



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

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MAGAZINE

Texan takes the reins

Marine Corps veteran
Dennis Nixon elected
DAV's new national
commander

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NATIONAL CONVENTION
JULY 14 - 17, 2018



Members of Chapter 12 in Henderson, Nev., served as color guard for the opening ceremony.



Left: (From left) Auxiliary 1st Junior Vice Commander Lynn Helms Prosser, Department of Georgia Past Commander Linda Jimmerson, DAV life member Tim Timmerman and newly named Auxiliary National Commander Ellen Timmerman.



Above: With their donation to aid veterans, Auxiliary junior members from the Department of Texas make up in heart what they may lack in height.



From the NATIONAL COMMANDER

DENNIS R. NIXON



Honored to serve with you

It's truly an honor to have been elected to serve beside you as our organization's national commander. Serving the disabled veteran community is a sacred obligation to our members and future generations of veterans, and I do not take that lightly.

It's important to recognize you are DAV. You are the ones carrying forth our important mission throughout the country. You deserve a tremendous amount of credit for how seriously and thoughtfully you represent our organization.

Many of us have dealt with illness and injuries that changed us decades ago, and the suffering goes on. Those who survive must face incredible challenges. They will look to us as examples and beacons of hope.

Many of us know all too well about the cost of war. Many of us have come awfully close to the fire. All of us were changed forever. And our families share that burden.

When I was injured and lost my leg from service in Vietnam, I knew my battle that day was over but the war would be ongoing.

I felt alone. I felt weak. And there's nothing harder for a Marine than to feel helpless.

Fortunately, that's when DAV became a part of my life.

I joined the military to become a part of

something bigger than myself. I wanted a mission. My fellow veterans and our loved ones can understand that special calling.

Every day now, I thank the good Lord that DAV came into my life. Through DAV, I found a second family. I was back in the fight. I was making sure my fellow veterans weren't left behind.

Like many of us, that's why I dedicated my life to DAV. It's why I served the better part of a half-century as a service officer. It's why I stayed active in my chapter and department.

As leaders in DAV and our great Auxiliary—whether you like it or not, your membership makes you a leader in the veteran community—we are bound to our mission of service to veterans and their families.

I ask you as leaders to inspire your fellow veterans. I ask you to stay current on the issues that affect our community.

When we get information on DAV initiatives like VolunteerforVeterans.org, public service announcement campaigns, the Victories for Veterans fundraising challenge, DAV 5Ks, or any other initiatives or resources we can support, I hope you'll join me in putting them to good use.

I want to thank all of you for leading the charge for our organization and on behalf of fellow disabled veterans. It's an honor to continue to serve beside you. And now, let's get to work.

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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



Advocacy in action: From Reno to Orlando and beyond

It may have been a whirlwind week in Reno, Nev., but I know I'm not alone in already looking forward to our 98th DAV National Convention in Orlando, Fla., next year! Surrounded by thousands of my fellow veterans and their families, I always feel so rejuvenated by the energy at our largest annual gathering.

The camaraderie with members from across the country is priceless; however, it is what we accomplish together that inspires me most. The work we did in Reno on behalf of our brothers and sisters sets the stage for the coming year. You identified the most pressing issues facing veterans today and crafted a path forward by adopting hundreds of resolutions. It is through this process that DAV has been making historic strides in protecting veterans' rights for close to a century.

But we won't be waiting until Orlando to take action on these pivotal issues. Rather, they are the guiding force of our advocacy every day. In June, the VA MISSION Act was signed into law by the president. DAV long advocated for expanding comprehensive caregiver benefits to veterans injured prior to Sept. 11, 2001, and this new law is a major step in ensuring no disabled veteran is left behind again. We celebrate this historic legislation, but we cannot proclaim "mission accomplished" until all veterans have access to the benefits they earned through service.

That same month, the House passed

H.R. 299, the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017, which would correct a long-standing wrong for thousands of veterans who served on ships during the Vietnam War and later became ill from their service. Approximately 90,000 Navy veterans who served off the shores of Vietnam were potentially exposed to Agent Orange and other herbicides, but they haven't been given the same presumption of service-connected disability for Agent Orange-related illnesses as their fellow veterans who served on the ground.

H.R. 299 would correct this injustice by providing many Blue Water Navy veterans the same presumption of exposure to Agent Orange that already exists for those who served in country. Supporting legislation that expands presumption of exposure to Agent Orange has long been a resolution DAV has rallied behind. DAV recently testified on the measure before the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee and will keep members updated as this legislation moves forward.

After an overwhelming bipartisan vote in the House, we now call on the Senate to take similar action on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act so that it can be sent to the president and finally signed into law this year.



Learn More Online

Advocate at davcan.org.



VA MISSION Act

I think it's fantastic that the VA MISSION Act of 2018 has been signed into law and will help the caregivers of combat-wounded veterans of all generations, not just those wounded after 9/11. However, as a service-connected blind veteran, I hope DAV will continue the fight to make sure that caregivers, like my wife, of all veterans made profoundly ill in wartime service get the same benefits. We're making progress, but we need to keep going if we're to equally recognize all our unsung heroes who save taxpayers money and work day and night to ensure a quality of life for the veterans they love. **Paul Kaminsky, Blind Veterans National Chapter 1**

Multiple primary care physicians

Responding to Jim Gibbons letter of support for the VA [May/June *DAV Magazine*]: I am glad you are getting good care. But here in Nevada we do not. While using the VA, I had seven different primary care physicians in seven years. I was nearly poisoned three times because no one at the VA checked to see if the various medications interacted with each other. Having multiple orthopedic issues, the VA's choice of treatment was pills and physical therapy, but I lived five hours from the VA medical center. My new doctors have already fixed four of the issues with surgery, with four more planned. **Rob Biller, Chapter 17 in Oshkosh, Wis.**

VA health care and DAV Transportation Network

I want to tell you how great the VA hospitals in Seattle and Boise, Idaho, and the Caldwell VA clinic are; they have done so much for me. They have great doctors, nurses and other staff who go above and beyond in the call of meeting my needs. I also

would like to thank the drivers of the DAV Transportation Network, because these are the finest people who go the distance in providing rides and caring. **John Landers, Chapter 1 in Caldwell, Idaho**

Invisible injuries

I have read the commander's commentary about invisible injuries in the May/June edition a number of times. The commander truly gets it and has certainly earned the right to talk on the subject. She is spot-on in her summary and recommendations. I truly hope I may meet her one day to thank her personally for such a wonderful insight. **Mike Critchfield, Chapter 18 in Big Rapids, Mich.**

Fight for earned benefits

I was particularly taken by the article concerning Mrs. Jane Miranda, widow of Navy veteran Jose Miranda ["Serving a survivor," May/June *DAV Magazine*]. Her struggle to obtain earned VA benefits was so typical of a system that is still very difficult to work through unless a claimant has a dedicated advocate like DAV. I personally know that DAV is the best veterans advocate organization currently available to all veterans and families. **Carl A. McAfee, Chapter 78 in Chambersburg, Pa.**

Power of networking

Years ago in a conversation about disability, a member recommended I go to DAV to have my 30 percent rating re-evaluated. The results came back 100 percent. In gratitude for the blessings shown to me through

DAV, I had contact cards printed with DAV Chapter 20's address and contact phone number. I have been doing this for several years and would guess that over 50 Vietnam veterans are now getting benefits through DAV's help. This is a practice I encourage all DAV members to try. **Glen Caldwell, Chapter 20 in Virginia Beach, Va.**

Facebook

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Mobile service office

I went to a mobile van unit after being bounced around in the VA for over a year. The DAV supervisor listened, took an interest in my case and is taking action. I look forward to completing this lengthy process. Since I served, my battle to survive has impacted all stages of both my life and my wife's. I intend to keep fighting beside advocates who show me they care. **Robert G. Pellerin**

Veterans helping veterans

I have worked with DAV for 20 years, and they have been nothing but great. Just because they give you bad news is no reason to blame the messenger. Yes, they are busy and that is to be expected. They are helping thousands of veterans. Please be patient, and yelling doesn't solve anything. I love DAV and can't imagine what it would be like without them. They have helped me navigate through the VA bureaucracy, and their service is outstanding. **Sandra Shidler**

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

Fighting ‘tooth’ and nail

Proposed bill would expand VA dental care to more veterans

By Mary Dever

Veterans enrolled in the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system could benefit from the VA’s dental program if new legislation moves forward. H.R. 4556—introduced by Rep. Carol Shea-Porter—would require the VA to offer comprehensive dental care to all 9.1 million veterans currently enrolled for VA health care.

Currently, only veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 100 percent, veterans with a service-connected dental condition, former prisoners of war and homeless veterans are eligible for VA dental care.

Dental care is also available if the dental condition is affecting the veteran’s service-connected condition or complicates treatment.

DAV Resolution Number 018 calls for the VA to provide comprehensive dental care to all service-connected disabled veterans within the VA health care system.

“Dental care is an integral part of an individual’s overall health, and we should treat it as such,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “All service-disabled veterans who utilize VA medical services should also be afforded dental care as part of a comprehensive health benefits package that encompasses VA’s ‘whole veteran’ approach.”

According to the U.S. surgeon general, individuals who are medically compromised or have disabilities are at greater risk for oral diseases. Oral disease jeopardizes

overall health and can be progressive, cumulative and more complex over time. Poor dental health often significantly damages a person’s quality of life.

Almost 70 percent of Americans over age 65 have been diagnosed with periodontal diseases, which range from simple gum inflammation to serious diseases that result in damage to soft tissue and bone, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Poor oral health negatively affects emotional well-being, as well as the ability to complete daily tasks such as speaking, eating and expressing emotions.

“There is plenty of research that shows us how essential good dental care is to health, so it only makes sense for veterans to be provided the same standards for dental care as for their health care,” added Ilem. “Right now, there are too many limitations that prevent veterans from obtaining this essential health benefit. This bill would eliminate these restrictions on eligibility for VA dental care, allowing all veterans that are enrolled in the VA system to access in-house dental care.”

The bill phases in the new eligibility over five years to give the VA time to invest in and increase its capacity to provide dental care. ■



Learn More Online

Visit DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network) at davcan.org to stay informed on this and other critical legislation impacting disabled veterans.

Never too late

DAV fights for 100-year-old veteran to get long-overdue benefits for World War II injury

By Charity Edgar

During World War II, Joseph Bennett served under Gen. George Patton in the famed 2nd Armored Division in campaigns across Africa and the European theater.

Decades later, Bennett's daughter, Sue Byrd, was struggling to help her father pay medical bills due to his service-connected injuries.

She explained that when her father finally returned stateside after the war, he decided not to pursue benefits for the injuries he incurred in combat. The Army told transitioning soldiers this was their only opportunity to submit a claim and it would delay their out-processing for an indeterminate amount of time.

Understandably, after two and a half years overseas during the war, Bennett just wanted to go home. He had sustained hearing loss, which his daughter said was due to being in and around tanks and surrounded by bombings during the war. On one occasion in France, Bennett watched as enemy bombs struck three service members within yards of where he stood. His proximity to the blast caused his ears to bleed.

Bennett also sustained a combat injury impacting his back, knee and leg. At first, it was manageable. He



World War II veteran Joseph Bennett celebrates his 100th birthday with his great-grandchildren, Daniel and Marya Nine. DAV was able to help the centenarian finally access the benefits he earned more than seven decades earlier while serving in the Army.

sought care at the VA, and a brace helped him walk. Despite encouragement over the years to apply for VA benefits, Bennett still refused, heeding the Army instruction in 1945 that said he only had one chance to apply.

After Bennett retired to serve as a caregiver for his wife, he determined that he no longer required secondary insurance to supplement Medicare, instead relying on care at the local VA medical center.

His condition worsened in 2014. The 20 percent deductibles that Bennett had to pay for the non-VA emergency room care were adding up. Two years later, Byrd finally convinced her father to allow her to submit a claim on his behalf as his medical bills piled up and his savings drained.

