



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

JULY | AUGUST 2022

MAGAZINE

**Disabled American
Veteran of the Year**

Adam Alexander

A sniper's bullet took the vision
in his right eye. Now his sights
are fixed on serving fellow
Wisconsin veterans.

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Orlando to host 2022 National Convention

Aug. 6–9, 2022

Hyatt Regency Orlando



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 the NATIONAL COMMANDER ANDY MARSHALL



The honor of a lifetime

I have been incredibly honored to experience many profound, life-altering moments throughout more than four decades as a DAV service officer. Whether passing word to our nation's heroes that they had received a favorable disability claim, assisting others with education and employment benefits, or letting them know they would be OK in their new normal after military service, I've been fortunate to witness the many ways our beloved organization makes a difference in the lives of America's disabled veterans and their families.

I also knew there would be more triumphs to witness when I was elected national commander in Tampa, Florida, last August, and I'm happy to report that my intuition was spot on. While serving in this position over the past year, I've been incredibly heartened by observing the selflessness and dedication of those who work behind the scenes to ensure more victories for veterans. Their pursuit of excellence and justice on behalf of those we serve has truly solidified to me why DAV perennially sits at the pinnacle of veterans organizations across the country.

But before I step aside and leave the organization in the capable hands of whomever is elected to serve as your next national commander, I'd like to take a moment to recognize those who have helped me through this incredible journey.

First, I'd like to extend my deepest gratitude to National Adjutant Marc Burgess for his guidance and leadership throughout my tenure in office. No matter the time or circumstance, I could always count on him for sage counsel throughout the past year. I sometimes joke that it irks me somewhat

to compliment a sailor, but DAV is in good hands with Marc at the helm.

Second, my time as national commander would not have been possible without the support of the Department of Florida. In particular, Chief of Staff Thomas Ayala stepped up as assistant adjutant and handled a large portion of the day-to-day activities to keep the department functioning normally while I tended to my national duties. Many thanks to him and the rest of the department for their support.

Third, a special thank-you goes to the National Communications Department for assisting in the many public-facing duties of this role. From speech writing, media interview preparation and countless other items, you all did a tremendous job in helping me amplify DAV's message to the American public. I thank you all for all that you do behind the scenes that doesn't always get noticed.

And last but certainly not least, the incredible experience of serving as your national commander would not have been possible without the support of my loving bride, Susan, who has stood by my side for the past 35 years. Having a support system is vital to succeeding in any role, and I simply would not have had such a wonderful experience without her.

The past year went by far too quickly for me, but I can say without reservation that serving as your national commander has been the honor of my lifetime. I thank each and every one of you for your support and all that you do for your fellow brothers- and sisters-in-arms. That's what makes DAV the leading veterans organization in the country and why I'm so confident in the organization's future success.

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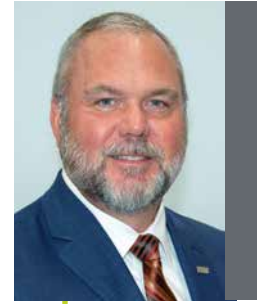
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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



The time to act

For generations, veterans have returned home from the military unaware of the invisible damage inflicted on their bodies. Diseases and illnesses—cancers, respiratory conditions, skin ailments and more—have become their new battleground in a war far outlasting anything they fought in service.

I'm talking, of course, about those individuals affected by toxic exposures.

Today, we largely focus on burn pits and chronic issues caused by inhalation of foreign particulate matter and on what this will mean for the 3.5 million veterans the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates have been exposed.

But the fact that we are having this conversation—and worse, that there remains such a struggle to get these veterans the health care and benefits they need—lies at the heart of the problem.

We are talking about it now because nothing was done over the span of decades to properly address how the VA handles illnesses that stem from toxic exposures throughout the span of military history.

Mustard gas. Atmospheric nuclear testing. Ionizing radiation. Agent Orange. Depleted uranium. Chemical weapons.

Airborne hazards. Contaminated water. Fuels and solvents. The list goes on, and yet nothing has been done, generation after generation, to create a system in which exposed veterans do not have to wage an exhaustive war to prove their conditions should qualify them for VA health care while they simultaneously fight for their lives.

This must end now, before the same fate befalls one more generation of veterans.

In late April, at our national headquarters in Erlanger, Kentucky, we rallied together with our fellow veteran and military service organizations, comedian Jon Stewart and affected veterans to support the Honoring Our PACT Act. That

same week, President Joe Biden affirmed his commitment to this issue, stating that if bipartisan legislation is brought to his desk, he will sign it.

It is not a simple fix, but we have momentum and we have an obligation.

DAV has continued pressing for justice on behalf of toxic-exposed veterans, and we will not stop until we end this seemingly perpetual cycle in which veterans are first made ill in the line of duty and then forced to fight for the health care and benefits they so desperately need.

Nothing was done over the span of decades to properly address how the VA handles illnesses that stem from toxic exposures.



Military spouse employment gaps

As a licensed clinical social worker and spouse of an active-duty Marine, employment is the No. 1 struggle for me personally. It's part of the turf, I understand, but it isn't easy. The gaps in pay and unemployment for a move when you love your job is hard. Not to mention all the programs that promise assistance in recertification have not once worked for me. States often don't even know how to process them, and we are stuck going through a whole relicensing process.

Jacinda Ann, Kailua, Hawaii

Male breast cancer

I read the most recent *DAV Magazine* article about detecting breast cancer in veterans. Thank you for covering this important topic, although I would like to highlight the importance of recognizing males with breast cancer, also.

Dan Naylor, Waupaca, Wisconsin

Evaluation of tinnitus compensation

The VA's attempt to change tinnitus from a "stand-alone" condition seems to be a bait-and-switch operation. They make huge promises of providing more and better compensation for veterans and take away one very important service-connected disability. There are many good things in the proposed changes to the VA compensation program, but this is not one of them. DAV needs to vigorously

challenge and fight this change to tinnitus qualifications. **Mike Heemer, Virginia Beach, Virginia**

Attracting younger DAV members

When it comes to engaging younger veterans, strong leadership and the mission of DAV are the draw for attendance. We need to educate them on the mission of DAV and how they fit into that mission. DAV leaders should host events that draw all veterans, and especially younger veterans, toward and into the organization. **Tate Williams, Amarillo, Texas**

National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic

The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic changed my life. I was told I'd never walk, jump or do any of the things I normally do. I went to the event and I was able to ski standing up. I had a smile up and down the hill. **Larry Ruiz, Fresno, California**

I live in a rural area, and we don't have the connections we need to make with DAV there. We're underrepresented, and it's important we get that representation—it spawns out. I was the only Tennessee vet at the clinic, and so I think there's a lot of opportunities to get other Tennessee vets and get a Tennessee team, because we have a lot of veterans in our area. **Brittney Elliot, Lafayette, Tennessee**

Logistics careers for veterans

The field of logistics needs people! Distribution centers need people who load and unload trucks, ship or organize loads headed to store shelves. People stayed home during the pandemic and just never came back. You all have a place waiting for you. Find your passion; it's there! The built-in skill of discipline and integrity that veterans possess is at the top of the list for any career field! **Rik Reichert, via Facebook**

Caregiver reassessment process

The reassessment process was an interrogation and a twisting of words and medical records. It was mental trauma. I had to rehash all my past suicide attempts and retell my story to strangers. Medical records and notes from all my providers who know me and speak to my needs were ignored. Instead, records were cherry-picked and used out of context to ultimately discharge us. We need to do better for our veterans. Any sense of stability you see is because of my wife and everything she does daily for me. **Matt Drinkwalter, Billings, Montana**

Editor's note: In March, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced a temporary halt on reassessments, reductions and removals from the comprehensive caregiver program, pending a review of its eligibility criteria introduced last year.

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), Twitter (twitter.com/davhq) and LinkedIn (linkedin.com/company/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.

Expanding VA dental care

DAV-backed Senate bill would ensure all enrolled veterans receive dental benefits

By Matt Saintsing

Just 15% of the more than 9 million veterans enrolled in Department of Veterans Affairs health care are eligible for dental benefits. However, the number of veterans actually receiving VA dental care is much lower—about 463,000—according to senators supporting legislation that would significantly increase access.

The Veterans Dental Care Eligibility Expansion and Enhancement Act of 2021 (S. 3017) would remove the current barriers to VA dental care by broadening eligibility for all veterans enrolled in VA health care. The bill also seeks to address the shortage of dentists by providing incentives to dental school students and mandates the expansion of VA dental clinics in all 50 states.

“As the former chair of the Senate Committee on Veterans’ Affairs, I have seen up close the pain, death and despair caused by war and its aftermath,” Sen. Bernie Sanders said when introducing the bill last October. “Honoring that extraordinary sacrifice and bravery is one of the most important commitments we have as a country. That means making sure our veterans and their families have access to the best and most comprehensive health care, including dental care, our country can provide.”

Right now, to receive VA dental benefits, veterans must have a service-connected dental disability or condition they receive compensation for; be a former prisoner of war; have a noncompensable service-connected dental disability caused by combat or service trauma; have a dental condition verified by the VA as aggravating a service-connected disability; be rated

100% disabled or rated for Individual Unemployability; be receiving Chapter 31 educational benefits; or require dental care due to a condition being treated through inpatient VA care.


“Today, dental care is not treated like the vital health care it is, and only a small fraction of veterans are eligible to receive dental care through the VA because of stringent eligibility requirements,” added Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand. “This bill would help eliminate eligibility restrictions and make dental care more affordable and accessible to all veterans.”

Research has linked gum disease to several chronic conditions affecting veterans, such as diabetes, heart disease and stroke.

DAV supports S. 3017, in accordance with DAV Resolution No. 18, which recognizes the importance of oral health as a basic need for veterans and calls on the VA to expand dental care for all veterans.

The leadership of the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee held a roundtable on VA dental care in April, which DAV took part in.

“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. “Right now, there are too many limitations that prevent veterans from obtaining this essential benefit that we believe should be part of VA’s ‘whole health’ approach, so we greatly appreciate the opportunity to have this discussion and highlight this important issue.” ■

 Find updates to other major veteran legislation by joining DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network) at DAVCAN.org.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

How an unexpected meeting between two Marines proves life-changing

By Brian Buckwalter

“Semper Fi,” Carlo Melone called out to the guy in front of him in line at a Chicago pharmacy. Melone knew he was saying hi to a fellow Marine veteran from the hat and patches on the man’s jacket.

Semper Fi is short for the Marine Corps motto, “Semper Fidelis,” which means “always faithful” in Latin. It’s a common greeting between Marines, past and present. But when Melone, a DAV benefits advocate, said it to Jose Rosales, it was more than a hello. It was a chance introduction that would wind up changing Rosales’ life.

