



THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

MAY JUNE 2013

MAGAZINE



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National Adjutant
of 19 years retires

National Commander testifies on Capitol Hill

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Mid-Winter Highlights



DAV Auxiliary National Commander Donna Adams tells the DAV Commanders and Adjutants Association meeting at the Mid-Winter Conference that the organization's partnership with DAV shares the obligations and responsibilities in serving veterans.



Department of North Dakota delegation meets with Sen. Heidi Heitkamp (D-N.D.) during the conference.



DAV members eagerly await National Commander Larry Polzin's presentation before a joint meeting of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in the Cannon House Office Building.



Department of Maine Commander Richard Fournier, left, discusses DAV's legislative priorities with Rep. Angus King (I-Maine).

"If DAV is out of sight, it is out of mind, and face-to-face meetings certainly keep them aware of veterans' issues."

*Chapter Adjutant Edward Saunders,
Chapter 10 in Billings, Mont.*



Department of Florida Adjutant Al Linden, left, meets with House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (R-Fla.).



National Commander Larry Polzin receives a standing ovation at the conclusion of his testimony before a joint hearing of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER

LARRY A. POLZIN



VA Resources Must Meet Growing Demand

During the 2013 Mid-Winter Conference, National Commander Larry Polzin presented DAV's National Legislative Program at a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. Polzin called upon lawmakers to make sure the Department of Veterans Affairs has the resources it needs to meet the growing demand for veterans programs and services. Following are highlights of the Commander's presentation, which received enthusiastic applause and a standing ovation from the hundreds of DAV and Auxiliary members gathered for the event.

Mr. Chairman and members of the Veterans' Affairs Committees, I am honored for this opportunity to discuss our major concerns and legislative agenda for the coming year. Since our founding in 1920, DAV has remained dedicated to fulfilling our promises to men and women who served and to their families and survivors.

Part of our mission is advocating for meaningful, reasonable and responsible public policy for our injured and ill veterans of all generations. With the proposed downsizing of our military forces and the slow recovery in our domestic economy, more veterans will be relying on the Department of Veterans Affairs for services and benefits for decades to come.

We must ensure that the VA is prepared to handle such a large influx of veterans. However, based on my experience with the VA, I'm not yet confident that our government is fully prepared to fulfill its promise to our nation's veterans. All of my adult life has been spent in service to my fellow veterans. And in 1971, the company that hired me after I was discharged from the Marine Corps turned its back on me when I needed open-heart surgery.

While I was in a VA hospital, a DAV Department of California Service Officer helped me file a claim for benefits I had earned, and I became a member of DAV. Later, I was offered a job as a National Service Officer, and it was an amazing chance to help my fellow veterans. That has been my life ever since.

And while the President's fiscal year 2014 budget proposal has yet to be presented, DAV and other veterans group have recommended a \$68.4 billion discretionary appropriation for the VA. Detailed recommendations for funding and policy priorities can be found in *The Independent Budget*.

A major area of concern is that the VA is forced to operate at last year's level under yet another continuing resolution. That short-term funding measure also does not provide any advance appropriation for veterans medical care for fiscal year 2014.

Demand for veterans health care and services has outpaced the resources allocated to the VA. And with widespread reports of long waiting times for medical and mental health care, long delays for claims decisions and the still growing backlog, sufficient funding for vital programs and services is an absolute must.

DAV members also are deeply disturbed by the possibility of further delays in veterans' disability compensation or lost access to VA health care. DAV believes delay means denial, and we will not stand by and allow this to happen.

Mr. Chairman, as a service-disabled veteran and a retired DAV National Service Officer, I have taken a great interest in the VA's disability compensation system. Of course, we are encouraged by the VA's effort to streamline and modernize the claims process. And we are convinced that the Veterans Benefits Administration is headed in a right direction.

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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT ARTHUR H. WILSON



An Open Letter to DAV

It seems like a long time ago now, 1994, that I became National Adjutant of DAV at our 73rd National Convention in Chicago. It was a time when wars were fought conventionally, with opposing forces uniformed for recognition. Now conflicts are waged, to greatly understate it, in unconventional ways. In 1994 this Organization was in some financial and leadership difficulty, which we can now say with pride has been completely overcome, and we are at a pinnacle of success.

You, loyal reader, are acutely aware of the enormous toll our worldwide conflicts have taken in terms of the severity and volume of disabling illnesses and injuries borne by those who have served, as well as the advances in medicine and health care which have enabled so many to survive what in the past would have meant certain death. And as a result, DAV has had to rise to the challenge, which I am proud to say we have done. Not only have we continued to improve and strengthen the services rendered to our membership but also those we provide to all disabled veterans and their families through our nation-wide National Service Officer corps. As you already know these men and women, disabled veterans themselves, are accredited attorneys-in-fact

recognized by the federal government to represent the veteran at no cost.

All of that brings me to this point: after nearly 47 years of full-time continuous service, first as an NSO, and now as its corporate and institutional leader, I have announced my retirement as DAV's National Adjutant on May 31, 2013, and National Commander Larry A. Polzin has appointed National Headquarters Executive Director J. Marc Burgess to the position of National Adjutant, effective June 1. I will, of course, continue to be actively involved in support of the Organization in any way that I am called upon. I look forward to many years of attendance at our Mid-winter Conferences and National Conventions.

I believe this to be an ideal time to pass the torch of leadership to a new generation of men and women, well-trained for their positions at our National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., and our National Service Offices in every state, the District and Puerto Rico. Never have I been more confident that the experience and dedication they possess will stand the nation, the Disabled American Veterans, and you, our members, in good stead.

(Continued on pg. 4)

Adjutant's Column

(Continued from pg. 3)

This DAV—apolitical in every aspect of its functionality save one—is emphatically not apolitical in representing the interests and welfare of America's wartime disabled and their families. We are most assuredly a “special interest” registered lobby in that cause. Because of the unwavering support of the citizens of this great nation and people like you, we have sustained this representation since our founding in 1920. I am one of a small group of seven members who have served as National Adjutant, and I am humbled thinking of that singular honor.

I am very aware that many readers of this publication, possibly because of the severity of their disability, have never attended a Chapter meeting, or a Department gathering, or a National Convention. My thoughts and those of all our members, I know, are with those comrades in arms always. They are the living core of DAV's reason for being. We shall never forget them and what they have sacrificed for their country. To the rest of us, more fortunate, it is especially important that we remain as active as we are able in our monumental cause: one that must remain paramount in the incredibly challenging years ahead. If what we have seen before is just prologue, let's consider our recent history. Since I became Adjutant the World Trade Center was attacked twice; the destroyer USS *Cole* was attacked (its survivors were honored at our Washington Headquarters); the second Iraq War began; the stock market fell precipitously, twice; the first African American President was elected; the Euro became the official currency of most of Europe; Saddam Hussein was executed; Osama Bin Laden was killed; and, as we pass through 2013, it appears that we may be on the road to economic recovery. In my judgment the next decades will be as equally momentous as those in the recent past.

As a congressionally chartered United States corporation, we are the largest and most

respected group in the world devoted by law solely to support the needs of disabled veterans and their families. I firmly believe, and I'm sure you'll agree, that the need for our services will increase in the aftermath of our participation in world conflicts.

As I soon will end my years of employment, which have been dedicated to the fulfillment of all those exquisitely important purposes, my heart will continue always to be so dedicated. I will be passing our great national institution into the hands of focused men and women who share our commitment. I'm confident in the conviction that will be the singular objective of each of them. I have sought over the years to instill in all who have been with me on this journey a sense of compassion and tolerance, leadership, impartiality, fairness, equality and, most importantly, integrity in all aspects of our service. I hope that this has been the hallmark of my tenure, and, in the long run, the reason for it.

In retrospect I am humbled by the great amount of confidence and responsibility you placed in me by granting me the opportunity to serve you. I certainly hope that I have lived up to most of the expectations that you have held for me.

I have met and enjoyed knowing so many of you, and to all the rest, I hope at some future time our paths may cross and that I will be able to meet you as well!



Candidates for National Office

The following information is intended to inform the membership about the announced candidates for national office. Such use does not constitute an official endorsement or approval by the National Organization of any candidate to the exclusion of others who may stand for election. DAV members may announce their candidacy at any time, up to and including the time of election at our National Convention in Orlando, Fla., Aug. 10-13, 2013.



★ Joseph W. Johnston

National Senior Vice Commander Joseph W. Johnston is a service-connected disabled veteran of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars. He is a life member and Past

Commander of Chapter 63 in Batavia, Ohio. He also is a Past Commander of the Department of Ohio.

He served on the National Interim Legislative Committee in addition to his duties with Chapter and Department voluntary services programs. He was inducted into the Ohio Veterans Hall of Fame in 2007.

Johnston joined the U.S. Army in 1966 and served in the enlisted ranks before accepting a commission. He was an Army Ranger for 28 years, serving with the 101st Airborne Division, 10th Mountain Division, 2nd Infantry Division, 82nd Airborne Division, 7th U.S. Corps and the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

After retiring from military service in 1992, he began a 20-year career in management and finance. He earned master's degrees in both business and executive management from Central Michigan University and the Army's General Staff College and worked for nonprofit organizations. He currently is chief executive officer for Greater Cincinnati Behavioral Health Services.



★ Ronald Hope

National 2nd Junior Vice Commander Ronald Hope is a life member of Chapter 12, Albemarle, N.C. The combat-injured Army veteran of the Vietnam War served 31 years as a DAV National Service

Officer and served 10 years as National Area Supervisor overseeing the organization's service offices in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina and Tennessee.

He has served in nearly every Chapter leadership position and served as the Department Service Officer

for 25 years. His deep commitment to serving DAV and all of America's injured and ill veterans and service members is what drew him to seek National Office.

His DAV career included serving as an NSO in Waco, Texas, before being promoted to Supervisor at the National Service Office in Oklahoma City and Winston-Salem, N.C.

Prior to his DAV career, he earned a bachelor's of administration degree with a major in marketing from Tarleton State University. He served in the U.S. Army from 1968 until his medical retirement in 1970.



★ Moses A. McIntosh

Moses A. McIntosh currently serves as National 3rd Junior Vice Commander. He was elected to the position at DAV's 2012 National Convention in Las Vegas.

A service-connected Desert Shield and Desert Storm combat veteran, McIntosh served in the U.S. Air Force and U.S. Army. A native of Meridian, Ga., he enlisted in the Air Force after graduating from high school. Following basic training, he served as a member of the 51st, 524th and 596th bombardment heavy squadrons. He also served with the U.S. Air Force Tactical Air Command.

Following an interservice transfer to the U.S. Army in 1989, McIntosh attended warrant officer training as well as Army aviation flight training, qualifying to pilot UH-1 and UH-60 assault helicopters. He was medically retired at the rank of chief warrant officer in 1997. He received a master's of science in human resource management from Troy State University and completed his undergraduate studies at Louisiana Tech University.

McIntosh is a life member of Chapter 18 in Augusta, Ga., where he has served as Treasurer and in a variety of other Chapter offices and appointments. He was elected Department Commander in 2007.

McIntosh has served as the Chairman of the Department of Georgia Finance Committee and DAV National Executive and National Interim Membership committees.



★ David W. Riley

Currently serving as National 4th Junior Vice Commander, David Riley is a veteran of the U.S. Army and the Coast Guard. He is a life member of Chapter 7, Mobile, Ala.

He has held a succession of Chapter and Department offices and chaired the National Legislative and Veterans' Rights National Convention Committee in 2011. He was selected as the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year in 2010 for his dedication, commitment and inspiration to his fellow injured and ill veterans.

