



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

MARCH | APRIL 2016

MAGAZINE

VA Health CARE REFORM

Presidential
Candidates'
Ideas

Congress'
Ideas

VA Health
Care
Reform

Commission
on Care
Ideas

Our Ideas?



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2016 Department Conventions

DEPARTMENT	CITY	CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS	DATES	BANQUET
Alabama	Auburn	The Hotel at Auburn University	June 2–5	June 4
Alaska	Fairbanks	Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Conference Center	April 22–23	April 23
Arizona	Mesa	Phoenix Mesa Marriott	May 31–June 4	June 3
Arkansas	Little Rock	Holiday Inn Presidential	June 17–18	June 18
California	Orange	Doubletree Hotel	June 8–11	June 11
Colorado	Denver	Doubletree Hotel	May 18–20	May 20
Connecticut	Cromwell	Courtyard by Marriott	April 28–30	April 30
Delaware	Dover	Comfort Suites	May 20–21	May 21
D.C.	Washington	University of the District of Columbia	June 16–18	June 18
Florida	Lake Mary	Orlando Marriott – Lake Mary	June 16–19	June 18
Georgia	Macon	Marriott Macon City Center	June 10–12	June 11
Hawaii	Kapaa	Aston Aloha Beach Hotel	June 10–12	June 11
Idaho	Boise	The Riverside Hotel	May 11–14	May 13
Illinois	Springfield	Northfield Inn & Suites	June 23–26	June 25
Indiana	Indianapolis	Marriott Center East	June 3–4	June 4
Iowa	Des Moines	Holiday Inn – Downtown	June 10–12	June 11
Kansas	Wichita	Courtyard Wichita at Old Town	June 2–5	June 4
Kentucky	Lexington	Embassy Suites	June 23–26	June 25
Louisiana	Alexandria	Best Western	May 19–22	May 21
Maine	Bangor	Four Points by Sheraton	May 13–15	May 14
Maryland	Ocean City	Princess Royale Hotel	June 1–4	June 4
Massachusetts	Leominster	Doubletree by Hilton	June 15–19	June 17
Michigan	Sault Ste. Marie	Kewadin Casino and Hotel	June 10–12	June 11
Minnesota	St. Cloud	Holiday Inn	May 5–7	May 6
Mississippi	Meridian	Drury Inn & Suites	May 6–8	May 7
Missouri	Jefferson City	Capitol Plaza Hotel	June 3–5	June 4
Montana	Lincoln	Lincoln Community Hall	June 2–4	June 4
Nebraska	Kearney	Holiday Inn	June 17–19	June 18
Nevada	Las Vegas	Palace Station Hotel and Casino	May 1–3	May 3
New Hampshire	Gorham	Town & Country Inn and Resort	June 3–5	June 4
New Jersey	Atlantic City	Resorts Casino	June 12–15	June 14
New Mexico	Albuquerque	MCM Elegante Hotel & Event Center	June 9–11	June 10
New York	Kerhonkson	Hudson Valley Resort	June 26–29	June 28
North Carolina	Greensboro	Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons	June 9–12	June 11
North Dakota	Grand Forks	Red Roof Townhouse Inn	April 29–May 1	April 30
Ohio	Dublin	The Crowne Plaza	June 23–26	June 25
Oklahoma	Catoosa	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	June 14–16	June 15
Oregon	Portland	Portlander Inn Hotel	May 13–14	May 13
Pennsylvania	Erie	Ambassador Center	June 6–11	June 10
Puerto Rico	San Juan	Sheraton Old San Juan Hotel	April 22–24	April 23
Rhode Island	Warwick	Crowne Plaza Hotel	April 14–16	April 16
South Carolina	Columbia	Doubletree By Hilton	May 19–22	May 21
South Dakota	Rapid City	Adoba Eco Hotel	April 15–17	April 16
Tennessee	Murfreesboro	Doubletree by Hilton	June 16–18	June 18
Texas	Austin	Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Austin	June 10–12	June 11
Utah	Ogden	Comfort Suites	June 16–18	June 17
Virginia	Roanoke	Holiday Inn-Tanglewood	June 9–12	June 11
Vermont	Rutland	Holiday Inn	May 20–21	May 21
Washington	Yakima	Howard Johnson Plaza	June 2–4	June 3
West Virginia	Mineral Wells	Comfort Suites	June 2–4	June 4
Wisconsin	Green Bay	Radisson Hotel & Conference Center – Green Bay	June 9–12	June 11
Wyoming	Sheridan	Holiday Inn Sheridan Convention Center	May 13–14	May 14

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER MOSES A. MCINTOSH JR.



The new faces of veterans advocacy

DAV has built a strong reputation as a leader in veterans advocacy. We are always on the leading edge of critical issues affecting the men and women who served, and that's no happy accident.

We are able to do so much as an organization because our banner, "DAV" rests on the shoulders of a great many individuals who believe we should, as a nation, be putting veterans first. These individuals, of course, are our members. It is you who put the face on veterans' issues, and there is no one better to advocate for veterans than you.

I have always stood in awe of the momentous rallying cry of our member base when we gather together at our conventions and mid-winter events. It's easy to see the show of force, to feel the weight of our numbers and to understand the impact of an organization of nearly 1.3 million people fighting together for a cause.

But what happens when we leave these venues? How can we stay engaged and make sure we don't lose the momentum and enthusiasm we feel when standing shoulder to shoulder in defense of veterans and their families?

I'm excited to see DAV working to re-energize one of our greatest strengths and assets—our nationwide grassroots advocacy network. Nothing could be more important in the fight to protect veterans' earned benefits than a solid, strong base of active members keeping our message alive in their local communities.

As you'll read on page 5, this new initiative imparts a great responsibility on our members to represent DAV and to ensure our message gets carried far and wide. I hope to see a number of

you raise your hands enthusiastically to take part in this endeavor as Benefit Protection Team Leaders and active members. It's an exciting opportunity for you to take the reins in your own communities and begin building credibility and relationships with your government leaders.

We need active, enthusiastic members to engage with us and **become part of the solution** to the issues facing veterans.

We need active, enthusiastic members to engage with us and become part of the solution to the issues facing veterans. We're no doubt at a pivotal time when it comes to the future of veterans health care. And remember, if we don't speak up now with a united voice, we may not get a say in what that future holds.

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Cover Illustration: Geoff Smith

DAV MAGAZINE • March/April 2016

Contact us: dav.org • Toll Free 877-426-2838 • 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076 • feedback@dav.org. Volume 58, Issue 2, *DAV Magazine* (ISSN 0885-6400). Editorial Office: DAV Magazine, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. Telephone 859-441-7300 or toll free (877) I AM A VET. Published and circulated bimonthly bulletin by the Disabled American Veterans, a Congressionally chartered, nonprofit organization, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. DAV Home Page is dav.org. Available on recording for the blind and those with physical handicaps that preclude reading printed material. The magazine is mailed free to DAV and Auxiliary members who are paid subscribers. Nonmembers may subscribe for \$15 per year. Periodical postage paid at office of publication, Newport, KY 41071, and at additional offices. Printed in U.S.A. Change of Address: When notifying a change of address, send former as well as new address, including ZIP code, to: DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550.

From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



Let your voice be heard

Throughout 2015, DAV asked members of DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) to contact their congressional representatives and urge them to take action on legislative matters of importance to veterans with disabling injuries.

This resulted in over 125,000 emails sent in 2015 by DAV members to lawmakers, letting them know that elected officials will be held accountable for enacting positive legislation to improve the lives of veterans and their families. That's a strong showing from our members, but we can still do more.

Last year, dozens of legislative proposals were introduced in Congress that, if enacted into law, would have life-changing effects for the nation's veterans. Although some of these bills were approved by the House of Representatives, and others were approved as part of an omnibus bill by the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, none received final congressional approval. As each session of Congress lasts two years, there is still another year left to move these proposals forward and onto the President's desk for signature.

In 2016, DAV will continue working to get Congress to move forward on legislation to fix the VA health care system, strengthen programs targeted to women veterans, expand support for caregivers of all eras and reform the claims and appeals process so that veterans get all the benefits

and services they have earned.

We need continued support from all of our members to help carry the message that we fully expect Congress to do their jobs for the men and women who served. We must tell our elected representatives we expect them to take every action necessary to keep the promises made to veterans after they return home from serving our nation and protecting our way of life.

Over the coming year, we will continue to use all available advocacy resources to influence public policy, including DAV CAN alerts, *DAV Magazine*, public service announcements, testimony before Congress, social media messaging and other means to reinforce to lawmakers that they are responsible for the care and well-being of the nation's veterans, their families and caregivers.

In addition, with presidential and congressional elections taking place this year, it will be critical that DAV's legislative priorities are communicated regularly to Congress, the media and the general public. Our success in Washington has been and will remain dependent on the continued strength of our grassroots members and supporters around the country.

I encourage you to learn more about and join DAV CAN by visiting davcan.org, where you can also stay up to date with the organization's advocacy campaigns and let your voice be heard.



Voters' 'choices'

"It's amazing how short on details the primary candidates have been on the future of the VA and issues that are important to veterans. What little we have heard makes it sound like each candidate is going to be able to "fix" all the problems. Several are advocating for some sort of insurance program to give veterans more choices, but no one is talking about how much that is going to cost or how taxpayers are going to be able to afford to get the VA where it needs to be. We, as veterans, need to be persistent as the campaign goes forward to get real answers so we can make informed decisions on candidates that really represent our interests."

John J. Plahovinsak, Cincinnati

It's disturbing to see new veterans groups out there who seem like they were created exclusively for partisan interests. Veterans issues used to be something everyone could agree on. I think we as veterans need to be very careful to make sure we are informed as voters and aren't allowing candidates to make us pawns for political purposes. **Winford Calhoun, Lawrenceburg, Tenn.**

Caregivers need help

I hope that the family caregiver act for veterans of all wars gets upgraded. I am disabled, and my wife has been taking care of me for many years. She has to bathe me, partially dress me, help me in and out of a car, help me to stand up and open doors for me on my scooter. I am sure it would cost a lot more if veterans like us had to have people come in and take care of us or if we went to an assisted-living facility. **Donald Kaser, Sapulpa, Okla.**

Membership matters

The Vietnam conflict had citizens going in many different directions. Personal healing was slow, and after reading the *DAV Magazine* for decades, I decided to venture out to meetings. Then came state conventions, and I felt a part of this organization. Friends from all branches of the military shook my hand and welcomed me into the fold. The first national convention for me was in Las Vegas, and then I was ready for Denver. To actually meet the faces in the magazine was a real eye-opener. We all are more than mere faces in a crowd; we are fighting for the rights of all military, both past and present. **Bernice Bartlett-DeBlois, Brooklin, Maine**

That healing touch

I applaud your article in the Nov./Dec. edition ("PTSD: Two generations, one new alternative"), revealing the value of alternative treatments for our veterans with PTSD. In the San Antonio area, we have an excellent program started with documented evidence of reduced pain and stress levels after treatments of healing touch. The Veterans Team Recovery Integrative Immersion Process combines massage, energy techniques, chiropractic adjustments and acupuncture. The practitioners donate their services on a goodwill offering basis. The second-phase of the program teaches the clients how to help themselves with similar programs. I encourage all therapists to explore these alternative programs to assist our veterans. **Linda Truax, Seguin, Texas**

What a feeling of joy to have *DAV Magazine* publish an article on PTSD and a new alternative. Meditation is powerful stuff. It will contribute to reduce or eliminate medications. **Arnie Welber, Sunrise, Fla.**

Having experienced healing results myself from learning transcendental meditation six years ago, I felt very pleased to see it described similarly by two veterans in *DAV Magazine*. Happy to see that you're helping get the word out about this unusual approach to treating PTSD. Calling attention to it may help many other veterans find relief. Thanks for doing so. **John Miller, Fairfield, Iowa**

As a lifetime member and a practicing psychotherapist who worked with disabled veterans for more than 15 years, I was heartened to see the recent article on an "alternative treatment" for treating PTSD. In the decades since transcendental meditation was presented to the West, there have been a variety of other meditation and mindfulness techniques offered for the alleviation of PTSD symptoms. One is mindfulness-based stress reduction, developed by Jon Cabot Zen at Boston University, and another is the lifetime work of the Vietnamese Buddhist monk Thích Nhất Hạnh, who has been doing workshops for American veterans for over two decades. **William Larsen, Nevada City, Calif.**

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](https://www.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.