Rosales had dropped out of high school in 1969 to enlist in the Marines at 17. He was inspired by his cousin, Pete Lopez, who had joined a year before, went to Vietnam and was wounded in action.

Soon, Rosales was in Vietnam himself, running missions to secure drop zone perimeters.

He made it out of Vietnam seemingly without injury, thinking little of the planes that had flown overhead, spreading the tactical herbicide Agent Orange around him. He said that his eyes would get watery after the planes passed, but he didn’t think much more about it at the time.

After his time in Vietnam, he returned to the states, was discharged in 1971, got married in 1972 and went to work doing metal plating for the airline industry.

Then in 1978, doctors diagnosed Rosales with Type 2 diabetes. They never linked the diagnosis to any cause—Agent Orange exposure, lifestyle or otherwise.

Marine veteran Jose Rosales dropped out of high school to join the Marine Corps at 17. Soon after, he was deployed to Vietnam as a military policeman.



He said they just told him he had diabetes and prescribed him insulin. He had to adjust to a new normal of regularly monitoring his glucose and taking insulin shots up to four times a day.

“You just try to do the best you can, because if you let it get to you, you’re going to break down,” said Rosales.

For the next 40 years, he relied on his medical insurance to partially cover his treatment costs. The balance had to come out of pocket, so sometimes he would have to go without his medication.

“Insulin was costing me almost \$300 a month,” said Rosales. “I couldn’t afford that.”

No one had told him that, since 2001, the Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized a presumptive connection between Agent Orange exposure and Type 2 diabetes. That is, until he met Melone in line at the pharmacy on that cold winter morning in 2019.

“If I had hit one more red light or there was a person between us in line, he would not have known this connection,” said Melone. “It was one of those random encounters that every service officer experiences when we get out in our communities.”

Even with this new information, Rosales said he was hesitant at first about Melone’s offer to help him file a claim. His mind kept going to the others around him in Vietnam who he felt had suffered worse injuries and disabilities.

“I’m very proud of being a retired Marine, albeit medical. However, as a senior national service officer, **I’ve spent the last 12 years literally changing the lives** of the men and women of all branches of service in our country.”

—Carlo Melone, Marine veteran and DAV benefits advocate

But after talking with Melone more, Rosales made the decision to file the claim 11 months after he first submitted his intent to file with the VA.

Then in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit, slowing the claim adjudication process.

Despite the delays, Rosales persisted. After waiting almost a year to be seen by the Veterans Health Administration for his compensation and pension exam, he received his rating decision in March 2021.

He said a huge weight was lifted off his shoulders. Before, not only was he paying out of pocket for his own medication, but he was also trying to pay for his wife Debbie’s cancer treatments. The VA decision meant he no longer had to worry about affording insulin.

“Now I get it through the VA, and that helps me a lot,” said Rosales, now a DAV life member with Chapter 42 in Hanover Park, Illinois.

The decision allowed Rosales to have the peace of mind he hadn’t had before, but Melone’s job wasn’t done. As he reviewed the rating decision, he noticed the effective date was wrong. It was listed as the claim submission date, not the intent to file date—an 11-month difference. Melone also learned that Rosales’ wife had died 19 months into the adjudication process, but Rosales was paid as someone who was single with no dependents the entire time.

Melone worked to fix the two errors. He said the attention to detail and effort he puts into every claim stems from his view that being a benefits advocate is like being on another tour of duty. The difference is that now his service focuses on changing the lives of fellow veterans.

“I’m very proud of being a retired Marine, albeit medical. However, as a senior national service officer, I’ve spent the last 12 years literally changing the lives



Jose Rosales (left) met fellow Marine and DAV benefits advocate Carlo Melone in Chicago in 2019.

of the men and women of all branches of service in our country,” Melone said. “It’s such an incredible feeling to be able to do that.”

For Rosales, the decision doesn’t take away his diabetes diagnosis. He still has to take daily insulin shots and monitor his glucose. He couples this with staying active by regularly golfing, bowling, playing softball and weightlifting. But the decision affords him the opportunity to not worry about how to pay for treatments for a disease he developed from serving his country.

Rosales said his advice to other veterans is simple: “Call DAV—they’ll help you.” ■



NATIONAL DISABLED
VETERANS
WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

CONQUERING NEW HEIGHTS

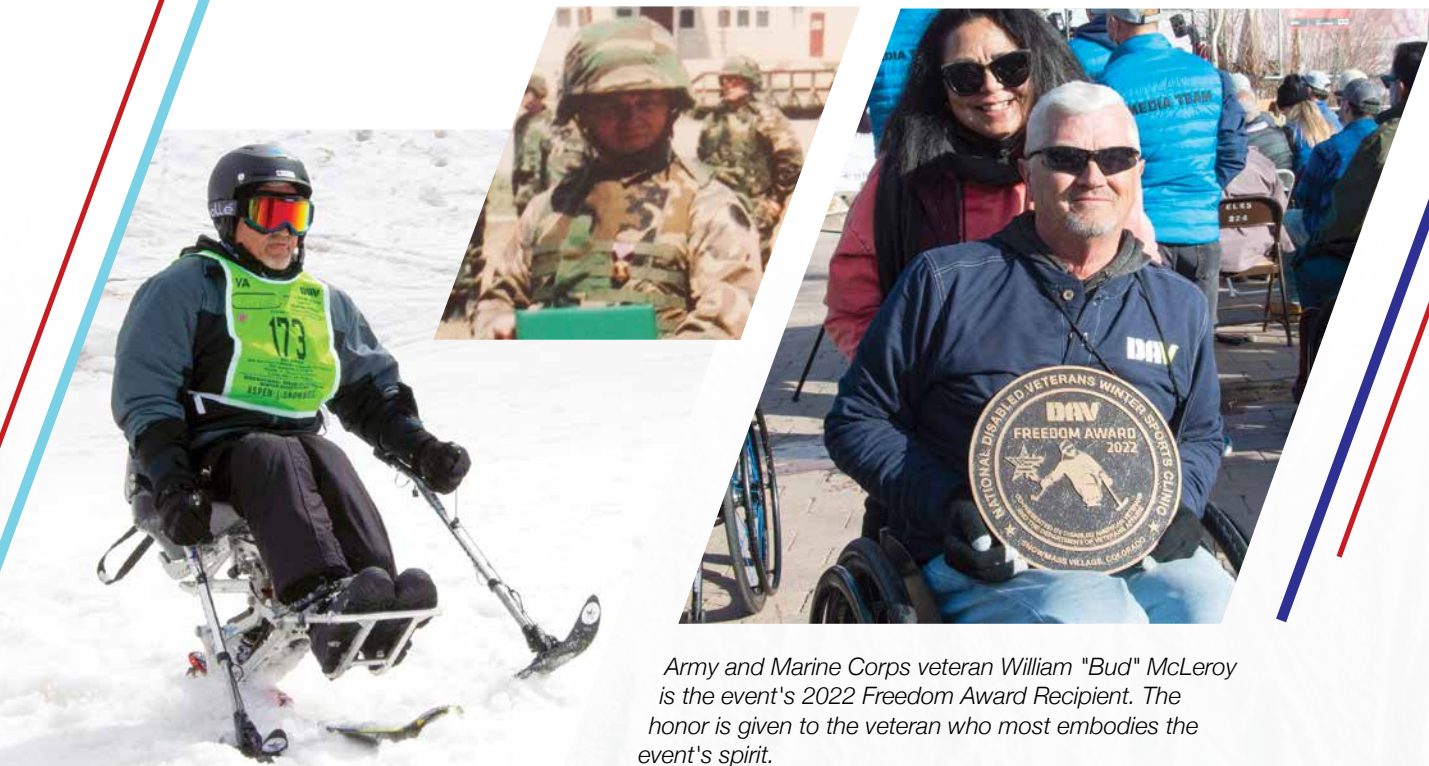
36th annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic uplifts veteran athletes to compete in adaptive sports

By Matt Saintsing



Disabled veterans participate in adaptive skiing, blind skiing and sled hockey. The annual event features veterans from around the country participating in several adaptive winter sports.

2022 DAV FREEDOM AWARD RECIPIENT: William 'Bud' McLeroy



Army and Marine Corps veteran William "Bud" McLeroy is the event's 2022 Freedom Award Recipient. The honor is given to the veteran who most embodies the event's spirit.

To borrow from late basketball coaching legend John Wooden, the mountain doesn't build character, it reveals it.

Emotions were high at the 36th annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, as 130 participants ascended to Snowmass Village, Colorado, to take part in adaptive skiing, sled hockey, curling, snowboarding, snowmobiling and fly fishing. The event, co-presented by DAV and the Department of Veterans Affairs, elevated disabled veteran athletes from around the country, who rose to overcome new challenges or sharpen their Alpine skills.

"We have come from all across the nation to gather here for a chance to test our mettle," National Commander Andrew Marshall said while kicking off the clinic. "During the week, this bond will grow as you enjoy and maybe even struggle with the challenges this event presents."

It was the first time since 2019, due to COVID-19 restrictions, that veterans traveled to Colorado for the clinic.

"I can't thank the VA, our gracious co-presenters, enough," said National Voluntary Services Director

John Kleindienst. "That we had such a successful clinic after a two-year hiatus is a testament to everyone who helped make this event happen, including our ski instructors and volunteers."

For disabled veteran William "Bud" McLeroy, the event was a chance to connect with his fellow veterans while polishing his already-impressive skiing proficiency.

McLeroy has been to every Winter Sports Clinic since 2012. A Purple Heart recipient, he was injured in 2004 near Sadr City, Baghdad. However, his first life-changing injury came from a car accident, which left McLeroy without a right leg.

But when his Army Reserve unit was activated for the Iraq War, he refused to sit out. He was the first amputee to deploy to Iraq, where he was injured a second time. While rendering aid to Iraqi civilians during a firefight, a wall came crashing down around him, crushing McLeroy and opening his stomach.

"My intestines just started coming through," he said. "So I wiggled them back in, bandaged myself up, and went back to work for another month because I didn't want to leave my guys."



“I was told I’d never walk, jump or do any of the things I normally do. I came here and I’m able to ski standing up. **I had to smile up and down the hill.**”

—Larry Ruiz, returning Winter Sports Clinic participant

Marine Corps veteran Larry Ruiz is pictured with an adaptable ski bike. He is a returning veteran of the Winter Sports Clinic and said the event was life-changing.

But his medical issues did not stop there.

After experiencing lingering back pain for eight years following the incident, he learned his spinal cord had stiffened and become thick in his lower back, resulting in the need for a wheelchair. After nearly two years in the hospital, he left military service.

It was while receiving care at the San Diego VA Medical Center that he was introduced to the National Disabled Winter Sports Clinic.

“I said, ‘I’m up for anything,’” he recalled.

For his motivation and fearlessness, McLeroy received the 2022 DAV Freedom Award, given to the participant most embodying the spirit of the Winter Sports Clinic.