In addition to serving as Chapter and Department Service Officer, he volunteers at the Mobile Community VA Outpatient Clinic and mentors other amputees in support of their recovery and rehabilitation.

While serving as a Coast Guard helicopter rescue swimmer, he contracted septic shock pneumococcus sepsis. As a result of the infection, he was hospitalized for three months, lost all four limbs and suffered damage to numerous internal organs.

After his medical retirement from the Coast Guard in 1997, he earned a bachelor's degree in computer science and a master's degree in computer and information science.



★ Michael E. Dobmeier

National Judge Advocate Michael E. Dobmeier has served in that leadership position since 2002. He was appointed Assistant to the National Judge Advocate in 2002 and completed the term of

National Judge Advocate Edward G. Galian, who passed away that spring.

Dobmeier is a native of Grand Forks, N.D., who enlisted in the Navy in 1969 after graduation from high school. He trained as an engineman, attended the Naval Submarine School at New London, Conn., and completed Navy Dive School in San Diego.

In April 1972, Dobmeier suffered severe burns over more than 30 percent of his body while aboard the submarine

USS *Trigger* when an oil heater exploded. He was evacuated to the Naval Hospital in Bremerton, Wash., and later sent to Brooke Army Medical Center in San Antonio.

He was discharged that year and became a life member of Chapter 2, Grand Forks, N.D. He has since been appointed or elected to nearly every Chapter and Department office and position, and was named the 1985 DAV Outstanding Member of the Department of North Dakota.

At the national level, he has served on the National Executive and Finance committees and was elected National 4th and 3rd Junior Vice Commander in 1995 and 1996, National 1st Junior Vice Commander in 1997, National Senior Vice Commander in 1998 and National Commander in 1999.



★ Delphine Metcalf-Foster

A retired Army first sergeant and combat veteran of Desert Storm and Desert Shield Delphine Metcalf-Foster has long been active at the Chapter, Department and National levels. In 2004, she became the first woman elected Commander of DAV Department of California.

At the national level, Metcalf-Foster served on the Board of Directors, to include a term as Treasurer, from 2010 through 2012. She is an active member of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, and she serves on California Rep. George Miller's VA Committee and U.S. Military Academy Board.

Metcalf-Foster's military awards include the Army Commendation Medal, Army Achievement Medal, Army Component Achievement Medal and the Southwest Asia Service Medal. She retired from the U.S. Army Reserve in 1996.

She worked for the Department of Defense as a civilian for 20 years, retiring as a quality assurance work leader for Alameda Naval Air Station. She was responsible for planning, assigning tasks, training new employees, demonstrating proper operation of equipment and resolving employee issues through conflict management. After retirement, she earned a bachelor's degree in liberal studies from Sonoma State University.

Metcalf-Foster is a life member and current Adjutant of Chapter 21 in Vallejo, Calif.



★ Dennis Krulder

A service-connected U.S. Army veteran of the Vietnam War and life member of Chapter 125 in Malverne, N.Y., Dennis Krulder is a Past Commander of the Department of New York and former 2nd District member of the National Executive Committee. He has also served on the Department of New York Executive Committee, as Department Chaplain and has been selected as chairman of numerous committees on the Department level.

A native of Brooklyn, N.Y., Krulder has served in all positions at the Chapter and Department level, and is currently Department Treasurer, an executive committee member of the Commanders and Adjutants Association and executive director for the VA Voluntary Services Program for all New York volunteers. For the last 14 years, he has been DAV's Hospital Service Coordinator at Northport VA medical center, N.Y., where he manages more than 130 drivers providing transportation to approximately 3,500 veteran patients each month.

Originally a member of Chapter 190, Krulder helped reactivate Chapter 125 in 2004 and became its Chapter Adjutant and Treasurer, positions he still occupies.

Krulder was inducted into the U.S. Army in May 1967 and served as a helicopter door gunner with the 5th U.S. Cavalry in Vietnam. He received several citations and Air Medals for his service.



FOR NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

★ Ronald R. Ringo Jr.

National Chaplain Ronald Ringo is a life member of Chapter 55 in Simi Valley, Calif. He is a service-connected disabled veteran of the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps. He enlisted in the Marine Corps in April 1977. He served as an infantryman and recruiter while on active duty in the Marine Corps, then for eight years as a military police officer as a reservist. He was commissioned in the Navy in November 1993 and served as a chaplain for multiple units in the Navy, Marine Corps and U.S. Coast Guard until his retirement as a lieutenant commander in 2011.

During his break in military service, he spent several years serving his community as a police officer and sheriff's deputy. He also served as a school principal and school administrator, developing and implementing a curriculum for students with emotional, drug and alcohol concerns.

Ringo earned his doctorate in counseling from LaSalle University and is a licensed social worker, certified trauma specialist and master addictions counselor. He also helped develop the Marine Corps and Navy Warrior Transition Program at the onset of the Iraq War. He continues to serve as DAV California State Chaplain.

Architect of Modern DAV Retires



By Thom Wilborn

Throughout DAV's distinguished history, a few gifted leaders stand out as true champions of our mission of service and advocacy on behalf of the nation's injured and ill veterans. Among the greatest and most skilled are Judge Robert Marx, National Adjutants Vivian "Crab" Corbly and Dale Adams, Executive Director and Secretary of Veterans Affairs Jesse Brown and National Adjutant Art Wilson.

Now, after nearly two decades as National Adjutant, Wilson, with the concurrence of National Commander Larry A. Polzin, is passing the torch to National Headquarters Executive Director J. Marc Burgess, whose appointment is effective following Wilson's retirement June 1.

Those who have worked alongside Wilson credit his astute leadership, wisdom and foresight with making DAV the preeminent veterans organization in our nation today and far into the future.

"Art's management style is to use foresight based on the best knowledge available," said retired National Headquarters Executive Director Rick Patterson. "His management decisions, large and small, are made from a position of intellectual strength and tempered with an accurate interpretation of the facts at hand."

The first Vietnam veteran to join the National Service Program, Wilson began his 47-year DAV



Airman Wilson

career on the cutting edge of change. A graduate of Lynn Classical High School in Lynn, Mass., he attended Burdette College in Lynn until he enlisted in the U.S. Air Force in September 1962, serving in Vietnam, the Philippine Islands, Thailand and Taiwan.

His storied DAV career began in November 1966 as a National Service Officer trainee in Atlanta, followed by National Service Office assignments in Buffalo and Philadelphia. Wilson later was appointed to supervisory positions in Syracuse, New Orleans and Boston. He was named supervisor of DAV's National Appeals Office at the VA Board of Veterans' Appeals in Washington, D.C., in 1974. In 1976, he was appointed to management duties at National Service and Legislative Headquarters.

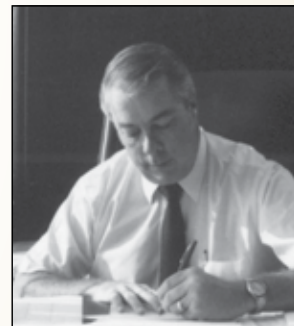
Wilson served 12 years as National Service Director before being appointed by then-National Adjutant Adams as Washington Headquarters Executive Director in 1993. Less than a year later, he was appointed by then-National Commander Richard Marbes as National Adjutant.

"Art's leadership and integrity were the right prescription for DAV at a very critical time in the organization's history," said Marbes. "And since then, DAV has thrived and flourished as never before."

Using his personal vision to rebuild DAV, Wilson immediately began to make vital improvements to DAV service. And for 19 years, the progress and the strength of DAV has



National Service Officer



National Service Director



National Adjutant

increased relentlessly, thanks to the superb management skills of Wilson and his hand-picked staff of directors.

“One of the great changes instituted by Wilson was his demand for fiscal responsibility and accountability,” Patterson said. “While government and private industry often boasted of re-engineering its operations, DAV lived it. DAV completely revamped how its business was done by embracing and investing in new technology, permitting work to be accomplished more effectively and efficiently.”

Wilson’s changes have been wildly successful. From 1993 to 2003 the net worth of DAV increased from \$59 million to \$248.7 million — a 422-percent increase.

“Art moved aggressively to strengthen our vital National Service Program,” said retired Washington Headquarters Executive Director David Gorman. “And he fortified DAV’s legislative clout with Congress and the federal government. He continued to build the organization’s reputation in Washington for promoting reasonable, responsible legislation to gain needed benefits

Wilson with former National Headquarters Executive Director Rick Patterson (left) and former Washington Headquarters Executive Director David Gorman



professional staff. Over the next decade, they became the fabric of DAV leadership, adding their energy and advocacy to DAV initiatives.

To offset the attrition of retiring National Service Officers, Wilson and his newly appointed National Service staff created the National Service Officer Academy at the University of Colorado in Denver, from which 289 trainees were graduated and quickly moved to the NSO ranks. Wilson instituted the programs that worked so very well back in the mid 1940s when future NSOs were educated at American University and, in 1967, the training at Catholic University.

Under Wilson’s leadership DAV has been able to sustain a cadre of about 270 NSOs for a number of years. They are supported by new computers, printers, and necessary software to make them more effective and efficient in the field. These enhancements in manpower and technology ultimately result in better service to the hundreds of thousands

“[Art’s] management decisions, large and small, are made from a position of intellectual strength and tempered with accurate interpretation of the facts available.”

*Rick Patterson,
former National Headquarters Executive Director*



Wilson with past-National Adjutant Denvel D. Adams, who recommended Wilson’s appointment to National Commander Richard E. Marbes in 1993.

and services for disabled veterans and their families, while protecting current benefits and services.”

Aware that DAV’s future belonged to younger men and women, Wilson initially brought in a large number of veterans from the Gulf War and other post-Vietnam conflicts to join DAV’s

of veterans, their dependents and survivors who receive professional representation from DAV each year.

When wars in Iraq and Afghanistan began, Wilson continued to add our newest generation of veterans to the National Service Corps. Today, the majority of our NSO corps are Gulf War and more recent veterans.

Wilson’s leadership also helped pave the way for the creation of the Columbia Trust, the Homeless Veterans Initiative, Women Veterans Program, a larger and more responsive Transportation Network and Voluntary Services programs, the Local Veterans Assistance

Program and many other enhancements.

The Columbia Trust is today the primary funding source for local DAV service programs, allowing Chapter and Department purchases of Transportation Network vans that support the Hospital Service Coordinator program and Voluntary Services.

As a component of the National Service Foundation, the Trust provides funding from Departments and Chapters with excess resources to other Departments and Chapters that have significant needs for service programs but few resources. From 1996 to 2013, the Columbia Trust has awarded grants totaling more than \$22 million.

Wilson created the Homeless Veterans Initiative, which gave new meaning to our nation's promise that "we don't leave our wounded behind." Wilson led the development of a system that allows Chapters and Departments to assist homeless veterans by sponsoring stand downs, working jointly with other initiatives and creating a safe environment in which homeless veterans would receive the care, comfort and rehabilitation needed to move from the streets to self-sufficiency.

Wilson also urged Congress to strengthen programs aimed at eliminating unemployment and homelessness among America's ill and injured veterans, which resulted in the VA's Homeless Veterans program. Under the program, the number of homeless veterans fell from 250,000 per night in the late 1990s to fewer than 60,000 by 2012. In addition, DAV's Charitable Service Trust has awarded grants of nearly \$6 million to support homeless veterans programs.

With the aging of World War II and Korean War-era veterans, DAV sought to encourage future leaders to donate time on behalf of veterans. Wilson created the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program, which annually honors and helps fund the higher education of outstanding young volunteers who participate in the VA Voluntary Service program.



Wilson with past VA Secretary and DAV leader Jesse Brown and longtime DAV supporter Lois Pope.

Since it was created, DAV has awarded 139 scholarships totaling nearly \$1 million.

