MAKING SPACE FOR ALL

How disabled veterans are helping make the future of interstellar travel more inclusive | Page 18
Leading advocates to gather in Washington, D.C.

One of the most highly visible demonstrations of DAV's dedicated advocacy in action comes in February at the annual mid-winter conference near our nation's capital. Each year, hundreds of DAV members and leaders join together to put a face to the most pressing veterans issues and bring the fight directly to elected leaders and policymakers in Washington, D.C.

We invite you to lend your voice to the cause and join us at DAV’s annual mid-winter conference at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Virginia, as we tackle the major issues facing veterans today.

You’ll stand in support of National Commander Andy Marshall as he presents DAV’s legislative agenda to Congress. You will also have the opportunity to meet with your lawmakers to explain clearly what DAV is fighting for: full and timely benefits for veterans exposed to toxic substances and burn pits; enhanced survivor benefits; equitable benefits and services for women and minority veterans; expanded access and options for veterans’ long-term care needs; improved mental health services and suicide prevention efforts; and strengthened VA health care infrastructure.

Come join your fellow DAV leaders as we work to ensure policymakers in Washington hear the voices of America’s ill and injured veterans and their families. Together, we will achieve victory and ensure veterans get the benefits they need and have earned!

Feb. 27–March 2, 2022

For more information, visit dav.org/events/2022-mid-winter-conference
A plan for prevention

Tucked in the middle of the November/December 2021 issue of DAV Magazine is an article that deserves some extra focus from our members at chapters and departments nationwide. Titled “Anybody can do it,” the article highlights how Chapter 30 in Mountain Home, Arkansas used a grant from DAV’s Columbia Trust for its suicide prevention program, which contributed to a dramatic decrease in the epidemic in their local county.

The reason for this renewed focus is twofold. First, the article spotlights one of the National Service Foundation’s most underutilized programs and the Trust’s role as a catalyst in bridging resources from well-populated chapters and departments to others in need. Second, and more importantly, it bestows the recognition that Chapter 30 deserves for tackling and making a notable difference in an issue that plagues the veteran community—one that will remain my highest priority as your national commander.

Suicide among veterans and service members is both a public health and national security crisis. Far too many of our brothers- and sisters-in-arms have perished by their own hand. Since 2010, more than 65,000 veterans have died by suicide—more than the total number of deaths from combat during the Vietnam War and the operations in Iraq and Afghanistan combined. We owe these men and women, their families and our fellow veterans a better, more coordinated response to address the military and veteran suicide crisis.

Preventing suicide is an issue that goes beyond the differences we have and straight into the heart of our humanity. Suicide is a complex problem with no single cause and no single solution. But it is preventable. Given the multiple factors that may lead to suicide, preventing it requires a comprehensive public health approach that harnesses the full breadth of the federal government.

This past November, I was heartened to learn that the White House announced a series of priority goals and executive actions that will drive suicide prevention efforts moving forward. These goals are outlined in “Reducing Military and Veteran Suicide: Advancing a Comprehensive, Cross-Sector, Evidence-Informed Public Health Strategy.”

This five-prong approach includes improving lethal means safety; enhancing crisis care and facilitating care transitions; increasing access to and delivery of effective care; addressing upstream risk and protective factors; and increasing research coordination, data sharing and evaluation efforts throughout the federal government.

While I will not go into the specifics of the plan here, I urge you all to research the strategy and consider how you can help implement it in your local community. We will not see success overnight, but Chapter 30 in Arkansas has shown us it can be done. And as the article states, “Anybody can do it.”
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How new is your point of view?

When you’ve been doing something the same way for a long time, it’s all too easy to get comfortable in your safe zone. There’s nothing wrong with this; in fact, it’s human nature to leave well enough alone. If it’s not broken, why fix it?

But this practice can occasionally leave us a little shortsighted. Perhaps while you were going about your normal business, the landscape changed or needs shifted. Maybe your own skills and abilities evolved but aren’t being fully utilized to the best advantage. Or, possibly, you’re overlooking valuable insight that others around you may have to offer.

Every so often, we have to remember to shake things up a bit. Change perspective.

This issue’s cover is a testament to this idea. We need to look up, take stock of our surroundings and reevaluate whether we’re doing all we can to meet the mission.

You can read more on Page 18 about the incredible experience DAV ambassador Centra “Ce-Ce” Mazyck had during a parabolic flight in California. The former paratrooper was one of a dozen individuals who took part in groundbreaking research to see how spaceflight can be made more accessible for individuals with disabilities. It’s a fascinating concept and is truly at the heart of what we do at DAV—empowering disabled veterans to live their best and fullest lives and to, literally, reach for the stars.

This willingness to look beyond what’s working today is a hallmark of individuals and organizations that thrive. It means changing the lens now and again, seeing things from a new angle or through someone else’s eyes.

While our mission hasn’t changed throughout DAV’s more than 100-year history of serving veterans, the ways we go about achieving it certainly have. We have continued to look to each new generation of veterans to see what we can learn from them and how they can help us to create positive change for the future.

I encourage you to do the same in your chapters, departments and local community. With a fresh, new perspective, there is no limit to how far our organization—and the veterans we serve—can go.
LETTERS

Cost-of-living increase
Does anyone know if we [veterans] will be getting a cost-of-living raise this year? Robert Broussard Sr., Delcambre, Louisiana

Editor’s Note: For 2022, the cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) has been increased by 5.9% — the largest hike in decades. Read more about the increase on Page 8.

Top DAV scholar
Loved the story about 2021 DAV Scholarship recipient Daniel Finney in the last issue of DAV Magazine. He is a beloved young man in Columbia and has made a lot of friends with our veterans. More young people should get involved in the DAV Scholarship Program. Not only does it connect future leaders with veterans, it gives people like Daniel a foundation to pursue future goals. Joyce Roberts, DAV Department of South Carolina Commander, West Columbia, South Carolina

DAV 5K
It was a beautiful day! My daughter and son enjoyed running it! Great cause! Emmy Coyle Pierce, Marysville, Ohio

Nashville was full of sun as we had a great time completing the virtual DAV 5K this past weekend! Kyle Hopkins, Nashville, Tennessee

‘Blue Water’ Navy claims
All the best, Blue Water sailors! You should get compensation for your health being affected by poisons put into the environment while you were supporting the “boots on the ground.” Go Navy! Carol Bath, via Facebook

DAV Transportation Network
I’m a life member and have been for years. I see the good that DAV does every time I go to the VA hospital/clinic. The DAV vans are always parked outside, having delivered veterans to their medical appointments. It lightens my heart to know DAV can help those disabled veterans with their transportation needs. Donald Kreber, Delano, Minnesota, via Facebook

Medical cannabis
Why did the VA cut off my pain meds because I tested positive for THC when I live in Nevada where it is legal and the dispensaries give vets a 20% discount? John Penley, Las Vegas, via Facebook

Editor’s Note: While VA physicians cannot recommend or prescribe medical cannabis, they are permitted under the department’s policy to discuss its use with patients and document usage in medical records. We recommend you contact your VA facility’s patient advocate for any concerns regarding your health care.

Concurrent receipt
Concurrent receipt for career-retired military veterans drawing VA disability needs to go to the top of the list. Nothing is more outrageous. I’ve been a DAV life member for more than 20 years. Thanks for all you do for disabled veterans. Brian Ward, via Facebook

DAV centennial celebration
I’m confused why DAV wouldn’t use one of the many talented military bands instead of the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra to lead the DAV centennial celebration in a musical salute to America’s veterans. This was a major miss on DAV’s part. It would have been a perfect time to showcase military bands and promote recruitment. Tarah An, via Facebook

Editor’s Note: Thank you for sharing your feedback with us. DAV is very grateful that the Cincinnati Pops, Cincinnati Music Hall and the West Point Glee Club all graciously donated their time, talents and facilities to help DAV celebrate its centennial celebration. There are also historic ties to the neighborhood of Cincinnati where the event took place, since DAV was founded next door to Music Hall in historic Memorial Hall.

Honoring Sen. Bob Dole
Senator Bob Dole did so much for his country. He was a soldier in the Second World War and sacrificed his right arm. He was in the Senate for many years. I actually met him in person at the World War II Memorial on Memorial Day. His passing marks the end of an era. Thank you for your service and sacrifice, Sen. Robert Dole! RIP. David Botticelli, via Facebook

Celebrating International Day of Persons with Disabilities
Thank you, DAV, for remembering our disabled—especially our veterans—and the key role the United Nations still plays in promoting and protecting our equal rights! Paul Sullivan, via LinkedIn

WRITE TO US  Please send feedback to DAV Magazine, 860 Dolwick Drive, Erlanger, KY 41018, 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.
The number of breast cancer diagnoses among middle-aged women veterans enrolled in VA health care increased five times between 2000 and 2015, according to the Department of Veterans Affairs. Each year, about 700 VA patients receive that life-altering news. Now, two pieces of bipartisan legislation aim to expand access to mammography services and facilitate earlier detection of breast cancer.

Last summer, lawmakers introduced legislation in both the House and Senate to improve and expand mammography services for veterans enrolled in VA health care and to better screen women veterans potentially exposed to burn pits and other toxic exposures.

The Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options (MAMMO) for Veterans Act (H.R. 4794, S. 2533) requires the VA to address “geographic disparities” in accessing breast imaging exams. The bill would require the department to carry out a pilot program to extend mammogram services to veterans living in areas where they are limited, such as more rural states. It would also require VA facilities to include 3D breast imaging and study access issues for disabled and paralyzed veterans.

“The best way we can fight breast cancer is with early detection and top-notch preventative care—plain and simple,” Sen. Jon Tester of Montana, chairman of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee, said in a July statement. “That’s why it’s critically important that we expand every veteran’s access to high-quality cancer screening and care, no matter where they live.”

Breast cancer is the second-leading cause of cancer deaths among women, behind lung cancer, according to the VA. Roughly 1 in 8 women will develop invasive breast cancer in their lifetimes. But women who served in the military are 20% to 40% percent more likely to develop breast cancer than those who never served.

Rep. Julia Brownley of California, chairwoman of the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Health, was also a lead co-sponsor of H.R. 4571, the Supporting Expanded Review for Veterans In Combat Environments (SERVICE) Act. The bill would expand mammogram screening criteria to include women veterans who served in areas with burn pits, such as Iraq and Afghanistan, even if the women don’t meet current age recommendations, have symptoms or have a family history of breast cancer.

“The VA is uniquely positioned to be a leader in the fight against breast cancer,” added Sen. John Boozman of Arkansas, who helped introduce both the SERVICE Act (S. 2102) and the MAMMO Act in the Senate. “Upgrading the VA’s breast cancer imaging capability and expanding its services is key to prevention and treatment.”

As of publication, the SERVICE Act had passed in the Senate.

“Women veterans may be exposed to a variety of toxic and environmental hazards during military service that put them at risk for developing breast cancer, making early detection a critical component of their health care,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “Starting screenings sooner can help close the gaps between the time of exposure and development or progression of this disease, potentially saving lives.”

Find updates on this and other veterans legislation by joining DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network) at DAVCAN.org.
The TRUTH Prevails

DAV helps military sexual trauma survivor get her earned benefits, validation

By Brian Buckwalter

The first time Naomi Mathis saw Migdalia Griswold’s case file in 2019, she knew something was wrong. Griswold, who served in the Army in the early 1980s, had extensive documented proof she was a survivor of military sexual trauma (MST). But instead of being helped by her command when she reported what happened, she was called a liar and eventually forced out of the service with an other than honorable discharge.

Mathis, a DAV benefits advocate, said the Department of Veterans Affairs initially allowed the character of her discharge from the Army to overshadow evidence proving Griswold was entitled to VA benefits. For more than 30 years, she was left to deal on her own with the post-traumatic stress disorder caused by the incident.

“It was just wrong,” said Mathis. “And that wrong needed to be right.”

Mathis, an Air Force veteran who has struggled with PTSD herself, said she immediately connected with Griswold the first time they spoke.

“I just got it,” said Mathis, who works out of the VA regional office in Bay Pines, Florida. “I understood everything she was saying. She was trying to get her emotions across to me. She didn't need to, because I got it.”

Mathis, along with her supervisor, Michael Michelotti, began working with Griswold through a process that would take nearly two years to complete. They had to convince the VA to accept Griswold’s service as honorable so she could access the benefits she earned.

Mathis said that while it’s ultimately up to individuals, like Griswold, to work through the process—doing things like writing statements, attending appointments and gathering documentation—taking the first steps and knowing where to go in accessing VA benefits can be a confusing journey without someone to help.

“That’s where you need DAV to step in, because it’s so overwhelming,” said Mathis.

She said she views her role as a DAV benefits advocate like a coach doing work behind the scenes for her team—making sure players do what they need to do and know...
the plays so they are set up for success. People who come to Mathis and other DAV benefits advocates looking for guidance and help are met by someone who can relate to what a service-disabled veteran is going through and who has the expertise to navigate the process of getting earned veterans benefits, no matter how challenging the process may be.

In Griswold’s case, there were many challenges between trying to obtain original service records from the Army and getting approval for a VA exam. Mathis said she and Michelotti would check on Griswold’s file multiple times per week and had countless conversations with each other to figure out different approaches to get the VA to accept her service as honorable.

Mathis said the long, difficult process had kicked up everything that happened in the past for Griswold, causing her, at times, to want to give up and not think about it anymore.

“You need somebody to fight for you because, clearly, there’s no more fight left in you,” said Mathis. “Not at that point, there wasn’t.”

Mathis said she and Michelotti continued to work the case by themselves, with a breakthrough coming once they got the VA to agree to give Griswold an exam. It was that conversation with the treating doctor, coupled with statements from her and her family, and the original records from the MST incident in 1983 that finally convinced the VA to recognize her service as honorable.

In July, Mathis was able to share that news with Griswold over a video call—a moment she said still gives her goosebumps thinking about.

“Thank you so much,” Griswold said through tears of relief when Mathis shared the news. “I feel someone’s validating my story of what happened. I love you guys so much for all you have done for me.”

Mathis said the validation for Griswold and being able to share that she is now entitled to the full VA benefits she earned made the long hours and the challenges they faced worth it for her.

“I’m ready for the next one,” said Mathis, who calls Griswold her hero. “It gives you a boost.”

Griswold said she is now looking forward to being able to share her story with other women as a way to help others.

“I don’t call myself a victim anymore,” said Griswold. “I have learned how to say I’m a survivor.”
Beginning in January, veterans will see a 5.9% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase in their monthly VA benefits—the highest jump in decades.

On Oct. 8, the president signed into law the Veterans’ Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2021 (Public Law 117–45), which authorized the increase for all disability compensation, clothing allowance and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) payments.

The Department of Veterans Affairs adjusts veterans’ monthly disability compensation amounts based on the yearly change in the cost of living as determined by the Social Security Administration. The recently announced 5.9% COLA boost increased the amount paid to veterans and their survivors effective December 2021 and will be reflected in January 2022 compensation payments.

“This COLA increase is absolutely critical for so many disabled veterans who rely on VA compensation to make ends meet,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese. “But we cannot lose sight of the serious impacts that overall inflation will have on these individuals, especially given the economic difficulties of the past year and a half.”

In the past two years, COLA increases have consistently been less than 2%. The 2022 adjustment is the largest increase in nearly 40 years. VA benefits will increase by roughly $8.50 for a 10% disability rating with no dependents and $185 for veterans rated 100% with no dependents.

Learn More Online
The full table can be viewed at va.gov/disability/compensation-rates/veteran-rates.
It’s no surprise that, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, Americans nationwide have had to lean more heavily on modern technology. From holiday gatherings to medical appointments, nearly every corner of society has had to pivot to a more virtual environment—and for good reasons. Keeping everyone safe while continuing to live our lives and remaining socially connected has been paramount.

The country is inching toward an eagerly anticipated return to normal, and we know that technology, while beneficial, can never replace the unique impact of holding face-to-face meetings with our elected officials. That’s why we at DAV are thrilled to once again hold our annual mid-winter conference in person.

After thoughtful reflection and weighing all of the options, I’m delighted to see this important advocacy conference take place from Feb. 27 to March 2 in Arlington, Virginia—just outside Washington, D.C.

This has always been a special event, but even more so in 2022. It will mark the first time in two years DAV’s members and advocates will travel to our nation’s capital to strengthen and protect the very benefits veterans have earned in service to us all. We will hold all of our regular workshops featuring updates from our service, legislative, communications, membership and employment teams.

Although it’s impossible to rule out any uncertainty, we’re ready and hopeful that participants will get the chance to meet directly with their elected officials and support National Commander Andy Marshall during his testimony before a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees.

Congress continues to work on several issues related to DAV’s critical policy goals. While it was heartening to see the Department of Veterans Affairs implement the first presumptive conditions for burn pit exposure—chronic asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis—we know that our work on this issue is far from done. Ensuring additional benefits for burn pits and other toxic exposures, enhanced survivor benefits, and improved services for women and minority veterans; reinforcing mental health and suicide prevention programs; expanding access and options to meet veterans’ long-term care needs; and strengthening the VA’s health care infrastructure are all on the table this session of Congress.

It’s perhaps more important than ever, as veterans, to stand and support one another. In short, it allows our collective voice to be heard. Our annual mid-winter conference helps DAV to advance meaningful legislation improving the lives of veterans, their families and caregivers every year. A sacred pillar of our democracy is the ability to have a say in how we care for our nation’s ill and injured veterans. I hope you will join us in Washington in February to continue that fight. With a full contingent of DAV members attending this time-honored tradition, I have no doubt that this year’s mid-winter conference will be one for the books.
Comedian and TV show host Jon Stewart is standing alongside DAV and other veterans advocates in the fight to improve access to health care and benefits for those exposed to burn pits during military service.

Stewart joined a coalition of service groups in Washington, D.C., on Nov. 4 to demand that Congress pass comprehensive legislation expanding lifelong health care provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs to veterans of all generations who were exposed to toxic substances.

In the Senate, the Comprehensive and Overdue Support for Troops (COST) of War Act of 2021 (S. 3003) addresses numerous types of exposure, including toxins at Karshi-Khanabad (K2) Air Base, burn pits, Agent Orange and radiation. The DAV-backed legislation also calls for a working group and review commission on presumptive diseases related to toxic exposure. There’s a similar legislative package that was introduced in the House—the Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2021 (H.R. 3967).