REVITALIZING OUR ROOTS

DAV looks to strengthen nationwide veterans advocacy network

By Ashleigh Byrnes

As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen the voice of veterans in Washington, D.C., DAV announced a new initiative in January to breathe life into the organization's grassroots advocacy network.

Beginning this year, DAV Department and Chapter legislative chairs will transition to Benefits Protection Team Leaders. Veterans selected for these positions will play a critical role in energizing their local member base to solidify and share DAV's most critical messages across the nation.

"If our members don't stand up and get involved, **the fate of veterans health care and benefits will be left in the hands of others.**"

—Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director

"We want to do everything we can to support and recognize the special few who have the leadership capabilities and knowledge to delve deep into our issues and effect change," said National Commander Moses A. McIntosh, Jr. "With so much at stake, DAV must double down on our efforts to advocate for veterans, their dependents and survivors, and Benefits Protection Team Leaders are the ones who are going to be on point in this fight."

DAV will be reaching out to Departments and Chapters over the next several months to help identify individuals who would be ideal candidates to step into the Benefits Protection Team Leader role.

"It's critical for our members to realize they are DAV," said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. "They aren't just representatives of their local Department or Chapter, they are part of the larger organization that can effect major legislative changes when we rally together and speak with one collective voice."

Team leaders do not need prior legislative experience, only the interest and motivation to help convey DAV's message to both elected officials and the general public. In the coming months, team leaders will be provided the tools and training they need to cultivate relationships among DAV, the Auxiliary, their communities and elected officials.

One driving force behind this effort is the barrage of bad proposals coming forward that could potentially damage, if not destroy, the current VA health care system. Additionally, the congressionally mandated Commission on Care is currently working to deliver a VA reform package with as-yet unknown effects, and multiple presidential candidates have advocated proposals that, in DAV's opinion, are not in the best interest of disabled veterans.

"We're at a pivotal moment in time as far as the VA is concerned," said Ilem. "If our members don't stand up and get involved, the fate of veterans health care and benefits will be left in the hands of others."

According to McIntosh, the stakes have never been higher.

"We will be relying on these new Benefits Protection Team Leaders to help drive the charge," he said. "But we must rise to the occasion now, before irreparable changes are made that can strip veterans of their hard-earned benefits." ■



Learn More Online

For more information, visit dav.org/grassroots.



DAV
BENEFITS
PROTECTION
TEAM LEADER



Seeking new stops

DAV needs your help identifying opportunities for seminars, MSO locations

By Joseph R. Chenelly

DAV's National Service Program represents more than 1 million veterans and more than 300,000 active claims before the Department of Veterans Affairs annually. Last year, DAV helped veterans, their families and survivors receive \$4.04 billion in new and retroactive benefits—up from \$3.7 billion in 2014.

Still more veterans are in need of help, especially among underserved communities like student veterans and areas distant from VA regional offices, so DAV has set its sights on increasing outreach yet again with more stops in 2016.

DAV wants to offer more benefits seminars and log even more miles with the Mobile Service Offices (MSOs), but needs feedback from members and communities to help make this happen.

“We need those who care about veterans to reach out to us, to help identify places where our mobile offices and seminars could do the most good,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “There are still far too many people across the country who have earned

benefits through military service but don't know how or are otherwise unable to obtain those benefits. So we're going to increase our efforts in order to reach everyone who needs us.”

As with all services DAV offers, these are free of charge. Also, veterans do not need to be DAV members to take advantage of these services.

DAV set up its mobile offices in over 800 different locations in 2015, concentrating largely on rural areas and many colleges and university campuses. While DAV offices are typically centrally located, they aren't always easy for veterans to visit due to distance, transportation,



Department and Chapter Service Officers provide free support to veterans in developing, filing and winning claims for benefits.



During **2015** our
MSOs traveled

104,662 miles

to over **800** locations

serving **17,769** veterans
and their families

health and other reasons. So the outreach goal is to take these mobile offices where they can have the greatest impact, especially in new places.

“When we go to veterans where they live, we increase their access to benefits and help keep the promise that is at the core of DAV’s mission,” Marszalek said. “In the past year, mobile offices traveled 104,662 miles, serving 17,769 veterans and their families during these stops.”

“The work of DAV’s National Service Officers extends well beyond their offices and **deep within the veterans community.**”

—Jim Marszalek, National Service Director

Additionally, DAV Service Officers across the nation provide free information seminars on veterans benefits. These seminars include a comprehensive rundown of what benefits are available through the VA and other government agencies. They last about an hour, can be held just about anywhere and accommodate groups of all sizes. DAV’s free services are offered at these events,

and veterans can connect with an advocate and arrange to get the claims process started.

“The work of DAV’s National Service Officers extends well beyond their offices and deep within the veteran community,” Marszalek said. “Our seminars empower veterans and their families with great information on what benefits are available, how eligibility is determined and what to do to obtain these important services.”

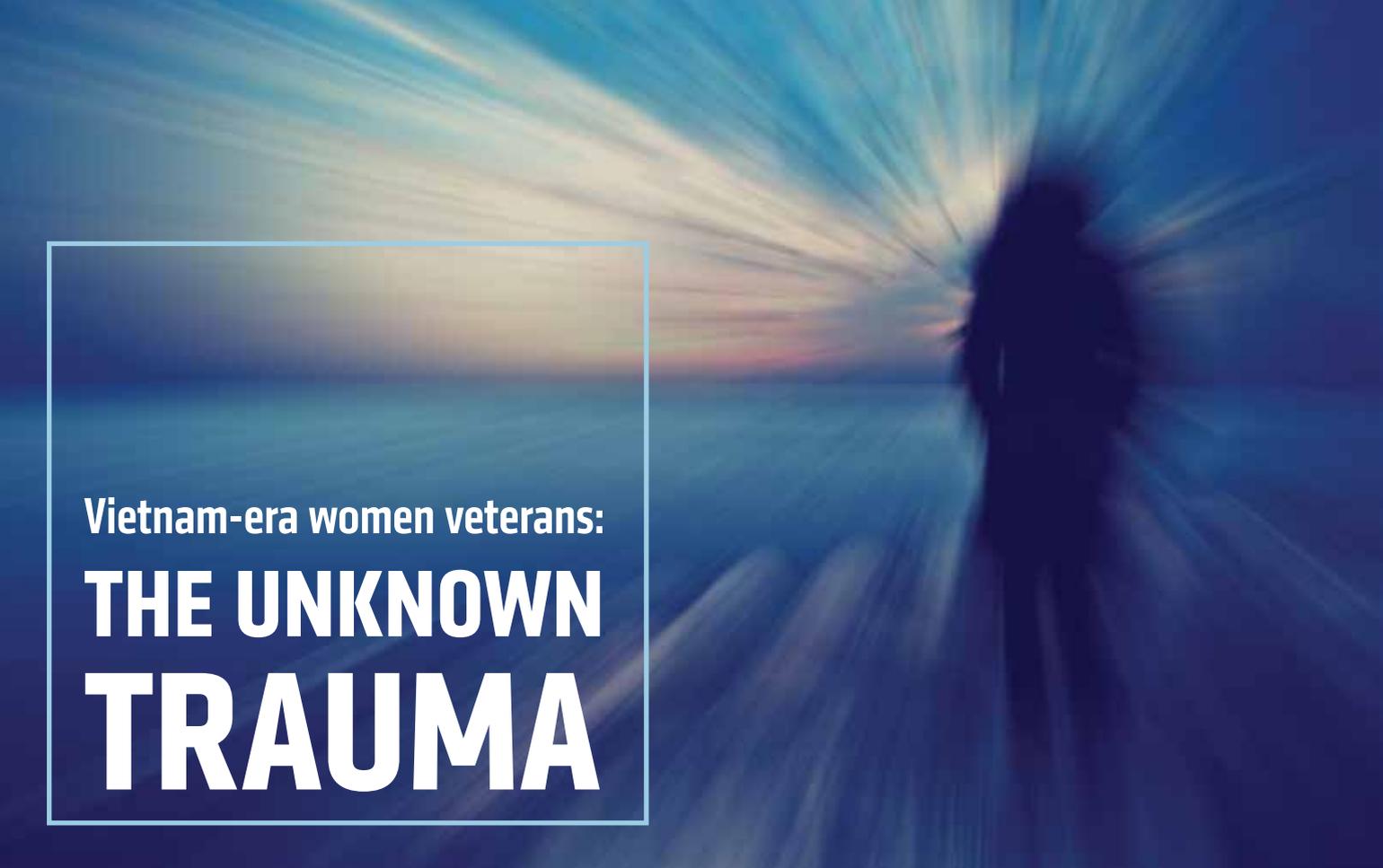
There are many veterans just starting to learn what they have earned through their military service. DAV is committed to enhancing their lives through outreach, education and advocacy.

“Our NSOs work directly with veterans, family members and survivors one on one every day in our offices, but they also put in the time to go into their communities and help veterans,” Marszalek said. “This is an opportunity for an individual or local organization to make a huge difference in the lives of those who served and their families by simply making a call.” ■



Learn More Online

If you would like to request a free benefits seminar or MSO stop in your community, contact the office closest to you. You can find that office as well as an up-to-date calendar of already scheduled events at dav.org/veterans.



Vietnam-era women veterans: **THE UNKNOWN TRAUMA**

Study shows women veterans from the Vietnam era are at increased risk of PTSD

By Mary Dever

There were approximately 265,000 women who served in the U.S. military during the Vietnam War, with nearly 11,000 serving in parts of Southeast Asia. A new study is showing the lingering psychological effects their service has caused.

According to “Prevalence of Posttraumatic Stress Disorder in Vietnam-Era Women Veterans: The Health of Vietnam-Era Women’s Study,” published in *JAMA Psychiatry*, a publication of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, these women veterans suffer significant rates of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) decades after the war, partly because of the sexual harassment and discrimination they faced.

“At that time in the Women’s Army Corps, we were taught to be ladies first and soldiers second,” said Carmen Bennett, an Army soldier who served in a clerical position during the Vietnam War from 1967 to 1968. “It was different then. We didn’t know what was considered ‘rape,’ and so that caused a lot of guilt.”

Bennett was raped on Aug. 24, 1968. The assault resulted in a pregnancy, which forced her out of the service.

“That really killed me,” Bennett said. “My parents and my family were so disappointed in me. I carried around the guilt and shame for a very long time. I still carry it.”

The study, funded by the Department of Veterans Affairs, is based on surveys and phone interviews of more than 4,000 Vietnam-era female veterans.

