addition to raising funds, Military Appreciation Night is a great opportunity for our many Chapters to connect with veterans throughout the nation and engage them about the services we offer veterans at no cost,” said





DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “Golden Corral was the first business in the country to provide free meals for veterans in recognition of their service. While others have followed their lead, this event is far and away the most productive of its kind in supporting veterans long after the holiday is over.”

For many of DAV’s local Chapters, this night of camaraderie and fundraising generates momentum that helps sustain their mission of service and advocacy throughout the year.

“The donations give us the capability to give back to other veterans through our service programs, information sessions and homeless stand downs,” said Commander Ron Burgess, of DAV Chapter 48, Dale City, Va. “It’s veterans helping veterans.”

“We like to give back to the veterans in the community and to their families,” added Mattie Whitfield, DAV Chapter 33 Commander in Odenton, Md. “We’re all about helping veterans, and the funds we raise here help us do that.”

For Army veteran Jayme Dallas, of Columbus, Ohio, the sustainment of these programs can be the difference between getting the services he needs and going without.

“Many of these veterans I know have been homeless at various times, and coming to events like Military Appreciation Night connects these veterans to each other and services they need,” he said.

Dallas added that for a number of veterans, it’s more than a meal. It’s also a reunion and an opportunity to celebrate their service.

Commander Steve Girdler, of DAV Chapter 19 in Kentucky, also believes the event honors veterans in

many ways beyond a free meal. “The event also allows DAV to continue its mission of empowering our veterans to live high-quality lives through Golden Corral’s donations and support of local DAV programs,” he said. “It also reminds veterans that people care and appreciate their service. It gets vets out, it gets DAV’s name out, and it shows our nation’s veterans who we are and what DAV can do for them. I am proud to be a part of it.” ■

Marking 15 years of generous support



Total meals served in 2015

336,077



Total funds raised for DAV in 2015

\$1,354,682



Total meals served since 2001

4,776,553



Total funds raised for DAV since 2001

\$11,556,046





Left: Past National Commander Ron Hope, a former Army helicopter pilot who served in Vietnam, discusses the Potomac Honor Flight with one of the participating pilots in Culpeper, Va. **Above:** DAV's airshow team flies the B-25 Mitchell bomber, which became legendary after the famous Doolittle Raid in early 1942. The bombers in the raid flew from an aircraft carrier to strike the Japanese home islands, which greatly restored American morale after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

DAV airshow team wraps up 2015

By Steven Wilson

DAV's airshow team, along with the iconic B-25 Mitchell bomber Panchito, ended their 2015 tour, which included 12 stops across the nation, with a total airshow attendance of nearly 1.5 million spectators.

"I'm very proud of the outreach efforts by our airshow team," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "That's a lot of people who are learning about our unique mission of service to veterans through a very distinctive platform."

The 2015 season began in March in Titusville, Fla., and ended in October in Houston. The season saw stops ranging from Maine to Wisconsin and several places between.

The highlight of the 2015 season was at the largest airshow in the nation, held in Oshkosh, Wisc., where DAV led the veterans parade and sponsored the grand

finale by hosting longtime DAV supporter and friend Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band.

This year's tour saw DAV once again visit Culpeper, Va., where the community organized the Potomac Flight over several of the national capital's landmarks, dedicating the flight to DAV. The flight consisted of nearly two dozen World War II-era T-6 Texans and was led by Panchito, with Past National Commander Ron Hope, a pilot himself, sitting in the copilot seat.

"Organizing something like the Potomac River flight is no small task," Hope said. "When you consider that's the most protected airspace in the world, it really shows how supportive the event organizers are to veterans." ■

 [View More Photos](#)

Visit [flickr.com/gp/thedav/9W5W78](https://www.flickr.com/gp/thedav/9W5W78) to view more photos of the 2015 airshow season.

ATLANTA

to host DAV National Convention

July 31 – August 3, 2016
Hyatt Regency Atlanta on Peachtree Street

The city's rich history combines with inspiration-inducing attractions to create a city with Southern charm and world-class sophistication. It's easy to see why Atlanta is one of the most popular destinations in the nation to visit.

Atlanta offers tons of fun for everyone—from family-friendly attractions and history to outdoor adventures and award-winning culture.

Beyond meeting fellow veterans and influencing DAV's future, convention attendees can experience a multitude of adventures in the city. Atlanta is known for its fine dining, premier shopping and unique museums and galleries. A beautiful, historic city, it offers boutiques, spas and shops, amusement parks, a renowned aquarium and plenty of outdoor recreation.