Byrd worked with the DAV office in Manchester, N.H., and a claim was filed in 2016. In 2017, the VA accepted the hearing loss but denied the physical injury claim; the leg and knee injuries were separated into two claims. Two appeals were submitted and later granted in 2018, but one had an incorrect effective date. Meanwhile, Bennett's health worsened.

"My dad was really sick earlier this year and back in the hospital again," said Byrd. "Day to day, I didn't know if he'd make it."

Then DAV benefits specialist Jesse Welch jumped into action.

Welch stressed the veteran's age and health condition to his counterparts at the Manchester VA Regional Office.

"We needed to get him paid," explained Welch. "Joseph's benefits would have disappeared if he passed away, despite his daughter helping him pay out of pocket to fund his care."

The ability to help veterans like Bennett is what means the most to Welch. When the VA granted the earlier effective date just weeks before the World War II veteran's 100th birthday in April, he was overcome with relief for both Byrd and her father.

"It was so important to me that we were able to get resolution for Joseph promptly due to his age and declining health," said Welch.

"This means the money my father gets for disability and Social Security goes to his bank account instead of the medical bills he shouldn't have had to pay," said Byrd.

"Having an advocate like DAV to tell you not to quit is important," she added. "I had someone to help me through the process and what I felt like was an injustice. He served, was injured and deserved to be taken care of."

Welch understands firsthand that there is no expiration in honoring service. He served in the Marine Corps for a year and a half before a training injury forced his medical separation. Welch wasn't even aware

of the benefits he was eligible for until 25 years after his discharge from the military. A family friend connected him with DAV, and he finally received the benefits he earned through service—decades later. An introduction to the organization also provided him with the ability to continue serving.



"Too many veterans believe they have been out too long to get help. It's important they know that the **recognition of their service has no expiration date.**"

Jesse Welch, DAV National Service Officer

"My service in the Marine Corps was cut short," explained Welch. "I didn't plan on leaving the military. Working at DAV is an opportunity for me to serve when I couldn't before."

"Every DAV benefits specialist has been on the other side of the table, going through the claims process themselves," said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. "They work tirelessly to ensure their fellow veterans receive the benefits they have earned through service. And when there is an absolute emergency—like cases with extenuating circumstances like Joseph's—they can ensure the claim is processed expeditiously."

"I am thankful for DAV and all they did to help me," said Bennett.

"Too many veterans believe they have been out too long to get help," said Welch. "It's important they know that the recognition of their service has no expiration date." ■



Learn More Online

Need help with a claim? Contact a DAV national service office near you. Find yours at dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office.



THE BIGGEST LITTLE CONVENTION IN THE WORLD

By M. Todd Hunter

New national commander elected at 97th DAV and Auxiliary National Convention amid adoption of new resolutions, celebration of caregiver benefits expansion

It's easy to be distracted by the sights and sounds of a casino town and its nightlife, but for those attending the 2018 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nev., it was just as much about business as entertainment.

One of the most important tasks at hand was choosing a new national commander, and members unanimously elected Dennis R. Nixon, a combat-wounded Marine, to hold the office.

In his acceptance speech, the Vietnam veteran from Texas described how he felt defeated and useless after becoming an above-knee amputee as a result of a 1969 land mine explosion in Danang, but becoming a DAV service officer nearly five decades ago gave him purpose once again.

"Suddenly, I was back in the fight," said Nixon. "I was making sure my fellow veterans weren't left behind.

"DAV gives us the unique opportunity to empower and improve the lives of our fellow veterans," he continued. "It helps us ensure promises are kept."

Nixon then credited members and supporters with carrying forth the organization's important mission with thoughtfulness and dedication, but also asked them to consider their individual DAV legacies.

"The seeds we plant today contribute to the legacy of our mission," Nixon declared. "If the organization is to continue and the work we're doing today is to endure, we need to be a voice of encouragement. We need to inspire."

He simply concluded, "Let's get to work."

Along with Nixon's election, convention delegates chose other national officers, including Senior Vice Commander Stephen "Butch" Whitehead, 1st Junior Vice Commander Donald Day, 2nd Junior Vice Commander Andy Marshall, 3rd Junior Vice Commander Joseph Parsetich and 4th Junior Vice Commander Nancy Espinosa. Delegates also re-elected National Judge Advocate Michael Dobmeier and National Chaplain Michael Dover.

The DAV Auxiliary elected Ellen Timmerman, who ran on the theme "Together, we can achieve more," as national commander. Other newly elected Auxiliary national officers include Senior Vice Commander Diane Franz, 1st Junior Vice Commander Lynn Helms Prosser, 2nd Junior Vice Commander Darlene Spence, 3rd Junior Vice Commander Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, 4th Junior Vice Commander AnnMarie

Hurley and Judge Advocate Paula Raymond.

In her final statements and report to the convention, outgoing National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster noted the tremendous work done during her time leading the organization by members and supporters on behalf of caregivers and women veterans, both of which will continue to remain top legislative priorities for the organization during Nixon's tenure at the helm.

"I'm proud of what we have accomplished together," she said, "but remain hungry for more."

Metcalf-Foster detailed DAV's co-sponsorship of the 2017 National Women Veterans Summit and efforts working with Congress to enact the remaining recommendations from the organization's groundbreaking 2014 report *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home*.

"I am pleased to announce that DAV will be releasing a follow-up report on women veterans in September and hosting an event on Capitol Hill," she revealed. "We will remain steadfast and dedicated to these causes until women have the support they earned through service."

Metcalf-Foster went on to describe the organization's efforts to expand the Department of Veterans Affairs' comprehensive caregiver assistance program to veterans of all eras, which came to fruition when the president signed the VA MISSION Act of 2018 in June.

"This is a major milestone," she said, "but we will not slow down or flinch in our unwavering support and will ensure the swift implementation of this new law."

While the legislation extends caregiver benefits to veterans severely injured before 9/11, it omits those whose injuries are a result of serious illnesses, such as Past National Commander Dave Riley, who contracted a bacterial infection that led to him becoming a quadruple amputee during his service. DAV will continue to fight for equitable caregiver benefits for Riley and countless veterans like him.

"Leading an organization like DAV isn't easy," Metcalf-Foster admitted. "But it remains one of the greatest honors of my life."

As Metcalf-Foster closed her remarks and her time as national commander, the crowd marked her service to veterans and their families with a standing ovation.

Then-acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peter O'Rourke, a Navy and Air Force veteran, delivered remarks to DAV members during the joint opening session, focusing on the department's recent modernization efforts and the relationship between the VA and DAV. (VA Secretary Robert Wilkie was confirmed by the Senate the following week and sworn in as the department's 10th secretary of Veterans Affairs on July 30.)



Left: Past National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster (right) presents the national commander's pin to National Commander Dennis Nixon during the introduction of national officers on the final night of the convention. **Right:** Auxiliary National Commander Ellen Timmerman speaks during the Introduction of line officers ceremony. Timmerman joined the Auxiliary in 2005 and is a member of Unit 32 in Albuquerque, N.M., and Unit 21 in Denver.

“Your work with DAV is so important to the VA, and you, the members, are essential to bridging the gap between the veteran and their local community,” said O’Rourke. “Whether you’re one of thousands of DAV drivers who transport veterans to their appointments or one of the hundreds of veteran service officers who fight daily for your fellow brothers or sisters, your continued commitment to the mission of DAV stands as true today as it has for nearly a century.”

Citing “historic and transformative improvements” at the VA, O’Rourke then touted a new health record system designed to seamlessly share health records between the Department of Defense and the VA, saying it will “bring transparency to veterans and caregivers and enable the veteran to be in the driver’s seat for their health care.”

He also noted that the department’s appeals modernization, mandated by the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017, is on track to be completed by February 2019, due in part to the success of the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP).

“While RAMP is beginning to deliver results, we know there are opportunities to continuously improve,” he said. “We ask for your continued help in this effort.”

O’Rourke stated that more than 40,000 appeals had gone through RAMP by the time of his remarks, with over \$30 million in retroactive benefits being paid in an average of 80 days.

“RAMP is making tremendous strides in helping cut down the appeals backlog,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “DAV will continue advocating for it and other appeals modernization efforts until the backlog is eliminated. And even when that happens, we’ll do everything in our power to keep it that way.”

Following the joint opening session—which included the national adjutant’s annual report and presentation of the 2018 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award to Army veteran and military sexual trauma survivor Callie Rios—O’Rourke joined Chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Dr. Phil Roe for DAV’s Service and Legislative Seminar, moderated by Marszalek and National Legislative Director Joy Ilem.

“The service and legislative forum presents our members with important information from legislators, policymakers and other top government officials, while allowing the panelists to convey their messages in a more relaxed atmosphere,” said Ilem.

The event was kicked off by a welcome video from Sens. Johnny Isakson and Jon Tester, the chairman and ranking member, respectively, of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, in which they thanked DAV for its efforts in getting the VA MISSION Act signed but also implored members to help ensure the new law is properly implemented.

The forum focused on numerous topics, including the VA MISSION Act, which Roe called one of the

Dr. Phil Roe (center), chairman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee, speaks with National Legislative Director Joy Ilem (right) and then-acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peter O’Rourke (left) during DAV’s Service and Legislative Seminar, which was moderated by Ilem and National Service Director Jim Marszalek.





Above: Musical legend Frankie Valli performs during a complimentary performance for convention attendees.

Right: Longtime DAV friend Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band perform during Fun Night.



most transformative pieces of legislation in VA history; RAMP; caregiver benefits expansion; VA infrastructure realignment; women veterans; veteran suicide; VA employee accountability; Agent Orange exposure for Blue Water Navy veterans; and possible future benefits reviews.

One of the 165 organizational resolutions adopted by members at the 97th national convention was DAV Resolution 002, which calls for vigorous opposition of any recommendations made for the purpose of reducing, adding limitations on or eliminating benefits for service-connected disabled veterans and their families.

Other notable resolutions that were adopted at this year's convention include DAV Resolution 023, which calls for more comprehensive and scientifically rigorous research by the VA into the therapeutic benefits and risks of cannabis and cannabis-derived products as a possible treatment for service-connected disabled veterans, and DAV Resolution 300, which recommends

that Congress separates all programs related to economic opportunity from the Veterans Benefits Administration and creates a new administration appropriately funded and administered by an undersecretary for economic opportunity.

"Our members consistently put forth and adopt forward-thinking resolutions that allow us to properly advocate for our nation's heroes and their families, in accordance with our national bylaws," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "This type of thought leadership illustrates why DAV is one of the country's



DAV members enjoy root beer floats courtesy of A&W Restaurants, which announced it would again collect donations nationwide for DAV on National Root Beer Float Day. A&W raised \$100,000 for DAV last year and is raising its goal to \$150,000 for the 2018 event.

premier veterans service organizations. I'm extremely proud to be part of it."

DAV also received nearly \$1 million in donations from corporate sponsors during the convention.

Ford Motor Co. donated eight new Ford Flex vehicles to the DAV Transportation Network, bringing the total number to 223 vehicles donated to DAV since 1996—a value of nearly \$6 million. Additionally, Ford presented a check for \$45,000 to the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship.

USAA, the nationwide series sponsor of the DAV 5K, presented a \$500,000 check to support DAV programs and services.

Hankook Tire America Corp. presented a \$175,000 check, representing its largest-ever donation, and announced it would double the number of mobile service office stops it sponsors this coming year.

A&W Restaurants also announced it would again collect donations nationwide for DAV on National Root Beer Float Day. A&W collected \$100,000 on behalf of the organization last year and raised its goal to \$150,000 for this year. The company then treated convention participants with free root beer floats following the opening business session.