“Vietnam service significantly increased the odds of PTSD relative to U.S. service; this effect appears to be related to wartime exposures, especially sexual discrimination or harassment and job performance pressures,” the study concludes.

According to the VA, women veterans who use VA health care and report a history of sexual trauma while

in the military also report a range of negative outcomes, including poorer psychological and physical health, more readjustment problems following discharge and a greater incidence of unemployment due to mental health problems.

Though she lived with the symptoms of PTSD, it was a long time before Bennett was formally diagnosed.

“Every year on the anniversary [of my trauma], on Aug. 24 and 25, I was on the phone with my friend who went through it with me. Every year. It was like I was stuck,” said Bennett. “I went through a lot of emotional trauma and guilt and everything. I had a lot of tears. I did a lot of crazy things. It changed me drastically in a lot of ways that weren’t good.”

Bennett sought help through DAV. It was then, 40 years after her assault, that she started therapy for PTSD and military sexual trauma (MST). “It wasn’t until [my DAV Service Officer] told me he’d seen in some of my records that there were some things that made him concerned. And he thought that maybe I should be checked out for PTSD.

“I went through a lot [with my family]; they disowned

someone finally recognized her disability. Stories like hers are why the VA is making a huge push for additional research and studies into what Vietnam-era women veterans really endured.

“In this situation, the veteran has lived with the after effects of her trauma for more than four decades,”

said DAV Assistant National Legislative Director Shurhonda Love. “Women veterans played a significant role in the Vietnam conflict, yet so many of them don’t know or understand what types of benefits and support systems are available.”

According to the National Center for PTSD, “Given the alarming prevalence rates of sexual harassment and sexual assault among military veterans, VA has responded actively to meet the health care needs of veterans impacted by these experiences.”

MST screening and related services are mandated to be available at every VA medical center for both women and men. *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home*, DAV’s comprehensive study of the many challenges women face, reports that one in five women enrolled at the VA screen positive for MST.

The Vietnam-Era Women’s Study shines the light on what has been a little-examined part of the nation’s experience in Vietnam. The study examines not just what women veterans of the Vietnam era were faced with, from MST to life and death decisions made by nurses, but how those experiences shaped their lives.

“PTSD is with me,” said Bennett. “It’s never going to go away.”



1 in 5 women enrolled at VA screen positive for MST

“Women veterans played a significant role in the Vietnam conflict, yet so many of them don’t know or understand what types of benefits and support systems are available.”

—Shurhonda Love, Assistant National Legislative Director

me. It really hurt; it broke my heart,” she added. “But now, I’m thinking my PTSD played a huge part in the way they acted toward me. I think the PTSD played a big role in my life.”

In 2010, Bennett was awarded 100-percent service connection for PTSD based on the trauma she endured in 1968. It took 42 years of quietly suffering before



Learn More Online

Visit www.dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office/ to find your local DAV service office if you need help or have questions regarding your earned VA benefits. There is no time restriction to file a claim. DAV can help. ■

1

VA to present burn pit registry findings to Congress in early 2016

Research into burn pit exposure as a cause of illnesses among veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan won't be included in the 2016 list of peer-reviewed medical research programs that Congress requires the Department of Defense to conduct.

Regardless, the VA has been directed to report to Congress in early 2016 on the findings of its Airborne Hazards and Open Burn Pit Registry, where veterans have detailed health problems linked to exposure to burn pits, oil well fires or other toxins and pollutants during deployments.

The VA said it will “report to House and Senate appropriations committees within 180 days on matters connected to [the burn pit registry], as well as other topics connected with potential toxic exposures in Iraq and Afghanistan.”

2

Asbestos bill passes House despite VSO objections

Despite strong objections from numerous veterans groups, a bill passed the House in January that would provide confidential information about millions of asbestos exposure victims—many of them veterans—to industry defense attorneys.

The Furthering Asbestos Claim Transparency (FACT) Act, H.R. 526, would open victims' injury records to attorneys defending companies against asbestos-poisoning lawsuits. The bill also calls for online publication of victims' work and medical histories and partial Social Security numbers.

Nearly 30 percent of the deaths caused by asbestos-based lung cancer affect veterans, often resulting from exposure to a flame-retardant material used aboard Navy ships.

3

Fiscal 2016 funding provisions for VA

Signed by the president in December, the \$1.1 trillion omnibus spending bill for 2016 saw a nearly 10-percent jump from 2015 levels.

As part of legislation directing \$71.4 billion to veterans care, the appropriations bill included specific whistleblower protections for roughly 200,000 VA doctors and nurses from retaliation if they should report misconduct. The bill also authorized the hiring of more than 1,500 staff members needed for claims processing and \$4.7 billion for female specific health care programs.



Independent Budget presents veterans' voice to Commission on Care

By Mary Dever

Independent Budget (IB) partners, including DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine, recently met with the Commission on Care, responding to the commission's request to better understand the IB's position on necessary reforms in Department of Veterans Affairs health care.

Augustine referenced several critical measures addressing challenges in the VA system and ensuring the focus of all care is based on the needs of veterans: rebuilding the VA's capacity to provide timely, high quality care; restructuring and consolidating the VA's community care programs into a single extended care network; realigning and expanding the VA's health care services to meet the needs of veterans today and in the future; and reforming the VA's culture and management by increasing transparency, accountability and oversight.

"DAV and our Independent Budget partners appreciate the opportunity to present to the commission this

DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine (center), alongside IB partners, presented a framework for veterans health care reform to the Commission on Care.

framework for veterans health care reform," Augustine told the commission. "We look forward to working with the commission to ensure its understanding of the importance of a strong and veteran-centric VA health care system for current and future veterans."

The IB panel, in addition to Augustine, included representatives from the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) and Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). They presented pertinent research from each of their organizations, a cumulative membership of more than 3 million veterans.

"We are here to share our insights into the challenges facing the VA health care system, to talk about what our nation owes to the men and women who serve and to lay out a framework for reforming veterans health care to meet those obligations today and far into the future," Augustine said.

The commission's final report to Congress is expected in June. ■



From the NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR JAMES T. MARSZALEK

Worthy veterans need us

Change someone's life for the better today. Our National Service Officers (NSOs) come into direct contact with people in real need every day. NSOs work day in and day out to help meet those needs by connecting veterans with benefits, compensation and other resources earned through selfless service and sacrifice.

But we can always do more. We can spend that extra moment to ensure every possible avenue has been explored, and we can go that extra mile to help a veteran or family member truly understand the process so that progress is not lost after a meeting ends.

We continue putting our resources into training so that we can build upon the level of understanding and expertise our Service Officers bring to the table. We have world-class training, but we have the most knowledgeable service office corps in the industry because our Service Officers work so hard to better themselves and stay up to date on the ever-changing benefits landscape. And I know we will continue getting better because of our passion for the mission

and the knowledge that there are so many depending on us.

Anyone in this great organization can help by finding veterans who are falling through the cracks and connecting them with our NSOs. And anyone can help by identifying places and opportunities for Veterans Information Seminars and new stops for our Mobile Service Offices.

Every veteran, family member and survivor we engage on a daily basis deserves our utmost respect and our full effort. The simple acts of being friendly and listening can make a major difference.

Most important to remember, we have all been there at one point or another. Every service officer and DAV member has gone through the VA claims process. We know

firsthand the challenges, confusion and frustration veterans can encounter; we know the value of compassionate treatment and the importance of having an advocate on one's side. Offering a voice of understanding can go a long way in encouraging a veteran in seeing his or her claim through to the end.

Together, we can change a lot of worthy people's lives for the better today.

We know the value of compassionate treatment and the importance of having an **advocate** on one's side.

Tackling homelessness one event at a time

Veterans attending the Winter Haven Stand Down received medical care, clothes, toiletries, back packs and duffel bags, along with information on VA benefits and services.



Years of declining veteran homelessness due, in part, to VA events dedicated to eradicating the problem

By M. Todd Hunter

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's 2015 Annual Homeless Assessment Report, an estimated 47,725 veterans nationwide found themselves homeless on a single cold January night. That's 47,725 too many.

The silver lining, though, is that the current number of homeless veterans in the U.S. is a significant decrease from the 73,367 estimate just six years earlier. This 35 percent nationwide decline began with the unveiling and implementation of Opening Doors, the nation's first comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness. The initiative was introduced by President Barack Obama in 2009 and is overseen by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, which includes the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Part of the VA's success in this endeavor is the department's various programs and events geared toward taking care of homeless veterans, such as the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center's 2016 Winterhaven Stand Down, held in January.

The annual event, described by hospital officials as a one-stop shop, was a full day of free services aimed at leading homeless veterans to independence and improved health.

"Winterhaven is an entry point for services that lead veterans to independence and improved health," said Brian A. Hawkins, Director of the medical center. "It is an integral part of the D.C. VA Medical Center's comprehensive effort to eliminate and prevent veteran homelessness."

Provided services included health screenings; housing and employment counseling; substance abuse counseling and psychological services; dental exams; HIV testing and free warm clothing, boots, shoes and hygiene kits. Attendees were also treated to hot lunches and haircuts.

Participation in the stand down decreased compared to last year, but that's a good thing according to medical center officials. It means there are fewer homeless veterans on the streets. In fact, the number of homeless veterans living in the district dropped from more than 700 to 408 during the same period.

"Word got out among the homeless veteran community in and around the capital area about how much of a difference Winterhaven plays in these veterans' lives," said Kevin Morton, the hospital's Health Care for Homeless Veterans coordinator. "I think that says we've got a good thing going here."

"The strides our nation and the D.C. VA Medical Center have made in ending veteran homelessness are nothing short of astounding," said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "But there's more to be done to get the number down to zero, and it's events like the VA's Winterhaven Stand Down that will get us there." ■



VETERAN HOMELESSNESS DECLINING, **STILL WORK TO BE DONE**

As some state and local governments eradicate veteran homelessness, nationwide numbers lag behind despite vast improvements

By M. Todd Hunter

You've seen them before, maybe huddled around a fire under a highway overpass or perhaps holding a sign on the side of the road pleading for assistance. No matter the circumstance, the image of struggling, homeless veterans begging for spare change can be found almost anywhere across the country.

Everywhere, except in cities like New York, New Orleans and Houston, just to name a few.

That's because for the past few years, mayors, community leaders, government agencies and local nonprofits have come together to effectively end veteran homelessness in these respective areas. In those cities, by federal definition, there are no veterans who lack housing except for those who have refused assistance.

Philadelphia is on the list, too. So are Phoenix, Las Vegas and the commonwealth of Virginia, which—according to Gov. Terry McAuliffe—matched more than 1,400 homeless veterans with permanent housing in 2015, making it the first state in the nation to functionally eliminate veteran homelessness within its borders.

In New York City, the number of homeless veterans has plummeted from 3,689 to 760—a decline of nearly 80 percent—since 2009, when President Barack Obama announced his nationwide initiative to end homelessness among veterans by 2015. More than 1,000 veterans were placed in permanent housing in the local area last year alone.

Opening Doors, which was unveiled in 2010 and is overseen by the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, is the nation's first comprehensive federal strategy to prevent and end homelessness. The initiative aims to ensure every community has a systematic response in place that prevents homelessness whenever possible and focuses on “housing first.” This policy dictates that the homeless should be provided with safe, supportive shelter as a precondition for attending to the issues that caused them to slip through the cracks in the first place. According to the White House, veteran homelessness has declined 36 percent nationwide since the initiative began.

Part of Opening Doors' success is the supportive services being offered in various housing facilities. Such services typically keep residents linked to social workers and include health services—most single homeless adults have some kind of serious physical, mental or substance abuse-related problem—and job readiness programs.