He also laid the foundation for the future with the development of DAV's Strategic Plan. At the heart of this vital initiative are DAV's core values of Service, Quality, Integrity and Leadership, which Wilson made DAV's guiding principles. Today, the Strategic Plan is working even better than expected and has become a driving force for greater professional success in serving veterans during the 21st century.

Wilson reinstituted DAV's Mobile Service Office fleet, which travels to communities around the nation, providing service to those living in rural areas far from DAV National Service Offices.

He also created a new Transition Service Program to assist service members before they leave active duty. The program assigns DAV-trained professionals to military separation centers to inform those leaving the service about their rights and benefits as veterans. In addition, TSOs make direct contact with hospitalized ill

"I suspect that he'll go back to finally doing what he loves the most – assisting ill and injured veterans and their families, one by one."

Mary Wilson



and injured veterans returning from combat. DAV is at bedside in military hospitals, filing their claims, telling them about their benefits and empowering them to lead high-quality lives and to care for their families after active service.

Perhaps Wilson's most inspiring contribution on behalf of veterans came when he cofounded the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation. Along with noted philanthropist Lois Pope and Jesse Brown, Wilson formed a partnership to nationally honor disabled veterans with a long overdue memorial in Washington, D.C. Wilson continues to serve as the President of the foundation.

As a result of their work, Congress approved construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. Tentatively scheduled for dedication in 2014, the memorial will be the first to honor all disabled veterans, both living and deceased, as a testament to their service.

During Wilson's tenure as National Adjutant, he served on the USO World Board of Governors for several years and the Board of Directors for the USS Intrepid Museum Foundation. He continues to serve as a member of the Intrepid Advisory Council.

Retired General Counsel, Assistant National Adjutant and Executive Director Fred Bristol has personally known most of the organization's leaders, including founder Judge Robert Marx and longtime National Adjutant Vivian "Crab" Corbly.

"Without question, the leadership and expertise brought to our organization by National Adjutant Wilson is second to none," Bristol said. "I believe that far into the 21st century, Art's legacy of inspired leadership will be the standard that others will only hope to reach."

"I think he can be classified as one of the finest Chief Executive Officers of an organization that would rival that of any private, public or nonprofit corporation in the United States," he said.



Shortly after joining DAV's professional staff as an NSO in 1966, Wilson wed Mary Robinson in the spring of 1968. They have four children, all of whom work in fields of service to veterans and their communities.

"DAV faced many challenges and hardships during the 20th century, but it is a much stronger, greater organization that faces what lies ahead, thanks to Art Wilson," Gorman said.

Wilson's wife, Mary, who stood with him during his 47-year career, said he probably "achieved most

"Art's leadership and integrity were the right prescription for DAV at a very critical time in the organization's history."

*Richard Marbes,
former National Commander*

everything that he started out to do. I'm very proud of him for everything that he's accomplished all these years. He's just a good person, just a good family man to both his DAV and Wilson families."

"He will miss it, but he's going to stay involved," she said. "I suspect that he'll go back to finally doing what he loves the most — assisting ill and injured veterans and their families, one by one." ■



Then-Service Director Wilson remained focus throughout his career on the DAV's core mission of direct advocacy.



DAV Files First-Ever Fully Electronic Claim

By Joseph Chenelly

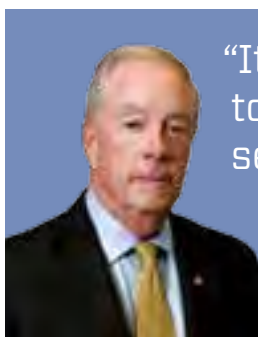
More than 200 veterans packed a large hall in Fairfax, Va., Sunday morning, Feb. 17, eager for information about claiming the benefits they earned through their military service. But few of them knew history would be made there that day.

As DAV National Appeals Officer Shane Liermann presented an overview of what these veterans could expect entering the claims process, the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) was working feverishly with DAV's National Service staff to ensure the day would be historic.

After the seminar, Vietnam War veteran Phillip Walker rolled into the back room for his turn with DAV's staff to begin his first claim for service-connected disability. The Marine veteran suffers from Parkinson's and ischemic heart disease, which he believes are a product of his time in uniform.

He didn't realize it at first, but his claim started unlike any other had before. Instead of filling out a stack of paperwork and mailing or carrying it to a Veterans Affairs

regional office for time-consuming processing, he sat next to a DAV National Service Officer and completed an online power-of-attorney form, an online interview questionnaire and claims for disability. A few other forms and supporting evidence were easily scanned



"It is an honor for DAV to be the first veterans service organization to file a fully electronic claim on a veteran's behalf."

Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant

into electronic files. Those forms, and the information they contained, immediately flowed into the VA's database, opening the file on the spot. Walker's is the first-ever original claim that will be fully electronic from start to finish.

The VA believes this represents the future of disability

The digital, paperless system is now used in about two dozen locations around the nation and is scheduled to be fielded in all 56 offices by the end of the year.

claims processing, one that will replace an antiquated system that has buried those VA regional offices under piles of paper, delaying decisions and keeping veterans from receiving earned benefits in a timely manner.

In September, Hartford, Conn., became the first VA office in the country to switch to the Veterans Benefits



Retired Gen. Allison Hickey, VA Under Secretary for Benefits, told the House Oversight and Investigations Committee that the purpose of the electronic claims filing systems "is to eliminate this antiquated, paper-bound process that does not serve our veterans."

Management System, or VBMS. The digital, paperless system is now used in about two dozen locations around the nation and is scheduled to be fielded in all 56 offices by the end of the year.

"The VA's staff will spend less time searching for and transferring paper records and can spend more time processing veterans' claims," said National Commander Larry A. Polzin, who also is a retired NSO. "In short, all the relevant information about the veteran's claim is available instantly to VA employees working on the claim."

Transitioning to a paperless system is quite complex, especially given the vastness of the VA. "We hope the VA continues to work closely with us as they tweak the system, making improvements as it develops," said Polzin.

"DAV's staff has played a crucial role in developing a number of the new initiatives being deployed, and we look forward to continued progress in improved accuracy and timeliness," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "It is an honor for DAV to be the first veterans service organization to file a fully electronic claim on a veteran's behalf." ■

Vets' Committee Head Demands More Accountability at the VA

By Joseph Chenelly

House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) said in a hearing March 15 that he wants stricter performance reviews for workers processing veterans benefits claims, with the threat of discipline and even termination hanging over those who are too slow or make too many mistakes.

By the Chairman's estimate, the more people the VA hires to process claims, the worse the department performs. In 1997, the average field officer processed 138 claims a year.

In 2011, with three times as many overall employees, the average field officer processed 73 claims a year, Miller said.

The VA currently has about 900,000 pending claims, 70 percent of them older than four months. Miller said he does not discount the importance of the VA's ongoing transformation efforts. "That is only part of the solution," he said. "It has to happen, but if you still have bad inputs, bad attitudes and bad performance, you are going to have longer delays. If people are not going to do their job,

they need to be fired, not transferred, which is still what occurs. There are a lot of people out there who are looking for work who would be honored to be dealing with veterans."

While some supervisors may worry about a backlash from taking personnel action against an employee, Miller said those who try to improve the VA workforce would have support from the American public and veterans service organizations.



Miller

VSOs Fault Congress for Inaction on Veterans Funding



By Thom Wilborn

The *Independent Budget (IB)*, compiled by DAV, AMVETS, Paralyzed Veterans of America and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, is asking Congress to provide \$68.4 billion for veterans' health care and other discretionary programs in fiscal year 2014, which begins Oct. 1, 2013. Included in that recommendation is more than \$58.8 billion for medical care. And for the first time, the *IB* recommends \$61.7 billion in advance appropriations for medical care in fiscal year 2015.

"The Veterans Health Administration is facing growing demand for services, while medical care and administrative costs skyrocket," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "The numbers of new veterans and disabled veterans entering the VA health care and benefits systems

continue to increase with the end of war in Iraq and the pending U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan."

The VA anticipates more than 94 million outpatient visits to its medical facilities in fiscal year 2014. Many of those patients are older, sicker and have a higher rate of mental and related health problems.

"It is our nation's responsibility to keep the promise made to the men and women who served to provide sufficient health care funding, and

a new fiscal year. Those temporary measures are each tied to the previous year's funding authorization," said National Legislative Director Joseph Violante. "Although DAV fought relentlessly for the creation of advance appropriations to provide VA adequate health care funding, Congress did not approve those funds for fiscal year 2014 in its continuing resolution."

In 15 of the previous 16 years, the final, full-year appropriations for

For nearly a **quarter of a century**, final VA appropriations have been late.

we should never shirk this duty," Jesinoski said.

"It is clear that a lack of action by Congress to enact a budget over many years has forced the VA to make do with continuing resolutions instead of a full appropriation at the start of

VA have been approved an average of 75 days late after the start of a fiscal year. For nearly a quarter of a century, final VA appropriations have been late — averaging nearly two months in 21 of the past 24 years.



"The series of continuing resolutions has left VA the daunting task of meeting ever-increasing health care costs and growing demand for benefits and other services," Violante said.

"Advance appropriations law calls for a review and adjustment as additional funding needs arise," he said. "But neither Congress nor the VA has conducted a review to determine if adjustments are needed. Additional funding needs have occurred, but nothing was done."

For example, the Administration's \$57.5 billion of advance appropriations for fiscal year 2014, which includes third-party collections, is \$1.3 billion short of the recommended *IB* amount. It was based on advance appropriations included in the fiscal year 2013 budget request released in February 2012 and was not changed after the VA reduced its collection projections.

"Health care funding for our veterans isn't a fire-and-forget missile," said Violante. "It relies on multiple variables which need to be closely watched and refined as time passes. No one knows what health care costs may be in two years."

As a result, the *IB* members, and the more than 50 other organizations which have endorsed it, are calling on Congress and the Administration to provide the funding to meet the health care and benefits needs of veterans.

Hand-in-hand with health care are the facilities used to serve veterans,

but the average VA building is 60 years old. "New construction for VA has been underfunded for a decade," Violante said. "It's time we began providing updated facilities for our veterans. We don't want to repeat the mistakes foisted on the Vietnam generation."

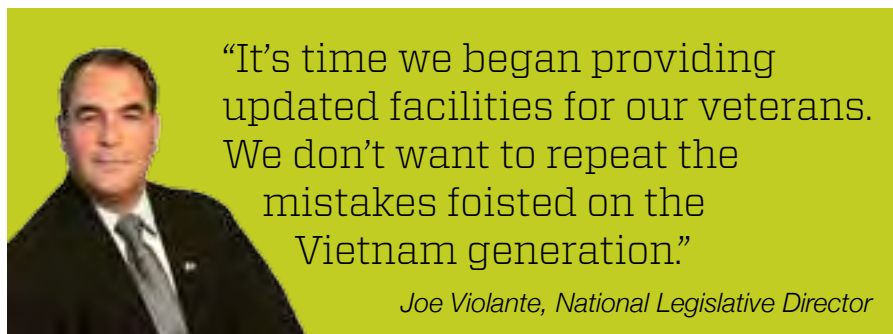
The *IB* recommends \$2.3 billion in fiscal year 2014 for construction projects, approximately \$900 million more than the expected fiscal year 2013 appropriation.

To help resolve the huge claims backlog, the *IB* calls for the

Management System, providing the digital conversion of active paper claims files, will upgrade the system to one that's consistent with modern electronic operations.

The *IB* is normally released after the Administration's budget, but the White House plan was delayed this year, preventing a comparison with *IB* recommendations.