For many veterans, the clinic is a chance to push themselves. Participants included veterans who require wheelchairs, amputees, those with visual impairments and those with traumatic brain injuries. Skiers who are blind were equipped with helmet communications devices to talk with guides.

For Army veteran Nate Turner, a first-time participant from Texas, the week was about thanking everyone who made this year’s clinic possible.

“It’s kind of hard to put into words,” he said. “The gratitude I have for the folks who put this together, the

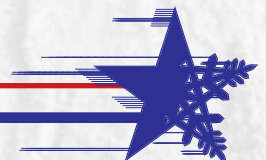
people who are volunteering—it’s very heartwarming and I’m very appreciative.”

The clinic saw several returning veterans eager to test their tenacity on the slopes. For many, the clinic was their first chance to “shred the powder” since 2019. Larry Ruiz, a returning Marine Corps veteran from Fresno, California, jumped right back in where he left off. He said his first time at the event was life-changing.

“I was told I’d never walk, jump or do any of the things I normally do,” said Ruiz. “I came here and I’m able to ski standing up. I had to smile up and down the hill.”

At the event’s closing ceremony, VA Secretary Denis McDonough commended the clinic’s participants for their inspiration to their fellow citizens.

“When veteran athletes engage in adaptive sports, you send a powerful message to spectators, sponsors, therapists, doctors and other veterans,” said McDonough. “That message is about the perseverance of veterans, the endurance of the human spirit and the strength of Americans—and therefore all of America.” ■



From the NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT DIRECTOR ROB LOUGEE



In the ‘Great Resignation,’ veterans can help

It's no surprise that DAV has long advocated for veterans in the workplace. We know the immense value they bring and encourage employers to engage with them.

In the period of the “Great Resignation,” that advice is more relevant—and urgent—than ever.

Over 47 million Americans voluntarily quit their jobs in 2021, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. The mass exodus was triggered at least in part by the COVID-19 pandemic that began in early 2020.

Even as the spread of the virus waned, the trend continued. By the end of March 2022, there were a record 11.5 million job openings. That same month, 4.5 million people quit their jobs, another record-setting number.

A Pew Research Center survey published in March gives some insight into why. Among those surveyed, the top reasons for quitting were low pay, no opportunities for advancement, feeling disrespected at work, child care issues and not enough flexibility to choose when to work.

But despite the number of people quitting, the national unemployment rate ticked downward to 3.6% in March. Among the veteran population, the rate was 2.4%.

According to the Pew survey, many of those who resigned in 2021 found new jobs and, in many cases, better ones. Half or more of those workers said they were better off when it came to pay, advancement opportunities, balancing work and family, and flexibility to choose when they work.

The message is clear: Employees and job seekers have the advantage.

DAV has seen this reality firsthand at our in-person and virtual job fairs for transitioning service members, veterans and military spouses. At the end of several job fairs in 2022, the numbers showed that attendees were getting multiple job offers. In one case, 222 offers were reported among 174 attendees.

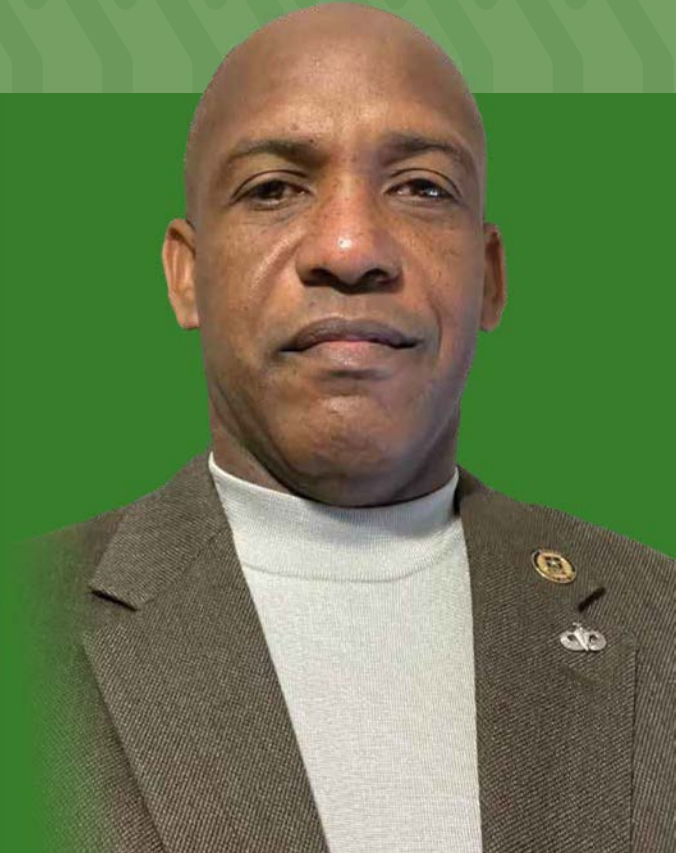
Employers must be prepared to make competitive offers in a job market where employees are demanding more and being greeted with options. Can you offer higher pay or more opportunities for advancement? Can the position you're filling work flexible hours? Does your company culture prioritize respect?

As employers navigate today's climate, they must also consider the advantages of hiring veterans. From a bottom-line perspective, there are financial incentives, including tax credits and on-the-job training resources.

Those who serve our country also bring unique skills and experiences to the civilian workplace. Things such as leadership, work ethic, reliability, adaptability and teamwork are ingrained in military culture and invaluable assets to any employer. When employers show that they value that experience, they reap the benefits of another quality common among veterans: loyalty.

With approximately 200,000 service members separating from the military every year, the veteran pipeline is essential for talent, now more than ever. Through job fairs, education and more, DAV is here to help. Employers can find more information, tips and resources—including DAV's veteran hiring guide—at jobs.dav.org.

'A LOT TO GIVE'



DAV job fair helps 30-year Army veteran find opportunity in civilian workforce

By Elizabeth DePompei

When Alston Cleary enlisted in the Army as a maintenance technician in 1988, it was a four-year commitment to help pay for college. Thirty years later, he retired as a chief warrant officer 5, the highest warrant officer rank in the Army.

"I kept seeing opportunities and things kept working out," he said. "So I kept staying."

Cleary retired in 2018, but he wasn't ready to stop working. He just wanted a different opportunity.

"I feel like I have a lot to give," said the life member of DAV Chapter 2 in Davenport, Iowa. "So I wanted to keep doing something."

With the help of a DAV job fair, Cleary found a way.

Soon after retiring, he got a call from a former superior who offered him military contract work

After more than 30 years as a maintenance technician in the U.S. Army, Alston Cleary retired as a chief warrant officer 5. He now works for agricultural machinery giant John Deere, after he found the job through a DAV job fair.

traveling to different installations and performing maintenance inspections, which he did for over three years.

But Cleary kept his eyes peeled for jobs in the civilian workforce. While he enjoyed contract work, he wanted something more stable.

In late 2021, Cleary attended a virtual DAV job fair where he was introduced to Home Base Iowa, an organization that helps connect businesses with qualified veterans. Cleary submitted his résumé to Home Base and soon received an email from someone at John Deere, the American manufacturer known for its deer-stamped tractors and other agricultural machinery.

Cleary hesitated for about a week but ultimately decided it was worth a conversation and reached back out.



“The position really worked out to be exactly where I needed to be. It almost reminds me of the military, because it’s another great team.”

— Alston Cleary

is to a veteran’s successful transition from the military and into civilian life. We also know the incredible skills and experience veterans like Alston Cleary bring to the table,” said National Employment Director Rob Lougee. “Through our partnership with RecruitMilitary, DAV connects veterans with employers who understand their value and offer them fulfilling opportunities.”

Cleary said learning how to translate his military experience for the civilian workforce was key to landing the job and continues to be a part of his workday. He encourages veterans and transitioning service members to research the skills required for the field they’re interested in and think about how those skills connect to their military experience.

“A lot of things that I do in the military are the same things that I’m doing at John Deere,” he said. “They just have different acronyms or call them different things.”

His problem-solving nature has allowed him to adapt and thrive. It’s a quality so often cultivated in the military, but Cleary also attributes his work ethic to his upbringing in Jamaica.

“I think that’s where it all started,” he said. “I’ve always seen myself as a better performer in stressful environments, because I like to be the voice of calm that comes in and says, ‘OK, here’s what we’re going to do.’” ■



Learn More Online

For more information and additional resources for job seekers, visit dav.org/veterans/employment-resources.

“The person I spoke to was someone who also served in the military, who could relate to a lot of stuff I told him about my goals and what I really wanted to do and where I was in life,” Cleary said. “I really felt like there was a connection made, so I felt like I belonged already.”

Cleary is now a Total Productive Maintenance coordinator for the John Deere plant in East Moline, Illinois, near company headquarters. He ensures factory equipment is operational, plans for preventive maintenance and helps solve equipment issues when they arise.

“The position really worked out to be exactly where I needed to be,” Cleary said. “It almost reminds me of the military, because it’s another great team.”

Finding that fit for both veteran and employer is what DAV’s National Employment Program is all about.

“DAV knows how crucial meaningful employment



TRANSITION TIME



Debunking 4 myths about separating from the military

By Brian Buckwalter

An estimated 200,000 people separate from the military each year. If you're thinking about getting out, you likely have lots of questions about the best way to make a successful transition out of the military.

Whether your exit from the service is something you've been considering for a while or a more recent development, the military-to-civilian transition may come with mixed feelings: excitement, fear, anticipation and confusion.

This wide range of feelings and questions is understandable. As the reality of this decision starts to sink in, you'll begin to realize all that goes into exiting the military. You're going to be bombarded with information, solicited and unsolicited, good and bad. You may click around the Department of Veterans Affairs website and become completely overwhelmed by the acronyms and the myriad programs potentially available to you. You may have no idea where to start.

You're not alone. For many, separating or retiring from the military is a challenging adjustment. In a 2019 survey by Pew Research Center, 47% of post-9/11 veterans said they had a somewhat or very difficult transition back to civilian life.

Fortunately, DAV is here to help. As you navigate this process, start by reading about some common military separation myths. Then visit benefitsquestions.org to get in contact with a DAV benefits advocate to help make your transition much smoother.

MYTH: Getting out of the military is a DIY process.

Transitioning from military service to the civilian world is not like changing the oil in your car or putting together a flat-packed coffee table.

Each person's transition is different, and there's no clear step-by-step, do-it-yourself guide to getting out.

Alan Worthy, who was preparing to retire from the Navy a little over a year ago, discovered this reality as soon as he started browsing the VA website.





“Reading the VA website is great, but it’s impossible to figure everything out,” said Worthy, who found the sheer amount of information overwhelming.

Fortunately, he said he had a strong network of friends who had recently retired. They were able to share their experiences with him. Several of them also pointed him to Jonna Barker, one of DAV’s benefits advocates who specializes in assisting transitioning service members.

