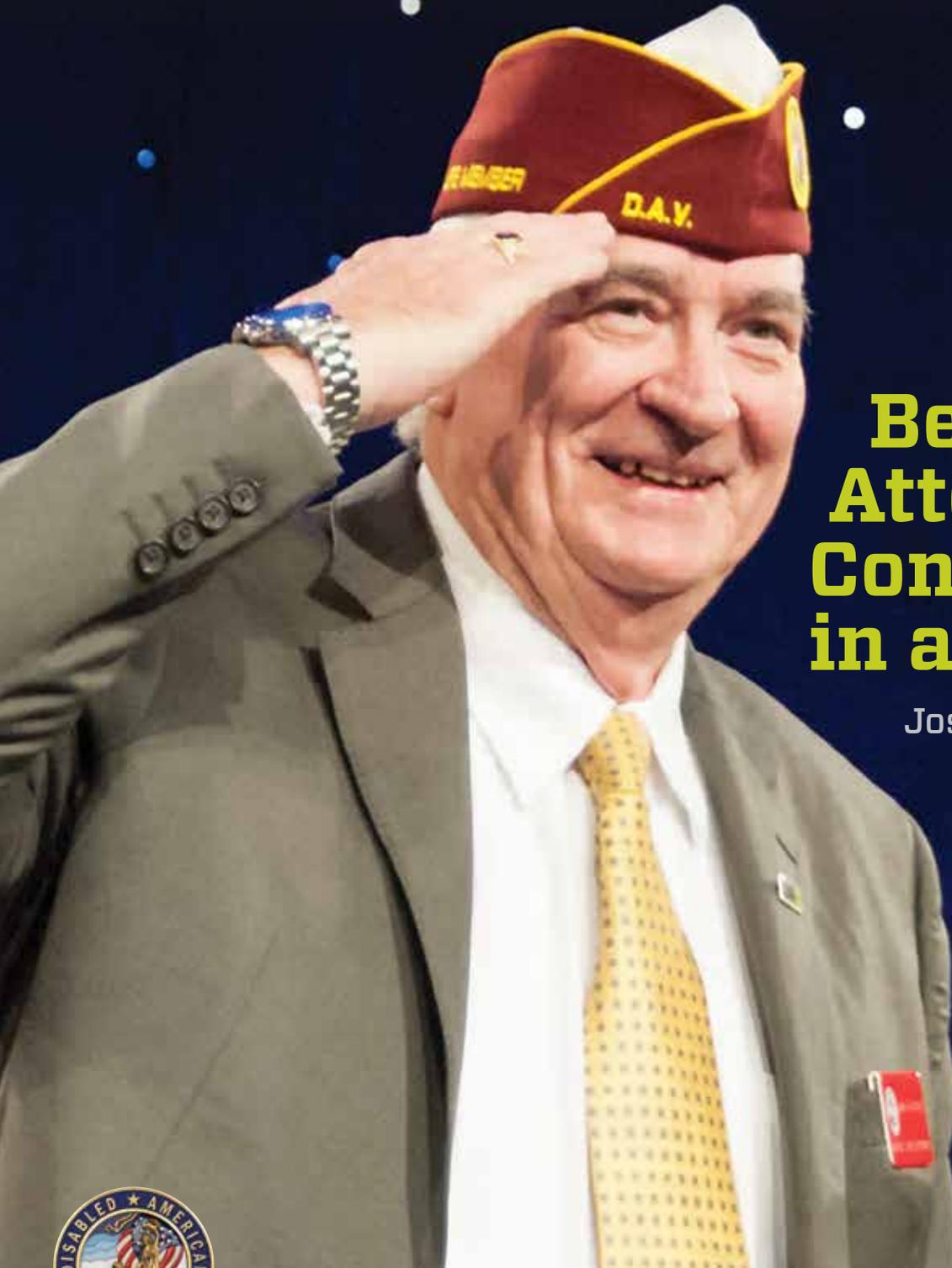


DAV[®]

THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY
SEPTEMBER | OCTOBER 2013

MAGAZINE



Best Attended Convention in a Decade

Joseph W. Johnston
Elected National
Commander
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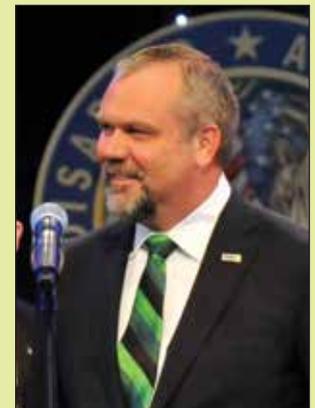




President Obama greets Past National Commander Dennis Joyner.



Above, Auxiliary Then-National Commander Donna Adams presents Then-National Commander Larry Polzin with a ballcap from Glendale Chapter 20 in Arizona. Left, Eric K. Shinseki, Secretary of Veterans Affairs.



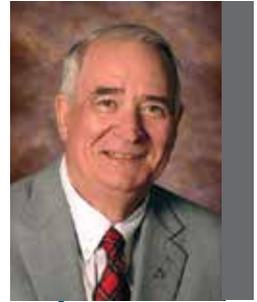
Above, Camp Corral sponsored Children's Fun Day with games and other activities, and the Auxiliary hosted a luau for junior members. Below, Gordy L. Smith of Virginia speaks with Adjutant Burgess following the First Business Session.



Convention attendees were treated to a concert by Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band.



From the NATIONAL COMMANDER JOSEPH W. JOHNSTON



Fire and Light

Editor's note: The following contains edited excerpts from Commander Johnston's remarks following his unanimous election to DAV's highest office.