"We look forward to seeing the Administration's budget to compare its proposed spending plans for VA with the *IB* recommendations," said Jesinoski. "Only by comparison will



Veterans Benefits Administration to continue to improve quality and increase annual training, as well as strengthen certification of the VA's veterans service representatives and managers. "This can lead to accountability measures so that claims are decided correctly the first time," Violante said.

The *IB* also recommends that Congress require the VA to give increased credibility to private medical evidence submitted for rating purposes. The development of a modern electronic Veterans Benefit

we know how great any gaps may be and what we and the other *IB* organizations must do to ensure VA has the resources it needs.

"*The Independent Budget* is an extremely useful tool in that it gives a review based on expertise and experience of what VA's funding needs are," he said. "DAV has been part of this process for 27 years, and we are hopeful that it is used by members of Congress and appropriators in deciding the future of our nation's injured and ill veterans seeking care from the VA." ■

Commander Testifies on Need to Fix Claims Process



By Joseph Chenelly and Thom Wilborn

More than 600 of DAV's dedicated leaders from around the country converged on Washington, D.C., at the end of February for the annual Mid-Winter Conference to meet with lawmakers and witness National Commander Larry Polzin testify before a special joint hearing of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees.

DAV members filled to capacity a large caucus room on Capitol Hill Feb. 26 as Polzin spoke of the largest challenges facing veterans today.

"Part of our mission is advocating for meaningful, reasonable and responsible public policy for our injured and ill veterans of all generations," Polzin opened. "With the proposed downsizing of our military forces and the slow recovery in our domestic economy, more veterans will be relying on the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) for services and benefits for decades to come.

"We must ensure that the VA is prepared to handle

such a large influx of veterans. However, based on my experience," he continued, "I'm not yet confident that our government is fully prepared to fulfill its promise to our nation's veterans."

The Commander, mentioning the nearly 900,000 pending claims for disability compensation and pensions awaiting decisions, spoke about DAV's work with the VA on the development of the new Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS).

"Eliminating the backlog will be a welcome milestone. However, to achieve real success, the VA must focus on creating a benefits system that gets each claim done right the first time," Polzin said. "Only when the VA has adopted a culture of quality, accuracy and accountability will true reform in the claims process succeed."

DAV urged the committees to ensure the system will be implemented.

Other issues Polzin brought forward included *The Independent Budget*, mental health care and a lack of outreach to veterans who are in need of services. He warned that the issues facing DAV's members today are only going to intensify in the future.

"VA confronts a rapidly aging health care capital infrastructure; rising long-term care needs of World War II and Korean War veterans; an aging Vietnam-era population; and a new generation of war veterans returning home from Iraq and Afghanistan," Polzin said.

A significant number of Representatives and Senators from the two committees attended the hearing, speaking on why the issues concerning veterans warrant bipartisan support in what is most otherwise a deeply divided Congress.

"In these difficult times, we have got to rise above partisanship when it comes to taking care of our veterans," said Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), the chairman of the Senate committee. "And I would hope very much and I expect that our two committees will achieve that goal. To the members of DAV, I want to thank you not only for your service and sacrifice for our country, but also the enormously important work that your organization does."

"I have to say that you are the absolute model of service above self," Rep. Brad Wenstrup (R-Ohio) told Polzin and the hundreds of DAV members looking on. "And you are giving on behalf of others with your time and all of your efforts. And as a physician and surgeon in the Army Reserve who had served in Iraq and who has seen the visible wounds as well as the invisible wounds,



Senior Vice Commander Joseph Johnston, left, is greeted by Sen. Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio), right, as the Department of Ohio delegation urges support for DAV's legislative agenda at a Capitol Hill meeting during the Mid-Winter Conference.

and congressional staff to deliver DAV's message on important issues. Before their visits, they attended seminars that provided information on what issues were most pressing.

"We took DAV's talking points with us to the meeting," said John Markiewicz, a Naval Submarine Service veteran now with Chapter 1 in Jacksonville, Fla. He met with Rep. Corrine Brown's (D-Fla.) staff. "We discussed the DIC [dependency and indemnity compensation] offset and claims backlog. The backlog was of particular interest.

"Brown's office was very supportive of our issues," Markiewicz said after the meeting, "as well as most veterans' issues. Rep. Brown is on the same page as DAV and is paying attention to the issues."

Chapter Commander Terry Sayers, of Chapter 11 in Warren, Ohio, also took the Hill.

"We met with Senator Sherrod Brown [D-Ohio] and discussed VA's operations in Ohio," Sayers said. "We talked about VA's problems and our



"In these difficult times, we have got to rise above partisanship when it comes to taking care of our veterans."

Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.)

I shudder to think how many people would go without any care at all if it weren't for your work."

In addition to the hearing, DAV and Auxiliary members met with dozens of Representatives, Senators

concerns for things that affect Ohio veterans, such as the claims backlog. The senator was very responsive. This gave the Ohio delegation a chance to present ourselves very well, and it was a very informal, relaxed atmosphere."



Florida DAV members meet with House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Jeff Miller (R-Fla.) to discuss veterans' issues during the Mid-Winter Conference.

"I learned a lot from the National Organization's seminars," Sayers said. "The information we were provided at the Mid-Winter Conference was very good. It gets you more involved with DAV. My opinion is DAV is one of the premier veterans organizations in the world. Our people are very educated and do the best to help veterans."

Chapter Adjutant Edward Saunders, of Chapter 10 in Billings, Mont., met with Rep. Steve Daines (R-Mont.). Although Daines is not a member of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, he is a freshman lawmaker still learning about DAV.

"Our objective when we met with Congressman Daines and staff was to get acquainted and learn of his committee assignments. We wanted to ensure we know who to call if we have questions about veterans' issues," Saunders said. "We wanted to make him fully aware of DAV and our purpose. His staff was very receptive to veterans' issues and

took the time to hear me out. Meeting with members keeps them on their toes. If DAV is out of sight, it is out of mind, and face-to-face meetings certainly keep them aware of veterans' issues."

The Commanders and Adjutants Association welcomed VA Secretary Erik Shinseki in the conference's first session. Shinseki spoke about the ongoing transition, particularly within the Veterans Benefits Administration.

"Change requires discipline, determination and money," he told the attendees. "Everyone in VA is working with a focus to change to better serve veterans and their families."

Shinseki also said the VA and the Department of Defense are working more closely than perhaps ever before in an effort to create a better transition from military service to veteran status.

DAV National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson also addressed those gathered Sunday morning.

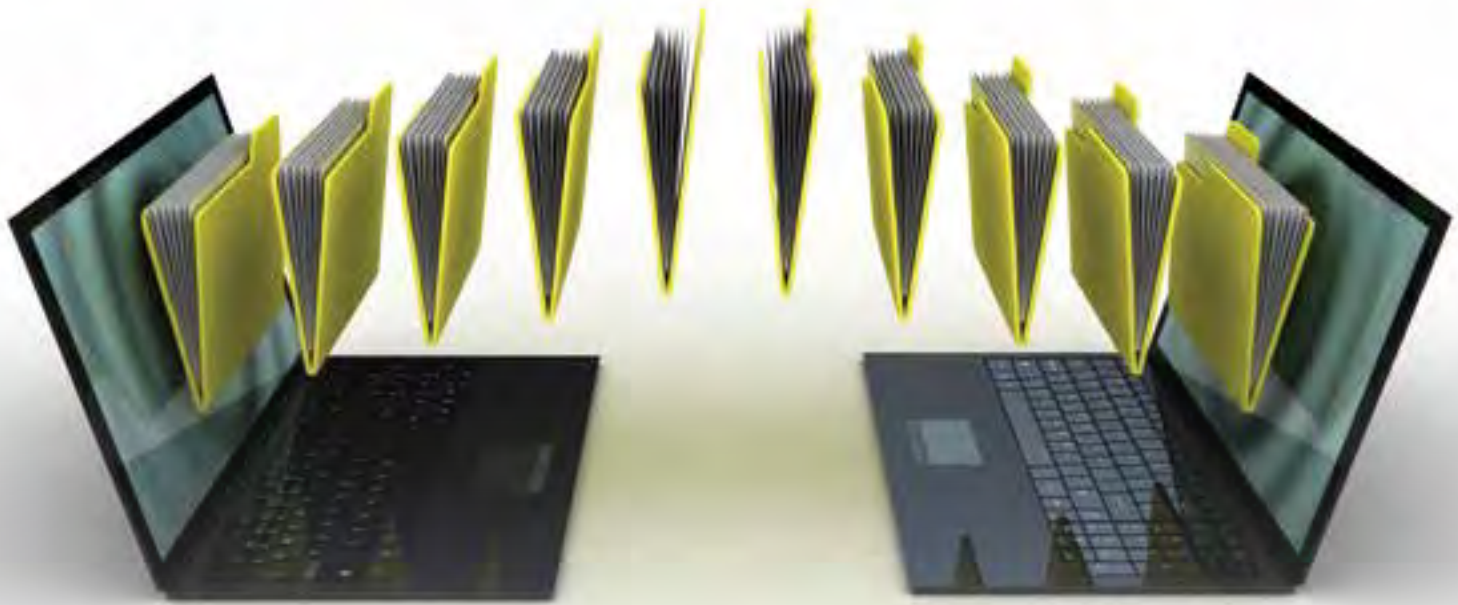
"DAV is one of America's greatest institutes, a fabric of our nation," he said. "DAV is bringing new energy to every level of the organization through rebranding and being wise with our funds.

"DAV remains dedicated to service," Adjutant Wilson said, "and we are now more focused on letting the world know about the vital services we provide veterans and their families."

The 2014 Mid-Winter Conference is scheduled for Feb. 23-26, 2014, at the Crystal Gateway Marriot in Arlington, Va. More information is available online at dav.org/events. ■



National Line Officers, from left to right, 4th Junior Vice Commander David Riley, Judge Advocate Michael Dobmeier, Chaplain Ronald Ringo Jr., and Past National Commander Donald Samuels await the start of DAV's legislative presentation to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees.



DAV Warns No Turning Back on Electronic Claims System

By Thom Wilborn

National Legislative Director Joseph Violante has urged lawmakers and the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to focus more on efforts to resolve the underlying problems that have created a massive claims backlog rather than to focus on the backlog numbers.

“DAV continues to urge the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and Congress to concentrate on the underlying problems that created and continue to fuel the backlog,” Violante said in testimony before the Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “When benefits are delayed or denied, the consequences can be devastating to veterans, their families and survivors.”

Addressing the ambitious efforts to process more than a million claims each year while, at the same time, changing to a paperless, electronic claims system, Violante said it

was difficult to get a proper perspective to measure the success of the electronic Veterans Benefits Management System (VBMS), which won’t be fully implemented until later this year.

Committee Chairman Bernard Sanders (I-Vt.) agreed that the VA is processing more claims today than ever before but said progress has been tempered with

long waits on claims decisions and a low accuracy rate of 86 percent.

“DAV probably helps more veterans process claims than any other organization,” Chairman Sanders said.

(Continued on pg. 28)

DAV believes that what VA is doing with VBMS is the **right thing to do**, to get into a paperless situation.



From the MEMBERSHIP DIRECTOR

ANTHONY BASKERVILLE

Reach Out to Women Veterans

DAV has long been at the front of the charge in advancing women veterans' issues, and we continue to work at the leading edge of advocacy for this group. One of the most important ways we can do that is by bringing more women into our member ranks.

We had a greatly successful membership year in 2012, with more than 3,500 new women veterans seeking membership with DAV. Women veterans now represent at least 78,000 of our current membership.

As women have always represented a smaller part of the veterans community, they have had to work much harder to ensure their concerns were brought to the table and given due recognition. We are fortunate enough today to have many women veterans within the DAV family, and we should encourage them to become more actively involved at the Chapter and Department levels.