“We've made great inroads in eliminating veteran homelessness in our country,” said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “From Biloxi to Syracuse and Winston-Salem to Las Cruces, the list of local municipalities that have successfully done so is astounding.”



DAV is one of the many nonprofits that has played a significant role in helping to eradicate veteran homelessness these past few years. Notably, the organization's new employment department hosted more than 70 veteran career fairs in 40 cities in 2015, giving more than 25,000 veterans the opportunity to connect with employers. Multiple studies have shown that homelessness decreases with steady employment. Further, DAV's flagship national service program ensures veterans

instantaneously, we can say, 'Hey, we have the funds, thanks to DAV, to be able to address this need with the urgency and attention it requires,'" said James Gillespie, Director of Development at Comititis.

The Trust also awarded a \$60,000 grant to the Washington, D.C., VA Medical Center in late 2014 to support homeless and at-risk veterans at the facility's 2015 Winterhaven Stand Down. The annual event focuses on leading homeless and at-risk veterans to independence.

"Those are just a few examples of the numerous organizations dedicated to helping homeless veterans that the Trust has supported in recent years," said Trust President Richard E. Marbes. "We'll continue doing so in the many years to come. As long as even one veteran is out on the streets, our job isn't done."

The reality is that as more men and women leave the military—especially those changed as a result of their service—a certain number will face struggles finding meaningful employment and stable housing, in all likelihood making this a process that will require the ongoing attention of the veteran community. But this national effort has shown that through dedicated community cooperation, serious progress can be achieved both in getting veterans off the street and preventing the cycle of homelessness before it ever begins.

"The good news is, we've helped to get thousands of homeless veterans off the street [and] made an unprecedented effort to end veterans' homelessness," President Obama said in August 2014. "But we've got more work to do in cities and towns across America to get more veterans into the homes they deserve." ■

"We've helped to get thousands of homeless veterans off the street [and] made an unprecedented effort to end veterans' homelessness. But **we've got more work to do** in cities and towns across America to get more veterans into the homes they deserve."

—President Barack Obama

receive the benefits they've earned, which recognizes their sacrifices and addresses financial instability.

Additionally, DAV's Charitable Service Trust continues its efforts to support initiatives dedicated to veterans' issues such as homelessness. Last year, the Trust awarded the Comititis Crisis Center in Aurora, Colo., a \$30,000 grant to supplement the center's efforts to provide free housing to women veterans and their families.

"When you look at a veteran who needs treatment

Setting the record straight



The good, the bad and the reality of VA reform proposals

By Ashleigh Byrnes

If you have opened a newspaper, browsed the headlines online or tuned in to the evening news anytime over the past two years, you likely know all too well the Department of Veterans Affairs has faced a continual uphill grind to restore its trust among veterans following numerous scandals brought to light.

There is a public focus on veterans and the quality of their care today that has not been seen for quite some time within the realms of traditional and social media. Veterans—and the VA in particular—are a hot topic for discussion and debate both in and outside Washington, D.C., and rightfully so.

With the 2016 presidential candidates beating a constant drum for support in voters' ears, it isn't surprising that veterans' issues have become dinner table talk even for the increasing number of American families without direct military ties. Politicians have wedged themselves firmly in the debate, and of course, no candidate's talking points are complete without strategically crafted messages about the VA and what the nation must do to reform the health and benefits systems for our nation's veterans. In addition, some political organizations have also become immersed in the discussion, injecting their own—often radical—solutions for reform.

One problem that emerges from a national conversation on veterans is that the rhetoric has a tendency to drown out reality. There is a lot of talk, but so far there has been little progress nailing down what a lot of the “big ideas” for reform really mean.

“There are a lot of catchphrases and buzzwords being thrown around, especially by politicians and presidential candidates, but these ideas have not been clearly defined,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. “Before we get swept up in these big ideas, it's important to recognize the serious ramifications they would likely bring for veterans.”

Having digested the independent reports conducted on the VA's access crisis, the congressionally mandated Commission on Care continues its discussions in Washington about the future of the department, with plans to deliver their recommendations this summer. Later this year, Congress may take action on a new VA plan to integrate community care with VA care. Paired with a presidential election taking place this year, there are possibilities for even more far-ranging ideas in the future.

“On the surface, a lot of these ideas sound great,” said Augustine, “but there is the potential for very negative and irreparable consequences for many veterans if these proposals are not fully developed and explained. We're hoping to help those engaged in the

discussion understand the overall impact of some of these proposals, so together, we can lay out the very best possible plan for the future of VA.”

While the details of these ideas remain murky, what is clear is that there are numerous individuals and organizations today eager to implement potentially destructive changes to the VA health care system without regard for the veterans who benefit from it.

“During an election cycle, it’s common for some very complex issues to be packaged in ways that make them appear to be simple, common-sense solutions,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “It’s important that we stand up to partisan, fringe elements who would propose legislative measures that could undermine the progress made to improve veterans health care.” ■

PROPOSALS ON VA REFORM: WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

“VA should only focus on operating specialized ‘Centers of Excellence’”

THE PROPOSAL Convert the VA from a full-service health system into a few “centers of excellence” focusing on only service-connected injuries and illness like post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injuries, blindness, amputations and burns. “Routine care” needs would be sent into the private sector.

HOW IT COULD HURT VETERANS

- The VA’s integrated health care system of 150-plus medical centers and 1,000-plus outpatient clinics would shrink, forcing veterans into private sector for all remaining treatment with no coordination of care.
- With fewer VA medical “centers of excellence” located farther apart and primarily in urban areas, hundreds of thousands of disabled veterans who rely on the VA for their care would be forced to travel farther and potentially wait longer for their care.
- Having veterans go to the VA for service-connected conditions but to private sector providers for all other care would result in a disconnect in the coordination of their care, thereby diminishing the quality of their care.

A BETTER SOLUTION Rather than downsizing and outsourcing the VA health care system to address access problems, the better solution is to provide new access options for veterans by creating a nationwide system of urgent care for them, a proposal the VA has also endorsed. In addition, VA health care facilities should extend operating hours to nights and weekends, and continue to expand the use of telemedicine and web-based health care services to enhance access and make the system more convenient, efficient and responsive to the needs of veterans.

“VA should only treat combat or service-related injuries”

THE PROPOSAL Treat only combat or service-related injuries or illnesses, thereby reducing the number of patients eligible for VA care.

HOW IT COULD HURT VETERANS

- The best health care is holistic and preventative, not piecemeal. A high-quality health care system must treat the whole veteran, not just certain injuries and illnesses.
- The VA’s model of primary care with integrated mental health care can provide better health outcomes for millions of veterans rather than forcing them to split their care in a private sector that lacks experience caring for those who served.
- A reduction in the number of veteran patients below the critical mass needed to medically and financially sustain the facility could result in the closure of hundreds of hospitals and outpatient clinics, again forcing enrolled disabled veterans who rely on the VA to travel farther or wait longer for their care.

A BETTER SOLUTION Rather than trying to reduce the number of veteran patients in the VA health care system, ensure that resources provided to the VA are properly aligned with services needed by veterans, when and where they need them. The VA should use the same long-term planning and budgeting processes in place at the Department of Defense to ensure that future needs and plans are aligned with future budgets. In addition, true transparency and accountability systems, such as an independent audit, are critical to ensure the money is wisely spent to care for veterans.

“Turn the VA health care system into an insurance company”

THE PROPOSAL Transition the VA from a system that provides direct health care services to veterans into one that simply pays for care in the private sector.

A BETTER SOLUTION Create veterans health care networks in every local market to seamlessly integrate community care into the VA system. This would provide a full continuum of care for veterans. The VA would be the coordinator and principal provider of care including primary care, which is more likely to prevent and treat conditions that are unique to or more prevalent among veterans, particularly those with disabilities or chronic conditions.

HOW IT COULD HURT VETERANS

- Changing the VA from a provider of health care to an insurer would disregard all of the experience and expertise that VA doctors and researchers have amassed for treating the men and women who have served, particularly those injured or ill from wartime service.
- New government insurance regulations setting premiums, copayments, deductibles, lifetime limits and the actual medical services provided would increase the amount of bureaucratic red tape veterans would have to cut through in order to receive the care they have earned.
- Veterans would have to assume more of the financial cost of the medical care they receive.

“Let the money follow the veteran”

THE PROPOSAL The funding allotted for veterans health care should be available to use wherever the veteran chooses to seek care, using cards or vouchers.

HOW IT COULD HURT VETERANS

- This proposal wrongfully assumes private-sector providers are able to immediately accept new patients and schedule appointments without lengthy wait times, and that civilian physicians and health systems have the same skillsets the VA has amassed after years of working with veterans as a unique patient base.
- If enacted, this would lead to fragmented and uncoordinated care for veterans, which can lead to both undertreatment and overtreatment, particularly for those with many coexisting chronic health conditions.
- The cost of such an open program, according to a Congressional Budget Office estimate a couple of years ago, could be as high as \$50 billion per year. Congress is highly unlikely to pay this cost while maintaining a VA health care system for those who choose and rely on it.

A BETTER SOLUTION Rather than giving veterans a voucher or card to fend for themselves in the private sector, put veterans in the center of decision making about their health care. Eliminate arbitrary access standards, such as the current 30-day and 40-mile standards for “choice,” and instead keep decisions on when and where veterans can access care between the veteran and his or her doctor or clinician.

“Privatize VA health care”

THE PROPOSAL Transfer governance of the VA from the federal government to an independent entity, such as a government-chartered corporation, similar to Amtrak or the U.S. Postal Service.

HOW IT COULD HURT VETERANS

- Management of the VA would go to an unaccountable, independent entity driven by corporate considerations, with no oversight by Congress or veterans themselves.
- It is the responsibility of the federal government to ensure that veterans who were sent to war by our nation have proper access to care for their service-related injuries and illnesses.
- A recently conducted DAV survey found that 87 percent of veterans believe the federal government should provide a health system dedicated to the needs of ill, injured and wounded veterans.

A BETTER SOLUTION Transfer more of the VA's nonmedical support services like construction, maintenance and development of IT infrastructure to the private sector, and create an integrated veterans health care system that allows the VA to focus on its core mission of providing high-quality, accessible, comprehensive and veteran-centric medical care.



Learn More Online

To join the fight to protect the veterans health care system, visit davcan.org and receive news and resources to ensure your voice is heard.

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER LINDA S. STAKE



Miracles happen every day

Hello friends! During my tenure as DAV Auxiliary's National Commander, I have often focused on the role of caregivers and volunteers in our veteran communities. There's a wonderful group of these generous and caring people I am lucky enough to spend some time with at a unique event.

As I pen this, we are just around the corner from the 30th National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, and to say I'm excited about this milestone event is a huge understatement.

The clinic is a world leader in adaptive sports and the largest of its kind. DAV, the Department of Veterans Affairs and many companies, organizations and individuals—including the DAV Auxiliary—come together to help about 400 men and women with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, amputations, visual issues, certain neurological conditions and other profound disabilities go to Snowmass, Colo., where they learn that the only limitations they have in life are the ones they place on themselves.

There is a special behind-the-scenes group that makes "Miracles on a

Mountainside" possible. Those good people are the caregivers and volunteers.

Our caregivers provide the veterans in their lives the highest expression of love—the giving of oneself. They do this every day, many without external support. They ensure injured and ill veterans get to the clinic and care for them while they are there. They are

truly unsung heroes.

Caregivers benefit from the clinic as well.