DAV also gave back as it presented a \$654,000 check to Camp Corral, a nonprofit organization that provides free, one-of-a-kind summer camp experiences for children of injured, ill and fallen military service members. The funds, which were raised by chapters, departments and

the Auxiliary through DAV's Just B Kids Scholarship program and then matched by the national organization, will allow more than 1,000 children to attend the camps.

It wasn't all work and no play for conventiongoers, though. As part of the event's evening activities, members were once again treated to the entertainment of longtime DAV friend Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band during Fun Night.

Musical icon Frankie Valli also treated guests to a complimentary performance, but not before retired NFL star and 2017 Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee LaDanian Tomlinson spoke to the crowd about why he supports DAV as an ambassador, and the upcoming release of "God Bless the Broken Road," in which he makes his feature film debut as a pastor trying to help a Gold Star mother and a disabled veteran. The movie will open in theaters Sept. 7, and a portion of the proceeds will benefit DAV.

The 98th DAV and Auxiliary National Convention will convene Aug. 3–6, 2019, at the Rosen Shingle Creek Hotel in Orlando, Fla. ■



Learn More Online

Download speeches, reports and other information from this year's convention at www.dav.org/events/2018-national-convention and view all convention videos on DAV's YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/DisabledVeterans/videos. Photos are available for download at flickr.com/theDAV.

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights

Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year

Texas native **Callie Rios** was named the 2018 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. After enlisting in the Army at 18, Rios was attacked by a fellow soldier and did not find much support from her unit. She now works to ensure no other military sexual trauma survivor travels the road to recovery alone, and uses her experience to help others overcome injuries that are invisible to others. She formerly served as the junior vice commander of DAV Chapter 58 in Midland, Texas, where she spearheaded a women veterans conference, Heroes in Heels, which linked former servicewomen with invisible wounds with mental health practitioners who can provide counseling. In addition to supporting women veterans, Rios provided outreach to former service members at an area college and has served her home state for nearly a decade as a volunteer member of the Texas State Guard, supporting humanitarian missions, including Hurricane Harvey. Rios is now a member of DAV Chapter 187 in El Paso.



Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year

Mary Lee Kolter (right), of Auxiliary Unit 101 in Nokomis, Fla., receives the 2018 Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year award from then-Auxiliary National Commander Craig Johniken (left). Kolter initiated Adopt-a-Vet, a project that places Christmas trees in the Auxiliary building with names of local veterans in area nursing homes who would likely not receive a gift for Christmas. The program served 18 veterans in its first year and grew to 325 in 2017.



Bugle Award

Dr. Steven J. Ross (center), a history professor at the University of Southern California, receives the 2018 Bugle Awards from then-National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster (right) and National Adjutant Marc Burgess (left). The Bugle Awards were created in 2005 to recognize the outstanding contributions of the media in support of disabled veterans. Ross' book "Hitler in Los Angeles" highlights a 1930s DAV spy ring that infiltrated a group of American Nazi sympathizers to thwart its spread and plans of violence. The book has been optioned to become a film.



DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights

Top Venture Impacting Veterans

Jared Wharton, founder and president of **Forward Operating Base Brewing Co.**, accepts a \$10,000 check as part of the Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Award for Top Venture Impacting Veterans. Wharton, an Army veteran, did exceptionally well in the business plan competition in the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp of Veterans with Disabilities, which offers cutting-edge experience and training in startup and small business management to veterans with disabilities. He envisions a brewery and taproom outside every American military installation. The check was presented by then-National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster and National Employment Director Jeff Hall.



Large Employer of the Year

David Grams (center left), senior vice president of operations at **DaVita Healthcare Co.**, accepts the DAV Outstanding Large Employer of the Year award. The Denver-based company hired 654 veterans in all areas of their business in 2017 and also held the first-of-its-kind National Veteran Interview Day, at which over 250 interviews were conducted across the nation. Since 2009, DaVita has won 40 awards for veteran and spouse recruiting.



Midsize Employer of the Year

Robert Boman, vice president of human resources at **Airbus Helicopters North America**, accepted the DAV Outstanding Midsize Employer of the Year award on behalf of the company. The company, based in Grand Prairie, Texas, makes it part of its business strategy to hire veterans. Currently, 20 percent of their 714 employees are veterans—54 of whom are disabled.



Small Employer of the Year

Janice Adams (center left), founder, president and CEO of **JMA Solutions**, accepts the DAV Outstanding Small Employer of the Year award. Veterans comprise 19 percent of the business management consulting firm's workforce, including Adams, who is an Air Force veteran and life member of DAV Chapter 17 in Washington, D.C. The company created a veteran outreach program that has established partnerships throughout the Washington, D.C., metro area and was named one of the area's top workplaces.

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights



Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative

Jeff Fryer (center left), of Muskogee, Okla., who works for the Oklahoma Employment Security Commission, conducts outreach to employers to assist veterans in gaining meaningful and permanent employment. By partnering with community organizations, he's able to network with 300 employers monthly and connect Oklahoma veterans with career opportunities. He also hosts two veterans job clubs monthly and conducts seminars and training for resume writing, interview skills, dressing for success, networking, job searches and much more.



Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist

Samuel L. Denson, of Pensacola, Fla., is a jobs and benefits administrator. The Navy veteran has provided over 23,800 total services to veterans, including resume writing, job searches, housing, training and clothing. Last year, he conducted over 250 job development seminars with employers and more than 1,200 employer visits to solicit more than 670 job orders for veteran job seekers.



Top Recruiter of the Year

DAV member **David Schaffner** recruited 120 members during the 2017–2018 membership year. The award was accepted by Roland Paquette (left).



Gen. Jonathan M. Wainwright Award

For the 12th straight year, the Department of Texas took top honors for ending the membership year with the largest increase in new members. Department Commander **Robert Simmons** (center) accepted the award from Metcalf-Foster and National Membership Director Douglas K. Wells.



Judge Robert S. Marx Award

On behalf of the Department of Minnesota, Past Department Commander **Robert Saddoris** accepted the award presented to the department with the highest percentage increase in fully paid life members.



To view more photos from the 2018 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention, visit [flickr.com/theDAV](https://www.flickr.com/photos/theDAV/).



Top Recruiting Awards

Division I:

Massachusetts recruited 100.86 percent of its goal. The award was accepted by Past Department Commander Francis Whitty (center left).

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights



Division II: Minnesota recruited 102.91 percent of its goal. The award was accepted by Past Department Commander Robert Saddoris.



Division III: Wisconsin recruited 100.94 percent of its goal. The award was accepted by Past Department Commander Leonard Shier.



Division IV: Hawaii recruited 102.37 percent of their goal. The award was accepted by Department Commander Julian Crawford.



Division V: South Dakota recruited 102.53 percent of its goal. The award was accepted by Department Commander Gaylord Helmbrecht.



Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee of the Year

Kirt Sickels (center left), director for the National Disabled Veterans TEE (Training, Exposure, Experience) Tournament in Iowa, receives the 2018 award from then-National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster, National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst (center right) and National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. In addition to the TEE Tournament, an adaptive sporting event co-hosted by DAV, the Navy veteran and DAV life member directs two other programs for his fellow disabled veterans: the GIVE Program and Veterans Casting Away Disabilities. "Kirt served honorably in the U.S. Navy, but that was truly just the beginning of a life committed to service," said Metcalf-Foster.



Outstanding Veterans Benefits Administration Employee of the Year

Patrick Hall (center), a supervisory veterans representative at the Cheyenne Veterans Service Center in Wyoming, accepts the 2018 award from then-National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster and National Service Director Jim Marszalek (left). Since taking his current position in 2010, the Marine Corps veteran has played a critical role in improving and modernizing the center, which has seen record veterans claims completion rates and has made significant strides in veteran appeals, for which it has been recognized as part of the VA's top 5 stations for the last six years.



Outstanding National Cemetery Administration Employee of the Year

Rex Kern is director of the Fort Rosecrans and Miramar National Cemeteries in San Diego. Kern is responsible for burial, maintenance and administrative operations at both facilities. Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine joined Metcalf-Foster on stage to present the 2018 award to the Navy veteran who has dedicated himself to honoring his fallen comrades with respect, compassion and dignity.

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights



Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship

Sara Gardner (left), of Fayetteville, Ark., received DAV's top Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship, which is awarded annually to outstanding youth volunteers in DAV's Voluntary Services program. The 18-year-old earned the \$20,000 scholarship for spending more than 600 hours spanning a four-year period volunteering at the Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks. Gardner intends to use the scholarship at Duke University, where she plans to study law and then become an attorney at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

2018 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Recipients

- \$20,000** **Sara Gardner**, Veterans Health Care System of the Ozarks (Arkansas)
- \$15,000** **Jessica Ullberg**, Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center (Wisconsin)
- \$10,000** **Aadya Kaushik**, Albany Stratton VA Medical Center (New York)
- \$7,500** **Ryan Kern**, VA Maryland Health Care System
- \$7,500** **Elizabeth Milliken**, Edith Nourse Rogers Memorial Veterans Hospital (Massachusetts)
- \$5,000** **Liam Browning**, John D. Dingell VA Medical Center (Michigan)
- \$5,000** **Korra Cline**, Fayetteville VA Medical Center (North Carolina)
- \$5,000** **Alana Lewis**, Overton Brooks VA Medical Center (Louisiana)

Local Veterans Assistance Program Awards



Division I: Department of California, with 559,025 hours, award accepted by Department Adjutant Dan Contreras (left).



Division II: Department of Oklahoma, with 221,366 hours, award accepted by Past Department Commander Linda Miller (left).



Division III: Department of Arkansas, with 33,036 hours, award accepted by Department Adjutant John Donovan (center).



Division IV: Department of Nevada, with 30,642 hours, award accepted by Department Adjutant Richard Walker (center left).



Division V: Department of South Dakota, with 21,704 hours, award accepted by Department Adjutant Eugene Murphy (center).

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Award Highlights

George H. Seal Memorial Awards



Top DAV Volunteer

Angel "Louie" Pabey (center), an Army and Vietnam veteran, is a member of DAV Chapter 80 in Crown Point, Ind. Pabey has volunteered for eight years and given more than 6,100 hours in service to his fellow veterans at the Jesse Brown VA Medical Center in Chicago. After beginning his service with DAV as a Transportation Network driver, Pabey now serves as the medical center's hospital service coordinator.



Top DAV Auxiliary Volunteer

Then-Auxiliary National Commander Craig Johniken (left) joins Metcalf-Foster to present the George H. Seal Memorial trophy to **Diana Wong** (center), of Albuquerque, N.M. The three-time cancer survivor volunteers to give back to the care providers and her fellow veterans who have helped her along her journey. She has amassed over 2,700 hours supporting veterans at the New Mexico VA Health Care System in Albuquerque. She is a member of DAV Auxiliary Unit 32 and DAV Chapter 32 in Albuquerque.

DAV 5K Top Member Fundraiser

Then-3rd Junior Vice Commander **Andy Marshall** (center) raised \$7,260 during the 2017 DAV 5K season.



DAV 5K Top Member Team Fundraiser

Johnathon and Jessica Shepherd organized over 440 people on **Team Eagle Ops**, which raised \$16,150 to support veterans at the DAV 5K in Tulsa, Okla.



Recognizing steady support

Mark Sweet (left), managing partner at **Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett and Dunner** law firm in Washington, D.C., receives an award from Art Wilson (right), president of the National Service Foundation, for the firm's unwavering and substantial commitment to the foundation's mission. The firm has donated more than \$2 million, making it one of the largest contributors in the history of the National Service Foundation.

DAV & Auxiliary National Convention Presentation Highlights



Ford Motor Co. donated \$200,000 for the purchase of eight new vehicles for the DAV Transportation Network. Bill Dirksen (left), vice president of labor affairs at Ford, presented the vehicle grant and a \$45,000 check from the **Ford Motor Company Fund** for the DAV Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program.