We have already seen how the hard work and dedication of women veterans within DAV has helped bring greater awareness of gender-specific issues. And moreover, the input from our women veterans determines the way we address the issues veterans encounter across the board.

It has been encouraging to see how many women veterans have stepped up

to take on leadership roles on behalf of their fellow veterans, and this is a trend we need to encourage. It is not just for the valuable experience they bring, but also for the encouragement they can provide to other women veterans seeking to join DAV or to take on more challenging roles for the organization.

We need to have women veterans deeply rooted in our organization who are invested in paving a better road for all of our injured and ill veterans. I hope those already in leadership roles will guide and encourage those members in your Chapters and Departments to seek out these opportunities to lead. The experience they bring is a valuable resource in our efforts to fight for veterans' rights.

The number of women in the military, veteran community and in DAV will continue growing for the foreseeable future. We need women, as well as men, who have firsthand knowledge and experience and are willing to take the initiative on these important issues to be taking on leadership roles within DAV.

DAV has a tremendous footprint within the veterans community, and we stand only to benefit from our own members — both men and women — stepping up to fight together for the future of our veterans care and benefits.



Women Veterans Out Front Leading within DAV

By Ashleigh Bryant

Within the past decade, DAV has seen a notable increase in the number of women veterans we serve. In addition to those assisted by the free services DAV provides, we have seen a rise in our female membership and, in particular, the involvement of women veterans in leadership capacities at the Chapter, Department and National levels.

It's not surprising, considering the growing number of women in the military and in the veterans community. Taking into account the expanding role of women in combat and the higher ranks and titles they have achieved while serving, this is a natural evolution for veterans service organizations (VSOs).

"Women veterans are finding strength in numbers, and they know how important their issues are," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "When they see other women veterans in leadership positions, it empowers them to discuss their issues and really make an impact — not just for women, but for all veterans."

DAV has long been at the forefront of women veterans' issues and has had a number of women leading as Chapter and Department Commanders, among other billets. When she was chosen as DAV Department of California Commander in 2004, Army veteran Delphine

Metcalf-Foster became the first woman veteran to lead a VSO in the state in 81 years.

"Women see other women out there as advocates," said Metcalf-Foster. "If they don't see a woman in leadership positions, how can we reach them?"

Metcalf-Foster has more than two decades of involvement with DAV, and she knows the value of stepping forward and taking on leadership roles. It's the best way, she said, to find out how you can contribute to the greater cause.

Army veteran Holly Erickson, now the Commander of DAV Chapter 6 in Duluth, Minn., began volunteering

"I want to promote a perception of women that centers not on our gender, but sees us as fellow soldiers with unique gifts, abilities and character no less valuable than a man's."

Holly Erickson, Commander of DAV Chapter 6 in Duluth, Minn.

for DAV eight years ago. Though her initial involvement centered on volunteer work, she became the Chaplain within the past few years and took over as Commander in December 2012.

The idea of taking on a leadership role appealed to

Erickson, as it presented a new way to serve veterans and to get more people involved with DAV.

“The advice I would offer to others interested in serving their DAV organizations would be to be willing to do anything to help out. Be willing to serve,” said Erickson. “Ask questions and get involved. There is probably a wealth of knowledge in the people of your organization. Make yourself into an invaluable asset for DAV and watch what happens.”

Though she is still a relatively new commander, Erickson is looking to bring new ideas to her Chapter and is focused on engaging elected officials to ensure that all returning veterans can find work and build prosperous, successful lives. Of course, she also has a special interest in issues that concern women veterans. A critical first step is making sure women veterans take an active role in this discussion.

“Another issue is to try to get more women involved and have better health care for women,” said Erickson. “I want to promote a perception of women that centers not on our gender, but sees us as fellow soldiers with unique gifts, abilities and character no less valuable than a man’s.”

Through the normal turnover of leadership, DAV currently has seven women veterans installed as Department Commanders, with many more taking on leadership roles at the Department and Chapter levels. Women veterans have also served as members of the Board of Directors, the National Executive Committee and in other roles.



“Women see other women out there as advocates. If they don’t see a woman in leadership positions, how can we reach them?”

Delphine Metcalf-Foster, Army veteran and Past DAV Department of California Commander (2004)

“It’s an inspiring upward trend,” said Deputy National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “Here we have very capable women bringing their experience and talents to the table. It’s a great thing for the Chapters and Departments, a great thing for DAV and a great thing for all veterans.” ■

ONE

Number of women who have received the nation’s highest military award: the Medal of Honor



DR. MARY E. WALKER

was awarded the Medal of Honor for her service as a Civil War physician, serving on the battlefield and in military hospitals without regard for her own health and safety. When the criteria for awarding the medal changed in 1917, Walker’s medal was rescinded along with 900 others. But in 1977, the Army Board of Corrections reviewed the case and reversed the 1917 decision, restoring the Medal of Honor to Walker. Four World War II nurses and two female soldiers since have been awarded the Silver Star.



92nd National Convention Great for Whole Family

Thousands of DAV and Auxiliary members from across the country will come together in the Sunshine State for what promises to be an important and quite enjoyable 92nd DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Convention.

This is the perfect location to bring the whole family, so please consider coming a few days early or staying after the convention to enjoy all Orlando has to offer. The convention itself features a full agenda. Members will elect National Officers and adopt resolutions, setting DAV's legislative agenda for the year.

The national meeting of the premier veterans service organization dates are Aug. 10-13 at the Hilton Orlando, an upscale, resort-style hotel. The venue and the city have the perfect mixture of world-class amenities and unique leisure opportunities.

Centrally located in "new Orlando," the hotel is convenient to everything the city has to offer, including art, theater, museums, shopping and dining. Pointe Orlando and Sand Lake Road are minutes away, offering some of the finest dining and entertainment in the United States. All the major Orlando attractions are close by, including SeaWorld Orlando, Universal Orlando and Walt Disney World Resort theme parks.

Orlando is one of the world's most visited cities for good reason. Called "The City Beautiful," there is much to do. First-rate museums, quaint antique districts and top-rated golf courses for some and thrilling theme parks, fantasy lands made of LEGOs and the wonder of the ocean's depths for others.

About 50 million people visit Orlando each year,

making it the most visited destination in the country. But don't worry; there is plenty of room for everyone.

The Orlando Hilton boasts a magnificent resort pool and a big waterslide and fountain. Relax at the quiet pool and whirlpool. Drift in a long, winding, lazy river. Chill in a private cabana with ceiling fans, refrigerators, chaise lounges and Internet access. There are basketball, tennis, volleyball and bocce ball courts.

The hotel also has a putting green and a nine-hole executive putting course. Run the quarter-mile jogging track. Rejuvenate in the Hilton Fitness Center. Then take advantage of a complete full-service spa.

The dining options at the hotel are remarkable as well. You will find a balance of healthy selections, creative dishes, unique preparations, varying menus and a range of prices. The Hilton Orlando offers seven dining establishments on the property.

A free bus excursion to a casino in Tampa is being offered, departing the hotel at 3:30 p.m. Monday, Aug. 12. For information on how to sign up, email Mary Ann Keckler at maryannkeck@aol.com or Rich Tolfat at rltolfat@aol.com.

The special National Convention rate for the Hilton Orlando is \$124/single or double. You can reserve your room today by calling 407-313-4300. The hotel is located at 6001 Destination Parkway, Orlando, Fla.

For more information about the convention and how to obtain specially priced Disney tickets, visit www.dav.org/news/UpcomingEvents.aspx. ■



VA Awards Grants to Improve Care for Women Veterans

By Ashleigh Bryant

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced in January that it would award 32 new grants to help improve health care access for women veterans across the nation.

The nearly three dozen grants will expand medical residency training in areas including gynecology and emergency obstetrics, military sexual trauma (MST) and breast health. The funding will also go toward purchasing more gender-specific medical supplies and equipment at VA facilities and expanding online and telehealth resources for women veterans in rural areas.

“Our goal is 100 percent accessibility for women veterans who need our care,” said VA Secretary Eric K. Shinseki. “These new projects will improve access and quality of critical health care services for women.”

Dedicating resources to create more comprehensive care for women veterans is part of the VA’s plan to meet the needs of this fastest growing demographic. And these newly awarded grants represent the largest ever one-year total for enhancing health services for women veterans.

“We’ve seen improvements at VA facilities across the country,” said Deputy National Legislative Director Joy

Ilem. “In order to help meet women’s specific needs and concerns, a number of clinics have been overhauling their spaces and services to make sure patients can receive all their care in one area.”

The Minneapolis VA medical center, for instance, was awarded \$217,000 from the VA. The facility will use the



VA's Telehealth can provide greater access to health care through the use of telecommunications and videoconferencing. (Photo courtesy of www.va.gov/health.)

“These new projects will **improve access and quality** of critical health care services for women.”

funding to support video conferencing to provide women veterans telepharmacy services, such as counseling for contraceptives, menopause management and chronic disease management.

As 78 percent of the new generation of women veterans are younger than 40, the Minneapolis VA is also using a portion of its funding to expand a pilot project for telehealth programs for maternity care.

In Baltimore, the VA medical center staff is helping keep the VA as the nation's leader in breast cancer screenings. The VA Maryland Health Care System is now the first health care system in the state, and the first within the VA, to offer three-dimensional mammograms to patients. The technology allows for more detailed and accurate readings, fewer biopsies and better detection rates than standard two-dimensional mammograms. The Baltimore facility has also brought aboard a physician dedicated to reading the new 3-D mammograms, which will help yield earlier detection and a better prognosis for women veterans by looking at tissue layer by layer.

The Baltimore VA has also invested in a redesign and rededication of space for women veterans. Part of the \$11-million plan to expand the facility inward included funds to create a women's only waiting room and private exam rooms. The staff also has been expanded and now includes two additional full-time registered nurses, a



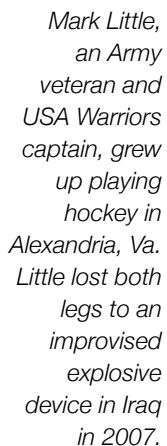
*Dr. Fatma Batuman examines veteran Patricia Cowell. As the director of women's health for the VA Greater Los Angeles Healthcare System, Dr. Batuman is responsible for all issues related to women's health within the GLA system.
(Photo courtesy of www.losangeles.va.gov.)*

licensed practical nurse, health technician and a social worker.

This kind of comprehensive care model means women veterans can access primary care and preventative medicine, as well as inpatient health services such as surgery and mental health counseling, all in one place.

With the VA estimating a steady and continual rise in the women veterans population, these efforts will help the department develop a more sophisticated care model through which women feel welcome as patients and, as such, opt to receive their services through the VA. ■

USA Warriors in Chicago

A large group of people, including ice hockey players and fans, are posing for a group photo on an ice rink. The players are wearing red and white jerseys with the Chicago Blackhawks logo. They are surrounded by many people, including children and adults, some in wheelchairs. The background shows the empty stands of a large stadium under a cloudy sky. The text "USA Warriors in Chicago" is overlaid at the top in a large, bold, red font.

The Warriors' standing team, made up of all injured military veterans, faced off against a celebrity team of professional hockey alumni and local celebrities led by U.S. Representative Mike Quigley (D-Ill.), and the Warriors' sled team took on the Blackhawks Sled Team from the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago.

Moxie, the service dog of DAV member and USA Warrior Christy Gardner, watches her owner intently from the team's bench.



Army veteran Jared Lemon scored one of the Warriors' goals in the game against the opposing team made up of Chicago Blackhawks alumni and local Chicago celebrities and politicians.



USA Warriors sled team captain, Marine Corps veteran Josh Misiewicz (left) and Army veteran Christy Gardner (right), take a breather between plays.