Pioneering attendees will have every chance to advocate for veterans with disabling injuries while enjoying everything the Peach State has to offer.

Returning attendees should be aware that the convention will be held from Sunday to Wednesday this year, rather than the traditional Saturday through Tuesday. The schedule for events will change accordingly.

Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band is slated to play Monday night.

Our special room rate is \$125 per night for a single or double. Additional hotel reservation information is available at bit.ly/AtlantaReservations, or by calling 888-421-1442 or 404-577-1234. Be sure to tell them you are reserving under the "Disabled American Veterans" room block if making reservations by phone. ■



Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band will perform during Fun Night.



Travel Assistance

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) can facilitate the screening of injured or wounded veterans. After making flight reservations, veterans (or their care coordinators) should contact a TSA Cares representative by calling toll-free 855-787-2227 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time. A representative will either provide screening information relevant to the veteran's disability, or the veteran may be referred to experts at TSA to help them through the screening process.



Learn More Online

Visit dav.org/events/2016-national-convention for more information.

National Commander's testimonial dinner

DAV National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. is scheduled to deliver the National Commander's Annual Testimonial remarks at a formal dinner on April 30 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta.

Atlanta features alluring spring azaleas and dogwood trees, which will provide an elegant backdrop to venues such as the nearby historical Martin Luther King Jr. National Historic Site and the new Center for Civil and Human Rights—both within walking distance of the Hyatt Regency—as well as other popular sites.

Rooms at the Hyatt are available for a special DAV rate of \$125 per night for a single or double from April 27 to May 2. Reservations can be made under the “DAV National Commander Testimonial” block by calling Hyatt central reservations at 888-421-1442, or through the website aws.passkey.com/event/14205944/owner/323/home. Cutoff for room reservations is April 6.

Early registration will take place from 4 to 6 p.m. Thursday, April 28, for those who are planning to



arrive early. There will be an informal reception with drinks and light snacks from 4 to 6 p.m. Friday, April 29. The cost of Saturday's testimonial dinner registration is \$50. A cocktail hour will begin at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7. Baked salmon, glazed chicken, beef tenderloin or vegetarian entrees will be served. Tables of 10 may also be reserved for \$500.

The deadline for dinner registration is April 6. Please make checks payable to “Moses A. McIntosh Testimonial.” Please mail payments to: Dr. Tincie M. Lynch, 956 Hodges Court, Marietta, GA 30064. ■

Auxiliary National Commander's testimonial

DAV Auxiliary National Commander Linda Stake's testimonial dinner is scheduled for April 16 at the Marriott Hotel in Little Rock, Ark.

Attendees will be treated to a free riverboat cruise down the Arkansas River on the Mark Twain riverboat, boarding at 5 p.m. Friday, April 15. There will be heavy snacks and a cash bar followed by a free catered barbecue meal at 7 p.m. Dress for the riverboat activities is casual.

Attendees will also journey to the River Market for lunch at noon Saturday, followed by a trolley tour of Little Rock.

The testimonial dinner on April 16 will begin with social hour at 6 p.m., featuring a cash bar. The dinner



will begin at 7 p.m. and costs \$65. Checks should be made payable to Charles Stake, 1751 Lakeshore Drive, Heber Springs, AR, 72543.

The room rate is \$109, not including tax, per night. Reservations may be made by contacting the Marriott Hotel, 3 Statehouse Plaza, Little Rock, AR 72543, or by calling 501-906-4000. Please make sure you tell the reservations clerk you are attending the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary testimonial dinner. ■



DAV 200

HONORS VETERANS



DESMITH PHOTOGRAPHY

By Steven Wilson

The DAV 200, a NASCAR Xfinity event held in partnership with Phoenix International Raceway, honored our nation’s heroes and their families Nov. 14.

The event, which was televised nationally, helped make veterans aware of DAV’s services and the public aware of their sacrifices.

“NASCAR fans are typically very patriotic citizens who want to support their nation’s heroes,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “We appreciate the opportunity this gives us to connect them with the DAV community in a unique and exciting way.”

DAV representatives had key roles in event activities, including National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr., who served as the race grand marshal and gave the command for drivers to start their engines.

National Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. speaks at a pre-race press conference at Phoenix International Raceway Nov. 14. Roush Fenway Driver Chris Buescher carried the DAV in-car camera during the event and went on to win the series championship the following weekend.