J.D. Thornock (center), a Marine Corps veteran who was wounded in Afghanistan and is now Military Affinity senior account manager at **USAA**, presents a \$500,000 check to then-National Commander Metcalf-Foster and Burgess to support DAV programs and services. USAA is the national series sponsor for the annual DAV 5K.



Hankook Tire America Corp., which sponsors mobile service office stops across the country, donated \$175,000 to DAV. Wes Boling (center), Hankook's public relations manager, announced the company would double the number of sponsored MSO visits in the coming year.



Tom Richard (center), director of marketing and southern sales for **Gym Source**, presents a \$45,000 check to Burgess and Metcalf-Foster. Gym Source, which raised the money during Memorial Day weekend to support DAV programs and services, is the nation's largest dealer of premium fitness equipment.



Danny Pummill, president and CEO of Le'Fant LLC, presents a \$25,000 check on behalf of **Veterans Evaluation Services (VES)**, which serves America's veterans and active-duty claimants by providing quality and timely reports through fair and objective evaluations.



Metcalf-Foster and DAV Charitable Service Trust President Dick Marbes (far right) present a \$654,000 check to Paula Moran, vice president of national marketing and media at **Golden Corral** (far left), and Lisa Brown (center left), chief development officer for **Camp Corral**.

Armed with education

Convention digital seminars available online



DAV National Communications Director Dan Clare presents the Communications Seminar to a room full of convention attendees. Seminars provide members the tools and resources they need to implement best practices in their communities.

By Mary Dever

You may have missed out on the entertainment of the Biggest Little City in the World, but if you weren't able to take part in this year's national convention in Reno, Nev., the valuable information shared is still available with a simple tap or click.

On Friday evening, before the official convention kickoff, author Dr. Steven Ross presented his research relating to his book "Hitler in Los Angeles," which details how a group of DAV members infiltrated the American Nazi movement and thwarted attempts at arson, sabotage, murder and other subversive plots on American soil.

On Saturday, the **Service and Legislative Seminar** featured a discussion between Chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee Rep. Phil Roe and then-acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs Peter O'Rourke. The forum was led by National Legislative Director

Joy Ilem and National Service Director Jim Marszalek, who moderated the discussion that spanned many of the current issues surrounding veterans, including the VA MISSION Act of 2018, which was recently signed into law.

At the **Membership Portal Training Seminar**, National Membership Director Douglas K. Wells and membership business analyst Heather Colemire provided instruction and orientation on both the DAV membership system and membership portals. Training also covered the duties of a DAV chapter or department webmaster. Wells also conducted the **Membership Seminar**, in which he and members of the Interim Membership Committee discussed relevant topics such as recruiting techniques and incentives.

The **Benefits Protection Team Seminar**, led by Ilem, focused on the duties and responsibilities of Benefits Protection Team leaders. Included were tips

on how to grow a local grassroots network and how to effectively use the Benefits Protection Team toolkit and other online resources.

The **Women Veterans Seminar**, hosted by Assistant National Legislative Director Shurhonda Love and National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst, involved a panel discussion on the partnership between DAV's Voluntary Services Department and the work that Boulder Crest Retreat is doing in its PATHH (Progressive Alternative Training for Healing Heroes) program. Women veteran participants and panelists discussed how the Boulder Crest experience permanently changed their lives.

The Walgreens Emotional Well-Being Workshop

was conducted by Travis Watson, director for Walgreens' clinical programs. The workshop was designed to raise awareness of emotional well-being, reduce stigma, create understanding and point individuals toward available resources.

Kleindienst also provided a basic overview of the new voluntary services system, VolunteerforVeterans.org, at the **Voluntary Services Seminar**. Also covered were detailed instructions on how to report VA Voluntary Service Program, Transportation Network, service officer and Local Veterans Assistance Program hours to the Voluntary Services Department.

The **POW/MIA Seminar**, hosted by DAV POW/MIA Committee Chairman Vincent Darcangelo, included guest speakers from the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency—Deputy Director Fern Sumpter Winbush and family and veteran liaison Stephen Thompson. The seminar addressed efforts to account for missing service members and reinforced DAV's promise to never forget those taken prisoner, missing or unaccounted for—the brothers and sisters left behind—and their survivors.

Communications seminars covered efforts and available resources to assist veterans with getting the

***Left:** Members actively participated in the seminars and facilitated the discussion. Pictured, a veteran speaks up during the Women Veterans Seminar. **Below:** Members receive interactive training on how to effectively use the membership system and portal.*





Left: Members take notes during Outreach 101, one of the communications seminars. Local chapters can expand and further develop community outreach by engaging their local media sources. **Right:** A member takes notes during the Inspector General and Fundraising Seminar. The education and training seminars provided members a chance to take information straight from DAV National Headquarters to their local chapters and departments.

word out about DAV services. The seminars included electronic newsletter development, social media, magazine contributions, media relations support, toolkits and more to spread the word about DAV in the community.

National Employment Director Jeff Hall provided an overview of DAV's employment program during the **Employment Seminar**. Attendees were provided up-to-date information on job fair activities, website tools and the road ahead. Participants gained a greater understanding of the many career paths and developmental programs available through the department's mission, structure, reach and work. They were also briefed on *The Veteran Advantage: DAV Guide to Hiring and Retaining Veterans with Disabilities*, which is available at jobs.dav.org.

National Chaplain Michael Dover discussed how to communicate with various generations of veterans and get them involved in local chapters during the **Chaplains Seminar**. A focal point was acknowledging that each generation of veterans possesses certain strengths, and understanding those strengths helps chaplains assist commanders in increasing membership and getting each generation actively involved in DAV's mission.

The **Inspector General and Fundraising Seminar** provided current and real-world information on matters related to the day-to-day activities and operations of departments and chapters. Also discussed were key DAV fundraising initiatives that benefit departments and local chapters. The seminar was designed to help new leaders learn the basics of the organization's National Constitution, Bylaws and National Executive Committee regulations from DAV Inspector General Ed Hartman and Chief Development Officer Brian Cowart.

"Once again, DAV and Auxiliary members have proven their thirst for knowledge and improvement is unrelenting," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "DAV's national convention provides opportunities for attendees to completely immerse themselves in the mission of DAV. We recognize that a small fraction of our members are able to attend the event. But we hope they will spread the information they learned to their chapters and use the online resources to benefit our mission nationwide." ■



Learn More Online

Education and training seminars can be found online at <http://dav.la/9w>.



Nine veterans and their guests were honored when Carolina Country Music Fest and Visit Myrtle Beach partnered with DAV to recognize personal victories by veterans. Each veteran attending has conquered challenges related to their military service, are an inspiration to other veterans and still serve the veteran community. (Photos courtesy of CCMF)



VICTORIES FOR VETERANS

DAV members honored through partnership with Carolina Country Music Fest, Visit Myrtle Beach

In 1996, retired Marine Jason Barbieri was in a dark place. His life was spiraling out of control. He didn't feel safe anywhere and couldn't hold down a job. Interpersonal relationships were largely nonexistent.

At one point, he strongly considered suicide.

Barbieri finally sought DAV's services and was connected to the mental health treatment he had earned. He overcame many personal battles and is now a resource for fellow veterans experiencing similar challenges.

"When I got back from service, I was feeling disconnected, disillusioned and misunderstood," Barbieri said. "For a long, long time I was lost. DAV got me involved in finding a job, getting the counseling I needed and staying motivated. They were the ones on the other side of the phone when I didn't think I could make it. They never gave up on me."

"My victory was loving myself and finding a reason to smile," he added.

In June, Barbieri and eight other disabled veterans, each of whom has overcome a life-changing illness or injury and continues to lead a life of service for fellow

veterans, were honored at Carolina Country Music Fest (CCMF) thanks to a partnership between the South Carolina-based festival, Visit Myrtle Beach and DAV.

The veterans were recognized on stage and cheered on by more than 20,000 country music fans.

"Thank you for the amazing experience and allowing me to share my story," said Wade Spann, who was one of the nine disabled veterans honored at the event. "The festival was truly an inspiring time for me to share and feel welcomed by a community. I look forward to continuing to assist veterans through DAV."

Festival organizers said that honoring the veteran community naturally fit with the event, which is the East Coast's largest three-day outdoor country music festival. This year's artists included Toby Keith, Zac Brown Band, Colt Ford, Craig Morgan and Old Dominion.

"Watching this group of heroes receive the DAV Victory for Veterans Award on stage was an amazing experience," said Bob Durkin, president of CCMF. "Each of their stories reminds us of the true sacrifices our veterans have made to allow us to be free. We are blessed with the opportunity to use CCMF's platform for good, and honoring the sacrifices of our nation's veterans through our partnership with DAV was a true privilege. These men and women deserve nothing less than our complete respect and admiration." ■



From the NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

JOY J. ILEM

Building on our momentum

Thanks to everyone who made it to the 97th annual DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Convention in Reno, Nev. With a number of crucial veterans issues being front and center on Capitol Hill this year, it was great to see so many of our members enthusiastically preparing to take our legislative agenda back to their home states and communities.

During the 115th Congress, we've been working closely with lawmakers, the administration and fellow veterans service organizations to ensure the collective voice of our more than 1 million members is heard. We have had a banner year with passage of the VA MISSION Act. It addressed many of our legislative priorities for the year, including provisions to improve VA health care services and access to care, expansion of comprehensive caregiver benefits and a plan for modernization of VA health care facilities. Despite this incredible success, one outstanding issue remains: improving services for our nation's women veterans.

One of our top priorities is to ensure women veterans have equal access to high-quality, timely health care and specialized services. While several bills concerning women veterans have been passed during this Congress, comprehensive legislation remains pending on Capitol Hill. It's time to finally give women veterans' issues the attention they desperately need.

To support this goal, I'm excited to announce a follow-on report to our groundbreaking women veterans report *Women Veterans: The Long Journey*

Home. Our new 2018 report, *Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead*, takes off from our first publication's focus on transition issues impacting women veterans following wartime service and includes post-deployment mental health, housing and employment issues, family reintegration challenges and dealing with wartime injuries. In our new report, we also examine the range of federal programs offered to address the needs of a diverse population of women veterans—from all eras, backgrounds and military experiences.

The new report will be released Sept. 12 and will be available at dav.org/womenveterans. We will be calling on all of you—our hardworking and passionate members—to take up the key findings with your elected officials. I know I can count on our grassroots advocates, and especially our Benefits Protection Team leaders and members, to lead the way. One person's decision to take action can—and does—help create real change. If you haven't already, get involved with your local Benefits Protection Team and help share our message with your elected officials back home.

Stay updated and active on critical veterans issues and legislative matters in Washington, D.C., through DAV CAN—the Commanders Action Network. This tool helps educate and activate our members and supporters when needed, and leverages our influence with Congress. Your voice helps make our network stronger and more effective, so sign up today at davcan.org.

DECADE OF SERVICE 2000s



Immediately following the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks, a DAV mobile service office delivered thousands of articles of clothing and comfort kits to first responders at the Twin Towers. At the nearby World Trade Center ruins and Giants Stadium, nearly 300 disaster relief grants were provided to impacted veterans and their families.



(AP PHOTO/MARK LENNIHAN)

Leading up to DAV's 100th anniversary in 2020, *DAV Magazine* continues to chronicle each decade in our organization's history and service in the military. From Afghanistan to Iraq and everything between, this installment provides historical background and highlights of important issues and events that affected service members, disabled veterans and their families during the first 10 years of the 2000s.

By Charity Edgar

At the turn of the 21st century, the United States was at peace.

The Gulf War had ended nearly a decade earlier, and America's military trained for threats that seemed abstract and distant. But on Sept. 11, 2001, war hit home. The nation stood witness to the most deadly terrorist attack on U.S. soil, as nearly 3,000 people were killed when hijacked planes crashed into the Pentagon, the World Trade Center towers and an open field in western Pennsylvania.

