



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

MARCH | APRIL 2020

# MAGAZINE

“We’ve unintentionally  
**POISONED**  
an entire generation  
of veterans”

Antimalarial drugs  
and the cost of prevention

Page 18



A Century of  
Service to Veterans

DAV.ORG DAV @DAVHQ DAVHQ COMPANY/DAVHQ DISABLEDVETERANS

# 2020 Department Conventions

DEPARTMENT	CITY	CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS	DATES	BANQUET
Alabama	Opelika	Auburn Marriott Opelika Resort & Spa at Grand National	June 4–7	June 6
Alaska	Fairbanks	Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Convention Center	April 3–5	April 4
Arizona	Phoenix	Embassy Suites by Hilton Phoenix Scottsdale	May 27–30	May 29
Arkansas	North Little Rock	Wyndham Riverfront Little Rock	June 12–13	June 13
California	Indian Wells	Miramonte Resort & Spa	May 20–23	May 23
Colorado	Pueblo	SpringHill Suites	May 20–22	May 22
Connecticut	Cromwell	Courtyard by Marriott Hartford Cromwell	April 30–May 3	May 2
D.C.	Washington	DAV National Service & Legislative Headquarters	April 24–25	April 25
Delaware	Dover	Comfort Suites	May 15–16	May 16
Florida	Lake Mary	Orlando Marriott Lake Mary	June 18–20	June 20
Georgia	Macon	Macon Marriott City Center	June 4–7	June 6
Hawaii	Honolulu	Airport Honolulu Hotel	June 5–7	June 6
Idaho	Coeur d’Alene	Coeur d’Alene Inn Best Western	April 23–26	April 26
Illinois	Springfield	Northfield Inn Suites	June 11–14	June 13
Indiana	Indianapolis	Indianapolis Marriott East	June 3–7	June 6
Iowa	Dubuque	Grand Harbor Resort	June 12–14	June 13
Kansas	Mayetta	Prairie Band Casino & Resort	June 12–14	June 13
Kentucky	Lexington	Embassy Suites by Hilton Lexington/UK Coldstream	June 26–27	June 27
Louisiana	Alexandria	Hotel Bentley of Alexandria	May 14–17	May 16
Maine	Bangor	Ramada by Wyndham Bangor	May 1–3	May 2
Maryland	Ocean City	Princess Royale Conference Center	May 28–31	May 30
Massachusetts	Leominster	DoubleTree by Hilton Leominster Hotel	June 19–21	June 20
Michigan	Mount Pleasant	Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort	June 24–26	June 25
Minnesota	St. Cloud	Best Western Plus Kelly Inn	May 7–9	May 8
Mississippi	Biloxi	Treasure Bay Casino & Hotel	April 29–May 3	May 2
Missouri	Jefferson City	Capitol Plaza Hotel & Convention Center	May 29–31	May 30
Montana	Lincoln	Sportsman Motel	June 4–6	June 5
Nebraska	Kearney	Holiday Inn Kearney	May 1–3	May 2
Nevada	Sparks	Nugget Casino Resort	May 31–June 2	June 2
New Hampshire	Nashua	DoubleTree by Hilton Nashua	June 5–7	June 6
New Jersey	Atlantic City	Resorts Casino Hotel	June 14–17	June 16
New Mexico	Albuquerque	Ramada by Wyndham Albuquerque Midtown	June 11–13	June 12
New York	Callicoon	Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center	June 28–July 1	June 30
North Carolina	Greensboro	Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons	June 17–21	June 20
North Dakota	Fargo	Ramada by Wyndham Fargo	April 24–26	April 25
Ohio	Dublin	Embassy Suites by Hilton Columbus Dublin	June 27–28	June 27
Oklahoma	Catoosa	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	June 30–July 2	July 1
Oregon	Albany	Comfort Suites Linn County	May 16–17	May 16
Pennsylvania	King of Prussia	Valley Forge Casino Resort	June 11–13	June 12
Puerto Rico	Mayaguez	Mayaguez Resort & Casino	April 24–26	April 25
Rhode Island	Warwick	Crowne Plaza Providence–Warwick	April 16–18	April 17, 18
South Carolina	Columbia	DoubleTree By Hilton Columbia	May 14–17	May 16
South Dakota	Brookings	Brookings Days Inn	May 15–17	May 16
Tennessee	Murfreesboro	DoubleTree by Hilton Murfreesboro	June 18–21	June 20
Texas	Corpus Christi	Omni Corpus Christi Hotel	June 5–7	June 6
Utah	Ogden	Comfort Suites Ogden	May 28–30	May 29
Vermont	Dover	Mount Snow Resort	May 15–17	May 15, 16
Virginia	Roanoke	Holiday Inn–Tanglewood	June 11–14	June 13
Washington	Suquamish	Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort	June 17–19	June 18
West Virginia	Fairmont	Fairfield Inn & Suites	June 5–7	June 6
Wisconsin	Green Bay	Radisson Hotel & Conference Center	June 10–14	June 13
Wyoming	Cheyenne	Little America Hotel & Resort–Cheyenne	May 1–3	May 2

## From the NATIONAL COMMANDER STEPHEN “BUTCH” WHITEHEAD



### Ensuring accountability in 2020

It was a tremendous pleasure to see so many of our dedicated members, advocates and supporters at the 2020 DAV Mid-Winter Conference in February. I've always enjoyed the camaraderie at the event, but my experience this year as national commander is something I'll cherish for the rest of my days.

Even in this role, I continue to learn new things about advocacy and the veteran landscape each time I visit Washington. I'm thankful for the imparted knowledge and am compelled to share my biggest takeaway from my recent visit—all of our legislative accomplishments are for naught if we don't monitor the implementation and progress of VA reforms that are put in place to better serve veterans and hold the VA, lawmakers and other government officials accountable for their outcomes.

In January, the VA finally began processing disability claims for Blue Water Navy veterans' exposure to Agent Orange in the waters off Vietnam decades ago. For months, the VA cited IT problems as it delayed processing these claims, withholding earned health care and survivor benefits for thousands of veterans and their families. But Blue Water Navy veterans have waited long enough for these benefits, and further delays are not acceptable. It's imperative for us to make noise on behalf of all Blue Water Navy veterans who have filed such a claim to ensure they receive a favorable decision in a timely manner.

Additionally, DAV will be soliciting feedback from our members as the VA MISSION Act approaches its first full year of implementation. We need to hear about your experiences—good and bad—so we can properly evaluate its strengths and weaknesses. Legislators and policymakers shouldn't only hear about VA-authored statistics pertaining to this law. They need to hear about real-life experiences from real veterans utilizing the VA health care system. I highly encourage you to participate in our survey when it reaches you.

Finally, we need your help in gaining as much support as possible for S. 2950, the Veterans Burn Pit Exposure Recognition Act of 2019. This bipartisan legislation, which was crafted from an original DAV concept, would codify a concession of exposure to help ensure that veterans who served near burn pits have less red tape to deal with when, and if, they need to file a related claim for a service-connected disability. I ask you to call your elected officials and voice your support for this bill and ensure our post-9/11 veterans don't have to fight the VA for decades for disability benefits the way Vietnam veterans did with Agent Orange.

As always, thank you all for your tremendous work and advocacy on behalf of our nation's veterans. I humbly ask that you all remain steadfast in your efforts this year, because if we don't advocate for ourselves and our fellow veterans, who will?

## CONTENTS



## FEATURES

8

**1** Election season is upon us, and National Commander Butch Whitehead reminds members to advocate responsibly.

**3** National Adjutant Marc Burgess encourages DAV members—and all veterans—to share their stories and experiences to ensure they are not lost to history.

**6** DAV helps a Marine veteran attain benefits for Agent Orange exposure and the lingering scars of war.

**11** New changes in effect for the GI Bill may be impacting your bottom line. Here's what to look for.

**16** Coming soon to a neighborhood near you—DAV is bringing benefits information seminars into local communities to more efficiently reach veterans.

**23** At 100 years old, one DAV volunteer shows that nothing will hold him back from making a difference in the lives of veterans.

**24** On step at a time: Air Force veteran William Shuttleworth treks from Massachusetts to California in honor of America's veterans.



DAV MAGAZINE • March/April 2020  
Contact us: [dav.org](http://dav.org) • Toll Free 877-426-2838 • 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076 • [feedback@dav.org](mailto:feedback@dav.org). Volume 62, Issue 2, *DAV Magazine* (ISSN 0885-6400). Editorial Office: DAV Magazine, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. Telephone 859-441-7300 or toll free (877) I AM A VET. Published and circulated bimonthly bulletin by the Disabled American Veterans, a Congressionally chartered, nonprofit organization, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. DAV Home Page is [dav.org](http://dav.org). Available on recording for the blind and those with physical handicaps that preclude reading printed material. The magazine is mailed free to DAV and Auxiliary members who are paid subscribers. Nonmembers may subscribe for \$15 per year. Periodical postage paid at office of publication, Newport, KY 41071, and at additional offices. Printed in U.S.A. Change of Address: When notifying a change of address, send former as well as new address, including ZIP code, to: DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550.



Emerging technology is helping veterans with spinal cord injuries get mobile; now researchers are looking to see how this tech can mitigate other conditions stemming from SCIs.

13



The U.S. military continues to make strides integrating women into combat roles.

*Photo by Sgt. Brian Calhoun/Army National Guard*

18



Mefloquine has been used to prevent malaria since the late 1980s, but research suggests the drug may have long-term—even permanent—adverse effects.

**Stephen “Butch” Whitehead** National Commander

**J. Marc Burgess** National Adjutant/Publisher

**Barry A. Jesinoski** National Headquarters Executive Director

**Daniel J. Clare** Chief Communications and Outreach Officer

**Rob Lewis** National Communications Director

**Ashleigh Byrnes** Deputy National Communications Director

**M. Todd Hunter** Assistant National Communications Director

**Mary Dever** Assistant National Communications Director

**Bryan Lett** Assistant National Communications Director

**Austin Shaffner** Assistant National Communications Director

**Matt Saintsing** Associate National Communications Director

**Doreen Briones** Production Manager

**Shannan Archer** Senior Graphic Designer

**Michelle Bradburn** Graphic Production Assistant

## From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



### Share your story

It seems like the calendar is becoming more and more packed with celebrations and observances, with a day dedicated to just about everything. Some things, of course, are a bit more lighthearted—National Doughnut Day or International Necktie Day, for instance.

Others are more significant and somber, such as Memorial Day or POW/MIA Recognition Day, and carry much more meaning within the veteran community.

One that recently caught my attention was World Storytelling Day, observed on

March 20. It celebrates the art of oral storytelling. At first blush, it may not seem to have much significance among veterans. But if you're like me, you know a veteran or two whose stories have greatly impacted your life, helping to define the way you view the world and possibly even the way you cope with an illness or injury.

Sharing your experiences, struggles and triumphs can help others facing adversity to achieve their own victories, too. You may not even realize how powerful and inspirational a tool your story can be. It can also be very therapeutic, if and when you're able,

to put a voice to your internal thoughts, even if it takes many years to do so.

Over the years, DAV has partnered with the Library of Congress to support the Veterans History Project (VHP), encouraging our members to record their oral histories and submit them to the

library's collection. The VHP comprises more than 68,000 veterans' collections, but there are more than 18 million veterans in the U.S.

