



## National Convention Remarks

Auxiliary National Commander Ellen Timmerman

August 3, 2019

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Thank you, Commander Nixon.

I'm honored to have the opportunity to speak to you today about topics that are critically important. The significance of these topics is not limited to myself. Rather, they are essential to all veteran families.

Each and every one of us in this room share a common responsibility—to stay informed and aware of all facets of the organization and veteran-related issues so we can serve veterans and their families.

Being here today and looking out at all of you in this room, I'm reminded of the hope and camaraderie that first attracted me to this wonderful organization. We are part of something bigger than ourselves, and we are in it together.

Membership is the lifeblood of our organization, and, without new members, we run the risk of losing out on new ideas from fresh perspectives that could help our Auxiliary move forward.

However, we've found ourselves struggling to promote growth and active involvement within our membership. I'd like to challenge each of you to reflect on your history with the organization and think about what initially motivated you to become an active member of our community.

Our goal is to promote the growth of the DAV Auxiliary by becoming more welcoming and supportive of new methods and ideas while still maintaining the traditions of the organization. This proves challenging when considering the broad diversity of our membership.

Encourage and train members to take active roles and leadership positions within the organization. Every member has something special to contribute. Urge each other to use those strengths to maximize the effectiveness of our ranks.

Encourage suggestions and new ideas at all levels of the organization, and embrace the membership age span. We should welcome individuals of all ages and backgrounds. Inspire a spirit of change to attract new and younger members. This means reaching them where they are and stepping out of our personal comfort zones.

Identify the unique challenges facing those we serve and develop programs to meet their needs.

The Auxiliary has been an integral pillar in the push for comprehensive caregiver benefits for veterans of all eras.

With the passage and implementation of the VA MISSION Act, we need to keep our members aware of changes to benefits, as well as continuously listen to new or developing needs from our members. We can do this by promoting caregiver and community awareness for veterans and their families.

We can't stress the benefits and meaning of membership enough. The voices who join our cause impact our ability to improve the lives of the families, survivors and heroes who rely on us. The power of our numbers lends more strength to our voice on critical legislative issues. I hope all of you are working to build relationships with your local DAV chapter to help you reach our goals to fill our ranks. Two organizations working hand in hand is better than one.

As new people join our cause, be sure to welcome them and take the time to explain some of the things your unit does for our veterans and their families, as well as what you do in your community. If you do this, they will be better prepared to help and even recruit more junior members. We all want to feel like we are valuable and truly an asset, and juniors are no different. Embolden and support them to be active by giving them meaningful ways to contribute.

I hope you are taking advantage of all the information available for your use to inspire and engage our fellow members and citizens. These items, found on the Auxiliary website, are for everyone to use—you don't even need to sign in.

Let's strengthen both DAV and the Auxiliary by working together and supporting each other. The DAV Auxiliary motto is "Making a Difference." Each of us has the capability to make a difference every single day—and we do.

I say these words with conviction: I truly thank you for your service to our country and for the sacrifices each of you made during and as a result of your military service. Most importantly, thank you for giving me the opportunity to enjoy the freedoms we have in this great country.

Thank you, Commander Nixon, for your friendship and partnership. It's been an honor to serve alongside you, and God bless you and your families.

This concludes my report.