"This is a day when all Americans from every walk of life unite in our resolve for justice and peace," said then-President George W. Bush in an address following the attacks. "None of us will ever forget this day. Yet, we go forward to defend freedom and all that is good and just in our world."

DAV members jumped into action. In Florida, a DAV Transportation Network van helped transport

blood shipments to victims in New York. A mobile service office delivered thousands of articles of clothing and comfort kits to first responders at the Twin Towers. Service officers unable to return to their New York City office began volunteering at Giants Stadium and the World Trade Center ruins, and set up a makeshift shop on Pier 95 to enable DAV to provide aid and identify impacted veterans and their families.

Meanwhile, President Bush vowed to track down the 9/11 architects—namely Osama bin Laden—remarking that "we will make no distinction between the terrorists who committed these acts and those who harbor them." On Oct. 7, 2001, the U.S. led a coalition invasion of Afghanistan, with plans to dismantle al-Qaeda and the Taliban government that was sheltering bin Laden.

Less than two years later, U.S. military members found themselves at the helm of yet another coalition invasion, this time in Iraq. As the country engaged in wars on two fronts, DAV began to focus on the influx

“DAV truly stands ready to fight for veterans and their benefits.”

—Stephen Whitehead,
National Senior Vice Commander

of veterans who would be returning home and the signature injuries that would follow.

Jose Herrera served in the Marine Corps from 2006 to 2011. After a deployment to Iraq, Herrera believed he was returning again, but new orders redirected him to Afghanistan. In what would be the largest airlift insertion of Marines since Vietnam, Herrera was among the 4,000 Marines in Helmand Province launching Operation Khanjar, aimed at driving the Taliban out of southern Afghanistan.

Improvised explosive devices were a constant threat—Herrera estimated his unit unearthed 19 each week—but it was enemy fire that claimed the life of his good friend Pfc. Donald “Wayne” Vincent in July 2009.



“I fought because of the guy next to me,” said Herrera, a life member of DAV Chapter 11 in Wilmington, N.C. “It’s about a camaraderie; this entire generation understands that to the core.”

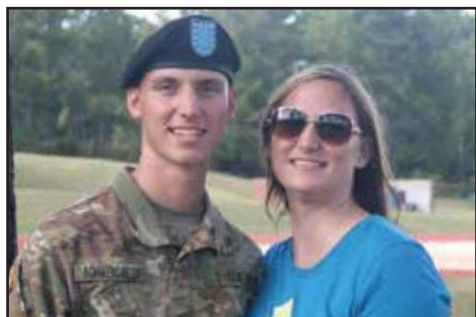
Amy Bahl, a combat medic in the Army National Guard, was deployed shortly after the invasion of Iraq. The then-25-year-old spent a year in Mosul treating gunshot wounds and injuries sustained from roadside bombs and IEDs.

“My day-to-day life was very little sleep, followed by trying to fix and save as many people as we possibly could,” recalled Bahl. “It was really hard because medics take a lot of things personal. We always felt guilty when we couldn’t save somebody.”

While weaponry was becoming increasingly lethal, better training and medical advances meant surviving multiple severe injuries was the norm, not the exception. In 2016, Army Lt. Gen. Nadja Y. West, surgeon general of the Army, said that 92 percent of soldiers wounded in Iraq and Afghanistan made it home alive, compared to 75 percent during Vietnam.

So-called “invisible wounds,” however, aren’t as easy to triage on the battlefield. Traumatic brain injury (TBI) has been referred to as the signature injury of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, with nearly 350,000 diagnoses of TBI in the military since 2000. And like those who served in earlier conflicts, veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan experienced post-traumatic stress—with 13.5 percent of those who deployed screening positive.

Other conditions—cancers as well as neurological, gastrointestinal and respiratory illnesses—developed over time, resulting from exposure to the burn pits



A medic in the Iowa National Guard, Amy Bahl deployed to Iraq for a year in 2003, leaving behind her 5-year-old son Austin Schwendinger. Fifteen years later, the United States still has troops in Iraq and Bahl’s son is a specialist in the Army National Guard in Dubuque, Iowa.

A member of the Minnesota National Guard for 27 years, Stephen “Butch” Whitehead was activated to deploy to Iraq in 2005. After 15 months in theater he returned home to a new assignment—helping soldiers transitioning out of the military—which is how the now-national Senior Vice Commander was first introduced to DAV.

commonly used to get rid of waste at military sites in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many veterans returned home and then grew ill—some even died—after contact with the dangerous toxins. In 2008, DAV began advocating to bring to light the health risks associated with burn pits, ultimately helping establish the burn pit registry for veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq as well as Djibouti, Africa.

DAV National Senior Vice Commander Stephen “Butch” Whitehead’s Minnesota National Guard unit received orders to Iraq in 2005. After 15 months in theater performing security and detainee operations, he returned home to a new assignment—helping soldiers transitioning out of the military—which is how he first came to know DAV.

“The mission aligned with my passion for serving those who served, so it was a natural fit,” explained Whitehead, who retired as a command sergeant major earlier this year after 27 years of service. “DAV truly stands ready to fight for veterans and their benefits.”

While Operation Iraqi Freedom officially ended in 2011, American troops returned again in 2014 in response to terrorist activity from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan ended in 2014, but an advisory mission began in 2015. American troops are still in both Iraq and Afghanistan.

Bahl echoed the sentiment that she hears fellow post-9/11 veterans share: They served overseas so that the next generation wouldn’t have to. Despite this, Bahl’s oldest son, Austin Schwendinger, who was 5 when she deployed, joined the National Guard in 2016.

That same year, Bahl joined DAV. She currently serves as senior vice commander for DAV Department of Iowa as well as commander of DAV Chapter 6 in Dubuque.

“DAV helped me with my claim,” explained Bahl. “They fought for me so I wasn’t by myself. So I figured, if someone is going to help me, why not join the fight?” ■

The new millennium of service

At the turn of the century, better training and medical advances meant surviving multiple severe injuries was the norm, not the exception. DAV leaders volunteered at the former Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., where severely wounded service members recovered.



Past National Commander Jim Sursley (left), provided newly injured service members valuable insight into what to expect on the road to recovery. A triple amputee injured during the Vietnam War, Sursley reassured young veterans that a fulfilling life was still possible after injury.



Past National Commander Don Sioss (right) talks with Army veteran Tammy Duckworth, who was injured when the Blackhawk helicopter she was piloting was struck by a rocket-propelled grenade in Iraq. Duckworth now serves as a U.S. senator and was named Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year by DAV in 2008. Previously serving as a Congresswoman, Duckworth was sworn in at the DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C.



Creating a NETWORK of LEADERS

Commanders and Adjutants Association meeting focuses on education, collaboration

By Janice M. Hagar

While DAV continuously works to enhance and expand its programs, capabilities and partnerships, the key to successful implementation is putting the right tools in the hands of the organization's leaders on the ground—its commanders and adjutants.

More than 100 participants gathered for the annual Commanders and Adjutants Association meeting, held in June at DAV National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Ky. During the two-day orientation, state and national DAV leaders—many recently appointed to their roles—gathered to learn how to effectively perform their duties and how the national headquarters supports their efforts as well as to build a peer network of contacts for ideas and support.

“Alongside networking, it's eye-opening to see the day-to-day operations at headquarters,” said Danny Oliver, then-president of the Commanders and Adjutants Association. “What we think we know would have filled a thimble compared to what we learned about the organization at the meeting. You could tell our leaders were impressed.”

Leaders like Carolyn Small, senior vice commander for the Department of Georgia, learned about new tools and gained valuable insight into what's working for other chapters and departments across the country.

“One of the ideas discussed at the roundtable was about fundraising,” said Small. “Someone mentioned the Ford Drive 4 UR Community program, where you can raise funds by test-driving vehicles. They had seen a lot of success from it, so I'm planning to bring that idea up at my next chapter meeting.”

Small noted the fast-paced event was “like drinking from a fire hose” but ultimately provided a great deal of information that can be applied at the local level.

“We had an opportunity to interact with the staff, and we got our questions answered on a one-to-one basis,” she said. “That was great because a lot of times, you have questions that are unique to your own organization.”

“We talked with our best leaders from the [national adjutant and headquarters executive directors] to the employment side and the volunteer fraternal side,” added Rachel Fredericks, senior vice commander for the Department of New York. “We came together to toss ideas around the table to each other for good goals toward the future and continuation of education for all of our leaders.”

Jerry Morgan, senior vice commander from the Department of Alabama, said this event makes it easy to see the passion that drives the organization.

“The best part is meeting the people here,” said Morgan. “They don't have a job title or a position—they share a mission, which is to support veterans.” ■

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

ELLEN L. TIMMERMAN



Serving veterans and families

It's an honor to have been elected as your DAV Auxiliary national commander, and I am looking forward to continuing to serve veterans and families alongside each of you.

I mentioned to several members at our recent convention in Reno, Nev., the importance of the Auxiliary's Caregiver Initiative Program. In the coming year, I hope you will join me as we work to expand this program beyond adaptive sports events. The Auxiliary has already showcased just how effective a program like this is at the annual National Disabled Veterans TEE (Training, Exposure, Experience) Tournament in Iowa City, Iowa. I know many of us have a passion for caregivers as well as being caregivers ourselves. Expanding the capabilities of this program will help us support these men and women, who are heroes in their own right, as they tirelessly care for our nation's ill and injured veterans.

I also hope you will join me as I focus on Auxiliary membership. There are many families and veteran supporters in our hometowns who simply aren't aware of DAV or the Auxiliary. I intend to "put ourselves out there" and invite everyone to do the same. As many of us already know, it's often the spouses or immediate family members of a veteran who take the first steps in getting involved with our organization. One method that works for me is staying in constant contact with a national, department or chapter service officer in the local area who can assist with gathering information to give to a veteran's family and make them aware of the benefits they may have.

Together, we can get our noble work done while we spread a message of unity, kindness and empathy to the veterans and families we serve. I'm honored and looking forward to serving with all of you.



National Headquarters
3725 Alexandria Pike
Cold Spring, KY 41076

Toll Free 877-426-2838, Opt. 8
davauxiliary.org
dava@dav.org

Membership Application

Date _____

MEMBERSHIP CODE NUMBER (FOR PAYMENTS ONLY)

Membership Application in Unit No. _____ State _____

☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Mr. Name _____ DOB _____ / _____ / _____
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY REQUIRED

Address _____ City _____

State _____ ZIP _____ Phone (____) _____ Email _____

☐ NEW LIFE ☐ LIFE PAYMENT ☐ NEW JUNIOR ☐ NEW JUNIOR LIFE ☐ JUNIOR LIFE PAYMENT
(\$20 Down Payment) (Complimentary) (\$20 Down Payment)

AMT
PAID \$

Eligibility through _____ Relationship _____

SEND TO AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Eligibility

Life membership is based on the applicant's age as of the current membership year

AGE	LIFE AMOUNT
80 or older	Free
71-79	\$140
61-70	\$180
46-60	\$200
31-45	\$230
Birth-30	\$250



It's easy to leave a legacy gift to the DAV Charitable Service Trust

Charitable gift annuity donors receive generous fixed payments for life that are largely tax-free, a charitable income-tax deduction and DAV Guardian Society recognition for their generosity.

You do not have to be a veteran to do a gift annuity through the Trust.

CGA Requirements

- \$10,000 minimum contribution to the Trust to establish a CGA.
- Minimum age of 60 (no maximum age).
- Up to two annuitants (both must be 60 or over).
- Rates based on age.
- Higher rates the older you are.

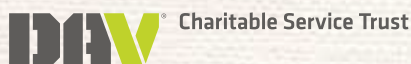
Gift annuity rates just increased in July for the first time since 2012!

Single-Life Rates

Age	Rate	Age	Rate
60	4.7%	80	7.3%
65	5.1%	85	8.3%
70	5.6%	90+	9.5%
75	6.2%		

TO LEARN MORE

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



Establishing a legacy of generosity

Charitable gift annuities a win-win for donors, veterans



Left: A magazine clipping featuring "Christmas Truce," with Lionel Ridgwell on the right. **Right:** Lionel Ridgwell in Vietnam (1966).