"I absolutely love every chance I get to play with the Warriors, and I'm thankful for DAV making that possible. Without their support, we may not have a team and I certainly wouldn't be able to travel back and forth to games and practices," said Gardner, who travels from Maine to be with the team. "I love the opportunity to be a part of a unit again. The camaraderie with the guys is amazing. They are always so upbeat and epitomize the 'adapt and overcome' motto we lived by on active duty."

The Warriors and DAV formed a partnership in 2012, rooted in the common mission of helping injured

veterans lead high-quality lives.

"We are extraordinarily proud of the Warriors and to be aligned with them in our mission to help veterans regain purpose and control over their lives after they've been injured," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "Rehabilitation is a road no veteran should travel alone, and we're happy DAV and the USA Warriors can be here to support these men and women as they recover."

The Warriors were also invited to skate with the Chicago Blackhawks at the team's morning practice. They were then honored by crowds at a Blackhawks game at the United Center against the San Jose Sharks and at the Hockey City Classic matchup at Soldier Field between the teams from Notre Dame and Miami, helping bring awareness to the program's ongoing mission. ■

I love the opportunity to be a **part of a unit again.** The camaraderie with the guys is amazing.

No Turning Back

(Continued from pg. 19)

“DAV believes that the VBA is now on the right path, that they have set the right goals, and that they have leadership committed to transforming and institutionalizing a new claims processing system to better serve veterans,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski.

Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.) said the claims backlog is the leading challenge confronting the VA. “And it is the No. 1 frustration facing every American veteran returning home.”

He says the VA claims process has been plagued by errors, delays and backlogs for years. “VA has hired thousands of claims processing staff, spent millions of dollars developing new IT solutions and rolled out dozens of other initiatives,” Isakson said. “But this has yet to translate into better service for veterans, their families and their survivors.”

Violante testified that the VBMS, although not fully developed or deployed nationwide, has reached significant milestones. “The most critical was the decision and commitment to scan all legacy paper files for new or reopened claims requiring rating-related actions,” he said.

“The creation of digital e-folders allows instantaneous review of files from virtually any location, as well as word search and other efficiencies, saving both time and resources,” said Jesinoski. “DAV believes that what VA is doing with the VBMS is the right thing to do, to get into a paperless situation.

“They’ve been processing more than a million claims annually for the last three years, and I find that extraordinary,” said Jesinoski. “However, the accuracy of rating decisions must continue to improve. There is still much work to be done in that area.”

Further, Violante testified that DAV recommends that Congress pass legislation that would require the VA to accept credible, competent medical evidence that is adequate for rating purposes. “In some cases where the medical evidence is sufficient to be rated, the fact that it comes in from a private physician triggers an unnecessary [disability] examination,” Violante said.

He also said that eliminating the claims backlog would move forward with more emphasis put on intermediate

claim ratings. “When the evidence is sufficient, some issues can be decided quickly,” he said. “VA can continue to work the more difficult issues in the claim, but at times the evidence in the record is sufficient to establish a partial rating in many claims, so we’d like to see more done with regard to awarding intermediate or partial claims.”

DAV assists with more than 300,000 claims to the VA each year, about a quarter of all veterans seeking compensation for their injuries or illnesses. About half



The claims backlog is the No. 1 frustration facing every American veteran returning home.

Sen. Johnny Isakson (R-Ga.)

of veteran claimants have no representation. With more than 90 years of service to veterans and the best training available, DAV National Service Officers are the most highly trained claims representatives available to veterans.

As a result, the VA has worked closely with DAV and other veteran service organizations (VSOs) to help develop several new programs to eliminate the backlog and streamline claims processing.

“Undersecretary for Benefits Allison Hickey has demonstrated her commitment to expanding the partnership with VSOs, and we believe that veterans are better-served thanks to her strong and principled leadership,” Violante said.

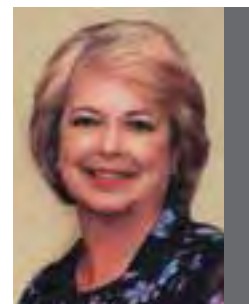
While agreeing that aggressive oversight of the VBA’s claims transformation effort is essential, Violante said Congress must support full funding for the VBMS program and document scanning. “We also recommend an independent review of VBMS by outside [information technology] experts,” he said.

Additionally, DAV recommends that the VBA develop a new culture based on quality, accuracy and accountability throughout every regional office.

Veterans seeking DAV representation in submitting disability claims to the VA may call the National Service Office nearest them. A list of offices can be found at dav.org/veterans/NSOffices.aspx. ■

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

DONNA M. ADAMS



We're All in It Together

Earlier this year, I had the honor of going to Washington, D.C., for the Presidential Inauguration with DAV leaders, followed by attending the DAV Mid-Winter Conference. In both instances, the Auxiliary was recognized as a partner of DAV. The activities surrounding the inauguration were incredible, and I can't begin to describe the feeling of sitting at the table with National Commander Larry Polzin as he laid out the legislative agenda of our great organization to the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees. He and our DAV legislative experts answered questions and offered solutions to issues that confront our veterans every day. Included in the presentation were concerns that affect our veterans' dependents and survivors — those people who are currently members and those who are eligible for membership in DAV Auxiliary. Commander Polzin continues to demonstrate his regard for the DAV Auxiliary, and we thank him.

As I visit with members of DAV and the Auxiliary around the country, what I hear about most is the interaction between the two organizations to reach our goals. The relationship between DAV Chapters and DAV Auxiliary Units is always included in discussions. The DAV Auxiliary has seen a dramatic change in membership by providing for husbands, fathers, sons and brothers of our veterans to join us in our mission, and that makes us pretty unique among veterans' service organizations. We have a growing number of DAV members who are welcomed into the Auxiliary, and some of those members have chosen to confine their volunteer activities to those of the DAVA.

I firmly believe that the single most important factor to maintaining any relationship is respect — respect for our differences, respect for our commonalities and respect for our organizational goals. With more women

joining DAV every day, and more men joining the Auxiliary, we are becoming much more gender-blended organizations. All over the country, our Auxiliary Departments and Units are becoming more legislatively proactive, more financially responsible and more results oriented. More and more, I find myself asking, "Are you with DAV or the Auxiliary?"

As Auxiliary members, we all know that we are here to help our veterans, and we're constantly planning programs for hospitalized veterans, fundraisers for homeless veterans programs or dinners for women veterans. When we're doing the work we do so well, we often forget that the men and women who are in our own parent Chapters are also the very veterans that we're here to help.

I strongly urge each Auxiliary Unit in the country to designate next month as a time to recognize the members of your Chapter and your state Department for their efforts. If there have been issues that are detrimental to our common goals, set those differences aside while you thank our own DAV members for their service to our country and their continued service to DAV. Share the vision and goals of your Unit with Chapter members and find out how we can assist each other to lighten the load in fulfilling those goals or combine our efforts to make our programs better. Help your Chapter to be reminded that the members of your Auxiliary are also the families of veterans the mission of DAV supports.

Above all, let's make an extra effort to respect the members of our own Auxiliary in our Units and our states. Let's try harder to demonstrate respect to members of our Chapters, and let our DAV members know that we appreciate their respect for us. When we fully embrace the idea that we're all in this together, our goals become so much more reachable and we can accomplish anything we set out to do.

VA Automation Accelerates Post-9/11 GI Bill Education Benefits

By Thom Wilburn

The VA says that, thanks to automation, it is providing education benefits to Post-9/11 veterans quicker, cutting days off the process that enables veterans to obtain funding for tuition, fees and living expenses.

The automated system “effectively takes human claims processors out of the equation — using computer systems to process claims,” said VA Assistant Secretary for Information and Technology Roger Baker in testimony before the House Veterans’ Affairs Subcommittee on Economic Opportunity.

“We welcome these changes to reduce the wait for GI Bill education benefits,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. “Veterans are no longer experiencing long waits to pay their tuition and other fees.”

“If veterans need assistance in filing a claim for education benefits, they can contact their nearest DAV National Service Office,” said National Service Director Garry Augustine. “Our National Service Officers can provide them with the information they need to file a claim and will represent them without charge. Our National Service Offices are listed at www.dav.org.”

The VA says the average time to process Post-9/11 GI Bill supplemental or renewal claims decreased from 23 days in September 2012 to eight days in January. For new students claiming benefits for the first time, the average wait is about 30 days to receive a certificate of eligibility. It ranges from 25 days in the VA’s Buffalo, N.Y., office to nearly 40 days in St. Louis.

At Arkansas State University in Jonesboro, Ark., there are no veterans waiting for funds among the 197 veterans, spouses and children using Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits. One reason ASU doesn’t experience delays is paperwork being submitted in a timely manner. “Paperwork was submitted in November for the Spring 2013 semester,” said Sandra Worlow, Director of ASU’s Beck Pride Center for America’s Wounded Veterans.

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits include housing, books and supplies; tuition and fees for veteran-students seeking graduate, undergraduate and non-college



Iraq War veteran Tristan Daniel, left, meets with Arkansas State University’s Beck Pride Veteran Center Director Sandra Worlow to apply for Post-9/11 GI Bill education benefits.

degrees; or certificates from correspondence schools, apprenticeships or on-the-job training.

The VA estimates 44 percent of the nearly 341,000 education claims were fully automated in January, and an additional 33 percent were partially automated. For returning students beginning a new semester, processing was taking an average of six days to complete.

Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits were passed by Congress in 2008. Since then, more than \$25.9 million in benefits have been granted to more than 911,000 veterans, service members and their families.

“The bottom line is [the automated system] is working,” Baker told Congress. “At the end of January, we had approximately 86,000 claims pending — 50 percent less than the total claims pending a year earlier.”

“We will take the lessons learned in automating these education claims and use them to improve delivery of all VA benefits,” he said.

“VA’s automated claims system for Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits could certainly help VA accelerate the claims process system to deliver needed benefits to all our veterans who must wait for the claims review process,” said Jesinoski. “There is promise in this accomplishment, and DAV will continue to closely watch to ensure that the promises made to the men and women who served our nation are fulfilled.” ■

From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN REV. DR. RONALD R. RINGO, Jr.



Memorial Day

During this time of year, we take time to reflect and give honor to those who have gone before us. In addition to Mother's Day and Father's Day, we give them a special day called Memorial Day. Many of you have childhood memories, as I do, of going as a family to the cemetery each Memorial Day to visit the site where my great-grandparents were buried. We would all dress up in our nice clothes and take a picnic lunch. We kids would be reminded of who was buried there and how important they were to our life. Then, the parents would edge the overgrown grass around the markers, and we would play up and down the hill.

We came to know that these people we had never met had played a vital role in our family. For some reason, however, as we became teenagers and life got busier, our family would go only every few years and then stopped going all together. Why do we allow the worldly rat race to interfere with a family tradition, and what is most important? Maybe this hasn't happened in your family yet. Great, maybe these few words will help you not allow it to.

If this hasn't been part of your family tradition, then maybe you want to start

one of honoring those who are a part of you and contributed to who you are. We are given this day of Memorial Day to jar our memories, but it can be any and all days. Start by keeping a record, a journal, a photo album, etc. Go to the family reunions, high school reunions and, for those who go to war together, unit reunions. Maybe we are the ones who start them up. We can always start from where we are and appreciate what and who is in our life today.

Memorial Day is a time to remember the joys of life. For most, it is the time spent with family and dear friends. "Good friends are like stars. You don't always see them, but you know they are always there." May we take and make the time to create those special moments that others and we can look back on with fondness, is my prayer. God bless.