The VHP is in need of more stories from women veterans in particular, as they remain underrepresented in the collection. You can learn how to share

your story, or become an interviewer yourself, by visiting [loc.gov/vets](http://loc.gov/vets).

We at DAV are also very interested in hearing your stories. One of the most effective ways for us to advocate on Capitol Hill for veterans is by sharing the accounts of real-life individuals who are impacted by policies or whose lives could be changed by the passage of new laws.

There is no one better to tell your story than you, so this World Storytelling Day, feel free to visit [mystory.dav.org](http://mystory.dav.org) and share your experience with us. You never know just how far that story may go to help a fellow veteran.

Sharing your experiences, struggles and triumphs can help others facing adversity to achieve their own victories, too.



## Medical cannabis

Marijuana is a calming tool, especially for those of us still dealing with PTSD. It also decreases joint pain and helps with sleep. It is a joke how the VA still prescribes what the pharmaceutical lobby pushes. I know of many veterans who were given so many pills it was hard to keep track. Now, it is a highly trained service dog and a bowl of weed. **Nick Travis, via email**

I certainly hope the VA will research and control the quality of cannabis and not rely on these unregulated producers. The data is not available on the possibility of contamination. Industrial solvents, pesticides, etc., have not been identified because it's not a regulated industry. Studies haven't been conducted to the level of good and bad side effects of this so-called miracle drug. Do you really want VA prescribing unregulated chemicals for your treatment?

**David Galassini, via email**

## Expanding Space-A travel for veterans

I am delighted to see that, in [the January/February 2020] issue, there is mention of looking into extending the Space-A travel benefit for veterans ["Legislative goals for the new year"]. What a victory that would be for us. In addition, I hope that legislation will also extend the theater of eligibility as it is for retirees. Thank you all for the outstanding work you do. **Harvey Porter, via email**

## Service dogs

I was happy to read about different service dog categories. I am hopeful all my Facebook animal-loving and caring friends will take the time to read the story ['The Service Dog Dilemma,' November/December 2019 *DAV Magazine*] from start

to finish. Knowledge is a beautiful thing, and it will contribute to more analytical discussion than reactive drama. **Arnie Welber, via email**

Emotional support animals, if valid, are just as important to disabled veterans with PTSD and mental or emotional wounds as physical support animals. Maybe if some of the veterans who commit suicide—at least 20 daily—had an emotional support animal, they would still be here. **Stephen Briggs, via email**

## Hearing loss/tinnitus

I have tinnitus, and I always will. I also have service-connected hearing loss. I am currently on my third set of hearing aids. The first set I got while I was still active duty. The others I got from the VA. I just had my yearly hearing check, and I am scheduled for my next set of hearing aids within the next week or so. The VA has been great to me when it comes to hearing loss.

**Marty Petrich, via Facebook**

I knew I had lost some hearing, but I did not believe it was so bad. They said I had lost about 47%. I was so surprised how different it sounded when I got my hearing aids. **John Martin, via Facebook**

## DAV podcast (missing in action)

Veterans of the Vietnam War were and are still so mistreated and forgotten! They were doing what our country asked of them. The missing personnel absolutely

should be brought back home.

**Edward Cherry, via Facebook**

## VA telehealth

Telehealth would work much more efficiently and effectively if the VA hospitals, hospital staff and administrators would step up and really support the program.

**Anne Kemper, via Facebook**

I live in rural America, and telehealth is not an option. You have to have decent internet for it to work, and most of us in rural America do not have access. Heck, even our school-age kids can't do homework and other stuff for school due to the lack of decent internet.

**Terry Swift, via Facebook**

## DAV volunteer Harlan Plummer turns 100

Happy 100th birthday, Harlan, and thanks for your lifetime of service to your country and your fellow veterans. God bless you and many more birthdays to come. **Kenneth Rogers Jr., via Facebook**

Happy birthday, Harlan! God bless you and your family! Thank you for your service and sacrifice for our country! **Ron Williams, via Facebook**

Happy birthday, Harlan. Thank you for your service and for all the volunteer work you do for all of our fellow veterans.

**Evelyn Hoff, via Facebook**

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



## Easier access for rural veterans

Bipartisan bill introduced  
to improve transportation services

By Mary Dever

**T**he Rural Veterans Travel Enhancement Act of 2019—introduced by a bipartisan group of senators—will expand on current initiatives that provide transportation services to veterans living in rural areas and reimbursement for their travel to Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities, Vet Centers and vocational rehabilitation programs. The proposed legislation will also require the VA to develop and pilot an improved protocol for conducting medical exams for volunteer drivers in a more timely manner, an issue that has been a top priority for DAV for years.

If enacted, this bill will extend the VA's transportation program, which is a complementary asset to the robust, nationwide DAV Transportation Network. Prospective volunteers must undergo a basic physical to screen for underlying medical issues that would jeopardize the safety of veterans, but they have experienced issues with timeliness and consistency of the exam requirements.

“DAV has long advocated for all veterans to have access to high-quality health care, no matter where they live,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese. “We applaud the introduction of this legislation, as it would help expand the reach of DAV's Transportation Network, which provided veterans with more than 615,000 rides to VA medical centers last year alone, and to better serve veterans living in rural areas. We are grateful to Sens. [John] Tester, [Kevin] Cramer, [Patty] Murray, [John] Hoeven, [Joe] Manchin and [Susan] Collins for their leadership to ensure all veterans can attend their scheduled VA appointments.”

DAV supports this legislation based on Resolution Number 330, which calls on the VA to operate an effective and efficient transportation program for service-connected veterans and simplify travel benefits.

If enacted, the proposed legislation will also extend VA authority to provide grants that allow veterans service organizations and state veterans service agencies to explore new approaches to provide transportation or travel assistance to rural veterans.

The Rural Veterans Transportation Enhancement Act would:

- Expand eligibility for reimbursements to veterans and eligible beneficiaries for travel to VA Vet Centers for mental health care and counseling.
- Make permanent the Veterans Transportation Service program, which allows local VA facilities to hire drivers and purchase vehicles to transport veterans to their appointments.
- Require the Government Accounting Office to examine VA transportation programs.
- Expedite the physical examination process for volunteer drivers serving veterans through the DAV Transportation Network.
- Extend a grant program that allows veterans service organizations and state veterans service agencies to explore new approaches to provide transportation or travel assistance to rural veterans.



**Learn More Online**

To follow along with this and other veterans legislation, sign up for DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) at [DAVCAN.org](http://DAVCAN.org).

# A Marine helps his own

Vietnam veteran turns to DAV for help  
with lasting effects of war



*Dennis Reichert, Vietnam veteran*

By Matt Saintsing

**D**ennis Reichert struggles daily with what he experienced in Vietnam. Memories of fierce combat haunt the Marine, as do images of the weapons, flak jackets and canteens stacked row after row, each representing an American injured or killed on the battlefield.

Reichert enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1966, after one year of college. He was motivated to go to Vietnam after learning about the plight of South Vietnamese civilians.

“I read the stories in the paper, and I was going to try to save people from being enslaved by communism,” he said. “That’s the main reason I enlisted in the Marine Corps, to save South Vietnamese.”

After boot camp and infantry training, he got his wish and found himself in South Vietnam, not far from the North Vietnamese border, which proved to be a dangerous area.

“The enemy would come straight over the border, or they would go west through Cambodia and Laos,” recalled Reichert.

One day, in particular, stands out as especially traumatizing. While passing through the coastal city of Huế, Reichert noticed a distinctive stench filling the air, becoming more horrid with each passing step. As his element turned a corner, he saw the source of the smell: a dead body that had been steamrolled by tank treads.

“That was my first time smelling and seeing real death,” said Reichert.

It would not be his last.

Going on patrol, coming into enemy contact and calling in air support became routine occurrences. To keep eyes on enemy movement, the noxious herbicide Agent Orange was sprayed to clear the area of vegetation.

“In my heart and mind,  
I feel like I **won a battle**  
for this individual.”

—Michael Franko, national service officer

“It would make sense for these areas to be defoliated, so our jets and other forces could see the North Vietnamese entering South Vietnam,” said Reichert. “Somewhere along the line, I came into contact with Agent Orange.”

Reichert was in country for nine months before he was injured in combat, ending his time on the front lines. While approaching a village, the Marines began taking small-arms fire from enemy troops who were exceptionally well dug in. “They would hop up,” said Reichert, “and kill the Marines at the top of the column.”

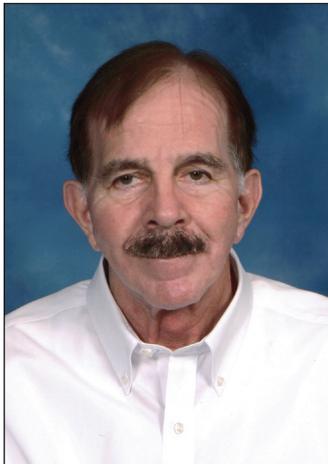
The Marines took cover and called in close air support.

After the explosions settled—which Reichert said were “so intense that trees would go sideways”—the enemy was still there. The element was lying prone on the ground when a Marine about 6 feet from Reichert was shot.

“For some reason, I was looking at him when the bullet hit his head,” he recalled. “He slowly sank into the ground, and I knew he was dead.”

Not long after that, a piece of shrapnel flew across the field, hitting Reichert’s leg. He and the other wounded were evacuated to a medical ship at sea.

Reichert was honorably discharged from the Marine Corps in August 1968, but the battle-scarred veteran continues to live with the effects of the Vietnam War. More recently, he began noticing physical tremors, which he



*Marine Corps veteran Dennis Reichert had been silently battling post-traumatic stress disorder for decades, but it wasn't until he sought help for Agent Orange exposure that he received the care he earned.*

suspected was Parkinson’s disease—an illness linked to Agent Orange exposure. On the advice of others, he visited DAV at the St. Louis VA Medical Center at Jefferson Barracks in February 2018.

That’s when he met Afghanistan war veteran and fellow Marine Michael Franko, who, at the time, was a DAV Department of Missouri service officer. The two quickly bonded over their shared familiarity with war, despite serving decades apart. Although Parkinson’s is what brought Reichert into DAV, he asked Franko if “it was OK” to have post-traumatic stress disorder.

“When you look at somebody who has been through the thick of it, they don’t always have the life in their eyes,” said Franko, who submitted claims for VA benefits and compensation.

After Reichert received a Parkinson’s diagnosis in May 2018, Franko walked him through what to expect with mental health examinations and explained that he was only a phone call away if he needed any help. Reichert would frequently visit Franko throughout the claims process, and the two would swap stories, as veterans often do.

Franko became a DAV national service officer in July of that year, but he still kept up with Reichert’s claim and would frequently update him on its progress. In September, Reichert received his final decision letter granting him VA benefits and compensation for Parkinson’s disease, PTSD and his wounded leg.

“He’s finally getting the treatment he deserves,” added Franko. “You could tell he walked a little taller and was much happier.”

Franko says he was driven to become a service officer to give back to veterans like Reichert.

“In my heart and mind, I feel like I won a battle for this individual,” he said. “Before Dennis received the decision, he appeared to be a shell of himself. Once he got a confirmed diagnosis, you could see he wasn’t just going through the motions anymore.” ■





# Hope through TECHNOLOGY

VA, veterans test state-of-the-art equipment to ease symptoms associated with spinal cord injuries

By Bryan Lett

**W**hen an individual sustains a spinal cord injury (SCI), there is a litany of secondary medical conditions that can develop from the resulting immobility, further complicating the road to recovery.