Each of you is crucial in forming the future of the great fellowship we call DAV. And in this cause, we are all equals.

Each has made his or her own sacrifice of blood or health in the cause of America—the great cause of freedom. All of those sacrifices were meaningful, some quite life-changing.

And each of us plays an essential role in realizing our vision. This is why, as I accept the great responsibility you place on my shoulders, I turn around and place my greatest hopes upon yours.

I don't just want to inspire you. I want your spirit to be filled with fire as you accomplish your mission as a member of our Chapter and Department.

I want that flame to burn so brightly that it will set fire to the heart of every DAV and Auxiliary member you meet.

The members of DAV and its Auxiliary are determined people. In times of adversity, we are people who struggle... people who overcome obstacles... people who come out on top, despite the odds stacked against us.

That was DAV's fighting legacy under the adjutancy of Dale Adams—a legacy that continued under Art Wilson, a great leader who took us into the 21st century.

Today, we watch Marc Burgess step up with the fire of a new generation of American veterans burning in his heart.

Together with Marc, you and I face a time of rapid change in the world.

We must make sure the hearts of the American people remain ablaze with respect and gratitude for veterans who sacrificed their blood and their health for our nation.

We must maintain DAV's superb reputation for integrity and good management of the funds the American people donate to our cause. We must expand our outreach to the public in general, so people keep veterans forever in their thoughts.

Finally, we must stoke the furnace of DAV's internal strength—growing membership as we expand outreach to an ever broader audience of those eligible to join our organization and its Auxiliary.

In this, I ask our Chapter and Department leaders to look for ways you can engage veterans in your community.

We are bound together by character, committed to the common good of our sisters and our brothers, as well as our deep compassion for their families. We are bound by the fire we will carry out of this place—back to our states, communities, and the veterans you and I serve through our Departments and Chapters.

Thank you for allowing me to serve you as your National Commander. And thank you for everything you do to empower your organization and the veterans you and I serve together.

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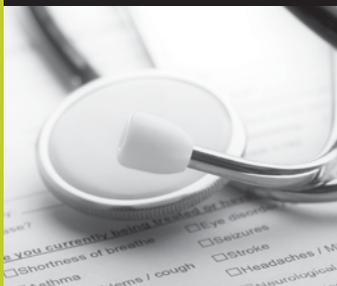
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Pictured: Paul E. Frederick, National Commander 1957-58, meets with President Eisenhower.

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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



Our Legacy, Our Future

I am honored and humbled to serve as your National Adjutant. It will be tough to fill Art Wilson's shoes, but I'll do my best to continue to lead DAV forward while remaining true to our historic roots. After all, times may change, but not our purpose or our mission.

We have never wavered in our commitment to those who have sacrificed in the defense of what our founders believed so strongly. Owing to that commitment, DAV has earned great respect as a strong and influential advocate for veterans' rights. Our reputation as an organization dedicated to addressing the needs of all injured and ill veterans demands that we strive even harder to help them overcome great obstacles as they try to regain a sense of normalcy.

Under Art's leadership, DAV has advanced and strengthened the programs that help hundreds of thousands of veterans each year obtain the benefits they've earned. No other organization does more to help veterans and their families. It's an enviable record that we all can be proud of. But we can't—and won't—stop there.

As you know, DAV has the best trained National Service Officers, and our Department and Chapter Service Officer certification program is second to none. We are determined to raise the bar even higher by continually improving our

training programs and upgrading the tools needed in this important work on behalf of the men and women who served.

DAV continues to enjoy a solid reputation when it comes to advocacy for veterans' rights. We are well-respected by lawmakers and their staffs not only for our experience and expertise in veterans' affairs, but also for the effectiveness of our grassroots advocacy. Our membership is the most well-informed and actively engaged in the veterans' community. It is a legacy carried forward from our early efforts to bring order to the chaos that marked health care and benefits for the veterans of World War I.

Also deeply rooted in our history is the concept of veterans helping veterans, which takes many forms. All across the nation, our members continue to serve injured and ill veterans and their families by volunteering at VA hospitals and nursing homes, providing free rides for veterans to and from their medical appointments and offering a helping hand when it's needed in their communities. The compassion our volunteers demonstrate in so many ways is a DAV tradition and an inspiration for all of us to continue serving our nation's veterans. Our legacy is our strength. Together, we will continue to build an even stronger DAV.

Adjutant Wilson

I received the *DAV Magazine* today and immediately turned to [Adjutant Wilson's] report. It has always been the first thing I read. Somehow, it gives me a stability. I shall miss his reports. I feel I have lost a friend. **Raymond L. Riley, Vienna, Ohio**

Adjutant Burgess

I just wanted to congratulate Marc Burgess on being appointed National Adjutant. I met him while submitting a claim in the 1990s at the Atlanta regional office while he was the supervisor. He was a great person then, and I know by keeping with the outstanding attention to detail, and utmost care for veterans, he will do great for DAV. **Jose A. Davila, Decatur, Ga.**

I read National Adjutant Marc Burgess' article in the July/August issue of *DAV Magazine*. I would like to thank him for the wonderful words he wrote about Irv Meadow, my father. He passed away 18 years ago of a heart attack during a Veterans Day parade in Philadelphia. He couldn't have planned it any better. The veterans, DAV in particular, were his life. He would be thrilled to see how

DAV Magazine welcomes letters. However, due to the volume of mail, we are unable to acknowledge every letter. Letters can be sent to *DAV Magazine*, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. Readers can also comment via email through feedback@dav.org. Letters are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety. Letters involving individual claims are referred to the DAV Service Department.