As always, it is my hope that this message will help you during this time of year to "mount up as on eagle's wings" and renew a little of your strength to keep moving forward and find joy... (*Isaiah 40:31*)

Until next time, may God bless you and may God continue to bless our great nation...SEMPER FI.

Basic Military Health Records Online by Year's End

■ All veterans and service members are projected to have their basic health records, including medical history, prescriptions and lab results, shared online by the end of 2013. These records can then be downloaded by patients to take to their civilian physicians. VA officials also expect the coming months to bring the expansion of health records interfacing tools to Defense and VA polytrauma centers to make sure doctors have complete medical histories of the most wounded veterans undergoing treatment.

Study Links Mild TBI to Veteran PTSD, Possibly Suicide

■ New VA-funded research shows concussions or mild traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) may be linked to post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and even suicide. Scientists at the University of Rochester School of Medicine, N.Y., studied 52 combat veterans, and using highly sensitive MRI scans, found brain lesions in

patients who were exposed to improvised explosive device blasts but never reported experiencing the classic symptoms of TBI. They also linked the damage they discovered to cases of severe PTSD, leading them to believe those lesions could render a person more susceptible to developing that condition. A second study, conducted by the National Center for Veterans Studies, found those combat veterans who suffered less severe cases of TBI had a higher risk of suicidal thoughts than those whose brain injury symptoms were more severe.

VA Launches Center for Innovation

■ The VA announced the launch of the VA Center for Innovation (VACI) in February, building on the successes of the VA Innovation Initiative (VAi2) of 2010. VACI aims to tap into talents from the government, industry and entrepreneurial communities to help identify, test and evaluate different solutions to improve access and quality of care for veterans. Among VACI's projects are challenges in teleaudiology, prosthetic socket redesign and the department's Blue Button feature.

CHAPTER & DEPARTMENT

Helping Veterans at Home...

George Davis (DAV, far left) along with Rick Hensen, VFW Post 9916 representatives and Frank Smith (far right, winner of new home heating and air conditioning system raffle). The system on the trailer is the one that Rick donated to the VFW to replace their old system.



Service Dogs for Heroes...

Afghanistan War veteran Barry Offenbacher, second from right, gets acquainted with a service dog donated by Service Dogs 4 Service Men, a South Florida group that turns retired greyhound racing dogs into fully trained service dogs to help war veterans. Attending the presentation are DAV Chapter 152, Miami, Fla., members Bob Green, left, and Al Ratner; and Army Maj. Bradley Allen, right.

Commander's Column

(Continued from pg. 1)

Eliminating the backlog will be a welcome milestone. However, to achieve real success, the VA must focus on creating a benefits system that gets each claim done right the first time. Only when the VA has adopted a culture of quality, accuracy and accountability will true reform in the claims process succeed.

DAV looks forward to the complete rollout of the Veterans Benefit Management System later this year. That and the continued development of e-benefits and the other technology improvements show great promise for better serving veterans.

Mr. Chairman, we are pleased that the veterans organizations have played an important role in developing or refining a number of new initiatives being deployed and we look forward to continued progress.

In fact, DAV became the first veterans service organization to file a completely electronic claim.

I am also pleased to report to the members of these committees that the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial Project has cleared the last major hurdle and is on track to be completed and dedicated in 2014. And I hope that you will be able to attend.

I now turn to a topic that fills me with great pride, the dedication of DAV members. I will summarize some of our work.

Veterans making the transition back to civilian life must overcome many obstacles, and DAV provides programs that address their overall health and well-being. Beyond helping hundreds and thousands of veterans each year access their government benefits, we fund rehabilitation and counseling programs, link veterans to job training programs and work to address homelessness. All DAV services are free.

America's veterans, more than any other group, have lived up to their responsibilities by putting their lives on the line in defense of our country. We are willing to sacrifice for the good of our nation as long as that sacrifice is shared by all. No one knows more about sacrifice than those who were wounded or injured serving in our nation's military forces and their loved ones.

Everyone before you today knows DAV well because, collectively, with our 1.2 million members, we are DAV. These men and women are vital to our mission and the well-being of our nation's injured and ill veterans. They represent some of the 14,000 DAV and Auxiliary members who volunteer their time to assist America's wounded, injured and ill veterans. In 2012, they provided more than 2 million hours of essential service to our nation's veterans.

Some of them are volunteer drivers with DAV

Transportation Network, which provides free transportation to veterans in every state and nearly every congressional district. In 2013, we will donate 110 vans to VA medical centers. From 1987 to 2012, we have donated 2,586 vans at a cost to DAV of nearly \$57 million. Last year, our more than 9,000 volunteer drivers logged more than 27 million miles transporting nearly 800,000 veterans to and from their medical appointments.

DAV also extends our commitment to the families and survivors of those killed in the line of duty and our most severely affected veterans.

We recognize that children have their own unique needs. That's why DAV and our Auxiliary have launched a new "Just B Kids" scholarship program that enables children facing hardship at home to spend a week enjoying the great outdoors.

This new program, funded in part by a grant from the DAV Charitable Service Trust, means more children can attend the highly acclaimed Camp Corral. The week-long camping experience is operated through the generous efforts of a longtime DAV partner, Golden Corral.

Mr. Chairman, we also are proud of our National Service Program, which is second to none. Each year, our National Service Officers, all of whom are wartime service-disabled veterans, represent more than 300,000 individuals with their claims for benefits from the VA.

DAV helps by far the largest number of claimants annually, ensuring that they receive all the benefits they have earned through their service and sacrifice. Our highly-trained and dedicated NSOs provide free representation to any veteran or their dependents and survivors.

And I would encourage you to put the veterans in your district in touch with a DAV National Service Officer when they seek assistance with their benefits.

As you can imagine, I am extremely proud of the work we do. No other veterans service organization contributes more to the well-being of our nation's veterans than DAV.

We understand their needs because we are an organization of veterans helping veterans. For almost a century, we have a proven track record of helping hundreds of thousands of veterans each year. And we are standing up for veterans because they stood up for us.

I assure you DAV stands ready to assist you and your committees in finding ways to improve the services and benefits that veterans have earned from a grateful nation.

Mr. Chairman, this completes my remarks and my staff and I would be pleased to respond to any questions you may have. Thank you for allowing me this opportunity to appear before you on behalf of DAV to share our proud record of service to veterans and our country. ■

Veteran Gives Back by Simply Changing Beneficiary

James Henry found a valuable way to thank the organization that gave him so much support when his military service ended and health problems ensued.



James Henry, Wisconsin, Guardian Society Member

"In my eyes, DAV has always been there, that one ray of hope or shining light that you see off in the distance and run to embrace."

When he no longer needed an individual retirement account (IRA), he made DAV the beneficiary. All it took was a simple change of beneficiary form Henry filed with his fiduciary.

"I'm proud of this simple gift to DAV, in thanks for all of the help they have given me throughout the years in making sure that my disability claims were properly addressed by the VA," he said.

Mr. Henry was physically injured during his military service, but his problems didn't end there. Like many of his fellow Vietnam veterans, he suffers health issues caused by exposure to the toxic defoliant Agent Orange.

"Many of us veterans who were drafted to serve our country years ago had no thought as to the consequences of that service," says Mr. Henry. "We did it because of the love for our country. When the consequences started to emerge, we were stunned, confused and in shock because no one told us

about the downhill spiral that our medical health would be taking.

"In my eyes, DAV has always been there, that one ray of hope or shining light that you see off in the distance and run to embrace because it will help you immensely in getting your health, life and family back on track. Of all the veterans service organizations out there, DAV by far is the best and most sincere organization in regards to the veteran."

Lots of people never think of retirement assets or life insurance policies as property that they own — or as assets they can use to make gifts to charities, sometimes with tax advantages.

A DAV member or friend can do what Mr. Henry did, and make DAV the sole or a partial beneficiary of a retirement fund or insurance policy that is no longer needed for its original purpose. These future gifts will someday bring hope to some very deserving injured heroes who will need DAV for years and generations to come.

At DAV, we cherish the story of every veteran's service and what inspires them to give back to their fellow veterans.



PROTECTING THOSE WHO SERVED

■ If you have created an estate gift for DAV, please let us know. We'd like to thank you through the Guardian Society, our appreciation for future gifts.

■ Legal address for estate gifts: **Disabled American Veterans, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, Ohio 45250. Tax identification number: 31-0263158.**

■ For more information or to receive our estate planning folder, please call **1-800-216-9802, ext. 1**, e-mail giftplanning@dav.org, or visit www.dav.org/giftplanning.

2013 DAV Day at the Ballpark Schedule

Major League

Home

| | |
|-----------------------|-----------|
| Detroit Tigers | May 27 |
| Seattle Mariners | May 27 |
| San Diego Padres | June 2 |
| Miami Marlins | July 1 |
| Chicago White Sox | July 4 |
| Philadelphia Phillies | July 5 |
| San Diego Padres | August 18 |

Visitors

| |
|--------------------|
| Pittsburgh Pirates |
| San Diego Padres |
| Toronto Blue Jays |
| San Diego Padres |
| Baltimore Orioles |
| Atlanta Braves |
| New York Mets |

Minor League

Home

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| Nashville Sounds | May 12 |
| Albuquerque Isotopes | May 18 |
| Kansas City T-Bones | May 18 |
| Portland Sea Dogs | May 20 |
| Wilmington Blue Rocks | May 21 |
| Hickory Crawdads | May 24 |
| Bowling Green Hot Rods | May 25 |
| Louisville Bats | May 27 |
| Las Vegas 51s | June 14 |
| Huntsville Stars | June 15 |
| Southern Maryland Blue Crabs | June 15 |
| Toledo Mud Hens | June 22 |
| Pawtucket Red Sox | June 27 |
| Lakewood BlueClaws | June 27 |
| Wisconsin Timber Rattlers | July 3 |
| Fresno Grizzlies | July 5 |
| Reno Aces | July 26 |
| Frederick Keys | July 31 |
| Charleston RiverDogs | August 21 |
| Tacoma Rainiers | August 31 |

Visitors

| |
|---------------------------|
| Sacramento River Cats |
| Reno Aces |
| Wichita Wingnuts |
| New Hampshire Fisher Cats |
| Lynchburg Hillcats |
| Kannapolis Intimidators |
| Fort Wayne TinCaps |
| Columbus Clippers |
| Colorado Springs Sky Sox |
| Chattanooga Lookouts |
| York Revolution |
| Pawtucket Red Sox |
| Toledo Mud Hens |
| West Virginia Power |
| Kane County Cougars |
| Sacramento River Cats |
| Tacoma Rainiers |
| Lynchburg Hillcats |
| West Virginia Power |
| Sacramento River Cats |

REUNIONS

ARMY

19TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION ASSN.

VIETNAM September 5-7, 2013, Waynesville and St. Roberts, MO, Contact: Tom Ebrite, Phone: (765) 286-4906, Email: s2snoopy@comcast.net, Website: www.19engrvm.org.

25TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. October 14-19, 2013, Columbus, GA, Contact: Sarah S. Krause, Phone: (215) 248-2572, Email: TropicLn@aol.com, Website: www.25thida.org.

26TH (YANKEE) INFANTRY DIVISION VETERANS ASSN. June 6-8, 2013, Warwick, RI, Contact: Robert R. Raney, Phone: (978) 531-2257.

2ND BATTALION 94TH ARTILLERY (VIETNAM 1966-72) September 23-27, 2013, Williamsburg, VA, Contact: Jim Lary, Phone: (501) 834-9777, Email: jlary@usa.net.

3RD BATTALION 187TH INFANTRY REGIMENT 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION 1969 May 13-16, 2013, Fort Campbell, KY, Contact: Thomas Martin, Phone: (856) 453-8407, Email: tommartin9385@yahoo.com.