I can't begin to tell you of the numerous accounts from families and loved ones relating to the joy they felt as they watched this mountain transform their veterans' lives.

The dedicated forces of volunteers also give freely of themselves and their expertise. These coaches, instructors and others do more than teach adaptive sports. They bond with our veterans and often become lifelong friends to veterans and their families.

Caregivers and volunteers are the gears that make the machine function at the clinic. I'm looking forward to spending time with them and embracing these men and women who give so much and ask for so little in return.

Caregivers
and volunteers
are **the gears
that make
the machine
function.**



From the NATIONAL DIRECTOR OF VOLUNTARY SERVICES JOHN KLEINDIENST

Serving veterans your way

When it comes to volunteering for veterans, we understand location is key. Not everyone lives around the corner from a Veterans Affairs medical center or has the same interests or talents to contribute. So, creating other options for individuals wanting to volunteer their time is an absolute necessity.

This is why in 2007, DAV created the Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP). This initiative gives volunteers the opportunity to serve where they live and still receive the same incentive awards as those under the well-known VA Voluntary Service program.

With our volunteer base aging and prospective new volunteers waiting longer to retire, I want to emphasize LVAP and all the flexibility it provides our incredible volunteers. I truly believe that our LVAP option is perhaps the most underutilized program in DAV.

Under LVAP, the options for volunteers to provide direct assistance to veterans and their families are virtually limitless. Volunteers might perform yard work, help run errands, set up a computer system, clean out the gutters, shovel snow from a sidewalk, assist with cooking or cleaning, paint or perform home repairs—any task that might improve a veteran's life.

The vast number of volunteer opportunities under LVAP don't end there. Volunteers who assist with Chapter and Department Service Officer work or volunteer in fundraising events such as

the annual Military Appreciation Night at Golden Corral already qualify for credit through the program. Volunteers can also get involved in DAV-specific outreach efforts like the DAV air show, state fair activities or homeless stand downs.

Another important aspect of LVAP is the freedom it gives our youth volunteers to get involved and become eligible for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarships. This can be extremely valuable, because while youth volunteer hours went up in 2015, the number of scholarship submissions were down. Helping to inform youth volunteers about LVAP can help close this gap and continue to increase the number of hours logged by our young men and women.

The key is reporting these hours and ensuring that your service in the name of DAV gives you and the organization the credit you've earned.

If you are not sure how to report your LVAP volunteer hours for credit, please review the Local Veterans Assistance Program User Manual at lvap.dav.org. Once on the page, use your state abbreviation as your username. If you do not already have a password, contact us at Voluntary Services at 859-441-7300, extension 3314.

I want to thank each and every one of our volunteers for their time, effort and passion in helping DAV continue its mission of empowering our veterans to live high-quality lives with respect and dignity.



READY

SET

HIRE

By Steven Wilson

DAV hosted its first virtual career fair with partner Veteran Recruiting in January and officially launched the 10K DAV Hiring Challenge.

“Our goal is to ensure 10,000 disabled veterans have attained meaningful employment by the end of 2018,” said National Director of Employment Jeff Hall. “These virtual career fairs are a key component of that goal.”

Hall said injured and ill veterans in particular may find the virtual career fairs convenient, as they can be navigated from the comforts of home.

“The employers in this virtual environment recognize the talents and drive veterans bring to the workforce,” Hall said. “Sadly, veterans with a disability are often overlooked by some companies, but our experience shows us these veterans can and do qualify for a wide variety of jobs.”

These virtual career fairs provide a dynamic, fully interactive online environment. Job seekers can look for jobs nationwide and navigate the career fair in real time. When veterans log in to the site, they will see a virtual booth with each employer’s information and can upload resumes, email the point of contact and even do a live chat in a private setting.

“These particular job fairs fill a very real need for disabled veterans,” said Kevin O’Brien, of Veteran Recruiting. “There are approximately 22 million veterans in our country with 3.9 million classified by the VA as having a disability.

“Forty percent of veterans with service-connected disabilities say they have difficulty in securing employment,” he added. “Our partnering with DAV is a step in the right direction in tackling this nationwide issue.” ■



Learn More Online

Running totals on the number of veterans hired as DAV approaches its goal of ensuring 10,000 disabled veterans secure meaningful employment can be found at www.10kdav.com.

2016 ALL VETERANS CAREER FAIRS

Date	City
March 10	Houston, TX
March 10	Jacksonville, FL
March 24	Washington, DC
April 7	Austin, TX
April 7	Boston, MA
April 14	Denver, CO
April 20	Virtual*
April 21	Orlando, FL
May 5	Oakland, CA
May 11	Dallas, TX
May 12	Norfolk, VA

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



From Vietnam to VA, the Department's Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning uses her experience as a woman veteran to advocate for change.



Dr. Linda Schwartz (right) recognizes a participant at the VA sponsored "National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic" in 2015.

DAV life member uses **her voice** for veterans

By Mary Dever

First hand military experience is often one of the most significant traits of a successful veterans advocates. As an Air Force nurse in the late 1960s, Linda Spoonster Schwartz treated military members returning from Vietnam from a casualty staging area in Japan. In 1983, she became a casualty herself when a hatch blew off an aircraft at 30,000 feet while she was serving as a flight nurse, leaving her with a devastating brain injury.

Because she was serving as a reservist, over the first three most difficult years of her recovery, she experienced the bureaucracy and confusion many veterans encounter when their life is changed as a result of wartime service.

Schwartz—currently the Department of Veterans Affairs Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning—didn't know a thing about disability ratings, or what the word "veteran" really meant, prior to her accident. She took the advice of Uncle Sam (as in her husband's uncle named Sam) joined DAV, and has been a life member for nearly 30 years. A DAV service officer was able to get her VA claim adjudicated after she'd been waiting for roughly three years. Thanks to her experience, she is now able to influence change for veterans in a unique way.

"I had the struggle of being injured during a time when women weren't necessarily welcome or as understood as they are today," said Schwartz. "But, also I was a reservist on active duty, my daughter was 6-years-old, and my husband was self-employed. I feel it's really reminiscent of what's going on with a lot of families now. It gave me a real appreciation for listening."

Schwartz served during the Vietnam War and was a member of the United States Air Force from 1967 until she medically retired in 1986. In 2003 she was appointed State Veterans Affairs Commissioner of Connecticut and was known for her strong advocacy for homeless veterans, veteran suicide prevention, and women veteran issues. She served as Commissioner until being named to her current position at VA in 2014. In this role she



“I didn’t come to Washington to make my fame and fortune. When I come home I want to be able to look you all in the eye and say, ‘I did my very best on behalf of you.’”

*—Dr. Linda Spoonster Schwartz,
VA Assistant Secretary
for Policy and Planning*

oversees the Office of Policy and Planning’s mission to serve as VA’s principal advisor on all matters of policy and organizational strategy; providing VA decision makers with the advice, counsel and support necessary to fulfill the VA mission.

From 1989 to 1998 Dr. Schwartz served in an advisory capacity to the Secretary of Veterans Affairs on several subjects including veterans’ mental health and women veterans’ issues.

“When I was medically retired from the military,” Schwartz said, “there was really not a lot of appreciation for women veterans, and I see that this is improving. Women in the military now are a lot different than when I was in the military. They are pushing the envelope. Their needs are evolving.”

For example, Schwartz recalled speaking about counseling with a group of four women veterans who had just returned from deployment.

“I asked, ‘May I know the nature of the issue?’ Whereas I was thinking military sexual trauma, they talked about being in a combat situation where they were attacked and one of their friends, his arm, landed in one of their laps. She couldn’t go to sleep at night without seeing that arm laying in her lap,” said Schwartz.

But, as is often the case, the women said they didn’t want the other people in the unit to know that this was affecting them.

“I think our challenge [at the VA] is to keep up with those needs by really looking and talking and doing more research on why are women coming to the VA and what do we need to do to adjust to this new way

in which they are being perceived by themselves and by their military experience,” Schwartz added.

Schwartz said DAV is a wonderful ally to have in her position when trying to make some changes to the law, as DAV helps raise the issues and acts as a valuable partner in the community to get things done. “Sometimes they’re my go-to people,” Schwartz said. “We’ve done a lot of good things together.”

And Schwartz said changes are happening in the VA. “In 2013 it took 257 days from the time veterans came to have their physicals to the time it took to process their claims. I’m very proud to tell you, it takes 86 days now.

“When I was leaving Connecticut I told my veterans, ‘I didn’t come to Washington to make my fame and fortune. When I come home I want to be able to look you all in the eye and say I did my very best on your behalf. So even when we get into some tight meetings, I feel compelled to speak on behalf of the veterans.’”

Her advice to veterans would be to find out all the benefits there are available, and to take advantage of veteran service organizations and the assistance they can provide.

Schwartz added, emphasizing the importance of not going through the claims process alone, “I have two degrees from Yale and I have a [DAV] service officer handle my claim.” ■



Learn More Online

To see Dr. Schwartz featured in a Spotlight Series by the VA Center for Women Veterans, visit www.va.gov/womenvet/generations/spotlight.asp.

Kickoff for a cause



Veterans, DAV honored at 2015 Quick Lane Bowl

By Ashleigh Byrnes

Dozens of local veterans were honored as part of the 2nd Annual Quick Lane Bowl at Detroit's Ford Field in December.

Through the generosity of Quick Lane, DAV was given special honors as part of the college bowl game's lineup, pitting the University of Minnesota against Central Michigan University. In addition to numerous veterans taking part in the singing of the national anthem, DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2013, Michigan native and Army veteran John Todd, delivered the game ball prior to kickoff while Air Force Reservist Jim Richards was saluted during halftime for his service.

Also as part of the on-field honors, long-time DAV friend Ford Motor Co. led fundraising efforts by presenting a check for \$50,000 to National Adjutant Marc Burgess. Quick Lane also donated \$10 of every ticket sold to DAV, as well as proceeds of the game's 50/50 raffle.

In a tight fourth quarter, the Minnesota Golden Gophers bested the Central Michigan Chippewas 21-14 before a crowd of more than 34,000 fans.

"This has been a fantastic opportunity to spotlight veterans in the local community and broaden awareness for what DAV does," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "We're grateful to all of our friends and partners in the Detroit area—especially Quick Lane and Ford—for their commitment to highlighting veterans as part of this event."

Spokesman for the game, retired Detroit Lions wide-receiver and businessman Herman Moore, said he

President of Ford Customer Service Division Frederiek Toney (left) and Director of Community Development for Ford Motor Company Fund Pamela Alexander (center) present DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess with a donation of \$50,000 during the Quick Lane Bowl halftime ceremonies.

was excited the game would benefit America's military men and women.

"I've had the honor to spend time and build connections with members of the military," said Moore. "It means a lot to me personally that Quick Lane has chosen to work with Disabled American Veterans for this event."

Leading up to the game, former DAV National Service Officer and Army veteran Nick Koulchar—a double amputee—spoke to student athletes from both universities about his experiences finding meaning in his life in the wake of devastating life changes.

"Once I realized it wasn't about, 'My life is over,' it's about new ways to approach life, then it really became what I can figure out how to do next, said Koulchar.

Koulchar, who in 2008 lost both legs to a roadside bomb in Iraq, expressed to the players that, in addition to athletics such as hand-cycling and Crossfit, finding meaningful employment helped him achieve his "new normal."

"DAV was another worthwhile cause, another worthwhile mission that created structure in the life that I had lost when I lost my military career," said Koulchar. "And once you leave college, you don't have that structure anymore. It's all you now, and trying to figure that out can be scary and overwhelming."