Adjutant Burgess went through the ranks and to know that journey may have begun with their visit. I, too, am a member of DAV. And yes, my father recruited me as soon as I was discharged from the Air Force back in 1966. **Ian P. Meadow, Garnet Valley, Pa.**

Other Injuries

I know that freedom is not free. My daughter found out the hard way. She was injured during basic training and was discharged. Now, she is told she cannot receive medical benefits. Injuries do not always come from being in or near the fighting. It happens on the bases here at home. Let us not forget about those. **Susan Lopez-Acosta, Lowell, Ind.**

Thank You to DAV

Thank you, DAV, for giving my brother Lane Miller a nice military funeral. He deserved it, and that helped me give him up a little easier. He had a stroke before I took him to my home to take care of him. He lived more than 11 years with me. He was a good brother, and he was loved. **Roberta Hatfield, Hazard, Ky.**

DAV Family

On June 28, a terrible flood hit the village of Herkimer, N.Y. My cellar filled with 7 feet of flood water. Since our homeowners insurance would not cover flood victims, we reached out to a National Service Officer. Within days, the DAV van was in the area and issued a relief check to assist with immediate help. From our hearts, we thank the many people who reached out and assisted our DAV family. **Frank Cassella, Herkimer, N.Y.**

Military Sexual Trauma

Concerning the news article on women veterans and the VA's new hotline and attention to their needs, including military sexual trauma (MST): Thank you; it's about time. It is still too limited to large metropolitan areas. I know of a male veteran who

was attacked by men and molested sexually. He was told to keep his mouth shut, and after medical attention it was covered over, just as they did with mostly all other cases, even those that happen to us women. **Staff Sgt. Bobbie Mallard, SSG, U.S. Army (Ret.), Loudon, Tenn.**

Travel Reimbursement Program

There are three main problems with the VA Travel Reimbursement Program presently in force for our veterans. First, VA travel reimbursement is being treated like health plans; there is a "deductible" assessed against the reimbursement. Second, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs was given discretionary authority to periodically increase the rate of travel reimbursement, but only if funds earmarked for veterans' health care were not used. Third, the VA travel reimbursement is paid with federal funds, and payment must now be made by electronic fund transfer (EFT), I believe that eligible VA patients should be exempt from the EFT mandate and the VA should have the authority to pay travel reimbursements, in cash, on the same day as the patient's appointment. **Senior Chief Petty Officer Brooks W. Outland, U.S. Navy (Ret.), Waianae, Hawaii**

DAV Leaders

The difference between a follower and a leader of DAV is that a follower believes when things are easy; a leader picks up the bags of a veteran in need and says "Follow me," even when things get hard. A follower makes excuses, while a leader makes things happen. A follower thinks DAV may exist for a while, whereas a leader knows DAV exists and believes in DAV. A follower forgets what DAV has done, and a leader remembers—dedication. Be a leader of DAV in all that you do and wherever you may be, regardless of circumstance or situation. **Aroldo Cadriel, Brownsville, Texas**

Quick Service Corrects Claims Error

By Thom Wilborn

Stephen Kelley, of Fenton, Mo., a veteran of the Vietnam and Gulf Wars, always suspected there was something odd about the disability rating he received from the VA. To get answers to his questions, he attended a St. Louis Chapter 1 meeting and met National Service Office Assistant Supervisor Andrew Edwards, who took time to answer all of Kelley's questions after the meeting.

"While we were talking, there was something about the claim rating that didn't add up. Something clicked in my mind that it wasn't what it was supposed to be," Edwards said. "I checked for his records the next day, only to find that his file had been retired and sent to the National Records Management Center."

A records request confirmed Edwards' suspicions.

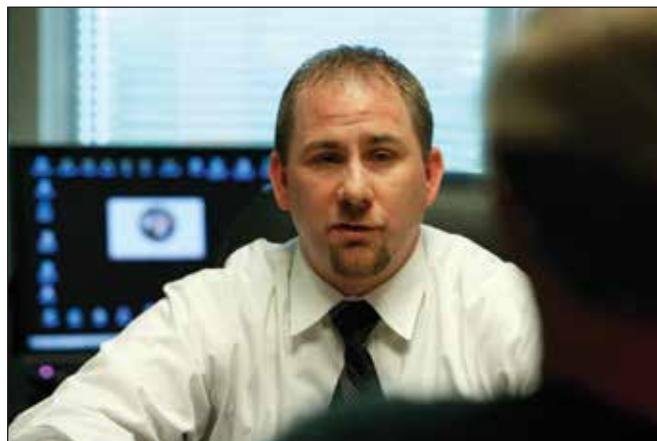
"It was immediately obvious that VA had made a clear and unmistakable error when it decided his claim in 2003," Edwards said. "DAV pointed out the error to VA regional office claims officials the same day."

The VA had increased Kelley's rating to total disability in April 2003, but denied special monthly compensation because his other disabilities totaled 50 percent. Denied the special monthly compensation, Kelley could not receive the benefits he needed for being homebound.

In making its decision, the VA had omitted a service-connected disability rating that was awarded in 1999. "VA amended the record to reflect the correct evaluation supporting the clear and unmistakable error, which meant that Kelley should have received special monthly compensation beginning in 2000," Edwards said. "This means that he will receive retroactive benefits from 2000."

"It was amazing how quickly the VA acted on Kelley's case," said Edwards. "The entire process, from my first meeting with him on April 4 to his notification on April 12 awarding him the entitlement of special monthly compensation, took only a week, thanks to the great work by the St. Louis VA regional office."

"The superb action by everyone involved corrected an error that had denied this veteran his rightful and earned benefits," said National Service Director Jim Marszelek. "DAV was his devoted advocate and his



Andrew Edwards, National Service Office Assistant Supervisor

trusted representative throughout the process. It is what our service is all about."