“It was quite an experience to be there and to feel the energy and excitement the fans showed for the sport. You could tell that they were equally rooting on the veterans whose service and sacrifices make our way of life possible,” said McIntosh. “They get it. This is a great outreach platform for DAV.”

Kyle Busch claimed victory, responding to the cheering crowd with the traditional burnout at the start/finish line before driving to victory lane. He led all but 10 laps of the event.

Burgess and McIntosh presented Busch with the winner’s trophy and thanked him for supporting DAV’s mission to America’s veterans. ■

VA takes steps to eliminate veteran homelessness



■ At the end of September, VA Secretary Robert McDonald announced that the Grant and Per Diem (GPD) program is awarding \$12.8 million in renewal funding to 20 community agencies that currently provide transitional housing with supportive services for homeless veterans under the Transition in Place (TIP) model. According to the VA, the GPD program is a key component to its plan to eliminate homelessness among veterans. The program provides per diem payments to help public and nonprofit organizations establish and operate supportive housing for homeless veteran populations, specifically the TIP approach, which facilitates rapid movement from transitional housing to permanent housing. TIP enables veterans to live as independently as possible, while increasing housing stabilization.

It is estimated that nearly 50,000 American veterans are homeless at any given time in our country.

For more information about the VA's homeless initiatives, visit va.gov/homeless.

VA's Million Veteran Program hits milestone

■ The VA's voluntary medical database system, the Million Veteran Program (MVP), has surpassed the 400,000-veteran mark. The program—one of the largest in the world—links genetic, clinical, lifestyle and military-exposure information with the goal of learning more about the role of genes in health and disease. MVP is a national, voluntary research program funded entirely by the VA's Office of Research & Development. The goal of MVP is to partner with veterans receiving their care in the VA health care system to study how genes affect health. Veterans who volunteer for the program donate blood and periodically fill out surveys about their health, health-related behaviors and military experiences. All of the veterans' information is kept secure and de-identified.

MVP is already the largest database of its kind in the U.S. and operates at more than 50 VA medical centers. Data collected through MVP is available to researchers for use in approved studies, including post-traumatic stress disorder, schizophrenia, bipolar disorder, substance-abuse disorders and heart and kidney disease.



“We are proud to see the progress being made in MVP, and we are confident the knowledge gained through this research will have a very tangible and positive impact on the health care that veterans and all Americans receive,” said VA Secretary Robert McDonald. “We applaud our veterans participating in the program. The selfless sacrifice they are making will allow researchers to gain valuable, important information.”

For more information about MVP and VA research, visit www.research.va.gov.

From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



Forgiveness

Greetings, everyone. Most people think forgiveness is something earned, either when trying to forgive themselves or others. It's clear there are some misconceptions about it.

Failing to understand the basic principles of forgiveness has caused countless people to experience unhealthy feelings of guilt that lead to worry, depression, loss of inner peace, fear, low self-esteem, loneliness and a sense of alienation from our Creator.

Forgiveness does not mean forgetting. It's normal for memories to be triggered in the future. When thoughts of past hurts occur, it's what we do with them that counts. When we find ourselves focusing on a past offense, we can learn to say, "Thank you for this reminder of how important forgiveness is."

Forgiveness is a process, not an event. It might take some time to work through our emotional problems before we can truly forgive. Forgetting does not mean denying reality or ignoring repeated offenses.

Forgiveness is not based on others' actions, but on our attitude. People will continue to hurt us throughout our lives. We can look outward at them—staying stuck and angry—or we can begin to keep our minds on our loving relationship

with our Creator, knowing and trusting in what is good.

Forgiveness starts with a mental decision. The emotional part of forgiveness is finally being able to let go of the resentment. Emotional healing may or may not follow quickly after we forgive. It's OK.

Guilty feelings may not disappear overnight, but that doesn't mean you're

not forgiven. Most of us are amateurs and bunglers when we try to forgive. All of us need our Creator's help in forgiving, especially when we don't feel like it.

Give up expecting things from other people. Recognize the "unenforceable rules" you have for your health or how you or other people

must behave. Remind yourself that you can hope for health, love, peace and prosperity and work hard to get them.

The practice of forgiveness has been shown to reduce anger, hurt, depression and stress. It can lead to greater feelings of hope, peace, compassion and self-confidence. Practicing forgiveness leads to healthy relationships as well as physical health. It also influences our attitude, which opens the heart to kindness, beauty and love.

In His Service to You.

Forgiveness is a process, not an event.

It might take some time to work through our emotional problems before we can truly forgive.