Some of those complications include low bone density and an increased risk of developing osteoporosis, poor bowel and bladder function, muscle atrophy, and an increase of fat tissue. An increase of fat tissue can bring with it all of the same health issues of obesity without the patient looking overweight. These conditions can open up an even wider web of health concerns, which makes a preventive approach a critical element of the treatment plan.

Yet there is hope for the estimated 42,000 veterans who have sustained a SCI—and the solution looks straight out of science fiction.

The Department of Veterans Affairs is studying powered exoskeleton technology, which recently became available as an alternative form of upright mobility to veterans with SCI, providing an external framework for support and computer-controlled motorized hip and knee joints to assist with walking. The study comes at an important time, as the VA is currently the largest health provider to individuals with SCI in the nation, and injuries to the spine are on the rise among post-9/11 veterans.

According to a recent report, “Epidemiology of War-Related Spinal Cord Injury Among Combatants: A Systematic Review,” the frequency of spinal cord injuries of all war casualties was estimated to be 1.2% in the Korean War and 1% in both the Vietnam War and the



**Above:** The ReWalk exoskeleton features a wrist-worn remote control to assist the user in sitting, standing and walking using knee and hip motors and a programmed stepping algorithm. **Right:** DAV life member and Air Force veteran Harry Hillen Jr. demonstrates how the ReWalk exoskeleton works. Hillen is a part of a VA-funded clinical trial to determine if individuals with spinal cord injuries (SCI) can use the device to fight off many of the secondary adverse medical conditions a SCI can produce.



Gulf War. More recently, it has been reported that more than 1 in 10 wounded Iraq and Afghanistan combatants have sustained an SCI. Presently, spine-related disabling conditions account for 14% of medical discharges from wartime military service.

“When people have a spinal cord injury, it’s not just the ability to move their limbs that is impacted,” said Dr. Kristi Henzel, who oversees the study at the Cleveland VA Medical Center. “The brain stem, the brain and the spinal cord control all of the body’s organs, so there are a lot of other things that can become dysfunctional from an SCI. These additional complications all have a negative impact on the patient’s longevity.”

The study is available to eligible veterans with SCI who pass the screening criteria. The targeted enrollment is 160 veteran participants across 15 different VA medical centers. Half the veteran participants will use the exoskeletons, and their progress will be measured against the other 80 participants who will use wheelchairs. For initial safety reasons, the veterans using the exoskeletons require a trained companion in order to use the devices at home.

“The veterans in the study group take the device home for 16 weeks, and during that time, they use the device as little or as much as they want,” Henzel said. “The goal

of the study is to help figure out how people are using it, how much using the device changes their quality of life and their activity level.”

In 1993, DAV life member Harry Hillen Jr. was medically discharged from the Air Force as a result of his wartime service. In 2008, he was celebrating his third wedding anniversary and the birth of his second child when his future as a husband and a father was threatened by the discovery of a cancerous tumor on his spinal cord.

“I had a lot to live for, but you never know what could happen to you at that point,” said Hillen, who is a member of DAV Chapter 58 in Hopwood, Pa. “It was pretty much a 50-50 chance if I was going to walk again, or even wake up from the surgery.”

Hillen successfully had the tumor removed, but it returned in 2011. He again had it removed and is now cancer-free and participating in the study.



Even if I can never walk again, it is amazing to be able to use it and be more active. **It definitely gives you hope.**



—Harry Hillen Jr., Air Force veteran

“I did physical therapy for three months after surgery,” Hillen said. “I was able to get to the point of walking with a walker, but I never progressed past that point. Then I got something in the mail about this opportunity and thought this could be something that really benefits me.”

Hillen’s final diagnosis is classified as an “incomplete spinal cord injury.” Put simply, an incomplete SCI occurs whenever a survivor retains some feeling below the site of the injury.

“It has improved my ability to play with my kids, because my legs have gotten stronger,” Hillen said. “When my daughter was born, one of my big things was that I wanted to be able to walk her down the aisle one day. That was my motivation that kept me going, and this device is helping ensure that happens.”

All of the participants in the study are using a powered exoskeleton, ReWalk 6.0, which is customized to fit each veteran properly.

“To begin use of the device, a person would transfer into it while it is seated,” said Andy Dolan, vice president of marketing at ReWalk.

Users buckle in and use a set of crutches positioned at their sides. The ReWalk takes physical cues from the user, as well as prompts from a wrist-worn remote control, to assist the user in sitting, standing and walking using knee and hip motors and a programmed stepping algorithm.

“It’s difficult at first,” Hillen said. “The first time I put it on, it was a little scary. You know, it is new. You get a little bit nervous, wonder if you’re going to fall, but being able to make the leg movements that you would normally make is pretty amazing. It gives you the hope to keep going. I can see and feel my legs being able to do more than before.”

“Studies like this show us what an important impact VA research has on the lives of disabled veterans,” said

Deputy National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado. “Especially as we’re seeing such a significant increase in SCIs among this current generation of warfighters, we must continue advancing technology that will give them the greatest quality of life possible.”

“This study is particularly exciting because, while others have had very encouraging results, this is the first to study individuals with SCI using these devices at home for a multi-month period,” Dolan said. “The VA’s funding and execution of this study is a crucial step in understanding the impact exoskeletons can have on a person’s quality of life and the reduction of their secondary medical complications.”

For Hillen, the ultimate goal is to be able to walk again and do more with his kids.

“Even if I can never walk again, it is amazing to be able to use it and be more active,” Hillen said. “It definitely gives you hope. It has given my kids hope also to go through it with me. I think it has made them stronger.”

The study has an estimated completion date of Sept. 30, 2021, but Hillen’s wife, Heather, said she has already seen improvement.

“The device gave him the help he needed to be able to stand up and take actual steps,” she said. “The look on his face when he is using the ReWalk is a look of accomplishment. The pride he showed when he learned how to operate it was a face I had missed seeing. I have felt our family getting closer to him as a husband and a father.”

Hillen is hopeful that the study will prove to be beneficial and therefore help more of his fellow veterans in the future.

“It’s all about seeing what it can do for other veterans,” Hillen said. “It’s about other veterans and improving their lives. Many veterans are worse off than I am, and I think this technology is pretty awesome.” ■



# GI Bill changes now in effect

## New regulations may hurt student veterans' bottom line

By Ashleigh Byrnes

Those using the Forever GI Bill through the Department of Veterans Affairs may have noticed a change to their monthly benefit.

Recently, the Forever GI Bill made two important changes to how the VA calculates monthly housing allowance (MHA)—and subsequently, the amount some student veterans will see in their benefits payments. Some beneficiaries may now receive lower housing payments, even though they have previously entered into leases or mortgages based on the higher rate. Others may see their housing benefit rise and may be due retroactive back pay that the VA will work to allocate over the next several months.

“January was the first month veterans would have seen the change, based on adjustments made to the calculations beginning in December,” said Assistant National Legislative Director Jeremy Villanueva. “We want to ensure veterans are aware of the potential impacts these changes will have on their benefits.”

First, the housing allowance was based on the Defense Department's housing allowance rates, which were capped in 2015. Post-9/11 GI Bill housing payments were exempt from the cap, meaning the VA continued to pay slightly higher housing rates than the DOD. For students who began using the GI Bill prior to Jan. 1, 2018, the higher rate will still apply. Those who began using the benefit after that date will now be paid at the DOD's E-5 with dependents Basic Allowance Housing rate.

Second, MHA will now be determined based on the location of the campus (ZIP code) where a student physically attends the majority of their classes, as opposed to the main branch or campus where a student is enrolled. This change mainly impacts students who attended extension campuses but have received a

housing allowance based on the geographic location of the main campus.

Schools will be required to resubmit enrollment information for students who took courses outside the main branch or campus between Aug. 1, 2018, and Dec. 1, 2019, in order to process claims in accordance with the new regulations. The VA has stated they will send letters to all students informing them of whether they have been overpaid, underpaid or not impacted by the change.

“The VA was in the process of updating its IT system to accommodate these rate changes and has, as a result, been overpaying some beneficiaries since August 2018,” said Villanueva. The resulting debts from these overpayments, according to the VA, will not require repayment by the beneficiary.

According to literature distributed by the VA, if a beneficiary was overpaid because of these changes, the VA will automatically review the overpayment for the debt waiver and provide additional information on the process for the beneficiary.

The VA has provided forms and instructions to those impacted so they can begin the housing relief request through the Ask a Question portal at <https://gibill.custhelp.va.gov/app/home>.

“Now that the new rates have gone into effect, it's a good idea to check out the VA's site and verify you are receiving the correct amount based on the new calculations, to avoid problems down the road,” said Villanueva. ■



### Learn More

The new MHA rates can be found online using the GI Bill Comparison Tool at [va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool](http://va.gov/gi-bill-comparison-tool). If you have additional questions about the change to this benefit, call the VBA Education Hotline at 1-888-442-4551.



# Help mark 100 years

Aug. 1-4, 2020

Hilton Anatole, Dallas

This year, we'll kick off our centennial celebration at the 2020 DAV and Auxiliary National Convention in Dallas—where you'll find big hats and big hair, as well as a hotbed of history, art and sports. There will also be special events and displays that honor the 100 years of service DAV marks this year.

The convention is a time for us to recognize our top volunteers and hear from department and chapter leaders while providing useful training. It's also an opportunity to advocate for ill and injured veterans, enjoy the camaraderie of fellow DAV members, and take ownership of the organization by choosing our leadership and setting our yearly legislative agenda—all while allowing for a hearty dose of fun in this premier vacation destination.

## 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.

If you're interested in history, start your visit off at the Fort Worth Stockyards before touring Dealey Plaza and its Sixth Floor Museum in downtown Dallas. Meanwhile, culture buffs can divvy up their time between Fort Worth's Kimbell Art Museum and the Dallas Museum of Art. And if you've brought the kids along, you can devote some time to both the Fort Worth Zoo and the Dallas World Aquarium, or keep cool in the Hilton Anatole's lazy river and splash pad.

Make your time in the "Big D" even better by taking advantage of free transportation options throughout the city. Jump on the M-Line Trolley in Downtown and head out to explore Uptown and the Dallas Arts District. Or find your seat on the D-Link, the Dallas Area Rapid Transit free shuttle service, to begin discovering Downtown and Oak Cliff in no time. No matter where you're headed, Dallas makes it easier than ever to start exploring all of the amazing places the city has to offer.

Our special room rate at the Hilton Anatole is \$149 per single or double. Additional hotel information is available by calling 800-445-8667 or visiting [www.dav.org/events/2020-national-convention](http://www.dav.org/events/2020-national-convention) and clicking "Reserve Online." Be sure to say you are reserving under the DAV room block if making reservations by phone. ■



**Learn More Online**

[www.dav.org/events/2020-national-convention](http://www.dav.org/events/2020-national-convention)



Hear  
her

# ROAR

The first enlisted women National Guard soldiers prove they have what it takes to call themselves **Army Rangers**

By Matt Saintsing

PHOTO ILLUSTRATION / SHUTTERSTOCK



PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. HAILEY HALUX/AIR FORCE

**S**taff Sgt. Jessica Smiley joined the Army at a time when women were barred from holding combat jobs and participating in elite training, like Ranger School. But a lot has changed in the 13 years since she first enlisted, and this past December, Smiley became one of the first enlisted female National Guard soldiers to earn the coveted Ranger tab.