"Mr. Kelley couldn't thank DAV enough for all our dedicated work," said Edwards. "You get great satisfaction knowing you've helped a veteran receive the benefits they are entitled to. Getting his earned benefits is part of the fabric of our organization, and this is always going to be my way of life."

"The quick resolution of this veteran's case was the result of the combined efforts of DAV, the VA and the Records Management Center," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "It shows that working together in harmony and with all due consideration for the veteran can equate to resolution in a very short time. But it takes our National Service Officers to get the ball rolling."

"It's also an example of DAV's comprehensive training program that gives our NSOs the knowledge and skills to successfully pursue a just decision in a claim," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. "As veterans helping veterans, DAV works relentlessly toward a goal of doing the right thing for veterans."

"I am thankful that I was at the St. Louis Chapter meeting to meet Mr. Kelley," said Edwards. "We're always ready to talk to veterans and to help them. It pays to give veterans the time they deserve and to review their files to see what has happened in the past. It is part of our mission of service to do our best for them." ■



Convention Elects Johnston National Commander

President, First Lady Share Stage with DAV Leadership

By Dave Autry

With the election of Joseph Johnston, of Ohio, as National Commander and special guests President Obama and the first lady addressing DAV and Auxiliary members, the 92nd National Convention was certainly one for the books. It was the best attended convention in more than a decade.

In his acceptance remarks, National Commander-elect Johnston challenged the membership to join him in meeting head-on the challenges that DAV and the entire veterans' community face. Among them is the need to "maintain DAV's superb reputation for integrity and good management of the funds the American people donate to our cause," he said. "We must expand our outreach to the public in general, so people keep veterans forever in their thoughts."

Other National Officers elected by convention delegates are Sr. Vice Commander Ronald Hope, 1st Jr. Vice Commander Moses McIntosh, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander David Riley, 3rd Jr. Vice Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster and 4th Jr. Vice Commander Dennis Krulder. Delegates also re-elected Michael Dobmeier as National Judge Advocate and Ronald Ringo as National Chaplain.

The Auxiliary elected Susan Miller, of Colorado, its National Commander. Her theme for the year is "United in Service." "If we are united in service," she said, "working together, we can't help but achieve success."

During his report to the convention, National Commander Larry Polzin said his tenure was an exciting and enlightening experience, as he traveled the country visiting Chapters and Departments to witness firsthand the dedication and commitment to our mission at every level of the organization. "Serving as National Commander, I certainly grew as an individual. This is especially true in the area of leadership," he said.

Polzin also had high praise for the important work being done by our National, Department, Chapter and Transition Service Officers, as well as our corps of volunteers. "DAV is honored to have the largest volunteer presence among those serving at VA medical centers. We are the leader, and we set the example for others to follow. And I want to thank each member for what you do," he said. "With the support of our dedicated members, we have succeeded in giving a powerful voice to those who have sacrificed so much for our freedom."



President Obama addresses DAV's 92nd National Convention in Orlando, Fla.

“During my year as National Commander, one of the most moving moments came during visits to patients at military and VA medical centers,” he said. “Talking with the veterans is a very special experience. It was my opportunity to help shoulder their burdens as they and their families deal with the trauma of war. I can assure you that this will always be my mission, wherever I go.”

In his remarks to the convention, Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki cited progress in cutting the claims backlog and noted that the VA has processed nearly all claims more than two years old. He also noted that the backlog has been cut from 611,000 at the end of March to about 496,000. “We’re on track to eliminating the backlog in 2015,” he said.

Shinseki also said the Veterans Benefits Management System is ahead of schedule to move from a paper-based claims system to an electronic. The VBMS has now been fielded to all 56 regional offices, six months ahead of schedule.

The Secretary’s remarks included a special salute to Korean War veterans in marking the 60th anniversary of the cease-fire that ended hostilities.

In her remarks, first lady Michelle Obama noted that one of her greatest joys during the past few years has been spending time with veterans and military families. “I have laughed with your children at barbecues. I’ve gone to baby showers with spouses,” she said. “I’ve learned so much during my many visits to military bases across this country. And let me tell you, day after day, I have been so inspired by your stories—so inspired.”

In an emotional moment, the first lady recounted how she has been inspired by an encounter with a combat-wounded Afghanistan War veteran she met at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center. She told how Marine Sgt. Winder Perez, who was hit by an unexploded RPG that lodged in his left thigh, had endured some 30 surgeries.

“And time and again, just when he’s regained the strength to walk, his doctors have told him that it’s time for another surgery, and then Sgt. Perez is back in a wheelchair, starting all over again from square one,” she said.

“Today, Sgt. Perez is walking again. He’s three months into an internship with the Defense Intelligence Agency, and he plans to spend the rest of his career serving his country. And when asked about everything he’s been through, Sgt. Perez puts it all in perspective by simply saying, ‘I just think you’ve got to get back up.’ That’s all he said. You’ve got to get back up.

“And as I look across this room, I see a group of people who know how to get back up. No matter what you’ve been through, no matter what the struggles you have faced, you all get back up. And that is what inspires me. That’s why, every day, I work to push myself harder to live up to your example,” she said.



First Lady Michelle Obama receives a warm welcome at the National Convention.



Lynn Quigley presents to Then-National Commander Polzin and National Adjutant Burgess a \$45,000 check to support the DAV Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program.

Ford Continues Support for Transportation Program, Youth Scholarships

Ford Motor Company, a longtime DAV supporter, presented DAV with \$200,000 during the National Convention for the purchase of seven new vehicles for the organization's nationwide Transportation Network, which provides free rides for veterans to and from their medical appointments. Another \$78,000 was donated to DAV for the annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and DAV's Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program.