Barker and other DAV transition service officers—benefits experts located on military installations—are experienced with the ins and outs of the VA benefits process and can guide and assist people through it. This assistance is free.

Worthy said working with Barker was calming, leveling and comforting.

“There’s no way I would have gotten through my retirement package stuff without her,” he said.

“I knew I was going to mess things up, and I knew I was going to miss things. And she was like, ‘You might, but I’ll catch it.’”

DAV benefits advocates help service members and veterans navigate the ins and outs of the Veterans Benefits Administration. VBA is where you get your VA benefits from—including health, education, housing and employment.

MYTH: TAP is all you need.

The Transition Assistance Program (TAP) is a Department of Defense-mandated requirement for all service members leaving the military. But with so much information packed into a condensed timeline, it’s like trying to drink from a firehose; you’re not going to retain it all.

Alan Worthy, pictured here with his daughter Ava, said connecting with DAV transition service officer Jonna Barker was instrumental in helping him navigate the VA benefits process. He said having the free services of a benefits advocate gave him peace of mind when he decided to retire from the Navy just over a year ago.

Additionally, what’s presented during TAP classes may vary from location to location. Veterans groups (including DAV) aren’t typically invited to share during these classes, which may inhibit understanding the role of benefits advocates in the transition process.

Barker, who’s been helping service members stationed in Southern California transition from the military for about seven years, said that TAP classes also don’t adequately explain what goes into filing a VA claim. If she could share for just 30 minutes, she said, she could help people be more prepared when it’s time to file their VA paperwork.

“Unfortunately, you can see it when they call in that they’re not that prepared,” she said.

What happens, Barker said, is many people on active duty come into her office at the last minute to try to navigate what can be a complicated VA claims process, rather than come to her six months or even a year out from their separation.





Barker

MYTH: You have plenty of time to take care of everything before you

separate. What you don't finish now can wait until you're a civilian.

Jon Retzer, DAV's assistant national service director, recommends having an initial conversation with a DAV benefits advocate up to a year before you plan on leaving the service. He said this gives you enough time to gather the documents you'll need to take advantage of the VA's Benefits Delivery at Discharge (BDD) program.

BDD is designed to determine eligibility while you're still in the military, but it has strict timeline requirements. A DAV transition benefits advocate like Barker can help you meet those timelines.

When those dates hit—no more than 180 and no less than 90 days out from your separation date—DAV can file your BDD claim on your behalf. This process also allows you to make sure every concern you have about your health is addressed before getting out.

Barker said it's important to ensure your medical records reflect all your injuries and illnesses and their treatments when you're still on active duty.

Beyond the claims process, other programs, such as the DOD SkillBridge internship program for civilian employment, and abilities, such as transferring your education benefits, can only happen while you're still on active duty.

Worthy, who had command of a unit while he was transitioning from the Navy himself, said he would regularly encourage those in his unit to take time from work to go talk with people and understand all the

“The first claim that you do is so important. Because if you don't do it right the first time, you will be spending a lot of time disagreeing with the VA's findings.”

—Jonna Barker, DAV benefits advocate in Southern California

benefits and programs available before they made any final decisions. There does come a point in the transition process, he said, that it's too late to change your mind, whether you're prepared or not.

MYTH: Once you're out of the military, you're on your own.

Getting out of the military can feel like an isolating experience at times. The mission drives on without you as you navigate the next chapter of your life. But you are far from alone.

Benefits advocates are only one element of a broad range of services and assistance that DAV provides. DAV also provides employment services such as career fairs and the entrepreneurial program Patriot Boot Camp. And by becoming a member of DAV, you can connect with the veteran community in your area for camaraderie and advocacy or to volunteer to help other veterans.

Also, the VA rolled out a proactive veteran outreach program, VA Solid Start, where someone will check in with you three times in the first year of your transition to answer questions and provide benefits information.

Lastly, try to stay connected with those you've served with over the years, as Worthy did. He learned of DAV from a friend. He said the advice he got from his retired friends—including learning about DAV—helped him immensely. It's information he said he's been able to take and has passed to others who are starting their own transitions.

By giving yourself plenty of time to explore your resources and talk with DAV, you'll be armed with the information and tools you need to make the right decisions for you and make your transition out of the military a smooth one. ■

VA proposes updates to disability rating schedule



PHOTO BY AIRMAN 1ST CLASS CHRISTOPHER MORALES/U.S. AIR FORCE

■ The Department of Veterans Affairs has proposed changes to the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities that pertain to the respiratory and auditory systems. The changes will incorporate medical advancements for treating certain disabilities and modern medical knowledge to more accurately compensate veterans for their service-connected disabilities, according to the VA.

“Veterans who currently receive compensation for a service-connected condition in these body systems will not have their disability rating impacted when the VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities is updated,” said Thomas Murphy, the acting undersecretary for benefits.

Some of the proposed changes include modernizing the evaluation criteria for sleep apnea by evaluating it

based on the symptoms’ responsiveness to treatment. If symptoms are fully treated with a CPAP machine or other treatment, a veteran would be rated at 0% and not receive compensation; the VA will award progressively higher percentage evaluations based on how symptomatic the condition remains after treatment.

In public comments, DAV stated that the proposed change is a failure to “address the functional impairment caused by sleep apnea” and asserted that the current 50% rating is appropriate.

For tinnitus (ringing in the ears), proposed changes would recognize that symptom as part of a veteran’s broader ailment. The veteran would receive service-connected compensation for tinnitus through the disease to which it is attributed, rather than as a stand-alone disability.

DAV also opposes this change, noting the proposal contradicts a legal precedent decided in 1994 that said veterans are entitled to separate evaluations—and distinct ratings—for conditions that stem from a single disability if they are not duplicative.

“No change to a veteran’s current rating would automatically occur due to these proposed changes,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “When and if the proposed changes are finalized, veterans should seek assistance from a veterans service organization like DAV before filing a claim for increase to determine the impact of the final rules.”

VA shares implementation plan and locations of PAWS Act pilot program

■ The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced its plan for implementing the pilot program required by the Puppies Assisting Wounded Servicemembers (PAWS) for Veterans Therapy Act.

The PAWS Act, signed into law Aug. 25, 2021, requires the VA to conduct a five-year pilot program to provide canine training as an element of a complementary and integrative health program for eligible veterans diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

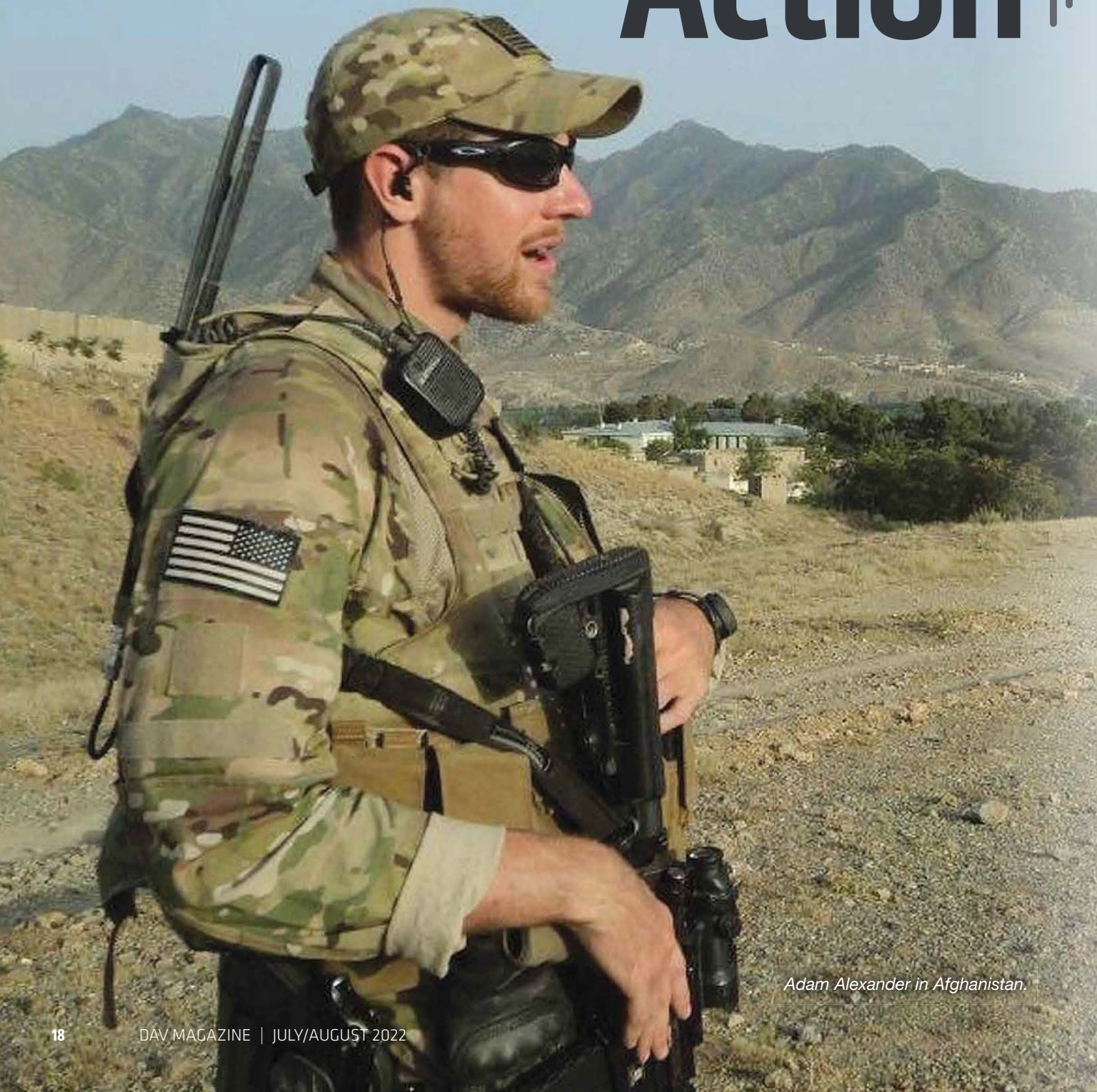
Veterans participating in the program will have

the opportunity to train potential future service dogs, with the goal of helping veterans manage their PTSD symptoms.

The pilot program will be offered at VA medical centers in Anchorage, Alaska; Asheville, North Carolina; Palo Alto, California; San Antonio, Texas; and West Palm Beach, Florida.

Clinicians at the pilot sites will determine the eligibility of veterans interested in the pilot program. Agreements with the participating organizations that will furnish the training have not been finalized.

Headstrong Action



Adam Alexander in Afghanistan.



DAV members Mike Hert (left) and 2022 Disabled American Veteran of the Year Adam Alexander (right) host their public access TV program, "The Outpost." The show highlights DAV and provides local veterans a platform to share their stories.