“I mean, if we can’t do this, what chance do the rest of us have?” Stewart said during a press conference. “If we can’t correct even the most basic of injustices to those who’ve served us, then I believe the phrase would be ‘yikes.’”

Stewart dedicated the first episode of his new Apple TV+ series, “The Problem With Jon Stewart,” to the issue of burn pit exposure. He’s also a longtime and fierce advocate for 9/11 first responders, many of whom developed serious illnesses in the years after the rescue and recovery operations in the smoldering rubble and plumes of smoke at Ground Zero.

Visit DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network) to learn more about and support current burn pit legislation: DAVCAN.org.
DAV members convene at our annual national convention to decide on the organization’s legislative goals for the year. These goals help DAV’s legislative team in Washington, D.C., focus on issues most important to our members as they advocate for the laws and policies that affect the disabled veteran community.

In 2021, DAV members submitted a historically high number of resolutions at the convention, helping to shape this year’s advocacy agenda.

“These priority issues change and evolve from year to year, usually reflecting advances we’ve made legislatively,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “We are grateful to have an increasingly engaged group of members who help to identify these areas of concern.”

DAV’s 2022 Critical Policy Goals are as follows:

- **Ensure Benefits, Health Care and Justice for Veterans of All Eras Exposed to Toxic Substances**—Although there has been some notable progress for veterans who suffered illness due to toxic and environmental exposures, too many have yet to receive the benefits, health care and justice our nation owes to them.

- **Enhance Benefits for Service-Disabled Veterans’ Survivors**—The current value of Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefits is insufficient to provide meaningful support to survivors of severely disabled veterans, and some eligibility rules have limited the number of deserving recipients.

- **Advance Equity in Health Services and Benefits for Women, Underserved and Minority Veteran Populations**—The Department of Veterans Affairs must ensure women, minority and underserved veterans have access to timely, high-quality and specialized health care services to the same extent as their veteran peers, and it must provide a safe, welcoming and harassment-free environment at all its health care facilities.

- **Improve VA Mental Health Services and Suicide Prevention Efforts to Reduce Veteran Suicide**—Despite increased resources for VA mental health services and targeted efforts, rates of suicide among veterans have not significantly decreased. By improving lethal means safety efforts, enhancing care for veterans in crisis and increasing collaboration with community partners, the VA can help to reduce suicide for at-risk veterans and ensure all veterans have access to needed mental health services.

- **Ensure Access to Long-Term Care for Aging Veterans and Those With Service-Connected Disabilities**—The VA must have a comprehensive program of geriatric and extended care that includes a broad range of care options and supports, from home-based primary care services to long-term institutional care to assist a rapidly aging veteran population, particularly veterans with service-connected injuries who have lost the ability to function independently.

- **Strengthen the VA’s Capacity to Deliver Timely, High-Quality Health Care to Veterans**—To ensure the best health outcomes for veterans, particularly veterans with service-connected conditions who rely on the VA for all or most of their care, the VA must remain the primary provider and coordinator of care, which will require new investments to rebuild its health care infrastructure and modernize IT systems. As demonstrated during the COVID-19 pandemic, the VA also plays an essential federal role during national emergencies, not just for veterans but for all Americans.
After medical retirement in 2014, Navy veteran Ericka McKim discovered healing and a renewed sense of purpose by starting her own business. Now, with a $10,000 prize from DAV, the entrepreneur can take the all-natural sweeteners and keto-friendly treats she created to an even bigger market.

In October, DAV presented McKim with the Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Top Venture Impacting Veterans Award at the Veteran EDGE conference. The four-day event, hosted by Syracuse University’s Institute for Veterans & Military Families, is dedicated to supporting, developing and connecting veteran and military spouse business owners.

McKim was one of 10 finalists chosen to participate in the conference’s Acceleration Challenge—a “mastermind workshop” for veteran business owners, including service-disabled veterans, who graduate from one of the institute’s programs.

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“The Acceleration Challenge is really born out of the idea that we have established businesses that are basically on the cusp of greatness,” said Misty Fox, the institute’s director of entrepreneurship. “And it’s just that little push that they need, whether it’s strategic or even just a capital infusion or just meeting the right person, whatever it is to really make it to the next level.”

DAV National Employment Director Jeff Hall sits on a panel of judges who choose one participant to receive the $10,000 award.

“With DAV’s employment program, our goal is to help veterans and their spouses secure a career, whatever that may be,” Hall said. “But there’s just something inherently enticing and attractive about helping a service-disabled veteran or their spouse in starting their own business.”

McKim’s bakery, And I Like It, started as a personal quest to alleviate debilitating symptoms that forced the former gunner’s mate out of the Navy well before she was ready.

She began experiencing severe back cramps, a list of digestive issues and brain fog. After two years of treatments, the Navy determined McKim was no longer deployable.

“It was extremely difficult for me,” she said. “I wanted to serve my full 20 years because I really loved what I did for the military. I really loved traveling all over the world and serving other people and having purpose in my life.”

McKim found herself back in Texas living with her parents, sick and unsure of what to do next. Heeding her mother’s advice, McKim cut gluten and sugar from her diet, but most of the gluten- and sugar-free products on the market either sacrificed taste or caused McKim...
severe physical reactions. One ingredient, maltitol, a sugar alcohol commonly found in sugar-free foods, made McKim's stomach rock hard and bloated.

“It looked like I was pregnant,” she said.

McKim's sister, a biochemist, suggested they source their own ingredients and try different formulas. Following a few years of trial and error, the sisters found the perfect formula: a low-calorie, all-natural, sugar-free sweetener without maltitol. Soon, McKim was able to make and enjoy her favorite dessert: cheesecake.

Around the same time, McKim started participating in business programs for veterans, hoping entrepreneurship would give her the sense of purpose she longed for. Eventually, it clicked: Why not build a business around the all-natural sweetener and cheesecakes she had created from scratch?

At her first farmers market in 2017, McKim sold 60 mini-cheesecakes. Today, And I Like It sells cheesecakes in 11 stores across the Dallas-Fort Worth area, along with three different all-natural sweeteners. Her customers include people battling health issues and dietary restrictions of their own.

“And so, the purpose that I felt in the Navy, I finally feel that purpose again with this job,” McKim said. “I’m not just selling a cheesecake or selling a sugar substitute or selling a candied pecan. I’m actually helping somebody.”

McKim said stores often request to buy her products at wholesale, but she hasn't been able to meet the demand. It takes her a week and a half every month just to produce the sweeteners. She recently identified a piece of equipment that would speed up production by 650%, but it cost $85,000. Her application for a bank loan was denied due to her debt-to-income ratio.

With the $10,000 awarded by DAV, and another $10,000 from the D’Aniello Family Foundation, McKim said the bank finally approved a loan.

“It was in tears when it happened,” McKim said of the award.

Fox said the money can help a struggling business survive, but it’s the veteran community that can make it thrive. The long-standing partnership between the institute and DAV is an extension of that community.

“I think the greatest part is, it’s not just an infusion of cash.” Fox said. “Now we’re going to introduce you to this other community that can also help you in so many other ways.”

To learn more about entrepreneurship programs for veterans, visit dav.org/veterans/employment-resources. To learn more about McKim’s bakery, And I Like It, visit andilikeit.com.
By Elizabeth DePompei

With hundreds of people cheering behind him, Air Force veteran David Lowe sped past Great American Ballpark in Cincinnati on his recumbent trike the morning of Nov. 6. He was one of more than 1,500 people to run, walk, roll or ride the annual DAV 5K to honor, in person, America’s veterans. Including those who participated virtually, more than 3,300 used the occasion to support DAV’s mission.

“I woke up at six o’clock in the morning going, ‘I don’t want to do this; it’s cold,’” Lowe said at the finish line. “But ... right now is the best time. Everybody’s here, and it’s fantastic.”

The camaraderie is what brought so many veterans, active-duty service members and supporters back to the starting line, one year after the 5K went virtual-only due to the coronavirus pandemic. Between in-person and virtual races, participants generated more than $130,000 to support DAV’s free, life-changing services for veterans. The event raised an additional $235,000 in sponsorships, including the presenting sponsor, Humana.

“Humana has a long-standing history with the military and is committed to the well-being of all veterans,” said Ed Sandrick, director of the Veterans Channel at Humana. “We’re proud to support the men and women who have sacrificed so much to defend our nation in partnership with DAV.

“The DAV 5K has raised funds for DAV to continue to support our ill and injured heroes while providing an opportunity to enhance their personal wellness and health,” Sandrick, a Marine veteran, added.

Capt. Ryan Hall, a nurse anesthetist serving in the Army Reserve, has participated in the 5K four times.
Every year, he looks forward to meeting other service members and veterans—the people he calls “salt of the earth.”

“There’s just a bond that happens within the military that’s unmatched anywhere else,” Hall explained. “And you have a moment to spend a Saturday morning with some guys, do 3 miles and do a 5K and high-five some people and act a little silly [and] just have that bond like you used to have. It means a lot to a lot of people.”

Ohio Army National Guard Pfc. Brooke Smith, who called herself “a die-hard for America,” ran in her first DAV 5K carrying a 90-pound rucksack. She’s the first woman in her family to enlist and said she hopes she can be a role model for others.

“I remember growing up, like being little, and seeing everyone being like a GI Joe. And I love that, but you didn’t see a lot of females doing that,” she said. “So I think I can inspire younger people and show other females that you can join and you can do it.”