Ford Motor Company Fund Community Relations Manager Lynn Quigley said the fund is honored to support our injured and ill veterans by partnering with DAV on many programs, including the DAV Transportation Network. Our partnership dates back through nine decades, and we are continuously amazed at what our partnership has produced.

"We are extremely grateful for Ford's generosity," said Then-National Commander Larry Polzin. "These vehicles will be used by veterans' hospitals to transport wounded heroes to and from medical appointments, continually providing a vital link between thousands of ill and injured veterans and the health care they so desperately need."

Since 1996, Ford has donated 171 vehicles to DAV's Transportation Network to get veterans to and from VA medical facilities. That's in addition to the 2,714 Ford vans the DAV National Organization, its Chapters, Departments and the National Service Foundation Columbia Trust have purchased since 1987, at a cost of more than \$57 million.

In addition to stressing a commitment to continue support for vital veterans programs and eliminating the claims backlog, President Obama announced a plan to enhance mental health research and to work with community colleges and universities to help veterans earn college degrees or get the credentials they need to find jobs.

The President paid tribute to veterans of all generations for their service and sacrifice, noting, "Next year, your profound sacrifice will be recognized in the heart of our nation's capital when our country dedicates the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

"That memorial will honor your courage in war, but it will also pay tribute to your bravery in the other battle you have fought—the fight to recover from the wounds of war. And this may be your greatest triumph of all. Because rather than being defined by what you lost, by what you can't do, you've inspired America with what you can do."

He also recognized three veterans of the war in Afghanistan: National Service Officer (NSO) Timothy Duke, Staff Sgt. Jacare Hogan and Silver Star recipient NSO Jason Hassinger. "They're just examples of all who've served in these years of war—the 9/11 Generation," he said. "And now, you're beginning the next chapter in your lives wearing a proud new title—veteran of the United States Armed Forces. So this time of war may be coming to an end, but the job of caring for our veterans goes on, and our work caring for our newest veterans has only just begun.

"I believe that now is the time to make sure our nation is truly ready—organized and structured to get this right, not just for this year, not just for next year, but for decades to come, not just for the veterans of today's wars, but for all wars," the President said.

"Number one, we need to make sure we've got the resources, the budgets our veterans deserve. The next priority is "to make sure you're getting the veterans health care you've been promised," he said. The third priority is getting rid of the claims backlog.

"It was a great honor to have the President and the first lady address the Joint Opening Session and share the stage with National Commander Polzin and our organization's top leadership and honored guests," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "I think it says something about our organization to be selected for a presidential appearance. And it was the second time that President Obama has addressed our national body," he said, recalling the 2010 visit.

The convention also featured the inaugural presentation of the Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Award for Top Venture Impacting Veterans, which went to Iraq War veteran Alex van Breukelen. DAV's newest award recognizes a newly formed disabled-veteran-owned business that impacts and improves the lives of veterans in some way. The recognition includes \$10,000 to help sustain the ill or injured veteran's new business venture. (See page 11.)

National Membership Director Tony Baskerville noted that it has been quite an exciting membership year. For the first time in decades, all Departments have met or exceeded their goals. He reported that DAV concluded 2012–2013 with 197,920 trial members, 212,685 part life and 823,449 full life members, for a grand total of 1,248,150 members, which is 14,096 members above goal.

In her report to the convention, Auxiliary National Commander Donna Adams noted the organization's "incredible" successes during the past year. "This year, we have seen record numbers of DAV members join our Auxiliary. And with your recruitment efforts, we exceeded our membership quota several months before the end of the membership year."

Adams praised the dedication of volunteers who logged hundreds of thousands of volunteer hours in VA medical centers, schools and communities. "You drove thousands of miles transporting veterans to medical appointments, wrote letters in support of DAV legislative initiatives, and you donated your hard-earned money to help our members in crisis through our Service Support Fund,"



Gary Sinise & the Lt. Dan Band played for members and guests as part of the Fun Night festivities.

she said. "Our Units supported the Educational Scholarship Fund and helped us be a sponsor of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic.

Adams also recognized the DAVA for Kids program that assisted in transporting children of eligible disabled veterans and military families to Camp Corral in addition to providing clothes and school supplies for those in need.

The convention wasn't all business, though. Delegates and their guests gathered at the National Commander's reception for a chance to mix and mingle with longtime friends and make new ones.

Of course, many attendees enjoyed the Fun Night activities, with music provided by Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band. Always a crowd favorite for the energy and range of the group's style and musical acumen, the band kept things rocking throughout the evening.

And the annual convention closed in style with the staging of DAV and Auxiliary National Officers, followed by dinner and musical entertainment by Paradise. The group is known for its unique combination of excellent musical arrangements and visual and interactive performance styles.

The 93rd National Convention will convene at Bally's in Las Vegas August 8–12, 2014. The 2015 annual meeting will be at the Sheraton Hotel Denver in August 2015. ■

 **Learn More Online**

Download speeches, reports and other information from the convention at www.dav.org/events/2013-national-convention/. Photos can be downloaded at www.flickr.com/theDAV.



Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year

Among the many highlights of the Joint Opening Session was a stirring tribute to Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year John Todd. He served as a helicopter gunship pilot in Vietnam from 1968 to 1969. He was shot down twice, and his injuries rendered him legally blind.

After his recovery at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in 1970, Todd moved to New York City to work as the National Coordinator for Vietnam Veterans for a Just Peace. He later worked for President Richard Nixon's staff where his work twice earned him the Freedom's Foundation award for Excellence in Political Communication.