By Steven Wilson

25 YEARS LATER



An American colonel and his Kuwaiti counterpart speak to members of the media following the cease-fire that ended Operation Desert Storm. (National Archives)

On anniversary, veterans remember Kuwait liberation

After years of escalating tensions in the Persian Gulf region, Iraq launched an invasion against its oil-rich and smaller neighbor, Kuwait, on Aug. 2, 1990. Within 12 hours, the bulk of the fighting was over. The Kuwaiti royal family had fled, and most of the country's military forces had been overrun by the Iraqi army.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein declared Kuwait was annexed and part of Iraq. The United Nations promptly condemned the invasion and demanded the Iraqi forces withdraw, and George H.W. Bush deployed forces to Saudi Arabia and began to form a coalition.

Operation Desert Storm began on Jan. 17, 1991, as Iraq refused to withdraw its forces. More than 500,000 allied military personnel deployed to the region, launching an intense aerial campaign and series of ground attacks.

On Feb. 27, 1991, Hussein ordered his forces to retreat and President Bush declared Kuwait's liberation.

Now, 25 years after the liberation of Kuwait, several of DAV's Gulf War-era members have reflected on their experiences from this pivotal point in history, discussing differences in the conflict itself and reintegration into civilian life as compared to veterans returning from the current wars.

Heath Prater, of Chapter 98, Anniston, Ala., said he was "either too tired or too busy to remember a lot."

"There isn't a lot of change or difference [between Desert Storm and what] service members face today," added Prater, who went on to deploy to Iraq both in 2004 and 2010. "It's all about shoot, move and communicate."

Richard Kennon, of Chapter 7, Jacksonville, Ark., was responsible for training Marines to defend against nuclear, biological and chemical attacks during the war.

"Many military personnel have experienced multiple deployments, which has led to an increase in mental health issues and difficulties with transitioning to the civilian world," he said.

Jan A. Hagashi, of Chapter 1, Tuscaloosa, Ala., said a difference he noticed was the way service members were



Roughly 4.7 million people attended the 1991 Desert Storm Victory Ticker Tape Parade down New York's iconic "Canyon of Heroes." (Joseph Sohm/Shutterstock)

received by the public when they arrived home and the support resources available to veterans.

"As a Vietnam- and Desert Storm-era Air Force vet, I definitely saw the contrast in the homecoming of military members from both [conflicts]," he said. "I can say DAV and other veteran nongovernmental advocacy groups have supported the quality-of-life issues of all our veterans along with community service throughout the years."

Gulf War veteran Anthony Swofford, author of *The New York Times*' best-seller "Jarhead," offered his perspective as well.

"Desert Storm ended and soon left the public consciousness and discourse," he said. "The two protracted post-9/11 wars have kept veterans affairs on the front burner. The valiant work the DAV does is ongoing"

More than 4,000 DAV members, their families and veteran supporters took part in a discussion on DAV's Facebook page concerning the 25th anniversary of Operation Desert Storm. ■

 To join the conversation, visit DAV's social media feeds at facebook.com/DAV or twitter.com/davhq.

New hope for toxic wounds

A new study conducted in partnership between the Department of Veterans Affairs and Rutgers University may help doctors find ways to better treat one of the main symptoms of Gulf War Illness (GWI).

The study showed Gulf War veterans "not only had more mitochondrial DNA, but also more mitochondrial DNA damage than otherwise healthy adults."

Mitochondrial damage is known to lead to chronic fatigue, which is one of the most common symptoms reported by those suffering from GWI.

SYMPTOMS OF GWI:

- Fatigue
- Headaches and cognitive impairments
- Musculoskeletal pain
- Respiratory and gastrointestinal dysfunction

While more research is needed to confirm the findings, the information may help guide new diagnostic testing and treatments for veterans suffering from GWI. Studies estimate one in four Gulf War veterans suffer from GWI symptoms.

The VA presumes certain chronic, unexplained symptoms lasting six months or more are related to Gulf War service, and veterans do not need to prove service connection for these illnesses in order to receive disability compensation, as long as they meet certain criteria.

Gulf War veterans, their dependents and survivors may be eligible for a variety of VA benefits. Visit benefits.va.gov/persona/veteran-gulfwar.asp to learn more.



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For more information:

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- OR
- email giftplanning@dav.org
- OR
- return the attached postcard

Fixed income payments for life through a DAV Charitable Gift Annuity is a win-win for the donor and millions of disabled veterans that DAV serves

Retired Col., Joseph “Jay” Kopecky has dedicated his life to selfless service. He is a 38-year veteran who spent eight years on active duty, 20 years in the reserves and 10 years in the National Guard. Kopecky is a life member of DAV and has proudly served his fellow veterans as a DAV Transportation Network driver in Hope, Ark., for more than seven years.