For Lowe, the 5K was also about giving thanks to the organization that changed his life.

While serving in the 1970s, Lowe sustained a spinal cord injury. He tried on and off for 20 years to obtain his benefits, to no avail. Lowe said he was ready to walk away from the issue, reasoning that the VA had done “good enough for me.”

But it wasn’t good enough for the DAV benefits advocates who were handling his claim. In September, he unexpectedly received years of disability back pay.

“I didn’t have any hope for anything because it’s been so long,” Lowe said. “And all of a sudden, it just happened. Without [DAV], I don’t think I would have gotten anything.”

“The DAV 5K is about honoring and supporting our nation’s veterans,” National Commander Andy Marshall said. “It’s also an opportunity to remind active and former service members that they are not alone. They have each other and they have DAV.”

As Veterans Day approached, Hall said that saying thank you is more than enough, but taking it one step further can make a lifelong difference for civilians and veterans alike.

“Make that connection with them and spend time with them and get to know them as a person as much as you can,” he said. “Those connections stay with you and stay with your heart, stay with the people that you bonded with for the rest of your life.”

“I woke up at six o’clock in the morning going, ‘I don’t want to do this; it’s cold.’ But ... right now is the best time. Everybody’s here, and it’s fantastic.”

—David Lowe, Air Force veteran
As did so many like him, Marine Corps veteran Eugene DeZarn had a very personal reason for adding a few dollars to a DAV collection jar at a Golden Corral restaurant in Northern Kentucky during the chain’s 2021 Military Appreciation Night on Veterans Day.

“DAV means a lot to me,” the Vietnam veteran said. Before finding DAV, DeZarn struggled with the disability claims process at the Department of Veterans Affairs. But DAV benefits advocates were able to help him fight for benefits for conditions related to Agent Orange exposure.

“I believe in DAV,” DeZarn added. “What can I say? They’ve helped me all along.”

During the years of partnership between Golden Corral and DAV, more than $17 million has been raised to support DAV’s state and local efforts to help veterans like DeZarn and those returning from more recent conflicts. More than 6 million free thank-you meals have also been distributed in that time. In 2021 alone, more than $500,000 was raised for DAV and 100,518 free thank-you meals were served.

“We use those funds to help veterans have a better life,” said Darryl Dykes, adjutant of DAV Chapter 19 in Erlanger, Kentucky.

“We can’t thank Golden Corral and their patriotic customers enough for the support they provide DAV and the honor they bestow on the men and women who have served and sacrificed in uniform,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “It enables our
local leaders to build strong support for veterans in communities across the country.”

Agnes Cardenas, the adjutant of Chapter 5 in Rio Rancho, New Mexico, said Golden Corral lets the chapter set up a table for several days before Military Appreciation Night to extend the opportunity for their customers to give back. The chapter then uses the money to buy turkey baskets for veterans in need of food assistance for the Thanksgiving holiday.

In Iowa City, Iowa, a DAV chapter uses money raised to purchase vans that volunteers use to drive veterans to VA medical appointments. In Somerville, Alabama, Chapter 11 Commander John Johnson said DAV members have been able to get veterans help with their VA claims after talking with them at the restaurant.

“We are honored to once again show our appreciation for the brave men and women who serve our country,” said Golden Corral President and CEO Lance Trenary. “Serving those who have served our nation on our behalf during our annual Military Appreciation Night is something our restaurant teams look forward to every year.”

In Cumming, Georgia, Golden Corral served about 800 free thank-you meals on Military Appreciation Night, said general manager Jason Baxley. At one point in the night, the line of people waiting to get in stretched outside the restaurant.

“This is the most fun holiday to work for the staff because of how grateful the customers—mostly veterans and their families—are for the evening,” Baxley said.

For Chapter 17 in Gainesville, Georgia, the restaurant serves as a place to raise money for DAV during the annual event. Chapter Commander Graham Martin said Golden Corral has been very supportive of fundraising for local veterans.

The funds Chapter 17 raises are used to help pay for utilities, housing or food. But Sam Smith, life member and past commander of Chapter 17, said the money also helps the largest initiative the chapter undertakes: providing veterans in the area with no-cost medical devices, including wheelchairs, powered scooters and hospital beds.

“That’s the whole purpose,” Smith said, “To help veterans and their families.”

Left: Jim Atkinson of DAV Chapter 17 in Gainesville, Georgia, hands out stickers to young diners while James Ledford Jr. looks on. Chapter 17 raised more than $1,500 in donations during Golden Corral’s Military Appreciation Night, held Nov. 11 at the restaurant’s Cumming, Georgia, location.

Right: Anna Liese Smith, a high school student and cadet in the Army ROTC of Kenton County, Kentucky, keeps watch to clear tables at the Golden Corral Military Appreciation Night on Nov. 11.

In 2021, Golden Corral raised more than $500,000 for DAV and served 100,518 free thank-you meals.
 entra “Ce-Ce” Mazyck used to sit on her back porch and gawk at the stars. She’d wonder what was out there in the vast night sky, light-years away.

She doesn’t want to wonder anymore. She wants to find out for herself.

The Paralympian and Army veteran caught the space travel bug on a recent mission led by AstroAccess, an organization working to make the cosmos more accessible for people with disabilities. Mazyck was paralyzed from the waist down during a jump training accident while serving in the 82nd Airborne Division at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, in 2003. The former paratrooper is a life member of DAV and a recipient of the Freedom Award, presented during the annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which honors outstanding courage and achievement in a veteran’s rehabilitation process.

On Oct. 17, Mazyck was one of 12 people with disabilities—including a fellow veteran, scientists, artists and engineers—to board a zero-gravity flight in Long Beach, California. Sponsored by DAV, the group was tasked with testing the limits of spaceflight.

“It was the best experience ever,” Mazyck said. “I would do it over and over and over again.”

The plane, operated by the Zero Gravity Corp., flew a series of parabolic arcs to mimic the weightlessness of space. Ambassadors moved from their seats to a padded portion of the cabin where they floated, free from the confines of gravity. The sensation is unlike anything else, ambassadors say, but there’s a reason the plane is affectionately called the “vomit comet.”
“I did several backflips and things like that,” Mazyck said. “And I had to stop. I said, ‘Let me stop before I get sick.’”

During the brief intervals without gravity (or nausea), ambassadors experimented with prototypes designed to address communication and safety challenges for people with disabilities. Solutions included everything from handles and strapping systems to GPS technology that helps people who are deaf or blind navigate their environment.

“We want to be independent when we’re taking these flights,” Mazyck explained. “So the more we take these flights and the more we have retrofitted things on the aircraft to get us acclimated, then the more independent we will be.”

Historically, people who have a disability have been excluded from cosmic adventures. NASA astronauts must have 20/20 vision (with or without corrective lenses), have a standing height between 62 and 75 inches, and pass a long-duration flight physical. Everything from space suits to spacecrafts were designed for people who meet the agency’s demanding requirements.

Ann Kapusta, mission director for the AstroAccess flight, said the traditional idea of who can be an astronaut is being challenged more and more. Earlier this year, the European Space Agency announced its plan to recruit at least one astronaut who has a disability.

“So there are ways that spaceflight is becoming more accessible,” Kapusta said. “Our mission with AstroAccess is really to push that boundary all the way to the extreme.

“If they can make space accessible, we can make any space accessible,” she added. “And if we can solve the challenges of spaceflight, there’s no reason that we can’t do it here on Earth.”

Military veterans such as Mazyck and fellow AstroAccess ambassador Azubuike “Zuby” Onwuta are well equipped for such a lofty mission. Onwuta, an innovator and Army veteran who is blind, explained that both the military and space worlds require discipline, reliability and the spirit to tackle unchartered territory.

“Our nation’s veterans have a steadfast drive to serve that strengthens our communities here on Earth every day,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “The AstroAccess mission gives DAV advocate Ce-Ce Mazyck and others the opportunity to help make space a better, more inclusive venture. Such groundbreaking work will benefit the disabled community and humanity well into the future.”

Mission ambassadors will continue to provide feedback and engage the public about space accessibility. The ultimate goal for AstroAccess is to send one or more team members to space.

“I want to experience that,” Mazyck said. “I want to see how it looks and want to see how it feels so I can come back and share.

“Disabled individuals, we can do this if we have our supporters, if we believe in ourselves and keep doing the research.”

Opposite page: The AstroAccess team is made up of 12 ambassadors and includes military veterans, scientists and artists. Everyone on the team has a vision, hearing or mobility disability. DAV member Ce-Ce Mazyck (bottom right) participated in the team’s first zero-gravity flight on Oct. 17, 2021.

Left: Azubuike “Zuby” Onwuta, a Harvard- and MIT-trained innovator and Army veteran who is blind, is one of 12 AstroAccess mission ambassadors.
Marcella Ng had never considered military service before an official with Army ROTC called. Known for being a tomboy and having an unquenchable thirst for the outdoors, Ng was persuaded to take a leap of faith by accepting an ROTC scholarship to the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Little did she know that unexpected phone call would set her on a path to become the nation's first Black female military pilot—a path that was not without struggle.

A native of central Missouri, Ng found her footing in college and enjoyed the regimented structure ROTC entailed. She also found success and was just one of two women chosen to be part of the all-service ROTC drill team on campus.