Veterans Face Choices with Health Reform Law

By Dave Autry

With the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act set to take effect next year, many veterans are struggling to get the information they need to make important decisions about medical care. Medicare expert Diane Omdahl warns that many veterans are at risk of being misinformed, which may cost them thousands of dollars in enrollment penalty fees.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, nothing in the law will affect access to the care veterans may already receive through the VA medical system or Tricare. Veterans enrolled in VA health care do not need to obtain additional coverage. Veterans receiving VA health care will have the option to enroll in an additional insurance plan through the new health insurance exchanges, which open in 2014.

Veterans who are happy with their current coverage do not need to make any changes. If they're not happy, they can explore their options, said Omdahl, who also is co-founder of 65 Incorporated, a health care information company (www.65incorporated.com).

Under the health reform law, current guaranteed Medicare-covered benefits won't be reduced or taken away, nor will the ability of seniors to choose their own doctors. However, veterans need to be aware of how the new health care law affects veterans and Medicare, Omdahl said.

For veterans who are eligible for Medicare Part D prescription drug coverage, enrollment in the VA health care system is considered creditable coverage for Medicare Part D purposes. This means that VA prescription drug coverage is at least as good as the Medicare Part D coverage. Since only veterans may enroll in the VA health care system, dependents and family members do not receive coverage under a veteran's enrollment.



Rep. Paul Ryan, R-Wisc., questions witnesses during a hearing on the Affordable Care Act (ACA), Aug. 1, 2013, in Washington, D.C. Witnesses included representatives from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services and the Internal Revenue Service responsible for implementing the ACA. (Photo by Chip Somodevilla/Getty Images)

There is, however, one significant area where VA health care does not qualify as creditable coverage: Medicare Part B. Because VA health care is not a health insurance plan, it is not considered creditable coverage for Medicare Part B, which covers outpatient services, including doctors' fees. So while veterans may avoid the late enrollment penalty for Medicare Part D by citing VA health care enrollment, they cannot do the same to avoid the late enrollment penalty for Part B.

For the 56 percent of veterans with private insurance coverage, new consumer protections prevent insurance companies from dropping them if they get sick or injured. And there are no longer any lifetime limits on how much insurance companies will cover.

Veterans who are not eligible for VA health care or other coverage may be eligible to receive tax credits for insurance bought in the exchanges. This may also apply to their families. Those exchanges will provide access to much-needed care for the 1.3 million veterans who are neither insured nor eligible for VA health care.

Uninsured veterans may also benefit from the Medicaid expansion. But, according to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, of the veterans who are potentially eligible for that coverage, fewer than half live in states committed to expanding Medicaid. ■

Award Encourages Veteran Entrepreneurs

When Iraq War veteran Alex van Breukelen returned home, he wondered how he would readjust to civilian life. Although he struggled with post-traumatic stress disorder, van Breukelen persevered in his dream of opening a restaurant in the Baltimore area. For help with his goal, he turned to the Entrepreneurship Bootcamp for Veterans with Disabilities Program (EBV). The EBV offers cutting-edge, experiential training in entrepreneurship and small business management to veterans with disabilities.

Van Breukelen entered the program's business plan competition and won the Top Venture Impacting Veterans Award. His award-winning idea was to create a hub for veterans to connect in the community.

"The program helped me properly prepare for opening a new business. The course, the curriculum and the instructors have trained me well for any future business endeavor I embark on," van Breukelen shared.

DAV recently announced its support for the EBV competition by offering a financial award—DAV's Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Award for Top Venture Impacting Veterans. The award is made possible by an ongoing contribution from Rick Fenstermacher, chief operating officer of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation.

"My motive is to honor Art and Mary for their friendship and guidance, advocating extraordinary values and integrity," said Fenstermacher. "I hope I can inspire others—individuals and corporations—to contribute to the fund to expand its reach to other worthy recipients."

"For servicemen and women returning to civilian life today, fewer issues are more important than finding a good job," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "The EBV business plan competition is aligned with our mission of empowering veterans to live high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We are honored to support this program and grateful to Rick Fenstermacher for his support of this mission."

Van Breukelen's Baltimore restaurant served as a meeting space for numerous veterans organizations as well as a



Alex van Breukelen, left, receives the inaugural Arthur H. and Mary E. Wilson Award for Top Venture Impacting Veterans from Rick Fenstermacher, chief operating officers of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation, and Art and Mary Wilson.

location to hold reunions. Van Breukelen plans to use the award money to further awareness of what these organizations do for veterans—and the civilian population as well.

"We have developed a network of over 1,500 veterans in and around the greater Baltimore area. Through this network, we have been able to bring together key individuals who played an integral role in the momentum of several veteran-based organizations. We have become the home for many veterans in Baltimore," added van Breukelen.

"To have our names on this award is humbling," said Art Wilson, former National Adjutant. "Mary and I hope it will enable entrepreneurs to achieve their goals and encourage them to give back to support their fellow veterans."

Van Breukelen encourages all veterans who have a dream of owning a business to enter the EBV program. "The funding provided by DAV for the award is tremendous. Having the partnership between EBV and DAV is a step in the right direction for our veteran communities. This generation of veterans is poised to be the next 'Greatest Generation.' We have support, we have encouragement, we have each other," he said. ■



Learn More Online

To find out more about the EBV program, visit whitman.syr.edu/ebv.



From the NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR JOSEPH A. VIOLANTE

The Other Backlog: VA's Critical Infrastructure

If the Department of Veterans Affairs is to provide high quality, accessible health care for our ill and injured veterans, Congress must provide adequate funding to maintain current structures and reduce the backlog of critical construction and maintenance projects.