You could say that helping other veterans is a passion of Lionel Ridgwell. Reaching out and connecting his fellow veterans to his local DAV office is just one of the many ways Ridgwell tries to do his part in looking out for them. So upon learning about the benefits—for both DAV and himself—of taking out a charitable gift annuity with the DAV Charitable Service Trust, he knew what he wanted to do. And when the opportunity arose, he didn't think twice. "I think the cause is very good, and help is needed to do it," he said. "I was in the position to have this opportunity, and it's my pleasure to be able to do this."

When asked why he supports DAV, he explained that DAV has helped him, along with many of his friends. One of those friends directed him to DAV about seven or eight years ago, and he's been grateful ever since. "I feel you are doing a wonderful job helping the veterans who served this great country."

By taking out a charitable gift annuity through the Trust and making a contribution of \$10,000 or more, Ridgwell now receives fixed monthly payments that he will continue to get for the rest of his life while leaving a legacy of hope and compassion that will allow us to help countless more veterans long after he is gone. A charitable gift annuity is a win-win for Ridgwell and the Trust. In addition to the fixed payments for life, he may also be able to take a charitable income-tax deduction and will be recognized in the DAV Guardian Society for his generosity and compassion.

If, like Ridgwell, you want to help our nation's heroes and lend your support to the millions of veterans we serve, contact us today to discuss taking out your own charitable gift annuity through the Trust. One of DAV's Personal Philanthropy Programs team members would be happy to send you an illustration and discuss your personal options.



TIME TO REGISTER

By Janice M. Hagar

The 2019 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is just around the corner, and participants can apply now through Nov. 30.

DAV and the Department of Veteran Affairs co-host the event, which will be held March 31 to April 5, 2019, in Snowmass Village, Colo. Located near Aspen, the clinic hosts nearly 400 profoundly disabled veterans who learn to shred limitations, build new skills and gain confidence as they participate in activities like Alpine and Nordic skiing, sled hockey, cross-country skiing, scuba diving, fly-fishing, curling, snowmobiling and archery.

The clinic is a world leader in rehabilitation, with top-notch adaptive instructors who help restore veterans' ability to lead active lives--some have gone on to compete in adaptive sports at an international level.

"Adaptive sports is one of the best ways for veterans to feel empowered despite their injuries," said DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. "It gets them outside and gets them participating in events. They also build a bond and support their fellow veterans taking part in the clinic. It's great for them to build new bonds, build new bodies and strengthen themselves mentally."

"The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic uses adaptive sports as a rehabilitative tool to engage

veterans in becoming active and involved again, with an ultimate goal of improving quality of life; becoming active and healthy; and improving overall mental, physical and psychological health," said Teresa Parks, clinic director for the VA. "While our overall focus is better health, for veterans who develop a passion for adaptive skiing, the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic has been instrumental in assisting many veterans to compete at the highest level possible, to include the Paralympics."

The clinic is open to veterans with disabilities such as spinal cord injuries, visual impairment and amputations who receive their care at a VA hospital or medical center, or a military treatment center.

By attending adaptive sports clinics, veterans have the opportunity to relieve stress and reduce reliance on medications while gaining independence and empowerment in their lives.

"We're so proud of our winter sports clinic veterans," said DAV National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "DAV is honored to be a part of something that has such a positive outcome for those veterans. It's truly amazing to see the veterans become highly skilled athletes. When we say, 'I can't,' and then look at what these veterans are accomplishing ... it puts things into perspective." ■

Robert Wilkie sworn in as VA secretary

■ After being confirmed by the Senate in an 86–9 vote, Navy and Air Force veteran Robert Wilkie was officially sworn in as the 10th secretary of Veterans Affairs in an Oval Office ceremony, held July 30.

Wilkie, who previously served as acting secretary, is the fourth VA secretary in five years and will focus on modernizing the department to ensure it delivers high-quality, timely health care and benefits services to the men and women who served.

Since March, Wilkie has worked closely with the veterans service organization community to better understand the needs facing his fellow veterans. With years of leadership experience in the Department of Defense, the secretary has a deep understanding of navigating federal government policies.



Wilkie

“We look forward to working with him to build upon the strong foundation put in place by Secretaries McDonald and Shulkin,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. “The VA has seen measurable growth and modernization over the past few years, and DAV looks forward to building on that progress with Secretary Wilkie so that VA can continue serving veterans for generations to come.”

A graduate of Wake Forest University, Wilkie also holds a Juris Doctor from Loyola University College of Law in New Orleans, a Master of Laws in international and comparative law from Georgetown University and a master’s in strategic studies from the U.S. Army War College.



DAV 5K

RUN TO HONOR VETERANS

2018 NATIONAL SERIES




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Receive **\$2 off** VIP registrations with the code **DAVMEMBER***

*Online registration only. Offer expires October 15, 2018.

SAT., NOV. 3	SUN., NOV. 4	SAT., NOV. 10
TULSA KEMAH, TEXAS	NEWPORT NEWS	ATLANTA BOSTON CINCINNATI

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NATIONAL SERIES SPONSOR 



If we're in your local area, we hope you'll stop by and join us!

2018 HANKOOK TIRE–DAV MSO STOPS		
DATE	CITY	HANKOOK TIRE DEALER
Fri., Sept. 14	Clarksville, TN	Gateway Tire & Service Center
Fri., Sept. 28	Marietta, GA	NTW
Mon., Oct. 1	King of Prussia, PA	CJ's Tire & Automotive
Fri., Oct. 19	Colorado Springs, CO	Peerless Tires
Tues., Nov. 6	Centerville, UT	Centerville Tire Factory

Hankook is honored to continue to serve veterans where they live by hosting DAV mobile service office (MSO) stops around the nation. These offices on wheels travel to underserved communities across the country to help veterans and their families obtain the services and benefits they have earned.




From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



The Ten Commandments of leadership

Written by American Kent Keith in 1968, “The Paradoxical Commandments” can now be found worldwide. Like Mother Teresa, who was said to have hung a copy in her Calcutta, India, children’s home, I view the poem as a helpful guide in life—and leadership. Using these precepts as a blueprint, I have translated these to reflect upon what they can mean to us as members of DAV. I hope you find it helpful in service to your fellow veterans.

1. It is critical to **love your neighbor—or fellow veteran—as yourself.** This means giving generously of time and resources to those in need, despite an inability to support us back.
2. A jaded veteran who has been hurt many times before may question you or your chapter’s motives. **Ground your work in our legacy of service**, and our mission will shine through.
3. **You can’t please everyone, but don’t let it stop you from doing your best.** As Steve Jobs once said, “If you want to make everyone happy, don’t be a leader—sell ice cream.”
4. Remember that **your true worth is determined by how much you give**—not what you receive in payment.
5. **Constructive criticism is key for a thriving chapter.** Surround yourself with positive people who appreciate your feedback and can provide you the same.
6. Approach the ideas of your fellow members and veterans with a spirit of humility and an open mind. **Diversity of thought should be embraced, not avoided.**
7. **Remain humble, and when you fight, make sure you are right**—acting on the right information with the right perspective and possessing the right attitude.
8. There is nothing more disappointing than seeing hard work go up in smoke. But **you succeeded once and you can again.**
9. If your advice and support to a member is being rejected, find out why and consider a different approach. **Instead of a handout, give your fellow veterans a hand up.**
10. Your work may go unappreciated, but it is still valuable work. **Give the best you have regardless of how it’s received.**

In His Service to You.

Staff announcements

National Adjutant Marc Burgess announced in August the appointment of Randy Reese, a disabled veteran of the U.S. Army, as Washington Headquarters Executive Director. Reese will succeed Garry Augustine, who

retires effective Dec 17.

In his new role, Reese will lead DAV's service and legislative programs. He will be DAV's principal spokesperson before Congress, the White House and Department of Veterans Affairs, and will lead the organization's advocacy efforts in Washington.



Reese

Reese joined DAV's professional staff in 1995. He served in numerous locations across the nation as a national service officer before being appointed Associate National Service Director in May 1999. From there, he was named Assistant National Service Director in August 2000; Deputy National Service Director in August 2001; National Service Director in 2002; Deputy Director of Human Resources in July 2010; and National Human Resources Director in August 2013.

Reese was previously appointed by the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to serve on the VBA Task Force on Vocational Rehabilitation & Employment; Federal Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation; and Federal Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans.

A native of Bristol, Va., Reese enlisted in the U.S. Army in 1984. He was a rifle squad leader in the 82nd Airborne Division during the Persian Gulf War. Following the war, he served as an elite "Black-Hat" instructor in the Air Movement Operations and Jump Master Courses at Fort Bragg, N.C. There, he suffered a disabling back injury while conducting a night parachute jump in an airfield seizure training operation.

He earned his paralegal degree from Kaplan College for Professional Studies and he is certified by the HR Certification Institute as a Senior Professional of Human Resources (SPHR) and Senior Certified Professional

(SCP) by the Society for Human Resource Management.

Augustine retires after 30 years of service to the organization. He was appointed to his current post



Augustine

in 2013. The combat-injured U.S. Army veteran joined DAV's professional staff in 1988 as a national service officer apprentice in Cleveland, Ohio. He went on to serve as Assistant National Service Director at DAV National Service and Legislative Headquarters in 2002 and was subsequently elevated

to Deputy National Service Director in January 2004. In July 2010, he was named National Service Director.

"During his time in Washington, Garry has helped shape the legislative landscape for disabled veterans and their families, successfully advocating for VA health care reform, expanded caregiver benefits, advance appropriations, appeals modernization and women veterans," said Burgess. "While he will be missed, we are in extremely good hands with Randy leading our benefits advocacy and legislative efforts."

Following DAV's national convention, Burgess appointed Austin Shaffner, a disabled veteran of the Air National Guard, to assistant national communications director at the national convention in Reno. He works at National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Ky. He joined DAV's staff in 2017 when he was appointed associate national communications director.



Shaffner

Shaffner's responsibilities include video production and creation of a wide variety of multimedia products to support the organization's internal and external communications efforts.

Currently a member of the Kentucky Air National Guard, Shaffner earned his Bachelor of Science degree in communications from the University of Louisville and graduated from the Defense Information School's Basic Combat Correspondent course in 2014. Shaffner is a life member of DAV Chapter 19 in Cold Spring, Ky. ■

A life redeemed

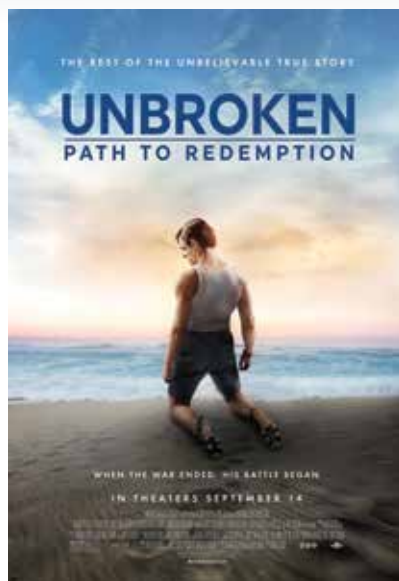
DAV life member Louis Zamperini's story is one of survival, but new film shows the battle he faced when he returned home

Four years after the premiere of the movie "Unbroken"—based on Laura Hillenbrand's bestselling book of the same name—a sequel is set to debut. "Unbroken: Path to Redemption," opening in theaters Sept. 14, picks up where the 2014 film left off and dives deeper into the internal struggles faced by many veterans returning from war.