Smiley and fellow soldier Sgt. Danielle Farber join the ranks of dozens of women who now wear the signature black-and-gold Ranger tab after completing the grueling course designed to develop combat leaders and prepare them for special missions.

“I’ve always tried to push myself to not only meet the standard but to exceed it,” said Smiley, a military police officer in the South Carolina National Guard, “not just for myself, but to the benefit of the soldiers beneath and beside me.”

The path for the enlisted Guard duo was paved in 2015 by Army 1st Lt. Shaye Haver and Capt. Kristen Griest—the first of their gender to graduate the formidable 61-day course. The first female Army officer reported to the 75th Ranger Regiment two years later. Then, in 2018, the first enlisted female soldier, Staff Sgt. Amanda Kelley, received her tab.

To prepare for Ranger School, Smiley underwent an intense 18-month physical fitness regimen, incorporating ruck marches, running and weightlifting into her routine. And laying the groundwork paid off, as Smiley found herself shoulder to shoulder with the other graduating Rangers at a life-changing ceremony near Victory Pond at Fort Benning, Ga.



*Army Sgt. Danielle Farber (left), Pennsylvania National Guard 166th Regional Training Institute Medical Battalion Training Site instructor, and Army Staff Sgt. Jessica Smiley, South Carolina National Guard military police noncommissioned officer currently serving with the Army Training and Doctrine Command, graduated Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Ga., Dec. 13, 2019, as the first National Guard enlisted women to complete the leadership school. Smiley and Farber completed the mentally and physically challenging course, which focused on squad and platoon operations designed to prepare soldiers to be better trained, more capable and more resilient leaders. (Photo by Sgt. Brian Calhoun/Army National Guard)*

The monthslong course, however, took a toll. The allure of a good night’s sleep and hot meal was tempting, particularly so when scaling the arduous and unforgiving north Georgia mountains carrying a pack weighing anywhere from 65 to 90 pounds.

“There were several times I thought about quitting, but then I told myself I’d quit the next morning,” Smiley said. “It was a time where I could just quit, and I’d receive no repercussions, because I didn’t ‘need’ the school.”

But each time, when morning’s first light came, she returned to the task at hand, and the thought of quitting withered away.

“

I've always tried to **push myself to not only meet the standard but to exceed it**—not just for myself, but to the benefit of the soldiers beneath and beside me.

”

—Staff Sgt. Jessica Smiley, Army Ranger

Her spot alongside other Ranger candidates was made possible in 2015 when then-Defense Secretary Ashton Carter announced that all combat roles and specialized training would be open to women.

“There will be no exceptions,” Carter said at the time. “They’ll be allowed to drive tanks, fire mortars and lead infantry soldiers into combat. They’ll be able to serve as Army Rangers and Green Berets, Navy SEALs, Marine Corps infantry, Air Force parajumpers and everything else that was previously open only to men.”

The new policy meant changes, not just for the military, but also for the way the nation structures

care and support for women veterans when they transition to civilian life.

Women are the fastest-growing demographic among all veterans in the United States today. About 9% of the roughly 9 million veterans treated by the VA are women, a percentage the Department of Veterans Affairs expects to double by 2040. To meet this demand, the House Veterans Affairs’ Committee announced the creation of the Women Veterans Task Force last year to identify and eliminate barriers women face when trying to access VA care—including reproductive health for women veterans, residential treatment programs and economic opportunity.

Specifically, the task force is focused on four areas: ensuring a welcoming and inclusive VA; providing equity and access to VA health care, including women-specific care such as gynecology and obstetrics; improving economic opportunities for women veterans and their families; and guaranteeing that women veterans have equal access to VA benefits, including education, disability and pension benefits.

“We have this growing population of women veterans who served during a time of war, and we know that they’re experiencing the same impact on their health as men,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem, who has been participating with the task force. “When they receive VA care, one apparent truth is a lot of these services and programs were designed for men; some of the nuances don’t shine through for women.

“It’s an exciting and important time to witness the evolution of gender roles in the military,” said Ilem. “Our charge now is to make sure we support that evolution by putting in place the appropriate measures to provide all veterans the care they need and deserve.” ■



Staff Sgt. Amanda F. Kelley, assigned to the 1st Armored Division’s combat aviation brigade at Fort Bliss, Texas, gets her Ranger tab pinned on by a family member during her Ranger School graduation at Fort Benning, Ga., Aug. 31, 2018. Kelley was the first enlisted woman to earn the Ranger tab. (Photo by Patrick A. Albright/Army)



# Service wherever you are

*Charles Burns, a senior national service officer with the DAV office in Fort Snelling, Minn., conducts an information seminar to a gathering of veterans in Elk River, Minn., on Feb. 8. In the back of the room, Assistant Supervisor Matthew Jahn assists veterans with their benefits claims. (Photos by SnowGlobe)*

## DAV information seminars provide benefits guidance and assistance to veterans in their local community

By Matt Saintsing

**F**or nearly a century, DAV has helped America's war-wounded and their families access a wide range of veterans benefits, including health care and compensation. While a robust network of service officers and benefits counselors is accessible at more than 100 sites nationwide, some veterans find it challenging to contact a DAV representative or travel to a national service office.

"For many years, we used our Mobile Service Office program to help reach these veterans by sending service officers in specially outfitted vans out into the community," said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. "But the vehicles were costly to maintain, difficult to maneuver and restricted where we could set up shop, so to speak. So we opted to replace the program this year with information seminars to reach more veterans at a time in different venues."

DAV information seminars are designed to educate veterans as they navigate the often murky waters

of benefits and claims assistance. DAV chapters, departments and volunteers are the lifeblood of the important events, bringing veterans face to face with DAV members who can help them get justice and the compensation they earned in service.

"Essentially, we can now advocate for veterans from anywhere," said Marszalek. "We have a lot more flexibility and can operate more efficiently."

Alex Martinez, who supervises DAV's national service office in Guaynabo, Puerto Rico, makes it a point to conduct information seminars inland, to reach veterans who are isolated from the DAV and VA offices along the island's coast.

"It isn't just going there and standing in line looking at each other," Martinez said of the seminars. "Veterans will come in so they can be seen at the VA hospital, and we'll try to take care of any claims they may have."

Veterans also have the chance to meet with officials from the VA National Cemetery Administration and receive blood pressure screens and flu shots, according to Martinez.

"It is quite an event," he added.

Layton Lamphere, who supervises the DAV service office in Muskogee, Okla., said information seminars attract anywhere from 20 to 150 people, depending on the area.

“We really try to reach people who don’t typically have face-to-face contact with DAV representatives,” said Lamphere. “We also go into large cities for veterans who don’t have the time or resources to travel to Muskogee to speak with us.”

The seminars also allow DAV advocates to discuss localized benefits, as well as changes to policies and laws governing VA benefits.

“We hit really hard on the Blue Water Navy issue during our last seminar,” Lamphere explained. “That was a huge change we wanted our veterans and their families to be aware of.”

Both Martinez and Lamphere said department-level leadership involvement is critical to making the information seminars a success.

“Our service officers and staff, from the national level down to the chapters, are trained to spot what veterans in their communities need,” said Marszalek. “What we do is not one size fits all, and the information seminars help us get out there and meet the unique needs each veteran has.”

Like all DAV services, information seminars are always free for veterans and their families. Membership is not required to take full advantage of DAV’s programs. ■



### Learn More Online

You can find a schedule of upcoming information seminars at [www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/InformationSeminarCalendar.pdf](http://www.dav.org/wp-content/uploads/InformationSeminarCalendar.pdf), or learn more from your local national service office by reaching them at [benefitsquestions.org](http://benefitsquestions.org).



Information seminars bring veterans face to face with DAV members who can **help them get justice** and the compensation they earned in service.

# Mefloquine miscues

Despite known risks of antimalarial medication, the Department of Defense issued mefloquine to U.S. troops for nearly a quarter century. Now, VA disability examiners may be misattributing its chronic adverse effects to PTSD.

By M. Todd Hunter





*U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Timothy Dobson, a fire team leader with 2nd Platoon, Ground Combat Element, Security Cooperation Task Force Africa Partnership Station 2011 (APS-11), takes doxycycline, an antimalarial drug, in Toubakouta, Senegal. (Photo by Lance Cpl. Timothy L. Solano/Marine Corps)*

**F**rom nuclear testing to Agent Orange to burn pits, the American military has a decadeslong history of inadvertently exposing service members to a range of harmful toxicants responsible for myriad long-term health issues. But there are certain exposures—those which have known dangers—that, as a matter of policy or apparent necessity, have been purposefully introduced to military personnel. This is true of the antimalarial drug mefloquine, which was administered to hundreds of thousands of deployed U.S. troops despite the Pentagon’s and health professionals’ awareness of its adverse effects.

Mefloquine, a pill taken weekly, was developed in the 1960s and 1970s by the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research after a drug-resistant strain of malaria sickened troops in Vietnam. It was widely prescribed to U.S. service members from 1989, when it was approved by the Food and Drug Administration, until 2009, when the Department of Defense issued directives effectively making it a last-choice drug for troops.

“It was recognized around the time of its U.S. licensing that there were very significant problems with this drug,” said Dr. Remington Nevin, a board-certified physician epidemiologist and former Army preventive medicine officer who has authored more than 30 scientific publications on malaria and antimalarial medication. “It was clearly known that some people became psychotic and some people became very violent, but at the time, it wasn’t appreciated just how serious these neuropsychiatric effects could be in terms of causing lasting disabilities.”

Nevin noted that the known dangers of mefloquine (previously marketed in the U.S. as Lariam) were such that its manufacturer, Swiss multinational pharmaceutical company Roche Holding AG (Roche), and the FDA agreed to language in the initial product insert that warned certain symptoms—*anxiety, depression, restlessness or confusion*—should be considered as early signs of a “more serious event” and the drug must be immediately discontinued by its user.



However, according to Nevin, most troops didn't receive those warnings or have logistical access to alternative medications while deployed. There was also no way for DOD medical personnel to identify ahead of time who was susceptible to the drug's neurotoxicity, estimated to be anywhere from one-quarter to two-thirds of its users.

"Instead, the military said, 'Here's your mefloquine, you're getting on the plane, you may have some crazy dreams, but suck it up and drive on,'" said Nevin, who now serves as executive director of The Quinism Foundation, a group dedicated to supporting research on quinoline drugs. "So, we systematically ignored and undermined the critical safety warnings in the product insert."

After various international studies confirmed mefloquine's potential for causing psychological illness, and a growing list of its neuropsychiatric adverse effects—including vertigo, tinnitus, insomnia, vivid nightmares, visual and auditory hallucinations, paranoia, seizures, mood swings and suicidal ideations—became more well known, Roche pulled the drug off U.S. shelves. Eventually, in 2013, the FDA issued its strongest "black box" warning, that mefloquine can cause long-lasting and even permanent damage, bringing an end to the DOD's nearly quarter-century use of the drug.