With buildings that have an average age of 60 years, the VA has a monumental task of improving and maintaining these facilities. Those facilities are where our veterans receive care and are just as important as the doctors, nurses and other VA staff who deliver that care. A VA budget that does not adequately fund facility maintenance and construction needs will reduce the timeliness and quality of care for veterans.

With shrinking requests and appropriations from the Administration and Congress, the VA is falling further behind in maintenance, repairs and safety improvements. Just to maintain the VA's infrastructure in its current condition, the agency's Non-Recurring Maintenance account would justify \$1.35 billion a year, *The Independent Budget* and veterans service organizations have calculated. That account is currently funded at \$712 million. More funds will need to be invested to prevent the documented \$22.4 billion maintenance backlog from growing even larger. The VA's major construction account doesn't fare much better. To finish existing projects and to close current and future gaps, the VA will need to invest some \$21.7 billion during the next 10 years. At current funding levels, however, between 18 and 22

years will be required to complete the VA's 10-year plan.

To meet all the minor construction needs within the 10-year timeline, the VA would need to invest \$8.5 billion to \$10 billion, including an additional \$1 billion to the account for this year. If minor construction continues to be funded at the fiscal year 2012 appropriated level, more than 16 years will be required to complete VA's 10-year plan.

In addition to funding shortfalls, the Strategic Capital Investment Plan, which is intended to help the VA make more informed decisions, lacks a mechanism for a comprehensive assessment of resources that lie outside of the VA through existing contracts and sharing agreements. Without a comprehensive understanding of the health care resources that exist within and outside of the VA, it would be difficult for the department to make sound decisions on capital investments and right-size its inventory for the near, mid, and long term. Another apparent flaw of SCIP is the lack of transparency on the costs of future real property priorities, which hinders the VA's ability to make informed decisions. This was among the findings in a 2011 report from the Government Accountability Office.

DAV and our grassroots advocates will continue monitoring the levels of funding for each of the VA's infrastructure accounts to ensure that all current gaps are closed within 10 years and that emerging and future gaps will have sufficient funding. And we will be ready to spring into action if the need arises. ■

Service and Legislation Highlights

In his report to the convention, Then-Washington Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski highlighted some of DAV's efforts to help improve the timeliness and accuracy of the benefits claims process. He stressed that the service and legislative arms of the organization continue to work in concert to fight for veterans' rights and advocate for veterans and their families and survivors.

"As the premiere veterans service organization, we are a vital voice in addressing concerns with the VA's Veterans Benefits Management System, or VBMS, and the Stakeholder Enterprise Portal, or SEP, by participating in the initial development of these programs and by being involved in the test phases before release of these products nationwide," Jesinoski told the membership.

"Earlier this year, DAV made history. A Vietnam veteran suffering from Parkinson's and ischemic heart disease 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 a claim for disability benefits.

"A few other forms and supporting evidence were easily scanned into electronic files. Those forms, and the information they contained, immediately flowed into the VA's database, creating the electronic file and opening the claim on the spot. That was the first-ever original claim that was fully electronic from start to finish," Jesinoski said.

The result? The veteran received a rating of 100 percent in less than two months.

In our drive to build government support for wounded, injured and ill veterans, Jesinoski noted, DAV's Legislative staff since last year testified at 16 Congressional hearings, covering 87 bills and draft measures, as well as multiple other issues. The goal, of course, is to ensure that veterans can provide for their families and survivors, and to prevent the erosion of benefits and services they have earned and deserve.



Barry Jesinoski

Jesinoski stressed, however, that the Legislative team cannot do it alone. "They need your support so that their message on Capitol Hill resonates back home in every state and in every congressional district," he said. "We need your voices. Please become a part of DAV Commander's Action Network."

One of our most serious but newer concerns, Jesinoski noted, is the viability of the veterans health care infrastructure. "We are greatly concerned about the budget proposal for construction and infrastructure maintenance," he said.

"Since the VA's ability to deliver health care services depends on maintaining an adequate and safe infrastructure, these shortfalls in construction funding are a serious deficiency that Congress must correct," Jesinoski said.

"DAV's legislative staff has been actively involved with members of Congress and their staffs on a weekly basis to discuss the VA's claims backlog, possible solutions to it, and pending or draft legislation intended to resolve the situation," added Jesinoski.

"These events, whether public or private, are extremely important because they provide DAV with an informal forum in which to present our issues to congressional leadership," said Jesinoski. "We firmly believe that DAV's legislative program is a success because of our ability to sit down with leadership, discuss the issues and, along with other members of the veteran/military/family community, thereby convince Congress of the importance of enacting our priorities into law.

"Your Washington staff continues its excellent work keeping on top of issues and policies affecting our nation's injured and ill veterans and their families," Jesinoski said. "We enjoy a stellar reputation as the top-notch professional veterans service organization committed to protecting and preserving veterans' rights." ■

2013 DAV AWARDS

George H. Seal Memorial Awards



Dennis Krulder of Yaphank, N.Y., and Melody Angelini of Forest Park, Ill., received the **George H. Seal Memorial Trophy** for extraordinary volunteerism. The awards are conferred in memory of George H. Seal, who was DAV's Director of Membership and Voluntary Services and the leading organizer and administrator of DAV volunteer programs.



Auxiliary Member of the Year



Rosa Lee Knox of Myrtle Beach, S.C., was honored as **Auxiliary Member of the Year** for her outstanding dedication to injured and ill veterans and their families. Knox is a member of Auxiliary Unit 30 in Myrtle Beach.