2022 Disabled Veteran of the Year awarded to Army veteran for promoting DAV on the airwaves

By Matt Saintsing

Armey veteran Adam Alexander was on the phone with his superior officer when enemy bullets began to rain down on his remote firebase in Afghanistan.

"Adam said, 'Hey sir, I got to go, we're getting attacked; got to head out,'" recalled retired Lt. Col. Mike Hert. "I said, you know, 'Keep your head down. Be safe.'"

The enemy had other plans.

Getting attacked was nothing new, but this was different both in size and intensity.

With enemy forces attempting to surround, storm and overrun the outpost, Alexander engaged targets with his M4 carbine. While he attempted to clear a mechanical jam of an automatic grenade launcher, a sniper bullet ripped through the center of his forehead before exiting the right side of his Kevlar helmet.

"One of the medics just kind of wrapped me up with bandages and gauze, kind of like a turban around my head as best they could," said Alexander. "The firefight was so intense, they actually ordered the medevac [helicopter] not to land."

But the pilot never received that directive—perhaps Alexander's only stroke of luck that day—as the aircraft's radio was mistakenly programmed. "I like to joke that it's the first time that the incompetence of an officer ever saved somebody," he said.

His quip today belies the violence he experienced more than 10 years ago. It was Nov. 10, 2011—a day before Veterans Day. He woke up six days later at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, in Bethesda, Maryland.

Since then, Alexander has shown superhuman strength and resiliency. He's DAV's 2022 Disabled American Veteran of the Year—an award presented to veterans who, despite their wounds, have had a substantial impact in serving their brothers- and sisters-in-arms.

Alexander and Hert parted ways after serving together in the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, but a serendipitous encounter brought them back together. In a mass email about a local Veterans Treatment Court, Hert noticed a familiar name in the distribution.

It was Alexander's.



Left: Alexander with his spouse, Kate, holding a poster signed by fellow soldiers in his unit, the 432nd Civil Affairs Battalion, to celebrate his Alive Day. **Right:** Alexander's right frontal lobe was destroyed. The injury was so grave that doctors removed more of his skull to allow the brain to swell.

"I almost fell over," added Hert. "The guy lives in the same town as I do." They met for coffee the next day.

Alexander credits Hert for bringing him into DAV, but he said the camaraderie of his fellow veterans is what attracts him to the organization.

"The military was done with me far sooner than I was done with it," said Alexander, voicing a common sentiment among veterans who saw their careers unexpectedly cut short due to illness or injury.

Nowadays, Hert and Alexander—both DAV life members of Chapter 17 in Oshkosh, Wisconsin—have traded their uniforms for cameras and microphones. Together, they host "The Outpost," a half-hour public-access television program launched in June 2021 that raises awareness about DAV and gives a platform for local veterans.

"I had been involved with cable access in the past for different things, and I knew how it worked. And DAV has such a great story," said Hert. "When you look at first, this show gives a great opportunity for the local chapter to get its message out."

Keeping the show hyperlocal, one guest was Alexander's next-door neighbor, Chuck DeMunk—an Army Green Beret and three-time-wounded Vietnam veteran.

"They devoted the episode to me and my work with the Montagnard tribes when I was over in Vietnam

and that whole experience," said DeMunk, assistant sergeant-at-arms for Chapter 17.

In addition to his show, Alexander has provided testimony to the Wisconsin State Legislature for a bill that would expand eligibility for property tax credits for other disabled veterans.

"He was one of the most impactful people testifying," said Department of Wisconsin Adjutant Matt Kempainen. "He just has a presence about him that, when he talks, you lean in, and you want to hear what he has to say because he's speaking from the heart."

While Alexander can be seen on Oshkosh Media's Life TV and YouTube, his recovery from the extreme traumatic brain injury was indeed a herculean task. There was extensive damage to his right frontal lobe—the section of the brain responsible for initiation—and the loss of his right eye. With an initiation deficit, Alexander had every intention of performing simple tasks but didn't know where or how to start.

"They had to kind of teach me how to get myself going and make up for my shortcomings," he said. "My short-term memory is just—excuse the pun but—shot."

During his 10-month rehabilitation, he received nearly every type of therapy the Minneapolis VA Medical Center had to offer: physical, occupational, speech and recreational, in addition to addressing his mental health.

His mother, Mary Kay Alexander, was by his side for nearly all of his recovery. From being at Walter Reed for the entirety of his stay to driving between her home in Wisconsin and Minneapolis, she witnessed firsthand how resolute her son is.

"They would take him to the Mall of America and challenge him to get from point A to point B," she said. "One of their therapy sessions, they went to Ikea, and he had to try to figure out how to buy a certain thing, how to navigate the store and operate within a budget, because he needed to relearn all of that."

"Adam's story is not one of struggle, but triumph," said National Commander Andy Marshall. "His lights may have gone out across the world during a battle for his life, but they unquestionably came back. And now he's putting them, and the cameras, into action." ■



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More than a job

For DAV Patriot Employers, hiring veterans isn't just personal—it's smart business

By Elizabeth DePompei

Trenton Keen searched for a civilian career path for four years before he finally transitioned out of his full-time job with the Army National Guard.

“I was looking for an alternative in the civilian world, and I just could not find it,” Keen said. “It seemed like every option that I found, every job I applied for, [employers said], ‘Nah, you don't have the experience we need.’”

Never mind that he was a trained cavalry scout and performed military funeral honors nearly every day for 10 years.

His story is all too common for transitioning service members and veterans. Many struggle to translate their military experience to the civilian workforce, in part because employers don't understand the immense value military experience can bring to the table.

DAV's Patriot Employer Recognition Program is helping change that narrative. The program recognizes those employers who demonstrate a commitment to ensuring veterans obtain suitable, fulfilling employment that honors their service. It also recognizes steps companies take to develop their veteran team members and support initiatives in the community that support those who wore the uniform.

“Veterans are some of the most resilient, industrious members of the workforce, and DAV is dedicated to ensuring they find meaningful careers with employers

who value their military experience,” said National Employment Director Rob Lougee. “Our Patriot Employers are key to that mission, and we are proud to celebrate their efforts to hire, retain and champion veterans.”

Last year, Keen found his way to a DAV Patriot Employer, Virtual Service Operations (VSO), a Virginia-based tech company providing hybrid cloud management and consulting services. They were recognized as DAV's Small Employer of the Year in 2021.

Keen, who always had an interest in tech but no formal training, applied through VSO to participate in an Amazon Web Services apprenticeship program in April 2021. It's one of several ways VSO recruits and trains veterans for its workforce.

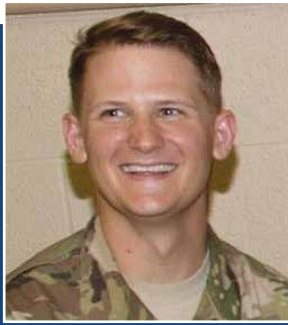
By August, Keen had earned multiple certifications and started a full-time career as a system administrator working with VSO's public-sector clients. Along with working in his desired field, Keen gets to work alongside

fellow veterans. VSO's overall veteran employment rate sits at 22%, but veterans account for 65% or more of many of the company's delivery teams.

Numbers only tell part of the story. VSO offers a robust support network for its veteran employees, including an in-house mentorship program, a military-style quarterly review process, career path planning,

“I think the veteran candidates that come in really exhibit an **amazing work ethic**, which you don't always find today.”

—Ruth Moore, VP of HR, Aristech Surfaces



Left: Trenton Keen served in the Army National Guard for 11 years. He was able to transition into a civilian tech job at Virtual Services Operations (VSO) thanks to an apprenticeship program. **Middle:** Mike Hilleary, a Marine Corps veteran, is now the vice president for Federal at VSO, which was recognized as DAV's 2021 Small Employer of the Year for its support of transitioning service members and veterans. **Right:** Kody Blue served nearly five years in the Army and is now an area supervisor for Aristech Surfaces. He's grateful the company values military experience, which allowed him to move up in the ranks quickly. Around 10% of Aristech's workforce in Northern Kentucky is made up of veterans.

leadership training and more. Even something as small as a company chat room for veterans makes a difference to employees like Keen.

"The way VSO treats the veteran community is second to none," Keen said. "They didn't know me from anywhere, but they knew what I was exposed to in the military, and they took that risk."

VSO leaders don't consider it a risk. Marine Corps veteran Mike Hilleary, VSO's vice president for Federal, credits the company's success in part to its veteran workforce.

"It's not just about the corporate social responsibility and the importance of hiring folks from that community," Hilleary said. "It's also about high quality of service delivery."

"Our commitment to mission first resonates throughout our company, and I think that's why these customers really see a high degree of focus when it comes to the service delivery. And we have really high customer satisfaction as a result."

Ruth Moore, vice president of Human Resources for Aristech Surfaces, has witnessed what veterans offer firsthand. The global company, which manufactures and distributes surface and design materials, employs 190 people at its Florence, Kentucky, plant. More than 10% are veterans.

"I think the veteran candidates that come in really exhibit an amazing work ethic, which you don't always find today," Moore said. "They're dependable. They're disciplined. They have great communication skills. ... You may not understand exactly what all they did in the military, because sometimes that doesn't always

translate to civilian life. But all of those things that they do really give them a solid foundation."

Aristech hired Army veteran Kody Blue for a skilled, entry-level position in November 2014. Today, he's an area supervisor who oversees the operations of the company's state-of-the-art manufacturing equipment.

"Kody has stepped in and just done an amazing job," Moore said, "especially for someone that's only been here a short time."

What really makes Aristech a DAV Patriot Employer is how the company fosters veterans' development. Blue was selected to participate in Aristech's maintenance apprenticeship program to become certified in industrial mechanics. The company applied some of Blue's military experience as a wheeled vehicle mechanic, allowing him to fast-track his apprenticeship.

"This is a really hard field to get into in the civilian sector, just because formal education is usually a must," Blue said. "A lot of companies don't look at the military as formal education. ... I was grateful that I was finally given the opportunity to prove myself."

Moore encourages employers to be open to the value of military experience. Not only is it smart for business, but it's also the right thing to do.

"This is our way to kind of pay back the people who serve our country and really put themselves on the line for us," Moore said. "It's the least we can do as employers." ■

 [Learn More Online](#)

Learn more about DAV's Patriot Employer Recognition Program at patriotemployers.org.

Barrier breakers



South Dakota members spotlight unique needs of women veterans with family-friendly event

By Ashleigh Byrnes

All eyes were on Lorrena Alameda, a member of the Dakota Sioux who served in Iraq, as she proudly presented the colors before a group of roughly 100 other women veterans.

Alameda, alongside a fellow soldier and a Navy veteran, performed color guard duties in half-military uniform, half-Native regalia, a beautiful blended tribute to both the community they were born into and the community they chose. Strapped to Alameda's chest was a tiny baby girl, barely a month old.