And true to his own advice, Koulchar is working toward new goals with each passing day. A veteran competitor of multiple hand-cycling races including the Marine Corps, New York City and Chicago marathons, he has now set his sights on the next goal—the U.S. Paralympics. ■

From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



Patience

Greetings, everyone! Financial problems arise in the home primarily because most people do not have patience to wait and instead will use credit to get what they want right now. Pregnancy in teenagers is running rampant because they want sexual gratification right now instead of waiting for the right partner. Fast food is a multibillion dollar business because instant gratification is what many people want.

In the examples I have given above, there is always a consequence in not being patient and waiting for the right moment. The consequences in these examples can potentially be debt, an unwanted pregnancy or obesity.

I will be the first to admit I have little patience. The military ingrains in us a sense of “go, go, go...hurry, hurry, hurry.” I’ve had to learn to develop patience beyond my military service because, as we all know, civilian life is often a bit slower paced. We do not have to make hasty decisions like a commander in the heat of battle. If we’re making hasty decisions, more than likely, we didn’t plan properly.

But today I’m talking about a slightly different kind of patience.

The Greek word for patience translates to “long suffering.” This word isn’t used in regard to things or events, but rather to people. Some examples of patience in this context are men who could seek revenge but choose not to, or a man who is slow to anger. From my faith

perspective, this translation paints a picture of God’s attitude toward men.

The quality of patience evokes thoughts of restrained emotions, tolerance and passivity in most minds. Though some of these elements are contained within the scope of what my faith teaches, the idea of patience is far too rich in meaning to be limited to these examples.

No doubt we know people on both ends of the patience spectrum—those who demonstrate an almost saint-like tolerance for others and also those who are easily irritated. The vast majority of us, of course, fall somewhere between. We may not show much agitation on the outside, but perhaps on the inside we are churning with stress and discontent, wishing that people would “just get on with it” so we can get on with our business. Sometimes, we may find ourselves drawn into petty disagreements and are unwilling to find a middle ground.

It is easy to give people what we feel they deserve, and patently more difficult to simply walk away or let someone else have the last word in an argument. In our dealings with our fellow man, we must reproduce the loving, forbearing forgiveness and patient attitude of God both toward ourselves and others. In other words, practicing patience allows us to be the adult in the room at all times—and there’s a good chance it will bring you a sense of greater peace in your daily life.

In His Service for You.

Camp Lejeune veterans may soon see expanded disability benefits

■ The VA plans to propose expanded disability compensation eligibility for veterans exposed to contaminated drinking water while assigned to Marine Corps Base Camp Lejeune from 1953 to 1987.

Discussions between environmental health experts at the Veterans Health Administration and the Department of Health and Human Services Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR) were led by Secretary of Veterans Affairs Bob McDonald. These talks proposed presumptions of service-connection for certain conditions associated with these chemical solvents. Water sources at Camp Lejeune were contaminated with industrial solvents that are correlated with certain health conditions.

Based upon the VA's review of current medical science and findings, Secretary McDonald intends to propose creation of a presumption of service-connection for kidney cancer, liver cancer, non-Hodgkin lymphoma, leukemia, multiple myeloma,

scleroderma, Parkinson's disease and aplastic anemia/myelodysplastic syndromes.

The VA is working on regulations that would establish these presumptions, making it easier for affected veterans to receive VA disability compensation for these conditions. While the VA cannot grant any benefit claims based on the proposed presumption of service-connection for these conditions until it issues its final regulations, veterans who have a record of service at Camp Lejeune between Aug. 1, 1953, and Dec. 31, 1987, and who develop a condition that they believe is related to exposure to the drinking water at the base are encouraged to file a disability compensation claim with the VA.

The VA is reimbursing certain veterans' family members for eligible out-of-pocket medical expenses related to the 15 covered conditions.

 More information can be found at www.clfamilymembers.fsc.va.gov.

Important 2015 tax information for VA enrollees

■ The Affordable Care Act requires most U.S. taxpayers to declare they have minimum essential health coverage on their federal tax form. In December, the Department of Veterans Affairs began notifying all enrollees and beneficiaries of their VA health care coverage period in 2015.

The notification letter includes IRS Form 1095-B, "Health Coverage," detailing VA health care coverage for the previous year. Veterans and beneficiaries should use this form to complete their 2015 income tax forms. As required by law, the VA will also notify the Internal Revenue Service. Mailings were expected to be completed by the end of January 2016.

 For information on VA health care and the Affordable Care Act, visit www.va.gov/aca, or call 877-222-VETS (8387).

New eligibility requirements for Veterans Choice Program

■ The VA has announced changes to the Veterans Choice Program to make it more convenient for veterans. The main focus will be to streamline eligibility requirements, which follows feedback from veterans.

Now, veterans' specific health care needs, including the nature and frequency of the care needed, will be considered when determining eligibility. Additionally, veterans living more than 40 miles driving distance from the closest VA medical facility with a full-time primary care physician are considered eligible for the program.

 To utilize the Veterans Choice Program, call 866-606-8198 to confirm your eligibility and to schedule an appointment. For more details about the program and VA's progress, visit www.va.gov/opa/choiceact.

Assistant National Employment Director appointed

Robert Lougee was appointed to the position of Assistant National Employment Director, effective March 21.

Lougee, a service-disabled combat veteran, served in the Army and deployed in support of Operations Desert Saber, Desert Shield and Desert Storm.

He joined DAV's professional staff in 1993 as a National Service Officer trainee in Waco, Texas.

In 1996 he was promoted to NSO supervisor in the Fort Harrison, Mont., office. Two years later, he was assigned to the service office in Muskogee, Okla. In 2001, he was transferred to Denver to serve in the same capacity and was subsequently promoted to National Area Supervisor for Area 8. Lougee served as Adjutant and Executive Director of DAV Department of Colorado from 2008 to 2009. He supervised the National Service Office in Portland, Ore., from 2010 until 2012, when he assumed his present duties.

Since 2013, he has served on the Governor's Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee for Washington



Lougee

state, representing DAV and advising the governor on state programs related to veterans, their families and survivors. In 2015, he was appointed to the Community Veteran Engagement Board for the Department of Veterans Affairs' MyVA Community Model. Additionally, he serves as the DAV Department of Washington Service Director and has

held various leadership positions at the Chapter level as a DAV member.

"Since the inception of the DAV Employment Department in early 2014, DAV has been the most prolific service organization in the area of veteran employment," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "This year, we're adding online career fairs, improving our digital resources and hosting 60 traditional career fairs throughout the country.

"We welcome Rob to an exciting and growing venture where he will assist veterans and their spouses in a new capacity," Burgess added. ■

Community support eases the path for Army veteran

Leonard S. Morris, an Army veteran and retired police officer, received a wheelchair ramp for his home, thanks to numerous volunteers in Kauai, Hawaii. In 2010, Morris started having problems with his knees, and over the next couple of years his legs started to weaken. Using his walker was no longer safe.

"The ramp proves to be a godsend," said Morris' daughter, Susan Morris Perreira. "It makes both my father's life and the life of his caregivers effortless and, most of all, secure."

Retired Air Force Maj. Gen. Mary Kay Hertog, Commander of DAV Chapter 5 in Kauai, recognized this as a collaborative effort within the local community.

"A lot of people and organizations were involved, from Home Depot, to a local construction company, to members of the Kauai Veterans Center," said Hertog. "I appreciate the hard work from so many volunteers."



WWII veteran recognized for lifetime of service



Arnold Sells stands next to his wife, Ruth, after receiving his Lifetime Achievement Award during a Dec. 13 ceremony in Virginia.

After 65 years of aiding veterans, DAV Department of Virginia says ‘thank you’ to Arnold Sells.

By Bryan G. Lett

For World War II Army veteran Arnold Sells, service to the country he loves didn't end after 40 months in the military, but after 65 years of continued service to his fellow veterans through DAV.

In December, Sells received the first Lifetime Achievement Award from DAV Chapter 10 in Fairfax, Va., for more than six decades of service, membership and compassion.

Sells grew up in Tennessee and enlisted in the Army in 1941. Assigned to the 101st Airborne as an Army Ranger, he was a part of Operation Market Garden during the invasion into the Netherlands. After his combat tour in Europe ended with shrapnel wounds, he returned home to recuperate.

He received claims assistance from DAV and became a life member in 1949. Sells soon realized the need for DAV service in Northern Virginia and banded together his fellow veterans to start DAV Chapter 10 in 1950. He is the lone surviving charter member.

“Arnold Sells has given many years of himself to assist so many veterans across Virginia,” said Jim Proconier, Past Department of Virginia Commander. “He is truly a unique blend of leadership, dedication and compassion.”

In 1955, Sells was unanimously elected to be Commander of DAV Department of Virginia and has held an elected or appointed position in DAV consistently over the past six decades.

“For many, many years all of my energy and time was spent in some sort of service to DAV,” said Sells. “And I've enjoyed every minute of my association with DAV.”

Sells continued his service to the organization when he was elected as a member of the National Executive Committee for two years. In addition, he served one year as the Department Adjutant and was elected 13 years in a row as the Department Chaplain.

Throughout the years, Sells has garnered a wealth of knowledge and a thorough understanding of DAV and has always been willing to assist and mentor new members.

“Arnold was such a big influence and mentor in my involvement with DAV and knowing the history,” said Past National Commander Rob Reynolds, who credits Sells for inspiring him to lead within the organization. “It has been an honor to have had the opportunity to share and learn so much from him in the past quarter of a century.”

Over the past 65 years, Sells has impacted the lives of countless veterans and influenced DAV to a degree that's impossible to measure, and his impact will be felt within DAV for many years to come.

“The legacy of service that was started in 1950 by Arnold Sells will extend far beyond him,” said Proconier. “It has and will continue with the service of those he watched, advised and mentored. And those of us that he took under his wing, and the entire DAV organization, are much better because of him.”

“This has been a wonderful, wonderful journey,” said Sells. “I have made a lot of good and loyal friends, and for that I am very appreciative. It means everything to me. I am just speechless. How can I thank everyone for this recognition and award? I just really appreciate it.” ■

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.



A simple change of beneficiary form A legacy gift to DAV

Meeting with your attorney is a great way to begin the process of naming DAV in your estate plans. You will need to use our legal name and address as follows: DAV (Disabled American Veterans), P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250; EIN/tax identification number: 31-0263158. Then please let us know, so we can thank you through the Guardian Society!

We invite you to *create your own legacy* of compassion for your fellow veterans by making a special gift to DAV through your will, trust, life insurance policy or retirement plan.

TO LEARN MORE:

- Call Stephanie Vorhees at 800-216-9802, ext. 1,
- Email giftplanning@dav.org or
- Return the attached postcard.



A lasting gift to fellow veterans

In just 15 minutes, this veteran built a legacy of care for injured and ill veterans



Bequest donor and Special Forces veteran William Butler

William Butler is a proud life member of DAV and a Special Forces veteran who exudes a passion for life and his fellow comrades.

Butler has dedicated himself to giving back to DAV in every capacity that he can. In addition to his annual giving and his Charitable Gift Annuity, he recently named DAV as the beneficiary of his life insurance policy. Butler credits this very generous decision to one simple lesson he learned in the service: “The Special Forces Groups are taught to give back.”

And that’s just what he’s done by naming DAV as the beneficiary of his life insurance policy. In completing a simple “15-Minute Bequest,” Butler is ensuring DAV will continue to be there to help the next generation of veterans.