Exposure to antimalarial drugs has been introduced as a possible factor in several cases of violent murder over the past two decades. Cases include Army Staff Sgt. Robert Bales, who pleaded guilty to avoid the death penalty for slaying 16 Afghan civilians in Kandahar Province, Afghanistan, in March 2012, as well as four soldiers who killed their spouses over a six-week stretch in 2002 at Fort Bragg, N.C. This factor was also discussed when a group of soldiers from Fort Carson, Colo., were charged with manslaughter after

throwing an Iraqi man in the Tigris River in 2004.

In a 2013 publication, Nevin and other military medical professionals argued that mefloquine can produce "derealization and depersonalization, compulsions toward dangerous objects, and morbid curiosity about death." It can also produce dissociative effects that make someone performing violent acts think someone else is committing the crime.

Unfortunately for veterans affected by mefloquine, the Department of Veterans Affairs does not recognize an association between the drug and negative mental health outcomes. This is, in part, because of a joint VA-DOD study that notes there are no significant associations between mefloquine and mental health issues.

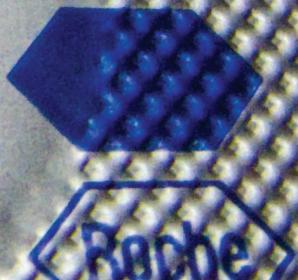
The 2018 publication, using data from a records study of 60,000 U.S. veterans who served between 2001 and 2008, found that reported negative physical and mental health outcomes are largely due to combat deployment exposure.

However, context is key. Not only did the joint study rely solely on record reviews of self-reported symptoms, which is problematic since most troops don't report psychiatric issues, but it was also not based on scientific diagnoses and did not have specific test subjects with a control group.

Alarming, a 2015 clinicians book focusing on post-traumatic stress disorder and related diseases in combat veterans does note that the acute symptoms of mefloquine intoxication may mimic and be mistaken for a number of acute psychiatric disorders, including PTSD.

"It's really a hidden epidemic, because so few people attribute these problems to the drug—there's always something else they attribute it to because it's taken during deployment, where there's so many other things happening," said Nevin, who warned that VA disability examiners may be misattributing mefloquine intoxication to PTSD.

# Mefloquine



In a 2018 letter to Dr. Paul R. Lawrence, the VA under secretary for benefits, Nevin offered a simple solution for rectifying these possible misdiagnoses: “Screening for such symptomatic exposure during a medical disability examination can be as quick and simple as asking the veteran, ‘Did you take mefloquine,’ and if so, ‘While you were taking the drug, did you experience one or more of these symptoms?’” he wrote.

In doing so, he argued, “examiners should retain an index of suspicion that any chronic neurologic or psychiatric symptoms, including those reported, could represent effects of mefloquine poisoning.”

“DOD not only dropped the ball in administering mefloquine in the first place, it also failed in its record-keeping of who and how many service members took it,” said Deputy National Legislative Director for Benefits Shane Liermann. “Recently, the VA has contracted with the National Academy of Medicine to study the long-term health effects of antimalarial medications. We are hoping this will overcome the shortcomings of the joint 2018 VA-DOD study and provide a path for Congress to establish presumptive service connection for any diseases or disorders found to be associated with the use of antimalarials like mefloquine.”

For his part, Nevin stated the DOD’s role in developing and administering mefloquine is what makes this issue a bitter pill to swallow.

“The drug company and the military knew all along, but they didn’t advertise or emphasize it,” said Nevin. “And as a result, we’ve unintentionally poisoned an entire generation of veterans with this drug.” ■



## Learn More Online

Veterans who have questions about Mefloquine or other service-related injuries can contact their local DAV service office at [benefitsquestions.org](http://benefitsquestions.org).

“The military said, ‘Here’s your mefloquine, you’re getting on the plane, you may have some crazy dreams, but suck it up and drive on.’ So, we systematically **ignored and undermined the critical safety warnings.**”

*Dr. Remington Nevin*



*Then-Army Capt. Remington Nevin at Kandahar Airfield during his deployment to Afghanistan in 2008. Nevin, a board-certified physician epidemiologist who currently serves as executive director of The Quinism Foundation, served as a preventative medicine officer for Combined Joint Task Force-82 while deployed.*



## From the NATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES DIRECTOR JOHN KLEINDIENST

### Start acting to honor veterans

I am proud and humbled to be able to share in the celebration of DAV's centennial anniversary with you this year. What's more, I believe our best is yet to come.

Over the past century, veterans have seen ups and downs. We have fought together on the battlefield, and we have fought together on the homefront to make sure veterans get the benefits they earned. We served together in uniform, and today, we serve our fellow veterans right here in our own communities.

I invite you to take ownership of this momentous occasion. Make it yours by participating in DAV's 100 Acts of Honor challenge. Each of you has special gifts and talents you can share with the veteran community, so let's ring in 100 years by putting them to good use.

One hundred is a big number, but there are countless ways you can achieve it—no act is too small to help make a difference in the life of a veteran. Chapters, units, individuals and even community groups can get involved in a number of ways. You can clean up a

community veterans memorial or cemetery, help a local veteran with some home improvements, visit a veterans nursing home in your area or visit patients at the nearest VA hospital. And we can always use volunteer drivers for our DAV Transportation Network—simply visit [www.dav.la/1if](http://www.dav.la/1if) to learn more

and sign up to help get local veterans to and from their medical appointments.

These are just a few suggestions, but many needs exist throughout the veteran community—and you can help be the one to fulfill them.

We want to hear about your efforts, too, as we march together toward a century of service. Tell us about your experience.

Let us know what you and your fellow members are doing and how your actions are impacting the lives of veterans and their families.

Email us at [VAVS@dav.org](mailto:VAVS@dav.org) or post on social media. Include #100ActsofHonor on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or LinkedIn posts, from both your individual and chapter accounts. Show us, and our fellow Americans, how important it is to stand up for veterans.

There are countless ways you can achieve [100 Acts of Honor]—**no act is too small to help make a difference** in the life of a veteran.



# Going **STRONG**



*Army Air Corps and Air Force veteran Harlan Plummer holds a Congressional Record acknowledging his more than 11,000 hours and 30-plus years as a DAV volunteer.*

## At 100 years old, DAV member continues serving fellow veterans

By Ashleigh Byrnes

In 2017, Ohio veteran Harlan Plummer was awarded DAV's George H. Seal Memorial Trophy, which honors the best of thousands of remarkable men and women who serve in the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service (VAVS) Program.

In December 2019, Plummer—who is a veteran of World War II, as well as the wars in Korea and Vietnam—turned 100, and he is still racking up volunteer hours with DAV. At last count, he had accumulated more than 11,000 lifetime hours, 500 of which he logged since receiving the award in 2017.

Plummer has volunteered through the VAVS Program for three decades in various capacities, including serving as a volunteer driver at the VA medical center in Chillicothe, Ohio, helping ensure veterans are able to access the health care they have earned. And while his devotion to veterans is clearly linked to his time in service, his volunteer spirit also seems to stem from his own experiences in childhood.

"When I was 13 years old, I got hurt on a railroad track. I was in the children's hospital for 13 months, and the doctors said I'd never walk and that I'd be in a wheelchair the rest of my life," said Plummer.

"But I started walking. I went through three wars and two mothers-in-law," he joked. "It just means an awful lot to me, to help and see people get back on their feet."

As DAV enters 2020 and looks to celebrate its centennial anniversary, it's members like Plummer—a veteran of the Army Air Corps and Air Force who belongs to DAV Chapter 71 in West Union, Ohio—who are helping to define the legacy of the organization and set the bar for its future.

"We can't thank Harlan enough for his time and generosity over more than 30 years with DAV," said National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. "His story should really inspire us all to dig a little deeper and see if there's more we can be doing for the veterans in our communities."

While Plummer has boxes of plaques, awards and certificates he's amassed over time, his efforts are all for the veterans.

"That's what keeps me going," Plummer said, "these guys that really need help."

"Harlan has overcome health and family obstacles over the years, but always comes back to the mission he loves," said National Commander Butch Whitehead. "He is a living, breathing example of why volunteerism is the cornerstone of DAV's mission." ■

# 5 pairs of shoes and a purpose

Veteran walks 3,300 miles, donates funds raised to DAV Charitable Service Trust

*Air Force veteran William Shuttleworth used his love of hiking to raise awareness of veterans' issues by walking across the United States. (Photos courtesy of William Shuttleworth)*



By Mary Dever

**W**illiam Shuttleworth, a 71-year-old Air Force veteran, wanted to do something about the harsh realities facing many of America's veterans. Something big.

As an avid hiker, the retired educator thought he could do what he knows best to raise public awareness of veterans' issues such as homelessness and mental health: He could walk and let his feet do the talking. He set a goal to hike 3,300 miles from his hometown of Newbury, Mass., to San Diego.

"I just basically walked out my front door and took off," said Shuttleworth, who started his 115-day journey May 15. "Maybe a week before I left, I walked all around town, anywhere I went, carrying my 32-pound backpack, just to get used to it. But other than that, I did no training. I just took off, told my wife goodbye and left."

"He's a big-idea person, so I was not surprised," said his wife, Patty. "I really knew at the time that he would become a vessel for people's stories that maybe they had never had before."

With Patty's unwavering support, Shuttleworth set a goal to raise \$5,000 for veterans while walking from town to town, providing comfort and a listening ear to veterans, families and friends who felt their concerns had been left unanswered. Just three weeks into his expedition, he'd already surpassed his goal.

"I thought, 'This is turning into something that could be quite lovely,'" Shuttleworth recalled. So he set his goal higher, ultimately raising \$70,000 for the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

Shuttleworth said he chose the Trust because he wanted the money to go directly to rehabilitation services for veterans.



Shuttleworth (right) lent a listening ear to veterans across the country. Many veterans met him on his journey, using the opportunity to share their stories.

“Veterans gave a lot and often have little to show for it,” he said. “More than 25% of all homeless men are veterans, and many of these forgotten warriors struggle with employment, addiction and sobriety. I wanted [donated funds] to go directly to the men and women that served [and to] services that needed it most.”

The DAV Charitable Service Trust supports physical and psychological rehabilitation programs, enhances research and mobility for veterans with amputations and spinal cord injuries, benefits aging veterans, aids and shelters homeless veterans, and evaluates and addresses the needs of veterans wounded in recent wars and conflicts. For those of every era, the Trust also supports programs that benefit the caregivers and families of ill and injured veterans.

“We are extremely grateful to William for—literally—going to great lengths to support our mission,” said Richard Marbes, president of the Trust. “He saw a need in our veteran community, and he sounded the alarm and brought attention to these critical issues veterans and their families face all across America.”

“I felt that ... a veteran myself, an older guy, I had some appeal of meeting people in small towns and having conversations,” Shuttleworth said. “I didn’t actually expect it to be the news events and sort of the hype event that it became. And even though I was tried and tested a number of times across the country, I never thought—not one time—that I would not complete my walk.”



Shuttleworth’s 115-day mission ended in San Diego, Aug. 31. He was greeted by supporters from all eras of service and all walks of life.

After averaging 30 miles a day, Shuttleworth’s walk ended Aug. 31 at the San Diego waterfront alongside the USS Midway. He said the hardest part of the trip was the last 10 days, when it was seldom below 100 degrees. But, he said, it was worth it.