“We’d take the 1903 Springfield rifles, and we would flip them with bayonets on,” recalled Ng, who is a DAV lifetime member of Chapter 29 in Harker Heights, Texas. “Just being part of that was such a special thing.”

But it was the more physical aspect of training that sold her on a future in the Army.

“I had instructors that didn’t try to put limits on you—that was so important.”
Like her choice to join the Army in the first place, Ng had also never dreamed of flying. That changed in the summer of 1977 when an Army lieutenant colonel and pilot singled Ng out and encouraged her to earn her wings. After graduating the following year, 2nd Lt. Ng went to Fort Rucker, Alabama, to make history.

Ng was both the first woman and the first African American officer assigned to her first unit in Germany. But maintaining flight status proved nearly impossible. When other officers declined to assess her piloting abilities properly, uncertainty clouded her aviation career.

Officials organized two flight boards to determine if she could keep flying. The first was thrown out, according to Ng, over the impression of undue influence. A second board was held, and the members determined she should no longer fly. Ng ended up serving as the unit’s dining facility officer.

Despite the setback, Ng continued to climb the ranks as a transportation officer. Later in her career, while Ng was assigned to the 7th Infantry Division, a senior officer recognized her and informed her that discrimination had, indeed, played a factor in stripping her of her flight status.

“It was a club called ‘No Blacks, No Bra,’” said Ng, referring to apparent prejudice against both her race and gender.

Despite unfair treatment at the beginning of her career, Ng remains proud of her service. She retired in 2000 at the rank of lieutenant colonel and having commanded a transportation battalion.

Today, Ng remains a pioneer, helping to pave the way for a new era in military aviation. She stresses to others the importance of not letting the negative occurrences influence their outlook.

“That’s the challenge, to keep telling young people, and especially young ladies, don’t let the circumstances of where you are, regardless of how rough it was, regardless of how bad it was, define who you are,” Ng said in a previous interview. “Because that’s not who you are.”

“Marcella is an inspiration to her fellow DAV members. In spite of the challenges she faced and the racism and sexism that held her back in her military career, she broke barriers and served with distinction,” said DAV National Commander Andy Marshall. “We’re grateful she continues to look out for her fellow veterans as a DAV life member, and it’s an honor to count her among our ranks.”

Air Force Maj. Kristi Buczek, a student at Maxwell Air Force Base’s Air University in Alabama, recalled Ng’s modesty even as she, unintentionally, helped to usher military aviation into a new chapter.

“She just saw herself as another person trying to make it through this difficult training and giving her all,” Buczek said in an interview in April. “And it didn’t dawn on her until other factors—other people pointed things out or maybe she got a little recognition—that she was unique and she really was paving the way for people.”
The DAV Auxiliary hosted more than 300 people Sept. 30–Oct. 2 in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, for its annual fall conference, a year after COVID-19 forced organizers to cancel the 2020 meeting.

Members from units in 39 states attended in-person, with many more members joining the conference virtually. The Auxiliary’s fall conference focuses on educating its members on various Auxiliary and DAV programs and planning activities for the upcoming year.

Auxiliary National Adjutant Pat Kemper and National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser said they were extremely pleased with how well-attended and smooth the conference went. While some Auxiliary members got to see each other at the DAV Auxiliary national convention in Tampa, Florida, this was the first Auxiliary-specific event since the pandemic where members could reconnect. Many units have not been able to hold in-person meetings since early 2020.

“So for me, what I was witnessing is sort of a rebirth,” said Kemper. “Members are starting to get out and become active and busy again and fulfill the mission of service.”

Kemper said the fall conference is also an opportunity for newly elected national officers and chairs to present updates on their programs. Presentations, including those from the chairs of the legislative, membership, community service, VA Voluntary Service and Americanism committees, focused on getting back to normal operations and energizing members about the Auxiliary’s mission.

DAV representatives, including National Commander Andy Marshall, National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski and Membership Director Doug Wells, also presented.

“The gravity of the pandemic and the destruction it caused gave us an important opportunity to reflect on the lessons learned in the face of adversity,” said Marshall during his speech to the attendees. “Undoubtedly, we will be experiencing the impact of this pandemic for years to come and must be prepared to address the long-term ramifications. But it has been remarkable to see the spirit of our Auxiliary truly come alive and to watch so many of you show the world what makes our organizations so great.”

That spirit was on display the first night of the conference when the evening’s theme was patriotism. People came decked out in red, white and blue outfits—some in American flag-themed shirts, hats and Uncle Sam costumes. The sea of color, Kemper said, gave her chills as she looked out at the crowd.

The Auxiliary, founded in 1922, is now in its centennial year. To commemorate the anniversary, Kemper said Auxiliary leadership is encouraging every unit to do 100 good deeds for veterans and their families during the year. Once they reach that milestone, she’d love to see them do 100 more. These deeds could be something as simple as reaching out to say hello, cooking a meal or helping with errands.

“That’s where the Auxiliary is at its best,” said Marshall. “It’s uniquely suited to provide support to families and caregivers of our veterans.”
New members bring more life

A strong and active membership is key to the success of any member-based organization, and that holds true for the DAV Auxiliary. Much like those standing in a military formation, our members bolster our collective strength. That’s why I challenge everyone in the Auxiliary to look for new and creative ways to increase our ranks.

Of course, eligibility to join our nearly 150,000-strong organization is open to the families, including extended relatives, of any military veteran who was not dishonorably discharged. Likewise, those related to existing DAV Auxiliary members are always encouraged to join us in our truly noble cause.

One program I’m particularly proud of is our Juniors. It may come as a surprise to some that joining our organization can never start too early. In fact, families can begin a life membership for children beginning at birth. All that’s required is a $20 down payment, which locks in the current life rate of $250. Any payments made while a Junior member is under 18 will count toward a full lifetime membership to the Auxiliary.

Junior members can participate in several fulfilling events, such as volunteering at local nursing homes and VA medical centers, parades, welcome-home events and honor flights. They’ll also be able to join and maintain Junior Auxiliary unit charters. Such experiences are as charitable as they are invaluable in instilling our youth with a sense of duty to care for disabled veterans and their families.

Enlisting new members can mean cash in your pocket. This year, for each new member you recruit to join the DAV Auxiliary, your name will be entered into a drawing. We’ll be giving away three $250 prizes, two $200 awards and one $50 prize at the end of June.

Since 1922, the families of disabled veterans have sought to create communities dedicated to helping the veterans and their families who sacrificed so much for us. With the Auxiliary turning 100 this year, there couldn’t be a better time to join and grow our organization.

Thank you for standing shoulder-to-shoulder with those ill and injured veterans of all generations.
On a blue-sky November morning outside the domiciliary at the Cincinnati VA Medical Center in Fort Thomas, Kentucky, a Vietnam War veteran with a “Wolfhounds” tattoo for the U.S. Army’s 27th Infantry Regiment stood waiting near a man wearing an Operation Enduring Freedom hat.

While the two served in different eras, they were united by shared experiences—and challenges—after the military. Both men were at the Fort Thomas rehabilitation center, the last step in a lengthy process to help get veterans back to self-sufficiency, which includes finding a job or steady income. That day, they were also getting help from DAV volunteers.

Similar to events put on by departments and chapters nationwide, DAV usually hosts the Homeless Veterans Stand Down at its national headquarters as an in-person gathering. Homeless or at-risk veterans as well as veterans in substance abuse treatment get access to resources along with a meal, free haircut and basic necessities. This year, DAV pivoted to accommodate the event as safely as possible, using vans to help bring these services directly to veterans at six locations in Ohio and Kentucky, including VA medical centers, pop-up flu and COVID-19 vaccination sites for veterans, and shelters.

“This is awesome,” the Afghanistan War veteran said of the services being offered.

Alongside center staff, DAV volunteers at the Cincinnati facility handed out backpacks to veterans—many of whom were receiving help for post-traumatic stress disorder, homelessness, substance use disorder, anxiety or depression. Each backpack was filled with $150 in donated toiletries, clothing and supplies and included vouchers for free haircuts as well as information on how to obtain a free phone.

“The smallest thing we did today could be the catalyst to alter their life direction, which is amazing,” said National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst.

“Things a lot of people take for granted—like having a working cellphone with internet connection in your pocket—can be a major barrier for those individuals without stable living situations.”

The packs also included information about DAV resources and services, specifically how the organization helps those who served obtain Department of Veterans Affairs and other government benefits.

“We were sure to address a specific group as well,” said Kleindienst. “Women make up a growing part of the veteran population and, unfortunately, often experience unique difficulties with employment and homelessness. We want to be sure they know they are not alone and that there are health care and housing resources available to them.”

More than 37,000 veterans are homeless in the U.S., according to a December 2020 federal report. More than 15,000 of those veterans are considered unsheltered and more than 10,000 are in emergency shelters. Nearly 12,000 veterans are listed as living in transitional housing.

“The stand down helps to meet immediate needs, but it can also be an entry to other critical services that can create more long-term stability for those with housing issues,” said Kleindienst. “Our hope is to provide at least part of the help they need to get back on track.”
Before 2020, veterans in and around Cambria County, Pennsylvania, knew they could rely on David Wagner and his team of volunteer drivers to get them to their VA medical appointments.

Wagner, the commander of DAV Chapter 2 in Windber, said his 15 drivers and a scheduler handled nearly 85 riders a month. But when the COVID-19 pandemic hit, his volunteer corps dwindled to all but a small handful of drivers and no scheduler.