By taking out a Charitable Gift Annuity through the Charitable Service Trust (CST) and making a contribution of \$10,000 or more, Kopecky will receive fixed monthly payments for the rest of his life while leaving a legacy that will allow DAV to help countless ill and injured veterans long after he is gone.

For Kopecky, this was not a hard decision. “When I realized after my near-death experience in Iraq that I wasn’t going to be able to go into the afterlife with a U-Haul attached to my casket, I thought to myself that I could do more for those who follow in the name of those who have led.”

When asked why he is such a strong supporter of DAV, Kopecky explains that DAV was there for him when he needed it. “DAV is an organization which believes in service rather than bureaucracy,” he said. “DAV is so important because it is serving those who served—DAV served me and cut through the red tape. This is why I became a life member. DAV exists to serve all veterans who need support.”

You are invited to stand with Kopecky and DAV in support of our country’s deserving men and women by creating your own legacy of hope and compassion with a Charitable Gift Annuity through the CST. ■



Jay Kopecky, a retired Army colonel and DAV member, is giving back to his fellow veterans and building a more secure financial future through a DAV Charitable Gift Annuity.



A veteran meets with a job recruiter at a DAV/RecruitMilitary All Veterans Career Fair held Oct. 8 in Cincinnati.

DAV spearheads veteran employment campaign

DAV, Charitable Service Trust ally to connect veterans to meaningful jobs

By Steven Wilson

DAV recognizes the transition from military service to civilian life is a challenging one, involving a lifestyle change with a lot of unanswered questions and concerns. This makes finding meaningful employment to support themselves and their families one of the biggest obstacles veterans must negotiate.

This is why DAV created its newest department in 2014, which functions solely to help veterans and their spouses find jobs.

“Veteran employment rates continue to improve, but we still are seeing some gaps in the employment sector that the nation should address,” said National Employment Director Jeff Hall.

Hall said that, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, overall veteran unemployment dropped by 1.4 percent last year, but post-9/11 veterans are still

experiencing higher rates of unemployment, as are women veterans across all eras.

DAV’s employment Web page is one resource veterans can use to find meaningful employment opportunities across the nation. The employers featured on the site are actively looking for veterans who fit their company’s needs.

In the first year of the program, DAV committed to sponsor 34 all-veteran job fairs at no cost to veterans or their spouses. By the close of 2015, DAV had hosted 70 more career fairs and anticipates conducting at least 60 in 2016.

“There’s no easy fix to the issue of ensuring all veterans find meaningful jobs,” Hall said. “This is just one part of the solution. I think it’s important for employers across the country to recognize veterans have leadership and managerial experience in addition to being the most trainable prospective employees in the nation.”

As DAV heads into its 96th year of providing a lifetime of support for veterans and their families, the DAV Charitable Service Trust has long supported employment programs in many different forms.

This past year, the Trust provided a grant to the Food Bank of Delaware to provide tuition, equipment and classroom supplies for low-income veterans attending the Food Bank Culinary School to gain chef training and on-the-job experience through industry internships. The Trust also provided a grant to the Rush University Medical Center in Illinois, where the donated funds will assist 26 veterans in developing skills in the health care IT field through paid internships.

Securing meaningful employment for disabled veterans extends beyond identifying companies that want to hire them. Many veterans need assistance with the job search itself. This is why the Trust supported Wheels of Success, which restores donated vehicles for personal use by veterans and their families. The Trust knows disabled veterans and their families need reliable transportation to access basic needs, as well as other

supportive services to maximize physical, mental, social and financial health.

“Through the generosity of donors who support veteran causes, we’re able to offer positive, life-changing services to veterans and their families,” said Trust President Richard E. Marbes. “I’m a disabled veteran myself, so I know what it’s like to look for work to support a family. That’s why supporting employment through the Trust is so vital.” ■



“[I]t’s important for employers across the country to **recognize veterans** have leadership and managerial experience in addition to being the most trainable prospective employees in the nation.”