Naming DAV as beneficiary of your insurance policy or financial accounts is as easy as changing your beneficiary designation forms with your insurance company or financial institution by providing them with DAV’s legal name, address and tax ID number. You can designate DAV to receive the full value of the insurance policy or your financial accounts, or

you can designate a percentage. Even what you think may be a small percentage can go a long way in helping veterans while still being able to take care of your loved ones.

Upon notification of Butler’s generous legacy gift, DAV immediately added him to the ranks alongside the rest of its legacy donors by making him a DAV Guardian Society member. The Guardian Society is DAV’s way of showing appreciation to the

men and women who stand up to create a legacy of hope and compassion for the millions of veterans DAV serves. If you decide to name DAV as beneficiary of your insurance policy or financial account, or decide to name DAV in your will or trust, contact the organization so you can be honored, along with Butler. ■

Butler is ensuring DAV will continue to be there to help the next generation of veterans.

DAV member presented Silver Star after 46-year wait

DAV Department of Maine Treasurer and Chapter 1, Chelsea, Maine, Treasurer and Adjutant Ron Brodeur was presented the Silver Star for gallantry in action during a 1969 helicopter extraction mission near Duc Lap, Vietnam.

During the mission Brodeur and fellow helicopter crew chief Eric Roberts were serving as door gunner during the operation as part of the 20th Special Operations Squadron, the “Green Hornets,” a helicopter unit that specialized in covertly infiltrating and retrieving special operations forces.

During this particular mission, the unit Brodeur’s team was sent to extract were under heavy enemy small arms and mortar fire. Brodeur and Roberts were able to lay down covering fire while actively advising the pilot and co-pilot on the location of the tail rotor section to keep the aircraft from hitting the surrounding tree line. Had this occurred, the aircraft and crew would likely have been lost.

The helicopter was badly damaged by enemy fire, but Brodeur and Roberts were able to help the entire special operations team safely aboard the aircraft with no losses suffered.



Air Force Chief of Staff Gen. Mark A. Welsh III pins the Silver Star to retired Chief Master Sgt. Ronald W. Brodeur during a Pentagon ceremony, Dec. 17, 2015. (U.S. Air Force photo/Scott M. Ash)

The two pilots were presented their Silver Star in December 1969, but the gunners’ documentation and paperwork were inexplicably lost.

Brodeur said he and Roberts, who was also presented the Silver Star at the same ceremony, owed a lot of credit for the recognition to their wives, who never stopped pursuing the goal of their husbands receiving their due recognition.

“When we leave active duty, we need them more,” Brodeur said. “They’re our support system.”

Brodeur deployed again in support of Operation Desert Shield/Desert Storm in 1990.



DAV Department of Puerto Rico Commander Idalis Marquez (left) stands alongside Department Treasurer, Jimmie Velez (center) and Army Brig. Gen. Marta Carcana (right) during the DAV Department of Puerto Rico’s first-ever event for women veterans in San Juan titled “Women Veterans/Our Stars.”

Puerto Rico's first women veterans event...

The event was held Nov. 4 and featured keynote speaker Army Brig. Gen. Marta Carcana, who is the Adjutant General of the Puerto Rico National Guard, and first female to ever obtain the rank in Puerto Rico.

The event was put in place to bring more awareness to the needs of women veterans. It consisted of National Service Officer seminars and a DAV table promoting information on employment among many other topics, such as, women’s healthcare needs and veteran advocate resources.

The first-of-its-kind event hosted 46 individuals, 33 of whom were female veterans. All received a resource toolkit and a certificate for participation. The DAV Department of Puerto Rico will be launching their second event for women veterans soon.

“The Department will be sponsoring another sometime in March 2016 and I am happy that DAV was a pioneer within the veteran service organizations in Puerto Rico,” said Department of Puerto Rico Commander Idalis Marquez.



Honored for legacy of service...

Mayor Jim Schmitt presents the key to the city of Green Bay, Wisc., to DAV Charitable Service Trust President Richard E. Marbes for his long history of veterans' involvement in the local community. After serving in nearly every capacity of DAV's Chapter, Department, and national levels throughout the past three decades, Marbes continues to serve as a Chapter Service Officer at his local Chapter 3 in Green Bay.



Chicago chapter brings holiday cheer to hospital...

DAV Chapter 84, Chicago, sponsored its third annual holiday stocking delivery for inpatients of the Edward J. Hines Jr. VA Hospital in Hines, Ill. The Chapter and family members collected, stuffed and delivered the stockings to the 11th floor residential care facility and the hospice unit.



Community youths honor veteran neighbors...

Commander Adam Pugh, of DAV Chapter 38, Orange Park, Fla., accepts a donation from Margaret and Morgan Bailey, who set up a lemonade stand to raise funds for local veterans. The pair raised nearly \$60 for their veteran neighbors and presented the check at Chapter 38's executive board meeting.



Resource center named after Ohio veteran...

Ohio Past Department Commander Samuel Lanza (left) was recently honored by the Trumbull County Veterans Service Commission by naming the new veterans resource center in his honor. Vincent Darcangelo (right), chair of the DAV POW/MIA Interim Committee, attended the ceremony. Lanza enlisted in the Marines during World War II and was wounded during the Battle of Okinawa. After returning home to Youngstown, Ohio, he has spent his life dedicated to serving fellow veterans. Having a "whatever it takes" attitude for service, Lanza is a longtime volunteer of the DAV Transportation Network, dedicated 60 years as a Chapter Service Officer and was even generous enough to purchase steel toed work boots for veterans who needed them so they could find meaningful employment at the local steel mill. The Samuel E. Lanza Veterans Resource Center will ensure his legacy of service lives on.



Bringing education to community veterans...

DAV Chapter 20, Medford, Minn., and the Disabled American Veterans of Minnesota Foundation made a donation of \$10,500 to the South Central College Faribault Campus Foundation. In doing so, they established an endowment that will provide an annual scholarship for a veteran or veteran's family member attending South Central College's Faribault campus. "Our Chapter has been looking for ways to have a lasting impact on the community and promote our presence while supporting area veterans and their families," said Chapter 20 member and DAV Minnesota Director of Operations, Josh Vrtacnik. "Assisting with accessible and affordable higher education is one way we can empower our fellow Minnesota veterans."



Share Your News!

Send your DAV or Auxiliary news to feedback@dav.org. Please provide a JPEG image (minimum 300 dpi), a description of the photo and the names of those pictured. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety.



Veterans taking care of their own...

When Giovanni Marotta (left), who owns a home remodelling company in San Antonio learned a fellow Marine and Texan was having a hard time getting an accessible shower, he put his resources to work and provided the needed service at no cost. L.L. "Duke" Hendershot, who was injured while serving in Vietnam, is a renowned member of Chapter 5, New Braunfels, Texas, who has volunteered in the veterans community for nearly 50 years.

Community businesses support local heroes...

(Left to right) NiteHawk Sweepers President Tracy Day, Davidson Macri Sweeping President Bob Anderson, newly named DAV Assistant National Employment Director Rob Lougee, Retired U.S. Navy Rear Admiral and DAV life member Bill Centers, Alamo Group CEO and President Ron Robinson, and Alamo Group Vice President Jeff Leonard show off the NiteHawk Sweepers Raptor model with custom DAV wrap design at the NiteHawk Sweepers open house at the company's new facility in Kent, Wash. NiteHawk Sweepers has been a generous supporter of veterans, donating a portion of sales from their custom camouflage-wrapped sweepers to DAV in 2015.



DAV Flight Team 2016 Schedule



DATE	SHOW NAME	LOCATION	AIRCRAFT
Mar. 12-13	Thunder & Lightning Over Arizona	Davis-Monthan AFB, Tucson, AZ	B-25 Maid in the Shade
Mar. 19-20	MacDill AFB presents Tampa Bay Airfest	Tampa, FL	B-25 Panchito
Apr. 16-17	Smoky Mountain Air Show	Knoxville, TN	B-25 Panchito
Apr. 23-24	AirPower Over Hampton Roads	Langley AFB, VA	B-25 Panchito
May 14-15	Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst Open House	JB McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ	B-25 Panchito
May 21-22	Shaw Air Expo	Shaw AFB, SC	B-25 Panchito
June 11-12	Rhode Island Nat'l Guard Open House & Air Show	North Kingstown, RI	TBD
July 9-10	Duluth Air & Aviation Expo	Duluth, MN	B-25 Show Me
July 25-31	EAA AirVenture	Oshkosh, WI	TBD
Aug. 6-7	Boeing Seafair Airshow	Seattle, WA	TBD
Sept. 10-11	Fort Wayne Airshow/Open House	Fort Wayne, IN	B-25 Miss Mitchell
Oct. 1-2	Robins AFB Air Show	Warner-Robins, GA	B-25 Killer Bee

Visit dav.org/events/airshow-schedule for the most up-to-date schedule.



Home Depot recognizes hometown veterans...

Past Department of Virginia Commander John W. King II (green shirt) stands with disabled veteran Gary Gwynn and local Home Depot employees at the unveiling of a DAV parking sign at the company's Franklin Road location in Roanoke, Va. The reserved parking sign recognizing and thanking veterans is part of a Home Depot initiative that started in the company's 131 Ohio Valley region stores and has since spread to numerous Home Depot locations nationwide.



Chicago veterans honored for service...

Past Sr. Vice Commander Jim Wright II (left), Commander Alexander Pechar (center) and Adjutant/Treasurer Charles Luhan, Jr. (right), of DAV Chapter 84, Chicago, each received DAV Distinguished Service Awards for 12 years of continuous service to veterans and their families. The Chapter members were recently honored guests at their ABC affiliate's Windy City Live program during the filming of its 1,000th episode.

Helping kids



DAV is once again joining with Camp Corral to provide a unique and fun camp experience to help our kids. This summer, more than 3,200 children of fallen and injured veterans will be attending a free week of Camp Corral throughout the nation. Last year, more than 300 of the camp participants were sponsored through **DAV's "Just B Kids" scholarship program**. Children between the ages of 8 and 15 are invited to come experience Camp Corral and enjoy a week of nonstop fun and excitement.



2016 CAMP CORRAL Schedule			
DATES	LOCATION	CITY	STATE
June 5-10	YMCA Camp Cormorant	Lake Park	Minn.
June 5-11	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	Texas
	YMCA Camp Greenville	Cleveland	S.C.
June 12-17	YMCA Camp Shady Brook	Deckers	Colo.
June 12-18	YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin	Middleville	Mich.
June 19-24	Camp Joy	Clarksville	Ohio
June 26-July 1	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	N.C.
	YMCA Camp Gorham	Eagle Bay	N.Y.
July 3-8	Triangle Y Ranch Camp	Oracle	Ariz.
	YMCA Camp Carson	Princeton	Ind.
	YMCA Camp Wood	Elmdale	Kan.
	Eastern NC 4-H Center	Columbia	N.C.
	YMCA Camp Classen	Davis	Okla.
July 10-15	YMCA Camp Loma Mar	Loma Mar	Calif.
July 17-22	4-H Memorial Camp	Monticello	Ill.
July 31-Aug. 5	4-H Camp Timpoochee	Niceville	Fla.
Aug. 7-12	YMCA Camp Seymour	Gig Harbor	Wash.
	Northern Virginia 4-H Center	Front Royal	Va.
	YMCA Camp Weaver	Greensboro	N.C.
Aug. 7-13	YMCA Camp Ernst	Burlington	Ky.
Aug. 14-20	YMCA Camp Fitch	North Springfield	Pa.

www.justbkids.org



If you have a kid in your life who would like to attend Camp Corral for free, visit www.justbkids.org to link to information on eligibility and to apply.