The scene was entirely befitting the day's event—the Stand Up for Women Veterans Wellness Retreat in Sioux Falls, South Dakota—in which women veterans were encouraged to not only attend but also bring their children along.

Army veteran Jill Baker, who serves as the Women Veterans Committee chair for DAV Chapter 1 in Sioux Falls, was one of the driving forces behind the event, which was sponsored by the chapter and Baker's own organization. Baker and fellow Army veterans

Helen Parr and Kim Hubers are a close-knit, dynamic trio who have seemingly cracked the code on engaging women in the veterans community.

"We thought, what's the best way we can reach women veterans and those currently serving and bring them all together, make it as easy as possible, reduce barriers so they can just come enjoy that camaraderie that we feel together?" said Baker.

They dug in, partnering with a local daycare, school and volunteer groups to offer free child care and parent-child activities as well as food, snacks and children's activities. Then they brought in experts from the Department of Veterans Affairs, the local Vet Center

and the Veterans Business Outreach Center to lead wellness classes such as art and writing therapy, yoga and entrepreneurship. Additionally, keynote speaker Laurie Walsh, a local Marine veteran and news personality, spoke about the importance of women veterans and their stories, and a host of exhibitors were on hand to discuss free resources available for attendees and their families.

Event attendee Tamara Panning, who served in the Army National Guard,



Army veteran Jill Baker (center left) focused on eliminating barriers that may prevent women from attending the wellness retreat, offering free child care and planning "mommy and me" activities as part of the agenda.



South Dakota DAV members (from left) Helen Parr, Jill Baker and Kim Hubers coordinated the Stand Up for Women Veterans Wellness Retreat with sponsorship by DAV Chapter 1 in Sioux Falls.

The retreat featured a number of wellness sessions—including yoga, art and writing therapy—and local resource vendors for women veterans and parents.



said, “I like the fact that kids were invited and I was able to bring my daughter. I have four kids, and they do like to be included.

“I’m busy with my own family life and working, but I got to meet some other women veterans today,” she added. “In fact, in talking to a group of ladies, we discovered we probably did cross paths 30 years ago in the military, so it was good to have a chance to connect.”

Other attendees, spanning multiple generations of service, connected with more than just resources and each other; for many, it was a first introduction to

Hubers—who deployed to Iraq in 2003 and served in multiple humanitarian missions—is now the mother of four and a service officer for the Department of South Dakota.

“There is a sense of community that we can’t find anywhere else,” said Hubers. “We can’t find it with other women who didn’t serve. We can’t necessarily find it with our moms or our sisters. We can only find it with each other.”

As a mom, Hubers said, there is no shortage of barriers to getting involved in the veteran community.

“Now if we can each bring a woman veteran in, they will bring someone else in, and so on and so on. Once you have that connection back, it’s pretty awesome.”

—Kim Hubers, South Dakota DAV member



DAV Benefit Advocate Owen Richards, from the service office in Sioux Falls, who was on hand.

“This event led a number of veterans to contact Owen after the fact, discuss and file brand new claims,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “These kinds of events, especially where veterans feel welcome and safe, can be the turning point where they finally become ready to talk about what happened in service.”

But she and her fellow DAV members are working to change that.

“I’ve brought my kids to so many DAV meetings, and everybody embraces them and is happy to have them there,” said Hubers. “Now if we can each bring a woman veteran in, they will bring someone else in, and so on and so on. Once you have that connection back, it’s pretty awesome.” ■



The Congressional Gold Medal was presented to the 65th Infantry Regiment "Borinqueneers" at a ceremony on April 13, 2016, at the U.S. Capitol. Source: U.S. House of Representatives

Borinqueneers: Korean War legacy remembered

DAV chapter honors segregated Puerto Rican regiment

By Chris Mayhew

Thanks to a DAV chapter's work, the service of the U.S. military's only segregated Puerto Rican regiment has gained special recognition in the state of Texas.

The Army's 65th Infantry Regiment was nicknamed the "Borinqueneers" in honor of the native Taino name for the island, Borinquen. According to the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, the regiment was barred from front-line service during World War II and suffered minimal casualties during the conflict. By the time the Korean War broke out, the combat regiment had become "superbly trained and well-disciplined." It was activated and mobilized to the peninsula.

Roughly 61,000 Puerto Ricans fought in the Korean War, many serving with the 65th. Among those numbers, 3,540 Puerto Ricans became casualties of war, with 747 killed in action. The regiment was the military's last segregated unit.

Luis Cortes, commander of DAV Chapter 114 in Helotes, Texas, recognized the importance of honoring the Borinqueneers' sacrifices and unique service. He successfully advocated for the creation of the license plate in Texas, as well as naming a 2-mile stretch of Texas highway for the unit and the DAV chapter.

In March 2022, retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Angel Rosario was among the first to obtain a Texas license plate bearing the unit's name and an image of the Congressional Gold Medal that was bestowed upon the regiment on April 13, 2016—the date is now recognized annually as National Borinqueneers Day.

Rosario, a 92-year-old Yauco, Puerto Rico, native and a longtime Killeen, Texas, resident, is a Purple Heart recipient. He served in Korea from 1951 to 1952. He remembers being aboard a ship from Puerto Rico to Korea for 35 days and starting to fight, in the snow, almost immediately after landing.

"I am so happy to know that we, and the history of the 65th Infantry Regiment, will not be forgotten thanks to DAV," Rosario said.

In December 1950, Borinqueneers defended the frozen, rocky hilltops above the port city of Hŭngnam



A painting by Dominic D'Andrea depicting soldiers of the 65th Infantry Regiment from Puerto Rico engaged in the last battalion-sized bayonet attack by the U.S. Army. The bayonet attack came on the morning of the third day of battle, when two battalions of the regiment fixed bayonets and charged at the enemy positions. *Artwork: Department of Defense*

from encircling Chinese forces. The regiment's actions helped 105,000 service members and more than 100,000 civilians board ships at Hŭngnam at the conclusion of the 1st Marine Division's valorous breakout from the Chosin Reservoir. And 1951, the 65th Infantry famously led the last battalion-sized fixed-bayonet charge in U.S. Army history.

The unit also faced discrimination. In 1952, nearly eight dozen of the unit's members were court-martialed and subsequently punished for failing to obey orders and take a series of objectives known as Jackson Heights—Hill 391—in Korea. A number of elements led to the mission failure, including the intense barrage of enemy artillery and mortar fire, heavy casualties and severe language barriers. By 1954, Army Secretary Robert Stevens had overturned the convicted soldiers' sentences.

"It's so important we find ways to enshrine the legacies of our veterans," said National Commander Andy Marshall. "This helps us to ensure we are not losing the experiences of these brave individuals to the pages of history."

While the regiment was deactivated in 1956, a battalion of the Borinqueneers remains active as part of the Puerto Rico Army National Guard.

Korea is often called "the forgotten war," so it's no surprise that the sacrifices of the Borinqueneers was often left out of news accounts and histories, Cortes said, adding that the honors touch the hearts of the veterans, their families and their descendants.

"These individuals have been waiting for years of their lives to be acknowledged," Cortes said. ■



Left: Retired Army Sgt. 1st Class Angel Rosario proudly turns the final screw to affix a new Texas license plate on his car that recognizes his service as a member of the only U.S. military segregated regiment from Puerto Rico. **Right:** Rosario and his wife, Luz, who has since died, gather at a sign recognizing a 2-mile stretch of state Highway 16 for DAV Chapter 114 of Helotes, Texas, and the 65th Infantry Regiment "Borinqueneers," with whom he served during the Korean War.



From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER LYNN HELMS PROSSER

Together again

As my time as the Auxiliary's commander comes to an end, I've spent some time reflecting on the endearing memories I will cherish from this past year. What I'm most thankful for is that all these memories include being with you.

Nearly two years of canceled and virtual events made the personal interactions at each conference, parade and ceremony all the more special. Thank you for the conversations and hugs. And thank you for all your work on behalf of veterans and their families.

One of the many highlights for me was attending the dedication of the new national headquarters building in Erlanger, Kentucky, in September. What impressed me most is how it's designed around telling the history and story of DAV and the Auxiliary while creating a collaborative space to gather and work.

While there, I also got to celebrate DAV's centennial. The music, speeches and celebration were all beautiful tributes to our nation's heroes and their families and to the impact our organizations have had on their lives for the past century.

The national DAV Auxiliary Fall Conference was next. It was such a joy to see how well attended the event was. We took care of business; updated and educated our members on our programs; and, of course, had lots of laughs and fun with skits and our patriotism-themed opening night.

The 74th National Veterans Day Parade and awards dinner in Birmingham, Alabama, in November was a special

event, too. Although it was a rainy day, lots of people still came out to enjoy the bands, vehicles and organizations that participated. Riding down the parade route and waving to the crowd stirred up lots of pride in me as I represented our organization.

I thoroughly enjoyed seeing so many of you at the mid-winter conference in late February. In addition to the conversations and fellowship, we showed Congress the resolve and unity of DAV and the Auxiliary around our promise to veterans. I look at the Department of Veterans Affairs pausing to reassess the removal of so many from their caregiver program as a testament to the power of our partnership.

While at the conference, I was able to participate in a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery. This solemn privilege moved me. As I stood there with my hand on my heart, thoughts of all those who have lost loved ones in service to our country filled my mind.

I will cherish these and many other memories for the rest of my life. Thank you for allowing me the honor of being your commander for the last year. And a special thank-you to National Commander Andy Marshall for the opportunity to collaborate and serve alongside him. The work we do for veterans and their families, caregivers and survivors is vitally important; that fact has never left my mind for even a moment. As a new Auxiliary commander takes over, I look forward to continuing to support this great organization and the people we serve.



Auxiliary

Making a Difference

National Fall Conference

SEPT. 29–OCT. 1, 2022

Embassy Suites, Lexington/UK Coldstream
1801 Newtown Pike, Lexington, KY 40511

Conference registration: \$40

- Business sessions begin Thursday, Sept. 29
- Reception is Friday, Sept. 30

Dinner and entertainment ticket: \$60

- Dinner is Saturday, Oct. 1
- Tickets must be purchased in advance

NEW FOR 2022: The National Executive Committee meeting will be held Saturday, Oct. 1, immediately following the close of the business session.

Get more information:

auxiliary.dav.org/news-events/events

HONOR A VETERAN

by flying a flag in
DAV's Field of Flags

FieldOfFlags.org



Tax-wise ways to support veterans now without writing a check!

Make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA at age 70½ or older; reduce your taxable income. Make your gift online by visiting freewill.com/qcd/dav, or contact us for transfer instructions.

New resource: Create a no-cost will by visiting freewill.com/dav.

Transfer shares of appreciated stock; eliminate capital gain tax, plus claim a deduction if you itemize. DAV pays no taxes when selling the stock, so its full value helps veterans. Please contact us for transfer instructions; do not sell the stock first.