*Jeff Hall,
DAV National Employment Director*

2016 ALL VETERANS CAREER FAIRS

Date	City	Location
January 14	San Antonio, TX	Norris Conference Centers
January 14	Tampa, FL	Straz Center for the Performing Arts
January 21	Oklahoma City, OK	Chevy Bricktown Event Center
January 27	Virtual Event	www.veteranrecruiting.com
January 28	Raleigh, NC	Vaughn Towers at Carter-Finley Stadium
February 4	Atlanta, GA	Georgia Dome
February 11	Nashville, TN	Nissan Stadium
February 18	Phoenix, AZ	University of Phoenix Stadium
February 18	Virtual Event	www.veteranrecruiting.com
February 25	Dallas, TX	Irving Convention Center
February 25	New York, NY	TBD*
March 3	San Diego, CA	Scottish Rite Event Center
March 10	Houston, TX	Minute Maid Park
March 10	Jacksonville, FL	TBD*

*Please visit jobs.dav.org for online updates on venue locations and other resources.

LeAnn Rimes celebrates veterans home

Country music star LeAnn Rimes partnered with DAV this past holiday season to celebrate our heroes home. Rimes joined rock artist Gavin DeGraw to record a new version of Kenny Loggins' hit song "Celebrate Me Home" for her holiday album, and the song's music video includes heartwarming moments from real military homecomings.

"While Gavin and I were recording 'Celebrate Me Home,' we were reminded of the emotional homecoming videos we've seen over the years and thought that connecting the song to veterans elevated the meaning," said Rimes. "We thought of all the great work DAV is doing for transitioning service men and women and veterans of all generations. We knew it was the perfect holiday partnership."

As part of the collaboration, deserving veterans from across the country received special recognition on stage at each of the 12 stops on Rimes' holiday tour, where they received VIP tickets to her concert, a face-to-face "thank you" on stage with Rimes and a special holiday gift.

"DAV was delighted to partner with LeAnn Rimes on this timely opportunity to pay tribute and give back to America's veterans in meaningful ways," said Marc Burgess, DAV National Adjutant. "This



SARA HERTEL

partnership helped us reach new audiences and bring greater attention to the importance of providing a lifetime of support to veterans of all generations." ■



Learn More Online

You can watch LeAnn's heartwarming video by visiting dav.org/celebrate.



HELPing veterans...

Wesley Holm (left), president of HELP Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Electric has been an active supporter of DAV since 2009 to honor the service of his father, father-in-law, HELP veteran employees and all veterans. He presented this check on Veterans Day to mark the more than \$759,000 HELP has raised for veteran-related causes over the past six years. Past National Commander Joe Johnston (right) represented DAV and was the keynote speaker at a special breakfast held at HELP Headquarters in Cincinnati. Also pictured (from left): HELP employee and national anthem singer Ginger Larson, Past Department of Ohio Chaplain Rev. Daniel Smiley, Miss Ohio 2015 Sarah Hider, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Kevin White and Cincinnati Reds Hall of Fame broadcaster Marty Brennaman.



Students thank donor's generosity...

Students from East Rowan High School recently read about Lane Construction in Charlotte donating a Ford Explorer to DAV Chapter 96, Salisbury, N.C. This prompted the students in Wendy Fontenot's English class to write thank-you letters to Lane for donating the van to DAV. Shortly thereafter, DAV and Lane decided to pay the school a visit and meet the students. DAV Chapter 96 Adjutant Otto Borden, who visited the school, said he was thrilled when he read the letters. Borden said with the Explorer being the only VA transportation van for Rowan County, many veterans who would have no other way to the VA are getting the help they need. "It's benefitting a lot of veterans. We've been pretty busy," he said.



Donated vehicle to veteran in need...

Andrew Norris (middle) receives the keys to his 1995 Oldsmobile Ciera, which was donated to DAV Chapter 27, Lafayette, Ind., with the sole purpose of providing a veteran in need with a vehicle. Norris served in Afghanistan, and, like many veterans, was struggling with financial and physical burdens upon his return. After several months of rehabilitation, he was able to work but needed a vehicle to get to and from his new job. Chapter 27 paid the fees to transfer the title and plates to Norris, and he is now well on his way with his new career. Also seen pictured (from left) are DAV Chapter 27 Commander James Kramer and Junior Vice Commander Richard Ford.



Warriors take top honors...

The USA Warriors sled hockey team, which has a long history of support by the DAV Charitable Service Trust, started their 2015–16 season by winning the Northeast Sled Hockey League inaugural Connecticut Cup Tournament in Newington. In three games, the USA Warriors allowed just one goal and scored nine. The Warriors program is designed to give service-connected disabled veterans the chance to play hockey in an environment suited to their needs, promoting both physical and emotional therapy.



Van presentation...