Now that most of the area has reopened, he said he needs more volunteers since many veterans don’t have a reliable alternative to the DAV Transportation Network.

“We have a lot of aging veterans around here,” said Wagner.

To help meet that and other needs, Chapter 2 and other chapters throughout the country recently got an awareness boost from Sinclair Cares: Supporting All Veterans, a nationwide partnership between DAV and Sinclair Broadcast Group.

Sinclair’s media footprint spans 185 television stations in 86 markets, Bally Sports networks, regional Marquee Sports Network, Tennis Channel and several online streaming channels.

From mid-October through Veterans Day, the Sinclair Cares initiative allowed these outlets to share localized stories about DAV’s mission and members. Many affiliates also aired DAV’s centennial documentary “The Battle Never Ends.” All that programming was coupled with a call to action to visit the Sinclair Cares website, where visitors could learn more about supporting DAV’s mission.

“We have great respect for the work DAV is doing to help veterans and their families,” said Rob Weisbord, Sinclair Broadcast Group’s president of broadcast.

“We learned through our friends at DAV, more than 4 million veterans are living with a service-connected disability that requires ongoing support. We are proud to mobilize our employees and our audiences and do our small part to help veterans in need.”

Wagner said he is thankful for the opportunity to share what his chapter does for veterans. WJAC, the NBC affiliate owned by Sinclair Broadcast Group that serves West Central Pennsylvania, highlighted his need for volunteer drivers on a local news broadcast. Afterward, several people interested in driving reached out to him.

“We got the word out,” he said. “We exist. We’re functional. We’re there for the veterans.”
VA extends presumptive period for Gulf War veterans

The Department of Veteran Affairs has extended the presumptive period to Dec. 31, 2026, for qualifying chronic disabilities resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Gulf War veterans.

Prior to the extension, Gulf War veterans had to file a claim for disability compensation before the end of 2021. The VA says it’s extending the presumptive period for qualifying chronic disabilities of 10% or more to ensure benefits established by Congress are fairly administered.

As scientific uncertainty remains regarding the cause and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Gulf War veterans and current research studies are inconclusive, limiting entitlement to benefits due to the expiration of the presumptive period would be premature. If an extension of the current presumptive period has not been implemented, veterans whose conditions have arisen since Dec. 31, 2021, would be substantially disadvantaged compared to those whose conditions had manifested at an earlier date.

The VA presumes certain medically unexplained illnesses are related to Gulf War service. These include chronic fatigue syndrome; fibromyalgia; functional gastrointestinal disorders; and undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms such as abnormal weight loss, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

A wide variety of symptoms can qualify a Gulf War veteran for presumptive service connection, so veterans who are experiencing unexplained medical issues are encouraged to file a claim.

Learn More Online
To learn more about health concerns and benefits for Gulf War veterans, visit dav.org/veterans/resources/gulf-war-veterans-health-concerns-and-benefits/.

Women veterans asked to participate in new VA survey

The Department of Veterans Affairs’ Center for Women Veterans (CWV) has launched a new survey designed to identify why women veterans are not accessing their benefits and services.

“Roughly 500,000 of the VA’s 7 million patients are women, and that number continues to grow” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “However, there are still many women veterans who are not choosing to access the benefits they’ve earned, and it’s important to understand why.”

The CWV is looking for at least 20,000 women veterans who currently do not use VA services to respond to the survey to gain a better understanding of why—and what the VA can do to help change that.

The survey is completely anonymous and takes roughly five minutes to complete.

In January, the VA will also release versions in Spanish and Tagalog.

Women veterans can share their thoughts at dav.la/30g.
Standing together on a new journey

There is no season for transitioning out of the military—it is a process continuously underway for those who join our ranks as veterans. But this New Year’s Day, let’s make a commitment to join in celebration of those returning home to family, country and friends and pledge to help them start another chapter in their lives.

As so many of us know firsthand, returning to civilian life can be disorienting and often confusing. The experience leaves some unsure of where or how to begin navigating a new, unfamiliar world. The lifestyle change is abrupt and dramatic.

I can relate to the veterans who feel frustrated and powerless after leaving military service. The years I spent in the United States Army were some of the proudest of my life. Families and friends welcomed me home upon the completion of my service commitment, but I also saw how civilian life changed greatly during my years in uniform.

As our military members return from Afghanistan, Iraq, the Mediterranean, the Pacific, Africa and parts unknown, let us give them the heartfelt welcome home that previous generations didn’t receive.

As a country, we like to talk about how much we value our veterans and honor our wounded. Let us come together to express our gratitude and thanks by lending a helping hand wherever we can and remember that many are returning with invisible and visible injuries that need mending.

To the men and women of our defense forces: We celebrate your safe return. Thank you for all your sacrifices, great and small. You gave your strength, your heart and your time to protect the country you love. Others gave their lives so that we would be free and safe. You deserve our respect and honor, and we are proud to offer our hand in friendship and camaraderie.

You may have faced many demanding situations and stressful conditions and circumstances. Take comfort that there is hope you will be restored. You fulfilled your commitment, now let the American people fulfill theirs.

It took courage to volunteer your service, but it also took strength to survive, to stand up, to battle and to care, even when times may have been at their worst. Look to the community of veterans around you. Keep looking up and never give in. We are with you, and we welcome you home.
National commander testimonial dinner

DAV National Commander Andy Marshall is scheduled to deliver the national commander’s annual testimonial at a formal dinner April 16 at the Safety Harbor Resort & Spa in Safety Harbor, Florida.

Rooms can be reserved for April 15–17 at special DAV guest rates of $139 (single/double), $149 (standard room with patio or balcony/pool view), $159 (poolside guestroom), $169 (bay view with balcony), $179 (superior room), $189 (superior room with balcony) or $239 (full suite) per night plus applicable taxes. Call 727-726-1161 and ask for the DAV national commander reception room block. The cutoff date for room reservations is March 15.

Cost for the dinner is $40 per person.

Golf outings are slated for April 15 and 16. The cost is around $50 each day and includes 18 holes of golf, a cart, and transportation to and from the hotel. In addition, bus transportation will be arranged to and from Hard Rock Casino in the afternoon of April 16. Cost will be $15 per person.

Local airports are Tampa International Airport and St. Pete–Clearwater International Airport.

For a registration form for the dinner and other associated events, contact DAV Department of Florida at 352-331-0945. Please mail payment to DAV Department of Florida, 2015 SW 75th St., Gainesville, FL 32607. Payments must be received by March 31.

Auxiliary national commander testimonial dinner

DAV Auxiliary National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser is scheduled to deliver the Auxiliary national commander’s annual testimonial at a dinner Saturday, March 19, at the Hilton Beach Resort in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina.

Rooms can be reserved at a special rate of $150 per night (plus applicable taxes) by calling the hotel at 800-876-0010 and mentioning the code “DAV.” The block will fill up fast, so please make reservations as soon as possible.

The event will begin at 6 p.m. with a social meet-and-greet and cash bar. Dinner will be served at 7 p.m. Cost for the event is $60, and attendees may choose from the following three entrées: bourbon pork chop, sautéed chicken breast or chef’s fresh pasta with Alfredo sauce (vegetarian).

Please mail checks, payable to Carroll E. Prosser, DAV Auxiliary Unit 30, to P.O. Box 30637, Myrtle Beach, SC 29588. Be sure to write “testimonial” on the memo line. Payments must be received by March 6.
Pat Kemper retires after 39 years of working for veterans, families

After nearly 40 years of service to veterans and their families, Auxiliary National Adjutant Pat Kemper has announced her retirement.

She started at the DAV Auxiliary National Headquarters in 1982 as a secretary. In May 2008, she was named assistant national adjutant before being appointed to her current post in January 2015.

“I’m proud to have done the best job I could, but in the Auxiliary, doing the best for military veterans and their families has always been a group effort,” Kemper said.

Kemper said she will spend more time with family, including as caregiver for her husband, Ernie, an Army veteran of the Vietnam War, who has developed issues from Agent Orange exposure.

“Now, I’m living what some of our members have lived as caregivers,” she said.

Under Kemper’s tenure, the Auxiliary supported efforts to expand presumptive Agent Orange exposure to Blue Water Navy veterans and expand caregiver benefits to post-9/11 veterans and caregivers. During her service, Auxiliary membership expanded to include men, and Craig Johniken was elected the organization’s first male national commander in 2017. Serving through the pandemic, Kemper also oversaw the Auxiliary’s relocation from Cold Spring to Erlanger, Kentucky, when DAV built its new national headquarters last year.

“Pat steps away secure in the knowledge that her leadership left a lasting impression,” said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “She’s been a friendly and efficient partner. DAV and Auxiliary members owe her a great appreciation. We warmly wish her well and thank her for a job well done.”

Former Auxiliary National Adjutant Judy Hezlep said Kemper’s dedication to the Auxiliary and DAV are attributes that served her well.

“She works wonderfully with people,” Hezlep said.

“It hasn’t been easy, but she has done an excellent job. She’s an excellent worker and a good friend. I knew when I retired that I was turning the organization over to someone who felt as involved and dedicated as I did.”

Auxiliary Assistant National Adjutant Bunny Clos has been named the incoming national adjutant by National Commander Lynn Helms Prosser. Clos’ appointment is effective upon Kemper’s retirement on Feb. 11.