Leave part of your retirement assets to DAV instead of the IRS! Retirement assets left to nonspouse heirs are heavily taxed, so consider leaving other assets to children or loved ones instead.

For more information about giving to DAV

- Call 800-216-9802, press 1
- Email giftplanning@dav.org
- Return the attached postcard
- Visit davplanmygift.org

DAV® Guardian Society

Saying ‘thank you’

For the Moto family, DAV was a reminder of service and a pillar of support

When Hawaii resident Brian Moto signed documents naming DAV as a beneficiary of his estate, he felt like a rich man.

“I felt a sense of happiness,” said Moto, the son of wounded World War II Army veteran Kaoru Moto. “For the Moto family, Disabled American Veterans was an important organization.”

The elder Moto, a longtime member of the now-defunct DAV Chapter 2 in Maui, received the Distinguished Service Cross for heroism after being wounded in Italy in 1944. After his death in 1992, the award was upgraded to the Medal of Honor and presented posthumously to the Moto family.

Although his father rarely spoke of his time in war, the local DAV and its members were constant reminders of his service and bravery. Moto said he was also a recipient of a DAV scholarship that helped provide him with an education and career. He chose to name DAV in his will as a way to say thank you and to support the organization’s continued work for disabled veterans and their families.

“I also think it’s important that the veterans themselves hear stories like mine and of my family,” Moto said. “Because I think it’s a story of encouragement and hope.”

Sample bequest language

“I give, devise, and bequeath to DAV (Disabled American Veterans), 860 Dolwick Drive, Erlanger, KY 41018, Tax ID: 31-0263158, ___% of my estate, or the sum of \$_____; or the following described property _____; or ___% of the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate.”

Want another easy option? Name DAV as a percentage beneficiary of a retirement account, financial account or insurance policy. Simply update your beneficiaries using DAV’s legal name, address and tax ID, listed above. ■

To learn more about other ways to give to DAV, including through your will, trust or beneficiary designations, please contact one of our personal gift experts. We’d love to hear from you and express our gratitude for the significant impact you will have on veterans’ lives!



Top: Brian Moto, the son of Kaoru Moto, named DAV as a beneficiary in his will as a way to give back to the organization that supported his father and family. **Bottom:** Late World War II Army veteran Kaoru Moto posthumously received the Medal of Honor.

DAV 5K

Walk, Roll, Run and Ride to
HONOR AMERICA'S VETERANS

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IN-PERSON
Nov. 5, 2022

VIRTUAL
Nov. 5-30, 2022



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DAV.ORG/REAL-ESTATE-DONATION
or call 844-277-HOME (4663)



From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN DEBRA VARNER

Step out and discover your purpose



The world as we know it today has changed from what it was two years ago. It has become a place where most of us—if not all of us—must step out of our comfort zone. We must come away from our places of contentment and face our new normal.

It takes determination to move forward when life gives you a major change. Our nation is facing many crises that most assuredly call for courage on the part of our leaders, but you and I must deal with other significant issues individually and collectively. The choices we must make as we live from day to day call for strength. And as military veterans, I think we all know that fortitude is necessary to fight through life's battles and come through victorious on the other side.

Sometimes those battles are intense. It may be against the oppression of one's own dispositions. We may have to fight against resentment, bitterness, covetousness, jealousy or depression. Or we may face addictions—whether alcohol, drugs, overeating, immoral behavior or contentment. Every day that the sun rises means another set of decisions to be made.

It can feel like a never-ending struggle. But if you and I are going to take the initiative and step forward to fight those battles, it's going to take courage. The good news is, we have an entire community of fellow veterans here to support us when the going gets rough.

There were many setbacks over the past few years that people are still

recovering from today. Perhaps you lost a business. Maybe you found yourself unemployed. When we encounter barriers to our goals and dreams, we must choose the direction of our change. We can get discouraged and depressed, or we can choose to believe that there is something better and greater just beyond the next hill.

It isn't easy to practice mindfulness and gratitude, but when you allow that inner strength to guide you, then you will discover what is needed to succeed. Without courage, there is no way we can know the fullness of the life that has been designed for us. To experience life's highest and best, these traits aren't just important—they are absolutely, unquestionably necessary.

We are blessed with many inspiring examples of strength, courage and determination in our military history. You may even have veteran friends or fellow chapter members who have demonstrated such resolve, and you can look to them in times of need. Do not be afraid or discouraged—your strength lies within if you only step out of your place of contentment.

Let us consider how we may encourage one another as well and continue to be beacons of light by sharing our strength with those who need it. Meeting together now is more important than ever. Let us encourage one another to be great achievers and goal setters.

Step out and find out what's in store for you in your new beginning.



Archer

NSO Retiree John Allen Archer

■ John Allen, a U.S. Army veteran who served as a DAV national service officer, died at his home in Millbrook, Alabama, on Feb. 10. He was 76.

Archer began his DAV career in September 1972 in St. Petersburg, Florida. He went on to serve 25 years with the organization as a veterans advocate, retiring in August 1997 in Montgomery, Alabama.

He is survived by his wife Carol Ann Kedrowski Archer and son Nicholas.

“We are fortunate to have counted John among our ranks,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “His career and life were truly testaments to service.”



Schultz

NSO Retiree Harold Schultz

■ Harold Schultz, a U.S. Navy veteran who served as a DAV national service officer, died in Lancaster, New York, on May 19 at 70 years old.

Schultz began his DAV career in November 1979 and served 24 years with the organization as a benefits advocate, retiring in August 2004 in Syracuse, New York.

He is survived by his wife Cathy Taylor-Schultz, sons Matthew and Ryan, and grandson Jack. “Harry was a devoted advocate for so many veterans and their families,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “While we are saddened to hear of his passing, the impact on the lives of those he helped will be felt for years to come.”



Big Ten honors veterans courtside ...

Several DAV members were recently recognized for their military service during on-court halftime ceremonies at the 2022 Big Ten Conference Women’s and Men’s Basketball Tournament Championships at Gainbridge Fieldhouse in Indianapolis. The veterans also got to watch the games from VIP courtside seats.

“For nearly a decade, the partnership between DAV and the Big Ten Conference has allowed us to showcase the work our organization does on behalf of veterans and their families to tens of thousands of spectators at some of the biggest sporting events in the country,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess.

Top left: DAV members who attended the March 6 women’s championship were Crystal Auld, Darlene Beck-Williams, Christine Frauendorfer, Judy King, Teresa Manikin, Sheryl Schwartzkopf, Pamela Schweizer-Betz, Rebecca Shaw and Lindsay Smith. **Top right:** DAV members attending the men’s championship on March 13 were Marc Burgess, Ed Hartman, Robbin Higgins, Linda Hobbs, Penny Johnson, James McIntire, Norm Nelson, Arnym Pedraza, Donald Peek and Donnie Taylor.

Iowa defeated Indiana 74–67 in the women’s matchup, and Purdue lost to Iowa 66–75 in the men’s game. All four teams went on to compete in their respective March Madness NCAA Division I basketball tournaments.



National Service Foundation donation ...

Chapter 2 in Kansas City, Missouri, presented a check for \$10,000 to the DAV National Service Foundation during the chapter's 100th anniversary celebration April 30. Members raised the money by hosting bingo events throughout the year. The much-needed funds will help support the health and well-being of local veterans through critical, no-cost services. **Top:** (from left)

Jim Hattaway, Gracie Caldwell, Gerald Caldwell, Mike Lickteig, Carl Harris, Dean Travis Jr., Claudia Silva, David Gerke, Linda Gerke, Lawrence Dixon, Ashley Temps, Marvin Chaney, Anna McDonald, Eli Silva, Norman Shands, Chad Riggs and Kenneth Hicks. **Right:** National Commander Andy Marshall (left) and Chapter 2 Commander Kenneth Hicks.



Chapter presented with U.S. Capitol flag ...

On Feb. 19, 2022, U.S. Rep. Derek Kilmer of Washington presented Commander JoAnn Gavin of DAV Chapter 5 in Bremerton, Washington with an American flag that had flown over the U.S. Capitol in honor of the chapter's 100th anniversary. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee and Bremerton Mayor Greg Wheeler sent proclamations saluting the anniversary. Chapter 5 serves the Kitsap and Olympic peninsulas, located west of Seattle, and averages 2,400 visits a year from veterans or surviving family members seeking assistance with claims.

Building accessible picnic tables ...

Junior Vice Commander Larry Baker of Chapter 12 in Port Royal, South Carolina, sits at one of the five picnic tables his chapter helped fund and build in February. The tables, designed to accommodate wheelchairs, were placed in community parks in the area. Members built the tables with the assistance of Operation Enduring Honor, a South Carolina nonprofit dedicated to making and installing wheelchair-accessible picnic tables in public spaces throughout the state.



The PATHH to posttraumatic growth ...

Boulder Crest Foundation was established to help people with invisible wounds. Their retreats and follow-on programs for first responders and combat veterans are based on the science of posttraumatic growth.

Recognizing the importance of helping those dealing with the effects of posttraumatic stress, DAV and the Gary Sinise Foundation cosponsor week-long Warrior PATHH (Progressive and Alternative Training for Helping Heroes) retreats alternating between Boulder Crest's Bluemont, Virginia, and Sonoita, Arizona, locations. DAV also sponsors an all-female cohort each year.

While program facilitators don't publicly share the specifics of what happens during the week, they've designed an intense agenda for participants that focuses on them coming together as a group to heal and build strong bonds with others.

"Everything is geared to you being a healthier person and making good choices," said Assistant Voluntary Services Director Ron Minter. "You're getting away from the stress and focusing on the growth."

Some DAV members attend Warrior PATHH as



mentors, as National Commander Andy Marshall did in November 2021.

"To see these young guys trying to change their lives and get back to some sense of normalcy was heartwarming," said Marshall.

The program continues after people leave with continued support programs. Minter said each cohort that comes through also forms tight bonds with each other—becoming a lifelong peer network of encouragement.

Top left: National Commander Andy Marshall (back row, center) stands with a group of combat veterans and first responders attending a retreat focused on posttraumatic growth in November 2021. Marshall spent a week with the men as a mentor as they faced their pasts to focus on healing. **Top right:** A group of men get ready to participate in an archery team building exercise at a November 2021 posttraumatic growth retreat at Boulder Crest Foundation's Bluemont, Virginia location. Each activity through the week-long program is designed to build bonds between the attendees—who are all combat veterans or first responders—as they face their pasts.

Student volunteers for Transportation Network ...
 As John Ang prepared for the next steps of his academic journey, he was looking for ways to be involved in his community near Nashville, Tennessee. A neuroscience major at Vanderbilt University, Ang found that opportunity to serve through DAV's Transportation Network. He recently became one of the area's youngest volunteer drivers. As Ang waits for acceptance into medical school, he'll be available several days a week to transport veterans under the care of the Tennessee Valley Healthcare System.