Larry D. Gregerson (center), Ford program manager, Operation Goodwill Northwest, ceremonially presents the keys of a newly donated Ford Flex to Joanne Krumberger, director of the VA Portland Health Care System, Ore. The new Ford will be sent to the Salem, Ore., area for the DAV Transportation Network in order to get veterans to and from their medical appointments. Pictured (from left) are DAV volunteer driver Rick Nelson; DAV Chapter 1 Portland, Ore., Chapter Commander Tom Cousino; and member Robert Alegrete.



Community alliance...

DAV Chapter 16, Grayslake, Ill., Commander George A. Rodriguez thanks his local partners at the Midwest Veterans Closet, who together serve their local veteran community. The volunteers have initiated community-based programs aimed at bettering the lives of disabled and homeless veterans by providing them with Valentine's Day cards, Easter baskets, clothing for job interviews and lap blankets. Rodriguez said this local partnership "continues to uphold an excellent relationship and collaboration with Chapter 16" in their community.



Motorcycle ride for veterans...

William Hollerman and Tim Grose, of Minnesota, showed their respect toward the state's disabled veterans by organizing a motorcycle ride, which benefited DAV Chapter 12, Little Falls, Minn. The ride included 54 motorcycles, six support vehicles and 85 individual participants. Chapter 12 Commander Russell Neterval and the 440 members of the Chapter thanked Hollerman and Grose for their hard work in organizing the ride.



Recognizing volunteer drivers...

DAV Chapter 31, La Grange, Ga., recently recognized the DAV Transportation Network drivers from their area. Dinner was provided, and each driver was recognized for the number of years they have supported and driven DAV Transportation Network vans. Transportation is provided to VA medical centers in Tuskegee and Decatur.

REUNIONS

ARMY

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION February 24–28, Fort Stewart, Hinesville, GA, Contact: James Lon Busby, Ph: 352-494-3153, Email: lbusby@gmail.com, Web: www.desertstorm24id.com.

73RD TANK BATTALION April 5–8, Holiday Inn, 800 Manchester Expressway, Columbus, GA 31904, Contact: Thomas Ruffo, Ph: 727-544-2811.

227TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALION, COMPANY A, COMPANY D April 27–30, Atlanta, GA, Contact: Howard Burbank, Email: chickenman@a227ahb.org.

MARINES

BATTERY A, 1ST BATTALION, 11TH MARINES April 15–19, Herndon, VA, Contact: Peter Van Ryzin, Ph: 540-347-3267, Email: vanryzin1@hughes.net.

KILO BATTERY 10TH MARINES, 2ND MARINE DIVISION CUBAN MISSILE CRISIS November 9–11, Arlington, VA, Contact: Bob Vaccaro, Ph: 570-664-6240, Email: bvaccaro@live.com.

NAVY

USS TURNER JOY (DD-951) September 21–25, Virginia Beach, VA, Contact: Richard D. Haight, Ph: 703-489-5021, Email: rickh20136@verizon.net.

AIR FORCE

819TH RED HORSE, PHU CAT, 66-67, 50TH ANNIVERSARY June 6–8, Fredericksburg, TX, Contact: Joe Crowder, Ph: 210-673-1798, Email: njpquiltcrazy@gmail.com.