3RD PORT REUNION OF ARMY MARINERS May 17-19, 2013, Fort Eustis, VA, Contact: Becky Brashers, Phone: (757) 566-8110, Email: tugchick@aol.com, Website: www.facebook.com/#!/3rdPort.

4TH BATTALION, 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT "C" COMPANY November 7-12, 2013, Branson, MO, Contact: Bob Hudak, Phone: (386) 437-7907, Email: b1144@aol.com.

536TH MILITARY POLICE COMPANY August 7-9, 2013, Glenwood Springs, CO, Contact: Bill Barnes, Jr., Phone: (440) 964-6838, Email: bill536mpckitz@yahoo.com.

7TH BATTALION, 13TH FIELD ARTILLERY (1960 TO PRESENT) October 9-13, 2013, Charleston, SC, Contact: Robert Adams, Phone: (859) 806-5199, Email: tadams08@insightbb.com.

84TH ENGINEER BATTALION CONSTRUCTION - VIETNAM June 20-23, 2013, Waynesville, MO, Contact: Richard Wallner, Phone: (810) 714-4158, Email: rlwallner@charter.net.

85TH ORDNANCE COMPANY DIRECT SUPPORT May 9-14, 2013, Albuquerque, NM, Contact: Dallas Waterfill, Phone: (859) 734-5598, Email: dallaswaterfill@yahoo.com.

ECHO CO. 2/5TH CAVALRY October 9-12, 2013, Ft. Benning, GA, Contact: Michael L. DeHart, Phone: (937) 335-2131, Email: michael.dehart754@gmail.com.

F COMPANY, 51ST INFANTRY, LONG RANGE PATROL (AIRBORNE) VIETNAM May 15-19, 2013, Louisville, KY, Contact: Keith Morris, Phone: (270) 257-0383, Email: morris@bellsouth.net.

MARS TASK FORCE & DESCENDANTS August 29-September 1, 2013, Bloomington, MN, Contact: Jerrie Daly, Phone: (651) 204-5004, Email: mmpdtreas@gmail.com.

US ARMY AIR CORPS PILOT CLASSES OF WWII (FORMERLY PILOT CLASSES OF 1944) September 11-15, 2013, Seattle, WA, Contact: Stan Yost, Phone: (239) 466-1473.

VIETNAM GUNTRUCKERS AND ALL TRANSPORTATION UNITS August 6-11, 2013, Indianapolis, IN, Contact: John Dodd, Phone: (434) 724-1469, Email: johndodd@johnlink.net, Website: www.vietnam-guntrucks.com.

VIETNAM SENTRY DOGS ALUMNI October 9-13, 2013, Springfield, MO, Contact: Gary Smith, Phone: (713) 614-2503, Email: puppypusher@att.net.

MARINES

11TH ENGINEER BATTALION, 3RD MARINE DIVISION, R.V.N. 1965 TO 1970 June 11-15, 2013, Pensacola, FL, Contact: Charles Luhan Jr., Phone: (773) 585-9629, Email: 3rdMarDivCL@sbcglobal.net.

1ST ANGLICO June 13-16, 2013, Quantico, VA, Contact: John Maurer, Phone: (614) 262-9002, Email: jmaurer@columbus.rr.com, Website: www.1anglico.org.

GOLF 2/7 VIETNAM 1965-70 August 14-18, 2013, Kansas City, MO, Contact: Ron Myers, Phone: (916) 723-7324, Email: rlmeyers5@comcast.net.

KILO COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 7TH MARINE REGIMENT AND ATTACHED UNITS September 18-23, 2013, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: William Rolke, Phone: (262) 780-0993, Email: k37usmc@att.net.

VMAT (AW) 533 CHU LAI/IWAKUNI 1969-70 May 31-June 3, 2013, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: John Murphy, Phone: (609) 313-8434, Email: Jmurphy425@gmail.com.

NAVY

MOROCCO 1950-1978 June 14-16, 2013, New Orleans, LA, Contact: LaVondra Hallman, Phone: (504) 453-2512, Email: lavondrahallman@gmail.com, Website: www.reunionmaroc.com.

NAVAL AIR STATION SANFORD (ALL UNITS AND SQUADRONS 1942-1968) June 27-30, 2013, Sanford, FL, Contact: Gerald Bohm, Phone: (386) 668-4851, Email: Dlfirs@aol.com.

PATROL SQUADRON ELEVEN REUNION August 22-25, 2013, South Portland, ME, Contact: Cpt. E. M. Brittingham, Phone: (804) 560-3306, Email: captemb@comcast.net.

PBR FORCES VETERAN'S ASSN. September 12-15, 2013, New Orleans, LA, Contact: Rich Fichtelman, Phone: (951) 734-5871, Email: Rfichtelman@sbcglobal.net.

USS ABNAKI (ATF-96) September 25-29, 2013, Charlotte, NC, Contact: Asa Myers, Phone: (803) 628-8110, Email: asamyers@carolina.rr.com.

USS BENJAMIN FRANKLIN (SSBN-640) September 11-15, 2013, Groton, CT, Contact: Alan Exelby, Phone: (856) 816-5672, Email: ssbn640blueyeo@aol.com.

USS BORDELON (DD/DDR-881) September 4-8, 2013, Milwaukee, WI, Contact: Sebastian Riccobono, Phone: (414) 852-2103, Email: sriccobono@sbcglobal.net.

USS BOSTON (CA-69/CAG-1/SSN-703) July 11-14, 2013, Albuquerque, NM, Contact: Arthur L. Hebert, Phone: (603) 672-8772, Website: www.usssboston.org.

USS BREMERTON (CA-130/SSN-698) September 8-12, 2013, St. Louis, MO, Contact: James Jansen, Phone: (406) 837-4474, Email: Jmbluff1@centurytel.net.

USS CANBERRA (CA70/CAG-2) October 2-6, 2013, Reno, NV, Contact: Ken Minick, Phone: (740) 423-8976, Email: usscanberra@gmail.com, Website: www.usscanberra.com.

USS CARTER HALL (LSD-3) September 26-28, 2013, Colorado Springs, CO, Contact: Don Brewer, Phone: (423) 349-6338.

USS CHARLES P. CECIL (DD/DDR-835) September 29-October 5, 2013, Branson, MO, Contact: Greg Wells, Phone: (405) 365-1926, Email: glw513@yahoo.com.

USS EUGENE A. GREENE (DD/DDR-711) September 15-20, 2013, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Glenn & Laverne Herman, Phone: (559) 732-1766, Email: laverneherman@comcast.net.

USS HOLDER (DD/DDE-819/DE-401) October 9-13, 2013, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: James de Barrios, Phone: (831) 458-9062, Email: ussholder_dde819@hotmail.com, Website: www.ussholder.com.

USS HORNET (CV-8, CV-12, CVA-12, CVS-12) September 24-29, 2013, Providence, RI, Contact: Carl & Sandy Burket, Phone: (814) 224-5063, Email: hornetcva@aol.com, Website: www.usshornetassn.com.

USS IWO JIMA (LPH2/LHD7) October 2-6, 2013, San Diego, CA, Contact: Robert G. McAnally, Phone: (757) 723-0317, Email: yjack@megalink.net, Website: www.ussiwjmarshipmates.cfns.net.

USS JOHN R. CRAIG (DD-885) September 4-8, 2013, South Portland, ME, Contact: Jerry Chwalek, Phone: (734) 525-1469, Email: jemail@ameritech.net, Website: www.usjohnrcraig.com.

USS MANSFIELD (DD-728) September 11-15, 2013, San Francisco, CA, Contact: Allen Brueckner, Phone:

(925) 685-6033, Email: brueckner@sbcglobal.net, Website: www.karliskorner.org.

USS MONTICELLO (LSD-35) "ALL HANDS"

REUNION October 12-13, 2013, Deerfield, IL, Contact: Robert Behm, Phone: (209) 772-0543, Email: beamer@ussmonticello.com, Website: www.ussmonticello.com.

USS RANGER (CVA/CV-61) September 18-22, 2013, St. Louis, MO, Contact: George Meoli, Phone: (203) 453-4279, Website: www.uss-ranger.org.

USS RATON (SS-270) October 2-6, 2013, Silverdale, WA, Contact: Larry Kramer, Phone: (360) 697-2842, Email: ldkramer43@hotmail.com, Website: www.SS270.com.

USS SEAWOLF (SSN-575) September 18-22, 2013, Kissimmee, FL, Contact: Scott Jaklin, Phone: (262) 237-8516, Email: Scott.Jaklin@SSN575.com, Website: www.SSN575.com.

USS SPROSTON (DD/DDE-577) September 4-8, 2013, San Pedro, CA, Contact: Michael Bereskin, Phone: (415) 239-0104, Email: Sproston@sbcglobal.net, Website: www.sproston.com.

USS WALKER (DD-416/DD-723) September 25-29, 2013, Fort Lauderdale, FL, Contact: Richard Williamson, Phone: (920) 788-4916, Email: rwilliamson@new.rr.com, Website: www.usswalker.org.

USS WALLER (DD-466) September 28-31, 2013, Lexington, KY, Contact: Keith Lemons, Phone: (606) 365-2902, Email: Hawkeyefarm1@sarnet.com.

AIR FORCE

SAFESIDE ASSOCIATION May 16-19, 2013, Valdosta, GA, Contact: Pete Villarreal, Phone: , Email: villa@santantet.org, Website: www.safesideassociation.org.

SECURITY SERVICE 1ST RSM/6921ST/6920TH, MISAWA, JAPAN May 30-June 2, 2013, Virginia Beach, VA, Contact: Helen Henderson, Phone: (904) 829-9235, Email: etaya49@hotmail.com, Website: www.usafssmisawa.com.

ALL SERVICES

KOREAN WAR EX-POW REUNION July 21-28, 2013, Arlington, VA, Contact: Bill Norwood, Phone: (423) 476-3628, Email: wnorwood909@charter.net.

SITE ONE HOLY LOCH, SCOTLAND REUNION ASSN. August 27-September 4, 2013, Scotland, Contact: Roland Kitridge, Phone: (508) 877-2960, Email: rk01701@yahoo.com, Website: www.holyloch.org.

UDORN VETERAN'S REUNION July 12-15, 2013, Weatherford, TX, Contact: Jerry Long, Phone: (817) 594-4623, Email: jehlydsr71baf6@gmail.com.

WHITE HOUSE MEDICAL UNIT (ALL YEARS) July 3-6, 2013, San Francisco, CA, Contact: Chester Ward, Phone: (510) 441-3883, Email: tvldoc@sbcglobal.net.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who was a prisoner or knows anything about Siegburg or Waldbröl POW camps located in Germany during WW2. Please contact Jean Dasburg at (786) 768-2288 or by email: jeanj@jjworld.com.
- Searching for information related to David Goldman, who was interred in Stalag 2B, West Prussia, Germany, Farm komando and would like to talk about their experience. Please contact Janice Goldman, 7141 North Kedzie, #505, Chicago, IL 60645, (224) 201-4975, Email: thinker20@msn.com.
- Searching for Marines who were in the 1st Bn 7th Marines, H&S Company and stationed at Camp Sukiran in Okinawa, Japan, from April 1960 thru May 1961. Please contact John T. Ward at (412) 371-3639 or by email: jtwardmarine1@yahoo.com.
- Searching for members of the 765th Security Platoon, Vung Tau Army Airfield, Vietnam, all years, for possible reunion. Please contact Alan K. Abraham at (608) 274-3516 or by email: abraham.alank@gmail.com.

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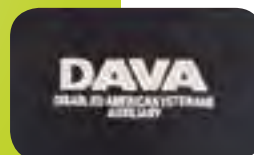


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