“I wore out five pairs of shoes on my journey,” he said. “I saw ‘America the Beautiful,’ and it starts with her people—the kindest, most hardworking and generous people to give their shirt off their backs and do anything in the world for each other. They’re who this country is all about.” ■

“Veterans gave a lot and often have little to show for it.”

—William Shuttleworth,  
Air Force veteran



## From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER DIANE J. FRANZ

### Spring into action

**W**ith the harsh winter months behind us and summer quickly approaching, spring is an opportunity to rejuvenate yourself and rekindle your motivation to give back to our nation's veterans.

As a new generation of disabled veterans returns from service—and the numbers of veterans of the World War II, Korean War and Vietnam War eras who need assistance increase—our nation's heroes need our help, and there is no more fitting time to get involved than during National Volunteer Month in April.

In 2007, DAV began the Local Veterans Assistance Program, or LVAP. This program recognizes creative volunteerism to support veterans. Volunteers can complete activities such as performing yard work or home repairs, running errands, shoveling snow, cooking or painting. Auxiliary members who volunteer for LVAP can receive credit for their time. These hours are also used when determining eligibility for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship.

Like all medical facilities, Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals, nursing homes and clinics need volunteers to perform a wide range of duties. Some work directly with patients, participating in recreational programs and other activities on the wards. Others assist the VA's professional staff, escort patients, serve coffee or simply provide

companionship to veteran patients.

To learn about voluntary service programs in your area, please contact your nearest facility using the VA Medical Center Directory.

More recently, DAV launched VolunteerforVeterans.org. The site makes it easy to help America's veterans or to get the volunteer help you need. It is a nationwide resource designed to connect volunteers with initiatives, veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors. It creates a database to match opportunities with civic-minded individuals and organizations.

Opportunities are as limitless and varied as the needs of our nation's veterans, particularly those changed by war. From basic assistance around the house to unique opportunities that require special skills, services to improve the lives of veterans, their families and survivors can be added to the site.

I encourage all DAV Auxiliary members to seek out volunteer opportunities that fit their skill sets and interests as a way to give back to veteran families in their local communities. Also, we must promote these incredibly valuable tools to our unit members in order to assist as many veterans and their families as we can.

It is these dedicated men, women and children who make the DAV Auxiliary mission of "Making a Difference" a reality.

## 2020 National Defense Authorization Act includes improved survivor benefits

■ The 2020 National Defense Authorization Act—signed into law in December—contains a provision that will completely eliminate the Survivor Benefit Plan/Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (SBP/DIC) offset by January 2023.

The SBP is insurance purchased out of pocket by military retirees for their survivors, while the Department of Veterans Affairs DIC program provides monthly support to surviving spouses of veterans who die from service-related disabilities.

Currently, surviving spouses who are eligible for both are having the SBP annuity reduced dollar for dollar by the amount of their DIC payment. When DIC benefits are payable, but the monthly rate is equal to or greater than the monthly SBP payment amount, beneficiaries lose the entire SBP payment.

“For years, DAV has called on Congress to repeal the unfair offset between SBP annuities and DIC payments,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese. “We are extremely pleased that Congress has finally passed legislation that will remove this unjust offset and that the president signed this provision into law.”

The bill will remove the offset incrementally by



*Joint Chiefs Chairman Gen. Mark Milley (top center) watches as President Donald Trump signs the National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2020 at Andrews Air Force Base, Md., Dec. 20, 2019. (AP Photo/Andrew Hamik)*

one-third in January 2021, a second third in January 2022, and the final third in January 2023, ultimately allowing surviving spouses to receive both the purchased SBP annuities and their earned DIC benefits.

Recoupment of offsets from previous years will not be provided, as the law will not be retroactive. To find out more about how this provision may affect you, contact your local DAV national service office at [benefitsquestions.org](http://benefitsquestions.org).

## Walmart joins VA-led ATLAS program to serve rural veterans

■ Walmart joined a group of organizations delivering new pilot locations for VA-led Accessing Telehealth Through Local Area Stations (ATLAS) services in rural communities across the nation. The goal is to increase accessibility to Department of Veterans Affairs health care for eligible veterans.

According to the VA, organizations that collaborate with ATLAS provide veterans with comfortable, private spaces to have video appointments with VA providers. At ATLAS sites such as Walmart, veterans meet with VA providers through VA Video Connect, the VA's secure videoconferencing software.

Walmart, which operates more than 4,700 U.S. stores in primarily rural and suburban locations, has donated equipment and space at five sites as part of a pilot initiative. VA telehealth clinical services vary

by location and may include primary care, nutrition, mental health and social work.

“The VA has a mission to deliver best-in-class service to veterans everywhere,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs executive adviser Deborah Lafer Scher, who leads the secretary's Center for Strategic Partnerships. “We can be much more successful if we have strong and effective partnerships.”

This new option makes VA care easier to access and eases the burden of long travel times to appointments.

For a veteran to attend an appointment at an ATLAS site, the site must be associated with the VA medical center in which the veteran is enrolled for care. Family members who receive care through the VA can visit ATLAS sites for select VA appointments. Find out more at [connectedcare.va.gov](http://connectedcare.va.gov).



**Out of the rain...**

DAV Chapter 25 of Skippack, Pa., donated two 12-foot gazebos to the Southeastern Veterans' Center in Spring City, Pa. The new gazebos will be used for veterans, their families and visitors to enjoy the outdoors. Pictured from left: Chapter 25 Commander Jim Ulinski, Veterans' Center residents Frank Horvath and John Lang, and Southeastern Veterans' Center Deputy Commandant Mildred Butler-Coleman.



**The Greatest Generation...**

In honor of the Greatest Generation, members of Chapter 45 in Goldsboro, N.C., dedicated their break room to active member and World War II veteran Thurston E. Quinn (right). Chapter 45 Commander Thomas P. Callan placed the plaque on the wall, just above the seat where they can regularly find Quinn, sharing in member camaraderie.



**A Century of Service to Veterans**

**SAVE THE DATES**

Please join DAV this year as we commemorate a century of service to America's ill and injured veterans and their families.

**DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION**

DALLAS

**Saturday, August 1 – Tuesday, August 4, 2020**

- Hilton Anatole, 2201 North Stemmons Freeway

**CENTENNIAL CELEBRATION**

GREATER CINCINNATI AREA

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**

- ▶ Centennial celebration, reception and concert
  - Cincinnati Music Hall
  - Performance by Cincinnati Pops Orchestra

**Friday, September 25, 2020**

- ▶ DAV Transportation Network and Ford Vehicle Drive-Away
- ▶ Outdoor concert and celebration

We'll provide more updates on [DAV.org/centennial](https://www.dav.org/centennial) as we get closer to our landmark anniversary.

## From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



### Faith and Reason

**W**ithin the ranks of DAV, there are many different faiths and points of view. It's great that we have a diverse membership, and I believe all conversations surrounding the point of faith can result in a more robust definition and comprehension of one's own beliefs, as well as a respect for those of others.

Faith, especially in current times, is often regarded as a private matter. It's sometimes viewed as incongruent to reason and dismissed from larger conversations since it does not apply equally to all. But faith of all varieties has an important role in shaping the way we live and the choices we make.

Truth is important to faith. You see, truth is not only a matter of offense, in that it makes certain assertions. It is also a matter of defense, as it must be able to make a logical argument and sensible response to counterpoints that are raised.

From my perspective, faith is not antithetical to reason. First, it is not just a will to believe; it is substantive, based on the knowledge that the one in whom that faith is placed has proven to be worthy of that trust. In other words, is there evidence to support your faith or not?

This can apply not just to religious faith but also to any system of beliefs. You can have faith in God, of course, but also in any type of higher power, in your elected officials, in an organization or in a specific cause. All these entities must be worthy of our trust, and we would be wise to continually question that trustworthiness as an exercise in faith.

As children, we have an abundance of faith, which is sustained either by reasoning through that faith or by blindly leaving the reason for faith unaddressed. Children may not understand the concept of faith, but when they nestle into their mother's shoulder or run into their father's arms, they do so because of an implicit trust. Over time, that trust is tested, and it will be the character of the parent that will either prove that trust is wise or foolish.

A common misunderstanding of faith is that it is a crutch for those who are hurting or are in need of some kind of transcendent intervention for a situation in which they cannot rescue themselves. I believe, more often, this is the testing of one's faith, not a crutch. Without doubt, a faith that stays strong in the storms of life is a faith to be envied. An equally viable faith is demonstrated when dependence is shown in the midst of success. Faith is not deprived of reason.

I encourage you to make discussions of your faith, beliefs and understanding regular occurrences. You can take time to consider it on your own through reflection or study, or (respectfully) engage others—especially those who may not share your specific views.

And remember, we're never too old or set in our views to learn something new or to subscribe to a different belief. The world is a large and wonderfully diverse place with much to see, do and experience. Exploring it can do so much to expand our perspectives.

In His Service to You.

# Kids get to be kids at Camp Corral

By Rob Lewis

Summer will be here before you know it, which means it's time to register for Camp Corral. DAV and Golden Corral are once again teaming up to help provide a one-of-a-kind summer camp experience for children of wounded, injured, ill or fallen service members and veterans at no cost to their families.

Since 2016, DAV's Just B Kids scholarship program has allowed more than 4,500 children throughout the nation the chance to attend Camp Corral programs for free. This summer, at least 1,000 more campers will be sponsored.

Camp Corral has been helping the children of service members and veterans make connections and build their resiliency skills since 2011. The summer camps provide fun-filled activities like swimming, horseback riding, canoeing and crafts that give kids a chance to relax, have fun and make new friends. Many campsites offer special resources to help these children deal with the unique challenges they face in their day-to-day lives.

"DAV is proud to be a part of the Camp Corral experience, serving the children of those who have served," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "Many military children have big responsibilities at home due to their loved ones' injuries, and Camp Corral helps lighten their pack for a while, giving them the opportunity to have a week of fun with other kids who share similar experiences."

To sign up or to get more information, visit [justbkids.org](http://justbkids.org). Applications close once a camp is full or one month before the first day of each camp. Popular campsites fill up quickly, so apply early. ■



2020 <b>CAMP CORRAL</b> Schedule			
DATES	LOCATION	CITY	STATE
June 7-13	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
June 14-20	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
June 21-26	Triangle Y Ranch Camp	Oracle	AZ
	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC
June 28-July 3	Eastern 4-H Center	Columbia	NC
	4-H Memorial Camp	Monticello	IL
	YMCA Camp Carson	Princeton	IN
	YMCA Camp Gorham	Eagle Bay	NY
June 28-July 4	YMCA Camp Wood	Elmdale	KS
	YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin	Middleville	MI
July 5-10	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC
July 12-17	Camp Twin Lakes at Will-a-Way	Winder	GA
	YMCA Camp Classen	Davis	OK
July 26-31	YMCA Camp Shady Brook	Deckers	CO
	YMCA Camp Wewa	Apopka	FL
July 26-Aug. 1	YMCA Camp Fitch	North Springfield	PA
Aug. 2-7	YMCA Camp Weaver	Greensboro	NC
	YMCA Camp Seymour	Gig Harbor	WA
Aug. 2-8	YMCA Camp Loma Mar	Loma Mar	CA
	YMCA Camp Ernst	Burlington	KY
	Camp Lakotah	Wautoma	WI



[justbkids.org](http://justbkids.org)



### **Helping veterans in the community...**

Members of Chapter 17 and Auxiliary Unit 17 of Universal City, Texas, provide meals and necessities to veterans in the substance abuse clinic and homeless shelter at the Audie Murphy VA Medical Center in San Antonio. They provide this service every quarter, feeding 75 to 100 veterans each time. Front row (from left): Jamie Sack, William Senter, DAV Auxiliary National 1st Junior Vice Commander Darlene Spence, Mary Johnson and Robert Woodfork. Middle row (from left): DAV Past National Commander Dennis Nixon, James Calhoun and Jennifer Wydler. Back row (from left): Donald McLeod, Robert Wydler, Jerry Lemelle, Willie Solsberry and Vertner Toliver.