C123S IN S.E. ASIA April 4–8, Fort Walton Beach, FL, Contact: Sue Rice, Ph: 417-872-9750, Email: ricepad13@gmail.com, Web: www.c123sinsea.org.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who knew my brother, Ronald E. Tabatt, who served in Korea and was a PFC with BTRY B 12 Field Arty Battalion. He died Dec. 4, 1960, in the Veterans Hospital in Fargo, ND. Please contact Darlene Nelson, P.O. Box 111, Hanska, MN 56041-0111, Ph: 507-439-6302, Email: dcnelson@sleppyeyetel.net.
- Searching for anyone who knew or heard of my 20-year USAF career as an air traffic controller living on the outside of Trenton, NJ, from May 1952 to January 1972, retiring from where we were living at that time, Keesler AFB, MS, while I was in school. Please contact Reinhold A. Gassmann, 164 Wagon Ford Road, Easley, SC 29640-7672.
- Searching for anyone who served with MACV, IV Corp, Advisory Teams 58 and 73, Vj Thanh, Churung Thiệu Province, Vietnam. Please email the following information: Full Name, Rank, Tour Date, Duty Title, exact location if other than Vj Thanh, address and phone number to John Raschke at foxwilson01@gmail.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the first commissioning of the USS Albert T. Harris (DE-447) from 1943 through 1946, to renew old friendships. Please contact Robert E. Mitchell, Luther Village, 1220 Village Drive, #475C, Arlington Heights, IL 60004-8125, Ph: 847-721-4401, Email: remco22@comcast.net.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the Third Recruit Training Battalion, Platoon 3099 from Sept. 1978 to Dec. 1978 at MCRD San Diego, CA. Please contact Tom Robinson, 1018 Williams St., Brush, CO 80723, Ph: 970-580-9246, Email: tommierobinson5916@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me on the USS Mount Hood (AE-29) from 1993 to 1995. Please contact DeLon Freije, P.O. Box 246, Fordville, ND 58231, Ph: 701-331-2837.
- Searching for anyone who was in the 776th Engineers Petroleum Distribution Company in the India Burma theater during 1944–45. Please contact Eldon L. Snyder, 2405 S.E. Century Blvd., Apt. 218, Hillsboro, OR 97123-8396, Phone: 503-649-8373.
- Searching for Debby Bayes, who was stationed at Hickam AFB, HI 1973–1977; Debby was from Iowa. Please contact Diane Smith, Ph: 580-718-0136.
- Searching for Jimmy Walker/James Davis. We were stationed at A-8-3 Site 2, Okinawa, in 1971–72. Please contact David Sanchez, Ph: 361-510-4950, Email: dcs649@yahoo.com.
- Searching for Robert V. Reynolds, survivor Bataan Death March and held prisoner in Japan during WWII. We were classmates at The QMC Company Officer Course at Fort Lee, VA, in 1952. Please contact Shirley F. Dively, 847 Welsh Road, Wellsboro, PA 16901, Email: sdively@epix.net.
- Searching for unit members of the 261st Signal Pole Line Construction Company, Fort Bliss, TX, 1958–1959. Worked land line carrier from Fort Bliss to White Sands, NM. Please contact Logan Nolan at Ph: 772-589-3352.
- Searching for the person who served with me in the 121st Signal Battalion, 1st Infantry Division, and who pulled me out of a deep camouflage hole around Phouc Vinh, Vietnam 1966. Please contact Marshall Bell, 21 Tahoe Drive, Newnan, GA 30263, Ph: 770-252-2397.
- Searching for Lenny Jarvis, of New York, who served with me in the 82nd Airborne Division in Santo Domingo in 1966 or 1967. Please call Phillip, of Puerto Rico, at Ph: 787-358-8553.
- Searching for Leon McLemore who was in the hospital with me from January through April 1965 on the island of Okinawa, from Chicago, IL. Leon lost both of his legs and had an injured arm as a result of being wounded in Vietnam. Please contact Leonard Thompson, P.O. Box 81, Solana Beach, CA 92075-0081, Ph: 619-701-4820.



Advisory committee illuminates needs of women veterans...

National 1st Junior Vice Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster (fourth from left) stands with members of the Advisory Committee for Women Veterans at her final meeting as a committee member last fall. Metcalf-Foster was a member of the committee for four years. By statute, the committee was established to provide advice to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on the needs of women veterans with respect to health care, rehabilitation benefits, compensation outreach and other important programs administered by the VA. Metcalf-Foster said the committee has broadened her perspective on the many needs of women veterans and helped her see how DAV has been a leader in addressing some of these needs. “It has been quite rewarding to witness the impact of the committee’s work in its mission to support women veterans,” she said. “It has been equally refreshing to work with great leadership like Dr. Shirley Quarles (center right, award in hand), a retired colonel and former chair of this committee, who has been instrumental in overseeing the implementation of relevant policies developed by committee members.”



TO ALL WHO DARED TO...

raise your hand and take the oath
deploy... and deploy again
watch your children grow from afar
re-enlist
take that gas mask off
work longer and harder than you
ever had, or ever will
march a rainbow flight
eat that veggie omelet MRE
finish The Crucible
leave the wire
join a dustoff crew
dig a fighting hole
join the Caterpillar Club
ride the highline chair
serve in the Eleven Bravo
learn what a shellback is
ship out on an icebreaker
train and defend the world's allies

...THANK YOU





FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED



Sport your Team DAV gear

Dri-Fit Long Sleeve
TEAM DAV
Size S-3XL | \$15

Crewneck Sweatshirt
Size S-4XL | \$20

Sportsman Tri-color
Cap | \$10

Water Bottle, BPA-free
750 ml | \$25



New Life Member Caps | \$15



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