REUNIONS

ARMY

19TH & 34TH INFANTRY REGIMENT; 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION (KOREA & JAPAN 1950-53) Apr. 25-27, Pigeon Forge, TN, Contact: Llanie Ellison, Ph: 205-349-2237.

83RD INFANTRY DIVISION WWII July 27-31, Arlington, VA, Contact: Paul DiGiammerino, Ph: 781-608-5222, Email: littleyetalian@comcast.net.

88TH INFANTRY (BLUE DEVIL) DIVISION AND TRUST TROOPERS, SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER Apr. 11-14, St. Kissimmee, FL, Contact: Robert L. McCall, Ph: 256-881-6325, Email: robmccall@aol.com.

117TH AVIATION COMPANY (AHC)/8TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY June 14-18, Herndon, VA, Contact: Allen Bennett, Ph: 850-834-3376, Email: namvet42@hotmail.com.

720 MPBN OF ALL ERAS REUNION May 1-5, Charleston, SC, Contact: Tom Watson, Ph: 803-892-6072 (EST), Email: mp720reunion@comporium.net.

CO. "O" 75TH INFANTRY Sept. 30-Oct. 2, New Orleans, LA, Contact: Larry Lee, Ph: 812-972-1396, Email: larryleeartciraner19701971@gmail.com.

CO. L, 21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION May 11-15, Harrisburg, VA, Contact: George Vlasic, Ph: 910-287-5618, Email: geonanvlasic@atmc.net.

DELTA TROOP BLACKHAWKS 71 AIR CAV May 19-22, Ft. Knox, KY, Contact: Joe Vernengo, Ph: 586-337-3334, Email: jvern106@comcast.net.

NATIONAL 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION (IVY) ASSOC., 98TH ANNUAL REUNION July 18-24, Knoxville, TN, Contact: Rusty Armstrong, Ph: 414-630-2484, Email: ivyleaveseditor@gmail.com.

RED WARRIOR ASSOCIATION OF VETERANS Oct. 10-12, San Diego, CA, Contact: Frank Wise, Ph: 540-856-2169, Email: jmhwiseshentel.net, Web: www.redwarriors.us.

US ARMY VIETNAM - DUSTERS, QUADS, SEARCHLIGHTS, VULCANS AND HAWKS REUNION May 31-June 5, Nashville, TN, Contact: Bruce Geiger, Ph: 914-576-1050, Email: bmgeiger@aol.com, Web: www.ndqsa.com

MARINES

1ST AND 3RD AMTRACS VIETNAM June 23-26, Swansboro, NC, Contact: Fred Davidson, Ph: 410-819-8774, Email: fdamd44@aol.com.

ALPHA BATTERY 1/11-VIETNAM Apr. 15-19, Herndon, VA, Contact: Peter Van Ryzin, Ph: 540-347-3267, Email: vanryzin1@hughes.net.

AMTRAC PLATOON BLT 2/4 & 26 June 2-5, Quantico, VA, Contact: Gene Cox, Ph: 602-840-6262, Email: capteecox@aol.com.

BULK FUEL USMC 28TH REUNION Apr. 28-May 1, at Sleep Inn, Mt. Pleasant, Charleston, SC, Contact: Howard Huston, Ph: (C) 609-432-4027 or (H) 609-927-3857, Email: hhust61@aol.com.

KILO BATTERY, 4TH BN., 13TH MARINES May 18-22, Quantico, VA, Contact: Tom Gafford, Ph: 434-546-0774, Email: tomgafford@gmail.com.

MCAS NAM PHONG, THAILAND "THE ROSE GARDEN" May 12-15, San Diego, CA, Contact Richard Koehnen, Ph: 619-840-2335, Email: richkoe@cox.net.

VMFA-542, 1ST MAW (VIETNAM) Aug. 2-7, Washington, DC, Contact: Jerry Nicholson, Ph: 818-709-6270, Email: jer166@sbcglobal.net, Web: www.vmf542.com.

NAVY

NAVAL AIR STATION SANFORD, ALL UNITS AND SQUADRONS, 42-68 June 23-26, Sanford, FL, Contact: Ralph Feedback, Ph: 407-302-2252, Email: dlfrsf@aol.com.

USS ABNAKI (ATF-96) Sept. 7-10, Portland, OR, Contact: Darrel Plank, Ph: 541-910-4132, Email: mtnman1118@gmail.com.

USS ANTIETAM (CV/CVA/CVS-36) Sept. 11-15, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Ed Booth, Ph: 253-752-6158, Email: edanderm@aol.com.

USS BLUEFISH (SSN-675 & SS-222) Apr. 28-30, Landmark Resort, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: John Wittenstrom, Ph: 910-235-0191, Email: jwittenstrom@nc.rr.com, or Peter Blaise, Ph: 772-777-2379.

USS CARPENTER (DD-825) May 19-23, Branson, MO, Contact: Jimmie Kennedy, Ph: 714-776-4019, Email: kennj3@gmail.com.

USS FORREST B. ROYAL (DD-872) June 23-26, Portland, ME, Contact: Ron Larsen, Ph: 715-423-8905; Email: mosbyusn@wctc.net.

USS INCHON (LPH/MCS-12) May 15-19, Warwick, RI, Contact: David F. Fix, Ph: 717-203-4152, Email: ussinchon@gmail.com, Web: www.ussinchon.com.

USS KING DLG-10/DDG-41 June 16-19, Herndon, VA, Contact: John Fitzsimons, Ph: 609-971-5498, Email: jfittzwithking@verizon.net, Web: uss-king.com.

USS MCCLOY (DE/FF-1038) Sept. 16-18, Wilmington, NC, Contact: Warren Williams, Ph: 781-767-4061, Email: martywill565@gmail.com.

USS SAVANNAH (AOR-4) Sept. 11-16, Virginia Beach, VA, Contact: Ray Heinrich, Ph: 252-715-3132, Email: aor4ray@yahoo.com, Web: www.usssavannah.com.

USS SPROSTON (DD/DDE-577) Sept. 21-25, Kansas City, MO, Contact: Orville Amos, Ph: 816-483-2710, Email: oamos541@aol.com, Web: www.sproston.com.

AIR FORCE

363TFW(P) 25TH DESERT STORM REUNION

May 21, Shaw AFB, SC, Contact: Wayne E. Austin, Email: 363tfwalumni@desertstorm@gmail.com.

819TH RED HORSE, PHU CAT, 66-67 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION

June 6-8, Fredericksburg, TX, Contact: Joe Crowder, Ph: 210-673-1798, Email: njpquiltcrazy@gmail.com.

ALL SERVICES

MACV COUNTERPARTS REUNION Apr. 27-30, San Diego, CA, Contact: Michael Lund, Ph: 989-356-4043, Email: omalley@usa.net.

S.S. MAYAGUEZ RECOVERY OPERATION, 41ST ANNIVERSARY REUNION May 15-19, Cincinnati, OH, Contact: Dan Hoffman, Ph: 803-422-6842, Email: kohtangdan@gmail.com.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for any information on PFC Fitzgerald who was critically injured at MASS-1 MT around 1983, Cherry Pt., N.C. Please contact David Chicoine, 187 Huntington Rd., Russell, MA 01071, Ph: 413-862-3226.
- Searching for anyone from the 24th Missile Battalion, Boston who was with me on a chartered flight scheduled to fly from Boston to El Paso, Texas, enroute to Red Canyon, N.M., in July 1957. Please contact John P. Lewis, 28 Harvest St., Dorchester, MA 02125, Ph: 617-436-4895, Email: Jabezj69@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone stationed with me in the B-36(H) Era at Carswell AFB, Texas, during the 1950s with the 42 B Squadron, 11th Bomb Wing. Please contact Jimmy E. Lawson, 244 Leisure Ln., Cedar Creek, TX 78612, Ph: 512-303-0225 or 512-914-2259.
- Searching for anyone who served with Lt. Wolf, "MD," Lt. C. R. Williams or Sgt. A. B. Barnes in the Medic 67th Tank Battalion, Mainz, Germany, during 1954-57. Please contact A. B. Barnes at 919-246-4335.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in Co. "D," 31st Infantry Regiment, 7th Division in Korea, 1951-52. Please contact Calvin W. Anderson, 2501 W. State Street, Ste. 3, Mason City, IA 50401-8917, Ph: 641-494-5103.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 801st Mt. Battalion, 101st Airborne Division with A Company at Camp Eagle from 1969 to 1970. Please contact Robert E. (Moon) Mullins at 304-732-7172.
- Searching for anyone who witnessed me flying to Bien Hoi AB, Vietnam in early October 1968. I was assigned to the 100th ABM Squadron, Davis-Monthan AB, AZ. Please contact Stacy Nephew, 1515 E. Harrison Avenue, Guthrie, OK 73044-5711, Ph: 405-282-4576 or 405-740-8390.
- Searching for Charles Saunders whom I served with in the USMC, 1965-67. Please contact Peter Frensch Jr. at 716-689-4353.

- Searching for former Lt. Arthur Knight or Ernest Rothrock who served at Aberdeen Proving Grounds, Md., in 1964-65, 8th Enlisted Training Company under then Capt. B. A. Hiland or anyone else who served during this time. Please contact Richard P. Adams at RAdams150@aol.com.
- Searching for Roger Montgomery who served with mein Vietnam, Aug. 1966-Aug. 1967 in the 335th Transportation Company, Dong Bathin. Last known address was Zanesville, OH. Please contact Hans J. Hassinger, 5 Sac Road, Albrightsville, PA 18210, Ph: 570-215-4125, Email: pophedmg52@aol.com.
- Searching for Sgts. Oates, Jackson or Freeman who served with me in the Korean War Sept. 1950-Nov. 1951, HQ Company Heavy Equipment, 74th Combat Engineer. Please contact A. B. Barnes at 919-246-4335.
- Searching for Thomas Walsh, A1C, who served with me at MacDill AFB in 1963 or anyone who may know of his whereabouts. Last known address was Flushing, Queens, NY. Please contact Al Guay, Ph: 401-658-1764, Email: a101@cox.net.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in basic training from Jan. 15, 1973 to Apr. 12, 1973 at Parris Island, S.C. in the 3rd Battalion, Platoon 306. Please contact Danny Sexton, P.O. Box 1107, Monticello, KY 42633, Ph: 606-278-2648.
- Searching for veterans and/or descendants who served with the 83rd Infantry Division during WWII. Please contact Paul DiGiammerino, Ph: 781-608-5222.

REUNION STORIES DAV is interested in stories about veterans who connected via the "Reunions" section of *DAV Magazine*. If you have a story you would like to share, please email feedback@dav.org.

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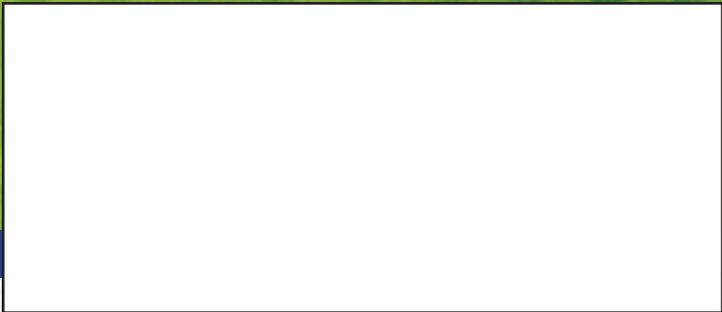


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