“Pat’s really going to be missed,” Clos said. “She’s been the backbone, she’s been the heart of the organization.

“I have huge shoes to fill,” Clos added, noting that Kemper was always in the office with a legal notepad jotting down reminders in addition to keeping a comprehensive agenda for staff. “She brought an energy and detailed knowledge of the organization. She knows everything, and she works well with everybody from the staff to the members.”

Clos has worked for the Auxiliary for almost 24 years. She lives in Alexandria, Kentucky, with her husband, Brian, and has three children, Ted, Tanner and Taylor. Her father, Ted Hornsby, served in the Air Force during the Vietnam era; her grandfathers were Army and Marine veterans; and two of her uncles also served. She is a member of Auxiliary Unit 19 in Erlanger.

Prosser said Kemper’s top priority has been its members.

“She just strives and strives to help people,” Prosser said, describing Kemper as innovative, true to her word, humble, quiet and hard-working.

“She might be retiring, but she’s not going away,” Prosser added. “She’s going to be right there to give us strength and a lot of unity.”
How to take control of your LEGACY

You’ve heard how important it is to have a last will and testament—maybe you already have one. But think for a moment about why. Perhaps what’s most important to you is the fact that having a will ensures your property will pass to those you care about. If you don’t leave a will, state law determines how your assets will be divided. It’s highly doubtful you would agree to this arbitrary method of choosing your heirs and determining their shares.

An old estate plan can be almost as bad as none at all. Your wishes today for the division of your estate may be quite different from those you had when you made your will. Life events, tax law changes, a move to another state, or changes in the nature and value of your assets can also affect your will. To make sure your wishes are followed, you need an up-to-date will.

But there’s another reason that a will is important: What you put in your will is what people will remember you by. Your will gives you the opportunity to transfer the values that are important to you. And one of the best ways to leave a legacy like this is to make charitable bequests in your will.

The form of your bequest
Remembering DAV in your will is a fitting testimony of your belief in our mission. When you name us as a beneficiary, you have many choices. One possibility is a bequest of a fixed dollar amount. Another is to give us a percentage of the estate, which allows you to keep the division of the estate residue in desired proportions, regardless of its size.

Your gift can be contingent. That is, the funds would go to some individual if that person survives you. If not, they would be paid to DAV. A gift without restrictions is usually the most useful, because it allows us to apply the funds to our most pressing needs. But you also can restrict your gift by specifying in your will how the funds are to be used. If you wish to do so, we urge you to consult us before you execute your will, to make certain the conditions are ones we are able to meet.

Get sound legal advice
When the time comes to probate your will, you won’t be here to correct any misunderstandings. To avoid trouble for your heirs, be sure to seek the counsel of an attorney who specializes in probate and estate planning.
This year, the DAV national convention returns to sunny Orlando, Florida. A city known for its attractions and entertainment, the City Beautiful ensures visitors of all ages have an experience they’ll never forget.

The convention is an opportunity to advocate for ill and injured veterans, to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow DAV members, and to take ownership of this organization and its yearly agenda—while allowing for a hearty dose of fun in this premier vacation destination.

Orlando offers something for everyone: family-friendly attractions; world-class dining and entertainment; top-notch golf courses and other recreational activities; and, of course, beautiful weather.

After spending time working alongside fellow veterans to help shape DAV’s future, an array of one-of-a-kind experiences awaits you. Convention-goers can experience the magic of Walt Disney World, the sights and sounds of Universal Orlando, the wonders of the marine life at SeaWorld, the world-class shopping at Pointe Orlando or the breathtaking views atop the 400-foot Wheel at ICON Park, just to name a few. Florida’s world-famous beaches and Kennedy Space Center are also only an hour away.

Attendees enjoy a special room rate at the Hyatt Regency Orlando of $149 per single or double. Additional hotel reservation information is available at bit.ly/3kqZR8X or by calling 1-800-233-1234. Be sure to tell them you are reserving under the Disabled American Veterans room block if making reservations by phone.

Learn More Online
To learn more, visit dav.org/events/2022-national-convention.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE
The Transportation Security Administration can facilitate the screening of injured or wounded veterans. After making flight reservations, veterans or their care coordinators should contact a TSA Cares representative by calling toll-free 855-787-2227 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. Eastern time. A representative will either provide screening information relevant to the veteran’s disability or refer the veteran to experts at TSA for help through the screening process.
From community events to national campaigns, DAV leaders spent Veterans Day reminding those who served that they have a network of advocates on their side and calling on the public to join the fight.

“I’m here today to tell you that just because you may no longer wear the uniform doesn’t mean you’re alone,” Army veteran and Past National Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster said during the annual Veterans Wellness Watch in Oakland, California.

The event, hosted by the Veterans Community Media Network during Veterans Day week, introduces homeless veterans to service organizations that can help them with everything from health care to housing. Members of DAV Chapter 7 in Oakland attended the event to assist veterans.

On a single night in January 2020, around 40,000 veterans were found to be homeless, according to an annual report released by the Department of Housing and Urban Development in March. Nationally, DAV’s Charitable Service Trust provided more than $775,000 for programs serving homeless or at-risk veterans in 2020, and DAV hosts a Homeless Veterans Stand Down each year to connect those in need with crucial resources.

“So whether it’s by helping you get the VA benefits you’ve earned, helping you find a job, assisting you with a day-to-day need or connecting you with another local organization, I want you to know that DAV is committed to keeping our promise to you to help you live a fulfilling life after your military career ends,” said Metcalf-Foster.

DAV extended that same message to thousands of others through its partnerships with giants such as UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship).

Leading up to Veterans Day, UFC greats such as Hall of Famer Forrest Griffin spent time with disabled veterans, including DAV members Centra “Ce-Ce” Mazyck, Danny Soto and Oscar Olguin. They met at the Nevada State Veterans Memorial in Las Vegas and swapped stories of hardship, sacrifice and persistence.

“When I get in the cage and fight, I know who I’m fighting for—I’m fighting for myself, for my family,” said UFC fighter Cody Stamann. “These people
are going out and they’re fighting for me, for my opportunity to chase my dream. I feel fortunate just to be around these people, just to get an opportunity to talk to them.”

UFC shared a video featuring the meeting and the stories of DAV members across their social media platforms and website on Veterans Day. DAV also co-presented the fighter walkout at Madison Square Garden in New York on Nov. 6. DAV members in the audience were acknowledged and given a VIP experience that included a photoshoot in the Octagon.

“It’s just an incredible experience to see they care enough to spend some time to talk to these men and women and to take our story to the American public,” said National Communications Director and Marine Corps veteran Rob Lewis.

Other partners once again stepped up to give back to veterans and support DAV’s mission through fundraisers. Since 2001, Golden Corral has hosted a National Military Appreciation Night, offering free meals to veterans and active-duty service members. The event also gives DAV members the opportunity to raise money and awareness of the organization. Over the past 20 years, the tradition has helped raise nearly $17 million in donations for DAV.

EG America and its over 1,700 convenience stores held a nationwide campaign throughout the month of November to raise money for DAV. Since partnering with DAV in 2019, EG America has raised over $2 million for the organization. California Pizza Kitchen also held a fundraiser for DAV, which ran Nov. 8–10. During that time, the restaurant donated 20% of food and beverage sales to DAV when guests mentioned the organization.

“DAV’s generous corporate partners make possible the critical work of supporting our wounded veterans for generations to come,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “By raising awareness and resources, they call on all Americans to help keep our promise to those who served in uniform.

“We also thank our nation’s veterans—our brothers and sisters,” he added. “Their continued service to our communities and support of DAV empowers fellow veterans and inspires others to lend a helping hand.”
Death of DAV past national commander

Vernon Cardosi remembered as a faithful veterans advocate

DAV Past National Commander Vernon Cardosi, an Army veteran who served during the Korean War, died on Dec. 13, 2021, at the age of 91. Cardosi led the organization from 1989 to 1990, rallying his fellow members to “roll up our sleeves and get involved” during proposed cuts to veterans benefits during his tenure.

“He was an exceptional leader and a fierce advocate for disabled veterans and was always prepared to lead the fight for the benefits and recognition our nation’s heroes have earned,” said National Commander Andy Marshall.

Cardosi, a service-disabled veteran, entered the Army in 1952 and served with the 43rd Infantry Division.

A life member of Chapter 115 in Lynn, Massachusetts, he served in several leadership positions, including chapter commander, district commander and commander of the Department of Massachusetts, before his unanimous election to national commander.

Addressing members shortly after his election to national commander, Cardosi said, “We have a duty to veterans as their advocates on Capitol Hill and in statehouses around the nation. We have a duty to each other, our families and the community of disabled veterans we serve.”

Among his other achievements, the Burlington, Massachusetts, resident helped advocate for the minting of the Korean War Memorial Dollar in 1991, commemorating the 38th anniversary of the end of the war and in honor of those who served.

Vernon is survived by wife Camille, sons Vincent and Richard, sisters Vera and Vivian, three grandchildren and two great-grandchildren.

DAV Auxiliary past national commander dies

Betty Hall was known in Congress and worked on Apollo space program

Past Auxiliary National Commander Betty Hall, whose polite style won her the ear of senators and members of Congress on veterans’ behalf, died on Nov. 26, 2021, at the age of 85.