"Unbroken: Path to Redemption" continues the true story of Olympian, World War II prisoner of war and DAV life member Louis Zamperini. After surviving a plane crash, weeks of floating on a makeshift raft in the Pacific and then years of torture as a prisoner of war in Japan, Zamperini finally returned to his home in California, seemingly unbroken, but his internal battle and spiritual journey had just begun. Haunted by nightmares of his torment, Zamperini saw himself as anything but a hero.

"I think of war as not so much an assault on the body; it is perhaps more so an assault on the mind," said Hillenbrand, who spent four years researching the book, working closely with Zamperini. "It damages people emotionally. It wounds people emotionally. We like to think the war is over and everybody goes back to being fine, but that's not what happens. People carry those wars out of the theaters and into their homes and their lives. They need help often, and struggle their way out of it. Louie is a perfect example of that."

Samuel C. Hunt, who portrays Zamperini, said Zamperini's very open account of his struggles with alcoholism and hopelessness after his return home—and how his mental state affected his family—is an example of human resiliency.



"Unbroken: Path to Redemption" official poster. (Courtesy of WTA Group/Universal 1440 Entertainment)

"His experiences were extraordinary," said Hunt. "As the actor, it was important for me to have some form of understanding of what it meant to me in my life. If we respect everyone's trauma—and try to be empathetic—then we can understand it better and help them heal."

Veterans with invisible wounds—whether post-traumatic stress, traumatic brain injuries, substance abuse disorders or other mental health challenges—can almost all relate to the internal strife Zamperini experienced, documented so thoroughly in Hillenbrand's book. DAV has long been an advocate for quality

care, resources and research into helping veterans and their families who are suffering from service-connected trauma and mental health issues. DAV aided Hillenbrand during her initial research into Zamperini's story, help she said she is grateful for.

Prior to the film's release date, veterans in Washington, D.C., were invited to screen the film. DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine said the issues depicted in the movie are relevant to veterans today, just as much as they have been to the generations of veterans before.

"Louie's story is a reminder to all of us that we can't heal ourselves alone," said Augustine. "We know more today about mental health and the effects of war than we did when he came home after World War II, but today's veterans are facing the same life-altering experiences that can make or break them. It is up to us—as fellow veterans and as human beings—to provide the support and resources our heroes deserve." ■

DAV AUXILIARY OUTSTANDING MEMBER OF THE YEAR

By Bryan Lett

The DAV Auxiliary selected Mary Lee Kolter, of DAV Auxiliary Unit 101, Nokomis, Fla., as its member of the year for 2017.

The award recognizes her continued contributions and dedication to the Auxiliary, DAV, and the veterans and their families in her community.

"I have known Mary Lee Kolter, both personally and professionally, for many years," said Past Auxiliary Unit 101 Commander Lois Anderson. "It is evident she has spent her entire life dedicated to the service of others. I have seen her work tirelessly on a project until it was completed well and correctly. Mary Lee has become a respected and trusted member of the Auxiliary community."

In 2013, Kolter initiated a veterans Christmas project she calls "Adopt-A-Vet." Each year, a special Christmas tree is placed in the Auxiliary building with names of local veterans in area nursing homes who would likely not receive a gift for Christmas. Community members have overwhelmingly responded to the project. The first year in place, "Adopt-A-Vet" served 18 veterans; this past year, the number grew to 325.



In the past four years, Kolter has served Unit 101 as adjutant, senior vice commander and unit commander. In June 2017, she was the recipient of the 2017 Person of the Year for the Department of Florida and elected to the Department's Finance Committee.

"Ms. Kolter has routinely gone above and beyond to ensure veterans and their families are taken care of," said Auxiliary National Adjutant Pat Kemper. "I cannot think of a more deserving recipient of this award."

Kolter also discovered many veterans in her community were in need of items not covered by government assistance programs. As a result, she designed and implemented the Veterans Closet. Every month, she leads her unit in distributing personal care and hygiene items to nearly 60 veterans in neighboring communities.

"Whether it is leading by example, volunteering or spearheading a new initiative to assist veterans and their families in her community, the Auxiliary knows it can count on Ms. Kolter to get the job done," said Kemper. "She is an extremely valuable member of our Auxiliary." ■



Excellence in our communities...

Commander David Weeks (center), of DAV Chapter 9 in Kettering, Ohio, presents Jeff Bowman and Jack Edwards of Rieck Services with the chapter's Excellence Award for being the Dayton Region Outstanding Organization of the Year. Rieck Services donated more than \$4,000 to support chapter service programs in 2017.

REMEMBRANCE

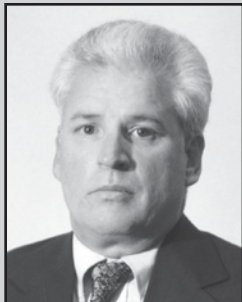
Michael Mastrean

■ Michael Mastrean, 67, a retired national service officer, passed away on July 7.

“Gerald spent a quarter of a century dedicated to serving his fellow veterans,” said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “He has touched the lives of countless veterans and their families through the work he did and by welcoming them into our organization. He will be greatly missed by the DAV family.”

The Air Force veteran, who served during the Vietnam era, from 1968 to 1972, became a DAV national service officer trainee in 1975. Mastrean retired in 2001 after 25 years with DAV. Throughout that time, he was a passionate and successful recruiter, bringing hundreds of new veterans into the organization.

Mastrean was a lively part of his local veteran community and is survived by wife Judy, daughter Angela and sister Michelle.



Mastrean



FOR THE MANY REASONS
YOU SERVED, *thank you.*



Recognizing good and noble work...

Then-National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster (center right) delivered the keynote address at the Coast Guard Women's Leadership Symposium held at Coast Guard Island in Alameda, Calif. Fellow attendees (from left) included Coast Guard Lt. Cmdr. Amy Hernandez; Metcalf-Foster's "battle buddy," Command Sgt. Maj. Roberta Santiago, with whom she served in the Army Reserve; and Coast Guard Lt. Erin Fillmore.

There are many reasons why you served, and our reason to serve is you. That's why USAA is dedicated to helping support DAV members and their families.



USAA is
Honored to Serve
Disabled American Veterans

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Senior Vice Commander

Stephen Whitehead, Rosemount, Minn.

1st Junior Vice Commander

Donald Day, Brooklyn, N.Y.

2nd Junior Vice Commander

Andrew Marshall, Palm Harbor, Fla.

3rd Junior Vice Commander

Joseph Parsetich, Great Falls, Mont.

4th Junior Vice Commander

Nancy Espinosa, Kaysville, Utah

National Judge Advocate

Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, N.D.

National Chaplain

Michael Dover, Ellerslie, Ga.

Past National Commander

Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Vallejo, Calif.



***From left:** Donald Day, Michael Dover, Stephen Whitehead, Nancy Espinosa, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Dennis R. Nixon, Joseph Parsetich, Andrew Marshall, Michael E. Dobmeier.*

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Coleman Francis Nee, Boston, Mass.

Alternate

Helen Bennett, West Bridgewater, Mass.

NEC 2nd District

Keith A. Robinson, Rochester, N.Y.

Alternate

Thomas A. Ingram, Brooklyn, N.Y.

NEC 3rd District

Robert A. Nicodemus, Enfield, N.H.

Alternate

Ernest S. Boisvert, Woonsocket, R.I.

NEC 4th District

Benjamin G. Flynn, Hartly, Del.

Alternate

James W. Clynch, Wethersfield, Conn.

NEC 5th District

Samuel Blow Jr., Melrose Park, Pa.

Alternate

Michael T. Iacavazzi, Scranton, Pa.

NEC 6th District

Robert D. Cox, Roanoke, Va.

Alternate

Michael K. Dawson, Ronceverte, W.Va.

NEC 7th District

John C. Raber, Bradenton, Fla.

Alternate

Jack L. Johnson, The Villages, Fla.

NEC 8th District

Jerry L. Bratton, Oxford, Miss.

Alternate

Carroll G. Davis Jr., Pearl, Miss.

NEC 9th District

Tincie M. Lynch, Marietta, Ga.

Alternate

Robert L. Bledsoe, Hephzibah, Ga.

NEC 10th District

James Dempsey, Dexter, Mich.

Alternate

Albert L. Hughes Jr., Redford, Mich.

NEC 11th District

David C. Uetterling, Defiance, Ohio

Alternate

Michael R. Stith, Akron, Ohio

NEC 12th District

Kevin J. Walkowski, Wind Lake, Wis.

Alternate

Rodney E. Helgeson, Warren, Wis.

NEC 13th District

George Hall, Harold, Ky.

Alternate

Randy Bunting, La Grange, Ky.

NEC 14th District

Warren Tobin, Jamestown, N.D.

Alternate

Joseph J. Hall, Mandan, N.D.

NEC 15th District

Jim Shuey, Omaha, Neb.

Alternate

David R. Thornburg Jr., Waukee, Iowa

NEC 16th District

Kirk H. Johnson, Marina, Calif.

Alternate

Richard A. Valdez, Highland, Calif.

NEC 17th District

Paul W. Jackson, Colorado Springs, Colo.

Alternate

Timothy J. Talley, Bovina, TX

NEC 18th District

Julian V. Crawford, Honolulu, Hawaii

Alternate

Glenn E. Hohman, Sierra Vista, Ariz.

NEC 19th District

Harvey E. Dixon, Boise, Idaho

Alternate

Robert Sellers, Blackfoot, Idaho

NEC 20th District

Thomas Parker, Lorena, Texas

Alternate

Charles W. Edwards Jr., Austin, Texas

NEC 21st District

Danny Oliver, Coweta, Okla.

Alternate

John F. Donovan, Conway, Ark.



Front: Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh. **Back, from left:** Lynn Helms Prosser, Ellen Timmerman, Craig Johniken, Diane J. Franz, AnnMarie Hurley, Darlene Spence, Paula K. Raymond, Aura-Lee Nicodemus.

National Commander

Ellen Timmerman, Farmington, N.M.

Senior Vice Commander

Diane J. Franz, Winter Springs, Fla.

1st Junior Vice Commander

Lynn Helms Prosser, Surfside Beach, S.C.

2nd Junior Vice Commander

Darlene Spence, Selma, Texas

3rd Junior Vice Commander

Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, Berkeley, Calif.

4th Junior Vice Commander

AnnMarie Hurley, Hull, Mass.

National Judge Advocate

Paula K. Raymond, Alton, Ill.

National Chaplain

Aura-Lee Nicodemus, Enfield, N.H.

Past National Commander

William Craig Johniken, Lufkin, Texas

NEC 1st District

Elizabeth Eldridge, Marshfield, Mass.

Alternate

Sharon A. Dufault, North Attleboro, Mass.

NEC 2nd District

Helen Mazza, Middletown, N.Y.

Alternate

Janice Bailey, South Ozone Park, N.Y.

NEC 3rd District

Karen Rediker, South Royalton, Vt.

Alternate

Donna M. Folcarelli, Johnston, R.I.

NEC 4th District

Sarah M. Kashner, Camden, Del.

Alternate

Edna Iverson Long, Willingboro, N.J.

NEC 5th District

Loretta J. Nosko, Erie, Pa.

Alternate

Laurie A. Stopyra, Chambersburg, Pa.

NEC 6th District

Maria H. Torres, Fajardo, Puerto Rico

Alternate

Carol L. Simmons, Parkton, Md.

NEC 7th District

Delores A. Roussey, Port Charlotte, Fla.

Alternate

Irene H. Stevens, Melbourne, Fla.

NEC 8th District

Carolyn F. Harris, Birmingham, Ala.

Alternate

Donald R. Harris, Birmingham, Ala.

NEC 9th District

JoAnn Atkinson, Marietta, Ga.

Alternate

Byrdyne W. Bell, Augusta, Ga.

NEC 10th District

Regina I. Fortner, Oscoda, Mich.

Alternate

Christina Alexander, Detroit, Mich.

NEC 11th District

Deborah Hall, Alliance, Ohio

Alternate

Denise J. Proffitt, Louisville, Ohio

NEC 12th District

Patricia A. Davis, South Milwaukee, Wis.