REUNIONS

ARMY

4TH BATTALION, 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (MANCHU)
 Sept. 14-18, Oklahoma City, OK, Contact: Bob Lannon, Ph: 317-745-4287, Email: bob199@hotmail.com, Web: manchu.org

19TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION VIETNAM ASSOCIATION AND ATTACHED UNITS Sept. 8-10, St. Robert, MO, Contact: Harry Ewald, Ph: 845-781-3421, Email: harry.ewald@verizon.net, Web: www.19engrvm.org
25TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
 Sept. 25-Oct. 2, Honolulu, HI, Contact: Sarah Krause, Ph: 215-880-0181, Email: tropicn@aol.com, Web: 25thida.org

35TH LANDCLEARING TEAM/538TH LANDCLEARING COMPANY, VIETNAM (1967-71) Aug. 25-28, Readfield, WI, Contact: Kenneth Stuczynski, Ph: 920-747-0637, Email: kenneth287@centurytel.net

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION VIETNAM VETERANS ORGANIZATION Aug. 24-28, Fayetteville, NC, Contact: Ron Long, Ph: 310-977-4253, Web: www.101namveteran.com

106TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION
 Aug. 24-28, Arlington, VA, Contact: Wayne Dunn, Ph: 410-409-1141, Email: waynedunn@comcast.net, Web: 106thinfdivassn.org/reunion2022.html

205TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY, MARCH 1971-JANUARY 1973 Sept. 7, Fort Leavenworth, KS, Contact: Larry Grebe, Ph: 574-209-0273, Email: ldgrebe@gmail.com
864TH ENGINEER BATTALION (PEACEMAKERS)

Oct. 19-23, Albuquerque, NM, Contact: Maxine Scriptor, Ph: 505-249-8238, Email: mrsanagramssister@hotmail.com
COMPANY D, 2ND BATTALION, 14TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION (1968-1970)

Oct. 3-6, New Orleans, LA, Contact: Tom Monahan, Ph: 609-923-6131, Email: tcm327b@comcast.net
NATIONAL DUSTERS, QUADS & SEARCHLIGHTS ASSOCIATION July 5-10, Oklahoma City, OK, Contact: Bruce Geiger, Ph: 914-576-1050, Email: bmgeiger@aol.com, Web: ndqsa.com

TROOP C, 2ND SQUADRON, 17TH AIR CAVALRY REGIMENT (VIETNAM) Oct. 19-22, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Emil Hirsch, Email: hirsch.emil@yahoo.com
U.S. 27TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (WOLFHOUNDS) HISTORICAL SOCIETY Aug. 15-21, Lexington, KY, Contact: Dave Shepherd, Ph: 859-445-2281, Email: shepd227@gmail.com, Web: wolfhoundpack.org

MARINES

USMC COMBAT CORRESPONDENTS ASSOCIATION Aug. 25-28, Orlando, FL. Register to attend at usmcccaonline.com/symposium.

1ST BATTALION, 5TH MARINE REGIMENT, 1986-1992
 Sept. 9-11, Macomb, IL, Contact: Scott Hainline, Ph: 309-351-2050, Email: ptimf@yahoo.com, Web: facebook.com/groups/1075222769273892

COMPANY G, 2ND BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT, VIETNAM Sept. 14-18, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Lamont Taylor, Ph: 518-249-7009,

Email: cinemscreenad@yahoo.com

COMPANY K, 3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT, VIETNAM Sept. 29-Oct. 3, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Bill Gerke, Ph: 631-433-8575, Email: msggerke@aol.com

MARINE AIR GROUPS, WORLD WAR II-PRESENT
 Oct. 11-14, Branson, MO, Contact: Ken Davidson, Email: grasusan9583@sbcglobal.net; or Joseph Mowry, Email: josephmowry@att.net

NAVY

TIN CAN SAILORS MIDWEST BULL SESSION Aug. 5-6, Kearney, NE, Contact: Greg Jensen, Ph: 308-234-1581 or 308-708-2106, Email: gwjensen@frontier.net, Web: tincansailors.com

UNITED STATES LST ASSOCIATION Oct. 17-20, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Angela D'Aloisio (USS Saginaw, LST-1188), Ph: 803-865-5665, Email: support@nehemiahcommunications.com; Don Lerche (USS Litchfield County, LST-901), Ph: 309-530-8710, Email: donlerche@yahoo.com; Mike Kempf (USS Park County, LST-1077), Ph: 317-490-4229, Email: m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net; Guy Simmons (USS Sutter County, LST-1150), Ph: 978-476-3895, Email: guysimmons@aol.com; Larry Condra (USS Wexford County, LST-1168), Ph: 314-604-5221, Email: Larrygeec@netscape.net; Web: uslst.org
USS ABNAKI (ATF-96) Sept. 19-22, Urbandale, IA, Contact: Nancy Ferber, Ph: 641-745-7077, Email: masonsawyergerma@yahoo.com

USS ALFRED A. CUNNINGHAM (DD-752) Sept. 26-30, San Antonio, TX, Contact: John Keith Johnstone, Ph: 414-762-7587, Email: johnstone752@att.net

USS LLOYD THOMAS (DD/DDE-764) Sept. 20-24, Dayton, OH, Contact: Scott Sheffer, Ph: 412-951-0588, Email: lloydthomas@atlanticcbb.net, Web: dd764.org

USS MANITOWOC (LST-1180) Sept. 12-16, Rapid City, SD, Contact: Ken Bohanon, Email: uss_manitowoc@gmail.com; Pat Owens, Email: pmowens57@live.com; or Angela Schadt, Email: aschadt322@gmail.com, Web: 123048.wixsite.com/ussmanitowoc

USS NECHES (AO-47) Sept. 15-18, Branson, MO, Contact: Johnny Hanlon, Ph: 918-760-7371, Email: johnnyhanlon@cox.net

USS OGDEN (LPD-5) Nov. 10-13, Pensacola, FL, Contact: Mark Stephens Email: ussogdenp5@gmail.com Web: ussogdenreunion.com

USS SARATOGA ASSOCIATION Oct. 12-16, Washington, DC, Contact: Mark Beecher, Ph: 304-917-1206, Email: bizmark@mercurycat.com, Web: uss-saratoga.com

USS STEINAKER (DD/DDR-863) Sept. 15-18, Norfolk, VA, Contact: Russ Noble, Ph: 231-944-2148, Email: rvnoble19@gmail.com, Web: usssteinaker.org

USS TAYLOR (DD/DDE-468) Oct. 2-6, Norfolk, VA, Contact: James G. O'Neill, Ph: 804 212-8911, Email: oneillfam@aol.com, Web: sailors.usstaylor468.org

USS TOLOVANA (AO-64) Sept. 20-22, Albuquerque, NM, Contact: Okie Baughman, Ph: 321-795-3940, Email: okie_baughman@yahoo.com, Web: usstolovana.org

USS WALLER (DD/DDE-466) Oct. 9-13, Nashville, TN, Contact: Keith Lemons, Ph: 606-365-2902, Email: schulertlemons98@gmail.com, Web: usswaller.com

USS WILHOITE (DE/DER-397) Sept. 21-24, Branson, MO, Contact: Elisabeth Rider, Ph: 479 280-2776, Email: sailingaway1987@gmail.com, Web: usswilhoite.org

AIR FORCE

91ST MISSILE WING MAINTAINER Aug. 4-6, Minot AFB, ND, Contact: Chuck Emery, Email: cemery@srt.com

55TH & 58TH WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRONS Sept. 14-16, Branson, MO, Email: joe.devenport@sbcglobal.net

NUCLEAR WEAPONS TECHNICIANS ASSOCIATION
 Sept. 25-27, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Janice Miller, Ph: 325-650-1854, Email: garjans@suddenlink.net

SPACE FORCE

527TH AGGRESSOR SQUADRON Sept. 8-11, North Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Fred Elizondo, Ph: 269-788-2079, Email: felizondo50@gmail.com

ALL SERVICES

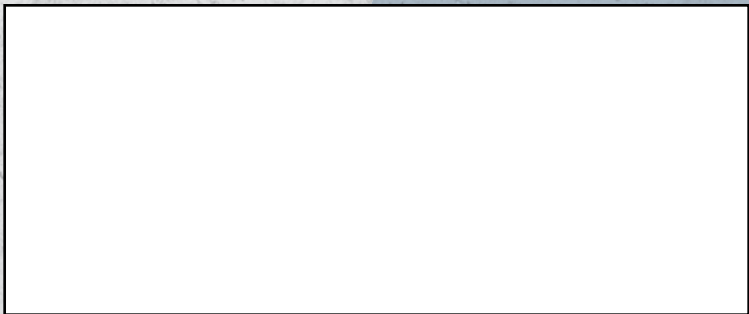
4TH INFANTRY (IVY) DIVISION ASSOCIATION
 July 26-29, Kansas City, MO, Web: 4thinfantry.org
KHE SANH ASSOCIATION Oct. 23-30, Sparks, NV, Contact: Russell Turner, Ph: 636-282-2263, Email: rkt88@prodigy.net

INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who saw a UH-1B do an aerial extraction on a stretcher of an Army E-6 whose left arm was severed while clearing an unfinished landing zone. Our Huey used both rotors to cut foliage to get into the LZ, and the door gunner hung upside down on the skid to reach the litter handles, lifting up to the crew chief. Likely occurred late morning sometime between September and November 1965 in II Corps or I Corps. Contact: William Beebe, Email: rvn6566@copper.net
- Searching for anyone who went through basic training at Amarillo AFB, Texas, from Nov. 24, 1967, to January 1968 and was assigned to 3332nd BMTS, Flight 433. Contact: Dennis Peterson, Email: sqtpete@centurylink.net
- Searching for Louise Coleman, an Army nurse stationed at Fort Sam Houston, Texas, summer 1967. Contact: Wekewa, Ph: 317-414-3499, Email: genwego@gmail.com
- Searching for Lt. Cmdr. Harry Hansen, executive officer of USS Henry B. Wilson (DDG-7), 1970-1971, and MSC James Banzali, who served in the EDF on USS Barbey (FF-1088). Contact: MSC (Ret.) D. Jaminal, Email: jaminald@yahoo.com
- Searching for Gibbs, Amigo, and Corpsermen Newton and Lancaster, 1st Recon Battalion, 1st Marine Division, Vietnam, 1968-1969. Contact: Duane "Bridgette" Bourdo, Ph: 401-255-4052, Email: duanego@verizon.net
- Searching for Donald Nelson, boatswain's mate of the LCA-X2, Assault Craft Unit 1, San Diego, 1968. Contact: Chief Petty Officer Steve Kirkpatrick, Ph: 909-844-1072

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