### **National recognition for volunteerism...**

Chapter 10 of Fairfax, Va., received the National Mall and Memorial Parks Group Volunteer Award from the National Park Service. Chapter 10 received the award for the second straight year based on its members' volunteer efforts in cleaning the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial in Washington D.C. Pictured from left: National Park Service Ranger and life member James Pierce, volunteer and life member Tomas Esterrich, Chapter 10 2nd Junior Vice Commander Tanya Culbert and National Park Service Superintendent Jeff Reinbold.



### **Thankful for their service...**

Members of Chapter 61 in Seguin, Texas, participated in Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Night and fundraiser at their local restaurant. In addition to raising funds to support the chapter's service initiatives, the annual event allows DAV members to meet and socialize with other veterans in their communities. Pictured from left: DAV life member Marlin Howze and World War II veteran Walter Fleming.



**Minnesota veterans at Root Beer Float Day...**

DAV members of Chapter 20 of Faribault, Minn., helped promote awareness of DAV's services at National Root Beer Float Day at their local A&W Restaurant. The annual event, hosted by A&W Restaurants, raised nearly \$170,000 to support DAV's mission across the country. Pictured from left: Chapter 1st Junior Vice Commander Dan Rasmussen, Chapter Commander Debra Petersen, Chapter Treasurer Joshua Vrtacnik, Harold Keilen, Larry Preuss, Chapter Senior Vice Commander Luverne Malecha and Larry Parkus.



**I scream, you scream...**

DAV Chapter 5 in Hot Springs, Ark., routinely serves ice cream to staff and hospitalized veterans at the Eugene J. Towbin Veterans Healthcare Center in North Little Rock. Kilwins of Hot Springs—an old-fashioned confectionary chain—recently donated to the program, allowing DAV members (from left) Gene Rasure, Kevin Tuohy and Rick Martin to serve up scoops for their fellow veterans.

**PLANNING A REUNION?**

Send the details to [feedback@dav.org](mailto:feedback@dav.org). Submissions must be received at least four months prior to the event date.



Help the brave men and women who served by donating any car, truck, RV or boat. The pickup is free and you could qualify for a tax deduction at the same time.

**To donate your vehicle, call or visit:**  
**1-833-227-4328 | [dav.org/cars](http://dav.org/cars)**



**Share Your News!** Send photos of your DAV or Auxiliary department, chapter or unit news to [production@dav.org](mailto:production@dav.org). Please provide a JPEG image, a description of the photo and the names of those pictured.



**Thankful for volunteerism...**

Chapter 45 in Goldsboro, N.C., recognized Joseph Royall (center) as their first Driver of the Quarter. Royall is the first to receive the honor. He is one of five volunteer drivers from the chapter who provide free transportation for local veterans to their VA medical appointments. The award was presented to Royall by Chapter 45 Commander Thomas P. Callan (left) and transportation coordinator Alonzo Albertson.



**Quilt of valor...**

Members of the Quilts of Valor Foundation presented a personal quilt to DAV life member and World War II veteran Howard Prunty (center). Quilts of Valor volunteers work daily to create quilts to cover warriors from all conflicts, including World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq and Afghanistan. Prunty is the last surviving World War II veteran from Chapter 55 in Covington, Ga.



**Mural to honor veterans...**

Members of Chapter 102 in Newport, Tenn., joined by local community leaders and a crowd of more than 150 veterans, their families and supporters, unveiled its new mural saluting Cocke County and the nation's men and women who served. What started as a project to replace the chapter's deteriorated welcome sign developed into a community project involving the local high school, the city of Newport and local arts groups. Pictured from left: DAV members Charles Stewart, Kate Stanford, Gene Stansbury, Chapter Adjutant Janet Collins, Department of Tennessee Commander Barbara Gilliam, Chapter Commander Larry Hartsell, Albert Johnson, Rob Watkins, Doug Almy, Vann Ford, Frank Nance and Andrew Hauser.



**Making services accessible...**

Chapter 234 in Stephenville, Texas, is now more accessible to disabled veterans thanks to the addition of a ramp at the entryway to its office. The chapter recently funded construction of an upgraded concrete ramp and landing area at the front of the building to allow easy access to all veterans needing assistance from volunteer benefits advocates. Pictured: Chapter Commander Bill Maness.

**Did you know that DAV members have access to great discounts on products and services?**



When you take advantage of these offers, our partners will donate back to DAV, helping us keep the promise to more ill and injured veterans. These are some of our valued partners:



**Ready for your adventure?** When adventure is calling, hit the road with Budget. DAV members save up to 25% off base rates. Complete terms and conditions apply.



NMLS# 3030

**Discover these benefits from Quicken Loans.** As a VA lender, we're offering \$1,250 in mortgage savings<sup>1</sup> when you buy or refinance a home with us.\*\* Visit [VIP.QuickenLoans.com/DAV](http://VIP.QuickenLoans.com/DAV) or call 855-287-6081.



**Moving? Save up to \$1,000 on your next move.<sup>1</sup>** DAV families enjoy exclusive savings on professional interstate moving, packing and storage-in-transit services with northAmerican Van Lines. Members also receive up to \$100,000 of personal property protection coverage plans at no cost! To qualify for your moving discounts, call 1-800-928-0599 or submit online at [movingnavl.com/dav](http://movingnavl.com/dav).

To take advantage of these special offers:  
[dav.org/membership/member-advantages](http://dav.org/membership/member-advantages)



<sup>1</sup>Budget will provide 5% of annually reported base rate and mileage revenue at participating locations in the U.S. and District of Columbia (excluding Alaska) to DAV. In order for DAV to qualify for receipt of the royalty payment, the annually reported base rate and mileage revenue must exceed \$5,000. The agreement between Budget and DAV runs through December 31, 2020. <sup>2</sup>DAV receives an annual fee from Quicken Loans in the amount of \$5,000. This offer between DAV and Quicken Loans runs through January 18, 2021. <sup>3</sup>DAV receives a royalty payment from northAmerican of 1% of the after discount line-haul transportation for a DAV member's household goods move. The agreement between northAmerican and DAV runs through December 31, 2020.

## REMEMBRANCE

### DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander Martha “Maurine” Pederson



Pederson

■ DAV Auxiliary Past National Commander Martha “Maurine” Pederson, of Kansas City, Mo., died Oct. 26, 2019. She was elected to the organization’s highest office in July 1979.

Pederson joined the Auxiliary in 1935 through her late father, Clifton Ishmael, a World War I veteran. Before her election, she served in many positions with the Auxiliary from the local to national level.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Oswald Pederson, a DAV life member injured in World War II. Pederson’s mother, Helen Ishmael, also served as the DAV Auxiliary’s National Commander from 1956 to 1957.



## #100ACTSOFHONOR

To commemorate 100 years of service to America’s veterans, DAV is calling on individuals, companies, schools, clubs, our members, as well as our fellow organizations to conduct 100 Acts of Honor in the name of veterans.

#### What counts as an act of honor?

- Visit a veteran in the hospital.
- Clean up a community veterans memorial.
- Perform a chore for a veteran who is unable to.
- Sign up to be a volunteer driver.

No act is too big or too small. Share it online with the hashtag **#100ActsofHonor**. Help spread the word by using one of the profile frames on Facebook. To find volunteer opportunities in your community, sign up at [VolunteerforVeterans.org](http://VolunteerforVeterans.org).



# I SERVED FOR *my family's safety*

USAA members who bundled Auto and Home Insurance saved over \$589 million combined in a single year.<sup>1</sup> Bundle today to help protect what matters to you and what you have worked so hard to build. With USAA insurance, enjoy an unrivaled level of service because we know what it means to serve.

**JOIN USAA TODAY AND GET A QUOTE.**

CALL 844-DAV-USAA (328-8722) OR VISIT [USAA.COM/DAV](http://USAA.COM/DAV)



USAA is  
**Honored to Serve**  
Disabled American Veterans

**WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO REFUSE TO QUOTE ANY INDIVIDUAL A PREMIUM RATE FOR THE INSURANCE ADVERTISED HEREIN.**<sup>1</sup> Savings figure based on 2018 savings earned when members combined USAA auto and home insurance products. Multiple product savings do not apply in all states or to all situations. Savings subject to change. Restrictions apply.

Use of the term “member” or “membership” refers to membership in USAA Membership Services and does not convey any legal or ownership rights in USAA. Restrictions apply and are subject to change. Property and casualty insurance provided by United Services Automobile Association, USAA Casualty Insurance Company, USAA General Indemnity Company, Garrison Property and Casualty Insurance Company, based in San Antonio, TX; USAA Limited (UK) and USAA S.A. (Europe) and is available only to persons eligible for P&C group membership. Each company has sole financial responsibility for its own products. Disabled American Veterans receives financial support from USAA for this sponsorship. The agreement between USAA and DAV runs through June 30, 2020. © 2020 USAA. 251249-0120-DAV

## REUNIONS

### ARMY

**1ST BATTALION 40TH FA VIETNAM** June 14–19, Mount Pleasant, SC, Contact: James Bishop, Ph: 209-952-0535, Email: james@jabishop.com

**1ST MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BN (ARS), U.S. ARMY VIETNAM** May 14–17, San Diego, CA, Contact: Don Skinner, Ph: 503-648-6059, Email: donsk@frontier.com

**2ND GENERAL HOSPITAL, WARD 1 AB (LANDSTUHL GERMANY 1974–1977)** April 17–19, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Bill Pierce, Ph: 435-896-3382, Email: bpiercerucd@gmail.com

**4TH BATTALION, 39TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION (VIETNAM 1966–1969 BEAR CAT, DONG TAM)** Sept. 24–26, Charlotte, NC, Contact: Jim Haines, Ph: 303-809-1858, Email: lzbearcat@live.com

**88TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION** May 4–7, Kissimmee, FL, Contact: Donald Thompson, Email: dthom28@myfairpoint.net

**121ST AVIATION COMPANY, 93RD TRANSPORTATION COMPANY & 80TH TRANSPORTATION COMPANY (DA NANG & SOC TRANG RVN)** April 30–May 2, Contact: John Schmied, Ph: 352-633-0541, Email: johnschmied@yahoo.com, Web: 121avn.org

**227TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALION** April 21–24, Nashville, TN, Contact: Howard Burbank, Email: chickenman@a227ahb.org, Web: reunion.227ahb.org

**OCS AT FORT KNOX (1965–1968)** May 2–4, Columbus, GA, Contact: Rich Sebastian, Ph: 330-388-6002, Email: richandmary@zoominternet.net, Web: ocsatfortknox.com/Reunion.html