The Sugar Land, Texas, resident was elected to the Auxiliary’s highest office in 1981, at the 59th national convention in Miami Beach, Florida.

During her 30 years working at NASA, Hall worked on the Apollo program that led to the moon landing. She worked at the Johnson NASA Space Center in Houston as an industry assistance specialist.

“She loved her country and family and was a regal lady with a strong will,” said Past Auxiliary Commander Patti Rapisand.

Rapisand said she watched Hall use kindness and wit when lobbying for the DAV Auxiliary.

Senators and members of Congress knew her by name.

“When she spoke to senators and congressmen, she was very polite and maybe told a funny story—and then went in for the kill,” Rapisand said.

She was eligible for Auxiliary membership through her late husband, James Hall, who was an amputee injured in World War II. She joined the Auxiliary in 1965 and was active for more than 40 years.

Hall was elected and appointed to many positions at the local, state and national levels before taking on the top elected office.

“She would tell me not to take things so hard, and laugh about it,” Rapisand said. “She just had a way about her that made you feel good about whatever you were doing.”

“When she was national commander, Lady Bird Johnson sent her a note saying that she was also a first lady, and she never forgot that,” Rapisand said.

Hall told people that, aside from her family, her two passions in life were the DAV Auxiliary and her country.
Remembering Bob Dole

Disabled World War II veteran, devoted advocate and DAV life member dies at 98

Robert J. Dole, a veteran of the Second World War and U.S. senator from Kansas, died on Dec. 5, 2021. He was 98.

Dole, a DAV life member for 34 years, was first elected to the Senate in 1968. Before his nearly three decades as a senator, he served eight years in the U.S. House of Representatives. Dole was also featured in the DAV-backed documentary “WWII Memorial: A Testament to Freedom,” on the creation of the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C.

A storied leader and legislator, Dole was instrumental in passing the Americans with Disabilities Act. The landmark law ushered in a new era of civil rights protections and guaranteed everyday opportunities such as access to public areas, transportation and employment for disabled Americans.

Dole’s personal experience as a grievously injured World War II veteran undoubtedly influenced his crucial role in passing the transformative legislation. On April 14, 1945, while serving as a second lieutenant in the Army’s 10th Mountain Division, Dole’s company was tasked with storming a Nazi-held hill.

Enemy machine-gun fire struck the 21-year-old, leaving him permanently paralyzed in his right hand and arm and partially without feeling in his left hand.

After the war, he worked as a DAV service officer helping other ill and injured veterans with their claims after military service.

In Dole’s first speech as a senator in 1969—24 years to the day after being injured—he passionately called for more support to Americans with disabilities and their families.

“We have a basic commitment in our nation to assure every person has adequate opportunity to develop to his fullest capacity,” said Dole. “We have only begun to help guarantee that each handicapped person and his family enjoy complete dignity, independence and security.”

WAYS TO RESERVE YOUR BRICK TODAY!
• Call 877-647-VETS (8387).
• Visit dav.org/bricks.
• Scan the QR code.

Purchase a Commemorative Brick
Honor a veteran and be part of the historic DAV Honor Garden monument at the National Headquarters in Erlanger, Kentucky.
Walk, Roll, Run and Ride to HONOR AMERICA’S VETERANS

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TRIUMPH

REUNIONS

ARMY

227TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALION, 1ST CAVALRY DIVISION (AIRMOBILE) April 2–5, Nashville, TN, Contact: Howard Burbank, Email: chickenman@227ahb.org, Web: reunion.227ahb.org

COMPANY C, 2ND BATTALION (MECHANIZED), 8TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 4TH INFANTRY DIVISION 1969–70 May 15–19, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Guy Smith, Ph: 805-598-7000, Email: guysmith2099@gmail.com, or Terry Randolph, Ph: 334-332-4341, Email: terrylibba72@yahoo.com

THAILAND VETERANS OF VIETNAM WAR, USARUSUTHAI ASSOCIATION June 30–July 3, Colorado Springs, CO, Contact: Joe Wilson, Ph: 719-310-3558, Web: usaruthaiassociation.com

NAVY

U.S. NAVY DRAFTSMEN (DM) March 17–20, Melbourne, FL, Contact: DM1 (Ret) Allen Johnstad, Ph: 321-505-6854, Email: mildlywildal@yahoo.com

USS ARLEIGH BURKE (DDG-51) 30TH/31ST ANNIVERSARY OF COMMISSIONING July 1–5, Norfolk, VA, Contact: secretary@arleighburkeassociation.org, Web: arleighburkeassociation.org

USS COGSWELL (DD-651) June 14–16, Orlando, FL, Contact: George H. Oxman, Ph: 760-889-2216, Email: secretary@usscogswell.com, Web: usscogswell.com

AIR FORCE

AIR FORCE AC-47 SPOOKY GUNSHIP, VIETNAM Sept. 7–11, Branson, MO, Contact: Junior Skinner, Ph: 918-949-5757, Email: junchi2018@yahoo.com

ALL SERVICES

PLEIKU AND SURROUNDING AREA May 8–12, Rehoboth Beach, DE, Contact: Ron Cheonulak, Ph: 412-515-7247, Web: pleikuab.com

INQUIRIES

• Searching for anyone stationed at Đông Hà Air Base, Vietnam, August 1966–67 in the 620th Tactical Control Squadron. Contact: George Mix, Email: budandpatty@gmail.com

• Searching for Capt. Brown, commander, Company C, 2nd Battalion (Mechanized), 8th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division, 1969–70. Contact: Guy Smith, Ph: 805-598-7000, Email: guysmith2099@gmail.com, or Terry Randolph, Ph: 334-332-4341, Email: terrylibba72@yahoo.com

• Searching for anyone from Basic Training C-2-3, Fort Leonard Wood, MO, June–September 1970. Contact: Mark Barber, mbarber1952@yahoo.com

• Searching for anyone who knew Navy Corpsman (Doc) Michael Brian Callahan, who served with 8th Engineer Support Battalion, 2nd Force Service Regiment, USMC, 1968–72, either at Camp Lejeune or while deployed to Cuba. Contact: P.A. Summers, Ph: 804-205-7740, Email: pasummers111403@gmail.com

• Searching for Tim Sullivan from Detroit who served in Chicago, stationed at Veterinary Food Inspection Service (VFIS), 1969–70. Contact: Richard LaChapelle, Email: dlachape@sbglobal.net

• Searching for anyone who may have helped transport wounded soldiers and Marines on details augmenting the 19th Casualty Staging Flight (Air Evac) during 1967–68 (Tet Offensive) at Clark Air Base, Philippines. Contact: Jim Kerrigan, Email: jameskerrigan@comcast.net

• Searching for anyone who remembers Feb. 12, 1967. Sgt. Loven V. “Joe” Seaman Jr. from the 1st Platoon landed on a dried-up rice patty about 800 feet from the regimental command post. Contact: Loven V. “Joe” Seaman Jr., Ph: 540-470-0631

REUNION STORIES

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

PLANNING A REUNION?

We welcome submissions from our readers for reunions and inquiries. Email the details to feedback@dav.org. Submissions must be received at least six months prior to the event date and are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety.
Camp Corral is planning to host 17 summer camps in 2022. To qualify for Camp Corral, children must be between the ages of 8 and 15 on the first day of camp.

In partnership with DAV, Camp Corral provides free, one-of-a-kind, weeklong summer camp experiences for children of disabled, ill or fallen military service members and veterans.

The organization partners with accredited community entities that offer traditional camp experiences through activities such as horseback riding, canoeing and rock climbing. A feature unique to the Camp Corral experience is that a military family life counselor is on-site to support campers as needed.

Camp Corral has served over 30,000 military-connected children—the majority of whom have a parent who was wounded, made ill or killed in service.

“DAV is honored to support Camp Corral and its mission of transforming the lives of children of wounded, ill and fallen military heroes,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “We understand that the children of military members endure unique sacrifices along with their parents. One of our priorities is to give them a chance to be kids while connecting with children from similar backgrounds and experiences. These kids deserve every opportunity available to them to enjoy each other’s company and the great outdoors.”

Through DAV’s Just B Kids scholarship program, more than 5,500 children of wounded, disabled or fallen veterans throughout the nation have attended Camp Corral programs for free.

Applying for Camp Corral

The application period opens mid-January. Mark your calendars; as spots fill up quickly. To learn more about DAV-supported summer camp experiences at Camp Corral, visit justbkids.org.

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The application period opens mid-January. Mark your calendars; as spots fill up quickly. To learn more about DAV-supported summer camp experiences at Camp Corral, visit justbkids.org.

Schedule is subject to change. Visit campcorral.org for updates and COVID-19 safety measures.

Camp Corral continues to partner with sites that meet the highest standards required by the American Camp Association, and camps will continue to update their safety measures based on local guidelines and recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
Long Sleeve Polo
S–XL $28
2XL–4XL $32

Puffy Vest
Unisex: S–XL $48 | 2XL–4XL $53
Ladies': S–XL $48 | 2XL–4XL $53

Hand Warmer/Phone Charger | $29
Phone not included.

Packable Puffy Jacket
Unisex: S–XL $64 | 2XL–4XL $68
Ladies': S–XL $64 | 2XL–4XL $68

Patriotic Cuffed Beanie | $18

Cinch Pack with Mesh Trim | $12

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