Alternate

Rose Williams, Plover, Wis.

NEC 13th District

April Roush, New Richmond, Ohio

Alternate

Mildred Brown, Ekron, Ky.

NEC 14th District

Sandra J. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, N.D.

Alternate

Judy M. Steinhouse, Fargo, N.D.

NEC 15th District

Velma Steinman, Jefferson City, Mo.

Alternate

Melissa Pierce, Cedar Rapids, Iowa

NEC 16th District

Mary Lou Caldwell, Sierra Madre, Calif.

Alternate

Alma F. Fowlkes, Los Angeles, Calif.

NEC 17th District

Marilyn Hogue, Littleton, Colo.

Alternate

Victoria J. Salazar, Questa, N.M.

NEC 18th District

Sharon L. Linton, Phoenix, Ariz.

Alternate

Carolyn J. Walker, Henderson, Nev.

NEC 19th District

Jenny Clark, Vancouver, Wash.

Alternate

Jerald A. Royse Sr., Tillamook, Ore.

NEC 20th District

Charlene Parker, Lorena, Texas

Alternate

Sharon Thornton, San Antonio, Texas

NEC 21st District

Linda Oliver, Coweta, Okla.

Alternate

Kimberly Stake, Heber Springs, Ark.

REUNIONS

ARMY

93RD EVAC HOSPITAL Nov. 10–11, Washington, D.C., Contact: Pat McTague, Email: pmctague@cox.net
237TH MEDICAL DETACHMENT, HELICOPTER AMBULANCE, DMZ DUSTOFF Sept. 28–30, Dayton, OH, Contact: Phil Marshall, Ph: 937-371-3643, Email: dmz.dustoff@yahoo.com
"B" COMPANY 504TH MILITARY POLICE BATTALION PLEIKU MP ASSOCIATION Oct. 4–7, Branson, MO, Contact: Gene Petrowski, Ph: 443-402-0500

MARINES

2ND BATTALION, 9TH MARINES (ALL ERAS) Nov. 8–12, Arlington, VA, Contact: Danny Schuster, Ph: 978-302-4126, Email: ditson35@verizon.net, Web: 2ndbattalion9thmarines.org

NAVY

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHERS REUNION Oct. 10–12, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Bill Solt, Ph: 321-362-5806, Email: nanpvpres@gmail.com, Web: navyphoto.net
NAVY SQUADRON VA-115 Feb. 16–19, San Diego, CA, Contact: Howard Triggs, Ph: 763-516-0331, Email: hwtriggs@gmail.com
USS CARTER HALL (LSD-3) Oct. 23–27, Pensacola, FL, Contact: Raylah Holm, Ph: 509-607-9021, Email: raylah@aol.com, Web: ussoakhillss7.myevent.com
USS HARRY E HUBBARD (DD-748) Oct. 24–28, Newport, RI, Contact: Ron and Patty Petrie, Ph: 401-847-3859, Cell: 401-855-3859
USS LEARY (DD/DDR-879) Oct. 14–18, Portland, ME, Contact: Alfred Redden, Ph: 360-530-1284, Email: alshr@allophone.com
USS LSM(R)-404 (ALL LSMR PEOPLE ARE INVITED) Sept. 17–20, Branson, MO, Contact: Warrn Gilmour, Ph: 801-641-6538
USS MANLEY (DD-940) May 1–5, Warwick, RI, Contact: manleypres940@gmail.com
USS OAK HILL (LSD-7) Oct. 23–27, Pensacola, FL, Contact: Raylah Holm, Ph: 509-607-9021, Email: raylah@aol.com, Web: ussoakhillss7.myevent.com
USS RANGER (CVA/CV-61) Oct. 3–6, Mesa, AZ, Contact: Kevin W. Haegle, Ph: 480-543-0980, Email: khaegle@cox.net
USS SARATOGA ASSOCIATION Oct. 10–13, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Chip Hayes, Ph: 845-729-8775, Email: uss_saratoga@yahoo.com, Web: uss-saratoga.com

USS SAVANNAH (AOR-4) Oct. 21–26, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Ray Heinrich, Ph: 252-715-3132, Email: aor4ray@yahoo.com

AIR FORCE

AC-119 GUNSHIP REUNION Oct. 10–14, Tucson, AZ, Contact: Everett Sprou, Ph: 520-979-1130, Web: ac119gunships.com
OSAN AIR BASE, KOREA 1968–69 Nov. 9–11, Branson, MO, Contact: Vincent Darcangelo, Ph: 724-981-3429
RED HORSE AND PRIME BEEF ASSOCIATION Oct. 8–12, 2019, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Dick Aldinger, Ph: 407-859-7436, Email: famdinger@aol.com, Web: rhpba.com

INQUIRIES

- Searching for my long-lost brother, Alan Warren Earley, USMC, DOB 12/24/28 or 12/24/30 and last known to reside in Camp Pendleton, CA 1950. Contact Bob Earley, 3548 Wosley Drive, Fort Worth, TX 76133, Ph: 817-361-7987, Email: earleyhome1@gmail.com.
- Searching for the family or anyone who would know of the family or heirs of SSML 3C Milton Gross, a survivor of the sinking of the USS Quincy on Aug. 9, 1942, during the Battle of Savo Island at Guadalcanal and subsequently assigned to the USS Santa Fe. Contact Bob Weiner at 516-922-0103, Email: bowe554@yahoo.com.
- Searching for MSGT Vernon Brown who served with me in the 17th DSES at Malmstrom AFB, Montana, from 1975 to 1976. Contact TSGT Marla M. Patterson, P.O. Box 31885, Billings, MT 59107, Ph: 406-860-4008.
- Searching for Charles Ruldolph, Richmond, Va., or Gilford Gibson Jr., McKenzie, Tenn., who served in "C" Battery, 3rd Battalion, 7th Artillery, Bamberg, Germany, 1966–67 Hawk Missile. Contact Dave VanHoose at 606-265-3499.
- Searching for anyone who served with me at Marine Corps barracks duty, Adak, Alaska, in 1974. Contact Gino S. Partee, Email: gspartee55@icloud.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in the 3rd Army, "Red Ball Express" in WWII. My husband was a truck driver in this unit: 3383rd Truck Company during the 1940s. Contact Kay Wiseman, 7204 15th Avenue, Takoma Park, MD 20912.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 74th Combat Engineer Battalion in Fort Campbell, Ky., and Korea, 1950–51, especially Sgt. Oates, my crane driver in Heavy Equipment H & S Company. Contact A. B. Barnes at 919-688-4775.
- Searching for Vietnam veterans who were born in Czechoslovakia or relatives of men killed in Vietnam. I served in Vietnam with Co. D, 2/50 Inf. 101st Airborne Division. Contact Manuel Frank Van Eyck, Email: mfvaneyck@gmail.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in Company L, 3rd Battalion, 18th Infantry Regiment, 1st US Army Division in Friedberg, Germany, 1948–1950. Contact Ken Shelton at 850-456-6787.
- Searching for anyone who served in Narsarsuaq, Greenland, APO 858 from June 1956 to June 1957. Contact Earl Stout at 870-653-5037.
- Searching for former members associated with the AC-119 gunships used from 1967 to 1972 in Southeast Asia. We would like to find aircrew, ground crew, support personnel, friends and families, and anyone whose bacon we saved. Contact Jim Dunn, 1570 W. Webb Road, DeWitt, MI 48820-8333, Ph: 517 669-9216, Email: AC119KJimD@aol.com.
- Searching for members of 1/506TH Infantry, 101ST ABN Division, mainly E and D companies, who fought in or know of the Battle of Fire Support Base Ripcord (July 19–23, 1970); especially Krough, Algis, Lee, Friend, Montville, Libel, Torres, and Lewinsky; and Clark from Charlie Co., later HHQ. Also searching for members of B Company, 2nd/506th Infantry, 101st ABN Division who were on Ripcord their last few days (July 19–23, 1970). My mortar crew took a direct hit. I ran with you to the chopper at midday (TOC pad) carrying a mortar barrel from pit east of 155 position. Contact Elbert S. Griffin Jr., 624 W Waterway Drive, Belhaven, NC 27810, Ph: 252-943-9943.
- Searching for anyone who served with me at 178th personnel Service Company, Aschaffenburg, Germany, especially Johnny R. Santos, Sergeant First Class. Contact Shirley A. Walls-Segers-Brooks, 2599 Hwy 69 S, Columbus, MS 39702, Ph: 662-243-1575.
- Searching for anyone who was stationed with me in Japan (on two bases) in the G.C.A., Raplon and Control Tower at McGuire AFB by Wrightstown, N.J., 1955–58 and 1960–1968, before going to Keesler, Miss., as an A.T.C. instructor. Contact Reinhold A. Gassmann, 164 Wagon Ford Road, Easley, SC 29640-7672, Ph: 864-836-8438.
- Searching for anyone who served at Udorn RTAFB or NKP, Thailand, from 1970 to 1972. Contact Robert "Bodie" Spicer at 318-614-4267, Email: bodiespicer1950@gmail.com.
- Searching for those who were in Vietnam with my father between 1970 and 1975 with the 1st Cavalry 5th Delta, or the family members of those who served. Contact Joel M. Cliett #0711864, 2568 Moore Rouse Road, Hookerton, NC 28538.
- Searching for anyone who can confirm toxic exposure to the elements in stack gas, namely nitrous oxide, sulphur dioxide and carbon monoxide. I was exposed to these elements as Quartermaster on the bridge of USS Barton DD-722 during Hunter Killer duty in Korea and on USS Robert A. Owens for over 3 1/2 years. Contact Robert Bentivenga at 914-522-0135, Email: Rbentii@aol.com.



A taste for service...

The Panera Bread store in Winston-Salem, N.C., presented members from the DAV Department of North Carolina with a check for \$10,795.20. The Change-It-Up donation will assist North Carolina veterans and their families through the department services program. Pictured from left: Department Adjutant Jeremy Roberts, then-Department Commander Kristofer Knowlton, Marketing Manager Jocelyn Wright from Panera Bread, Winston-Salem National Service Office Assistant Supervisor Kimberlee Aviles, Cloverdale Panera Bread General Manager Brian Witt and Assistant Manager Destry Brannock.



Thank you for your service

DAV and Golden Corral are once again partnering to invite veterans and active-duty military to gather for a free meal and camaraderie at Military Appreciation Night on **Monday, Nov. 12, 2018**, between 5 and 9 p.m.

Golden Corral restaurants across the nation will honor veterans and service members with a delicious free buffet dinner and beverage. It's also an opportunity for those who have served to reconnect with old friends and make new ones. Last year, Golden Corral served more than 300,000 free meals during the special evening.

DAV departments and chapters raised more than \$1.4 million in donations through the 2017 event. Additionally, DAV and Golden Corral work together to support Camp Corral, a nonprofit organization that provides one-of-a-kind summer camp experiences for children of wounded, injured, ill or fallen military service members.

DAV and Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Night is a 17-year tradition that has raised over \$14 million dollars for DAV and served nearly 5.4 million meals to say thank you to the men and women who served our nation.

Be sure to visit Golden Corral as they thank veterans and military members for their service and sacrifices. Stop in and enjoy your free meal, get together with fellow veterans and find out more information about DAV from local representatives at each participating location.



Share your evening! Send photos of your chapter or department at a Military Appreciation Night event to production@dav.org by Nov. 19. Your photo might be chosen for the January/February edition of *DAV Magazine*.

PROUD VETERAN Proud Supporter



Ladies' Fleece Striped Hoodie

Slim Fit | Sizes S-2XL

\$30



Navy Crew Neck Sweatshirt

\$24 | Sizes S-4XL



Frayed Mesh Back Cap

\$12 | Hook and Loop Closure

DAV Lapel Pins

\$8 | USA Made



\$7 | USA Made



Place your order now at **DAVSTORE.org**