**THE U.S. ARMY OFFICER CANDIDATE SCHOOL ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (TUSACAASAA)** May 1–4, Columbus, GA, Contact: Dan Johnson, Ph: 402-981-1072, Email: vp-admin@ocsalumni.org, Web: ocsalumni.org

### MARINES

**1ST & 3RD AMTRAC BATTALION** March 29–April 4, Bay St. Louis, MS, Contact: Ron Stogner, Ph: 601-569-9456, Email: ronstogner1948@gmail.com or Contact: Gene McCandless, Ph: 415-559-8691, Email: genemccandless@gmail.com

### NAVY

**USS BLUEFISH SSN-675 & SS-222** April 23–26, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: John Wittenstrom, Ph: 910-638-1716, Email: jwittenstrom@nc.rr.com

**USS COGSWELL DD-651 ASSOC. WITH USS WEDDERBURN DD-684 ASSOC. (1943–1969)** Sept. 21–23, Bellevue, WA, Contact: George Overman, Ph: 760-889-2216, Email: secretary@usscogswell.com, Web: usscogswell.com

**USS CONSERVER ARS-39** April 23–26, Fairfield, CA, Contact: Dale Hower, Ph: 619-449-4499, Email: dcwoodworking1@yahoo.com, Web: ussconserver.org

**USS DUBUQUE LPD-8** June 25–28, Dubuque, IA, Contact: Lawrence Parker, Ph: 812-228-7260, Email: ussdbq8reunion@yahoo.com

**USS FORREST B. ROYAL DD-872** June 25–28, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Ron Larsen, Ph: 715-423-8905, Email: mosbyusni@wctc.net

**USS KEARSARGE (ALL) ASSOC.** May 25–29, Milwaukee, WI, Contact: C.V. Lindley, Ph: 850-712-4664, Email: cvjan78@gmail.com, Web: kearsargeassociation.com

**USS MAUNA KEA (AE-22) 1955–1996** April 30–May 2, Milwaukee, WI, Contact: Dennis Thieme, Ph: 262-758-3894, Email: dtcthieme@outlook.com

**USS NAVASOTA** March 9–11, Laughlin, NV, Contact: Carmin Rosenthal, Ph: 253-350-3603, Email: carmin46@msn.com or Contact: Walter Stanchfield, Ph: 320-679-2531, Email: cstan01@gmail.com

**USS RICH (DD/DDE 820) 27TH ANNUAL REUNION** May 4–8, Kalamazoo, MI, Contact: Nick Tomasi, Ph: 269-353-8810, Email: reunion2020@ussrich.org, Web: ussrich.org

**USS STEINAKE (DD-863)** April 23–26, Gettysburg, PA, Contact: Ken Kohnen, Ph: 904-654-7321, Email: ken.kohnen@yahoo.com, Web: usssteinaker.org

**USS TAYLOR (DD/DDE-468)** Aug. 27–31, Harrisburg, PA, Contact: James O'Neill, Ph: 804-212-8911, Email: oneillfalm@aol.com

### ALL SERVICES

**MILITARY AND CIVILIAN ADVISORS—VIETNAM, LAOS AND CAMBODIA 1954–1975** April 15–19, San Diego, CA, Contact: Lewis Grissaffi, Ph: 619-922-8682, Email: luisaffi@yahoo.com, Web: counterparts.net

**UDORN RESEARCH GROUP (UDORN RTAFB 1961–1976)** July 9–13, Weatherford, TX, Contact: Jerry Long, Ph: 817-673-0459, Email: jclhyers71bafb@gmail.com

### INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who served in the 3rd Brigade 2nd of 12th Battalion, B Co., 4th Platoon, An Khe Camp Radcliff, 1965. Also looking for pictures or other forms of verification of the company being awarded the Presidential Meritorious Unit Citation for Battle at Plei Mei. Contact: Freddie Slaughter, Email: freddie.slaughter@sbcglobal.net.
- Searching for anyone with knowledge of the fatal M-88 accident in the summer/fall of 1981 at 2nd Bn, 125th Bde, 1st Cav motor pool, Fort Hood. Contact John Tilford, Ph: 812-219-8235.
- Searching for volunteers who were at Edgewood Arsenal, Md., in the early 1960s and were exposed to VX nerve gas agent and may be having problems from exposure, such as myself. Contact: Ed Myers, Email: jfishing2@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who jumped in Focus Retina March 16, 1969, 3rd Bat. 3/325th Inf. 82nd Airborne. Contact: 941-204-4653, Email: capt.fred@aol.com.
- Searching for Tech. Sgt. Janis K. Olson (JKO), Radio Operator 304xx, last stationed at Minot AFB, ND, in 1996. Former bases Shemya, Alaska and Dyess AFB, Texas. Contact: Jane Flowers, Ph: 507-320-0866.
- Searching for Robert M. Greene who was originally from Chicago. Green was stationed at Cam Ranh Bay, Vietnam, 1967–1968. Green was a member of the vocal group called "Doc & The Cavaliers," who performed and toured with an Air Force show known as "7AF Command Performance." Contact: Jesse Holt, Email: patjess2@cox.net.
- Searching for Air Force Sergeant Debbie Wallace who was stationed at Lockbourne Air Force Base, Headquarters Squadron, Columbus, Ohio, 1971–1973. Contact: Terry McAlister, Ph: 502-338-9582.
- Searching for Tim Sullivan and Joe Mcvey who served in Chicago from 1969 to 1970. Contact: Richard "Frenchy" La Chapelle, Email: dlachape@sbcglobal.net.
- Searching for anyone who was stationed in Pobwonni, Korea, 1968–1969. Contact: Richard "Frenchy" La Chapelle, Email: dlachape@sbcglobal.net.
- Searching for anyone who may have known Michael Gene Metcalf who served in the Army at Camp Evans, Vietnam, 1969–1970, Company C, 158 Aviation Battalion, 101 Airborne Division. Contact: Kay Metcalf, Email: mplus5@msn.com.
- Searching for Mr. Cloyd Greed. Contact: Tomas Hataj, Email: Indianhead.roster@gmail.com.
- Searching for members of the 2nd Battalion, 8th Field Artillery, who were deployed in OIF 2008–2009 and OEF 2011–2012 to have a reunion in Kansas City, MO, Sept. 2020. Contact: Alejandro Esparza, Email: jandroaleg500@aol.com.
- Searching for anyone that was in the 8th Army, A Btry, 7th Bn, 2nd Arty, Sig Co. in the Korean DMZ from December 1966 through spring 1968. Contact: Ken Green, Email: vpeters127@comcast.net.
- Searching for George Ranft of USMC 5th Comm Bn, Da Nang, 1967–1968. Contact: Bob Sutherland, Ph: 520-975-2009, Email: bobsutherland@hotmail.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in the 360th TEWS at Tan Son Nhut Air Base, Vietnam, May 1970–March 1971. Contact: Jim Stodola, Email: energy46@verizon.net.
- Searching for Specialist Four 11B20 Larry Clements, 198th Infantry Brigade, who was stationed in Vietnam August 1971–June 1972. Contact: Wilbert H. Baucom, Ph: 501-847-8550 or 501-960-2271.
- Searching for anyone who served with A Btry, 599th, F.A., Jan. 1951–Dec. 1951, Fort Bragg, NC. Contact: Moe Moore, Ph: 617-491-7714.
- Searching for Leland Grant Ritter, of Texas, who was stationed at the Naval Air Station Whidbey Island, WA, where he worked in the electric shop. Contact: Marion Galgerud, Email: boyde1941@cox.net.
- Searching for anyone who may have served with Rodrick "Marty" O'Banion, USAF, HOR Vermont, EOD 3/12/68, Discharged 1/12/72, Pease AFB, NH. AFSC: 42153, AGE Repairman in SEA/Indochina. Contact: Joseph Cleary, Email: jcleary50@comcast.net.
- Searching for Ronald Peacock USMC, 1968–1969. Fared from San Leandro, CA, Unit 2nd Sqd. 3rd Pln. E-Co. 27th Mar. 1st Mar. Div., Contact: Albert "Hondo" Hernandez, Ph: 505-506-7397, Email: beckyhernandez46@yahoo.com.



**Thunder Over the Boardwalk...**  
DAV Department of New Jersey members attended the 17th annual beachfront Atlantic City Air Show, spreading awareness about the organization's programs and services to thousands of attendees and joining groups like the U.S. Air Force Thunderbirds and U.S. Army Golden Knights parachute team in a salute to those who serve. Pictured from left: John Opatovsky, Commander Fred Smith, Senior Vice Commander Leonard Long, Ken Lazar and Adjutant Johnnie Walker.



# Give beyond your years

The funds raised through bequest gifts play an important role in DAV's ability to continue serving veterans and their families. We can never thank our estate gift donors enough! If DAV is included in your estate plans, please let us know before it is too late. We'd love to know you, thank you and welcome you into the Guardian Society.

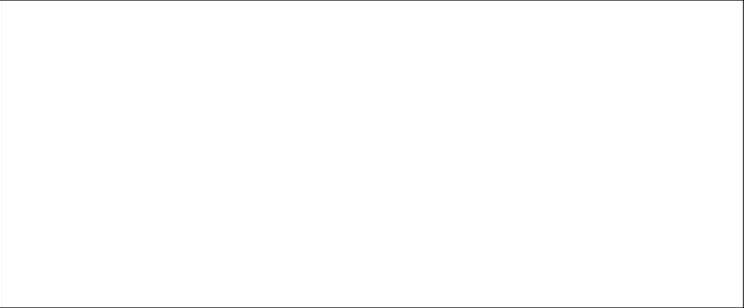
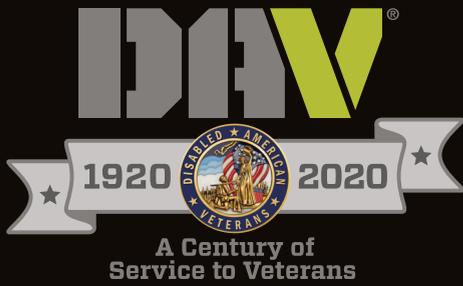
To learn more, or to inform us that DAV is already named in your estate plans, please call Judie List Sweeney at 800-216-9802, ext. 1; email [giftplanning@dav.org](mailto:giftplanning@dav.org); or return the attached postcard.



Guardian Society

## New gift for DAV members and supporters!

Create a no-cost will at [FreeWill.com/DAV](https://www.FreeWill.com/DAV). It's easy and can be done in just minutes. Be sure to let us know if you have named DAV in your estate plans. We want to thank you for your intentions!



# CENTENNIAL SWAG

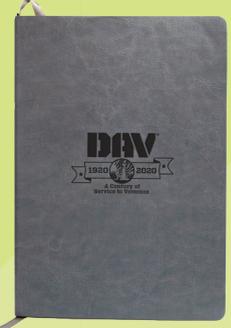


**\$12 each**

**Pocket Tee**  
 Colors: Black, Navy, Red  
 Sizes: S-4XL



**100th Anniversary Stylus Ballpoint Pen with LED Light | \$4.50**



**100th Anniversary Journal | \$10**



**100th Anniversary Hat | \$10**



**\$41**

**Softshell Jacket**  
 Color: Heather Gray  
 Men's and Ladies'  
 Sizes: S-4XL

Shop [DAVSTORE.org](http://DAVSTORE.org) for new products.