Membership Recruiter of the Year



Ronald Holtberg of Wilmington, N.C., was the **Membership Recruiter of the Year**, for the third consecutive year. He recruited 252 veterans into the Department of North Carolina.

Large Employer of the Year



DAV selected ICF International of Fairfax, Va., as the **Outstanding Large Employer of the Year**, and HELP Plumbing, Heating, Cooling and Electric, Cincinnati, Ohio, as the **Outstanding Small Employer of the Year**. Both companies actively seek veterans and disabled veterans to join their workforce.

Small Employer of the Year



National Commander's Outstanding VA Employee Awards



The **Outstanding Veterans Benefits Administration Employee Award** was presented to Christopher "Buzz" Buchan, a rating veterans service representative in the VA Chicago regional office.



Retired U.S. Marine Corps Col. Gene Castagnetti received the **Outstanding National Cemetery Administration Employee Award** as director of the National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific in Honolulu, Hawaii.



Nobel Laureate Dr. Andrew Schally, a medical research scientist the Miami, Fla., VA medical center, was awarded the **Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee Award**. A colleague accepted the award on behalf of Dr. Schally, as he was unable to attend the convention.



Department of Nevada Award Honors Native American Veteran

Robert Primeaux Receives the Sonny Montgomery Helping Hands Award

By Steve Wilson

The Department of Nevada's Sonny Montgomery Helping Hands Award was recently presented to a member of North and South Dakota's Standing Rock Sioux tribe, marking the first time an American Indian has received the honor. Life member Robert Primeaux was recognized in April. The award is named for longtime House Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Gillespie V. "Sonny" Montgomery, a veteran of World War II and Korea and author of the Montgomery GI Bill.

Primeaux, a Vietnam veteran who began his military service in 1968, said he feels an emotional attachment to this recognition because he not only attended college on the Montgomery GI Bill, but he also spoke to Congressman Montgomery on several occasions.

"When I left the Army and was looking for a federal job, a few employers told me the veterans preference point system was going to be phased out," he said. "I knew Sonny Montgomery was a veterans advocate, so I called him and he said he'd get that fixed."

Primeaux added, "Do you know what they called Sonny Montgomery in the House? Mr. Veteran. I'm still speechless that I was given an award named in his honor."

Primeaux is a North Dakota native who holds doctorates in business management and marketing, as well as public policy and administration. He advocates for veterans and their unique concerns by hosting two Nevada radio shows devoted to veterans' issues. "The programs are designed to be very informative," he said. "I get a lot of updates from the VA and from the House Committee



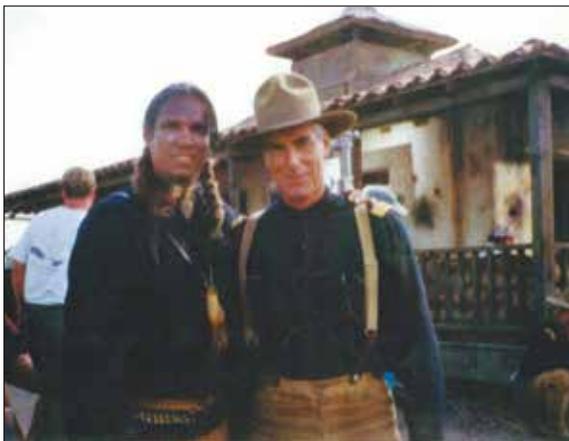
2013 Sonny Montgomery Helping Hands Award recipient Dr. Robert Primeaux hosts a radio show where he discusses veteran-related issues directly with DAV's veteran audience, their families and federal lawmakers as well as VA officials.

on Veterans' Affairs, and I announce them all on the air. What I share with my listeners is all public information, but it's information no one would [otherwise] get."

For Primeaux, communication is a two-way street that must involve a variety of people. He often features guests on his show, either in person or by phone, to discuss veterans' issues. Guests have included VA officials and members of Congress. "I go straight to the horse's mouth for information," he said. "I always ask them, 'What is it you want me to tell the veterans of this country?'"

His program topics have included post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, homelessness, benefits and groups that falsely claim to be veterans service organizations (VSOs). He's also been able to communicate to his listeners that anyone can be an advocate for the veterans in their own communities. "A number of people have called during broadcasts and asked how they can help, and I always tell them to call their local VSO, Congressional representative or VA office and simply ask what they can do," said Primeaux.

(Continued on pg. 25)



Dr. Robert Primeaux, left, on the set of the 1997 film "Rough Riders" with fellow actor Sam Elliott. Primeaux's character in the film represented the American Indians who fought with future President Theodore Roosevelt's cavalry, which made the Battle of San Juan Hill famous.

Seminars Provide Wealth of Important Information

The 92nd National Convention featured first-rate learning opportunities to help members meet tomorrow’s challenges in their Chapters, Units and Departments. At the Service and Legislative Seminar, for example, delegates gained up-to-date information about important legislative and policy issues from staff members of key congressional committees and VA officials. The seminar also provided an opportunity for a wide-ranging question-and-answer with panelists.

At the Benefits Protection/Legislative Workshop, delegates learned about the status of the fiscal year 2014 budget, important pending legislation and recently enacted legislation, as well as received information on improving the claims process and other key issues impacting veterans’ benefits and health care. The workshop also provided tips for being an effective veterans advocate at home and on the Hill, and how to stay informed of hot-button issues.

Those who attended the Women Veterans Seminar learned of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans 2012 report recommendations, Women Veterans Task Force findings, outreach challenges, new initiatives and legislation, and health care issues of concern to women veterans and their families. They also were updated on the Center for Women Veterans activities and the newly established hotline for Women Veterans.



The Women Veterans Seminar was one of the most well-attended sessions at the National Convention.

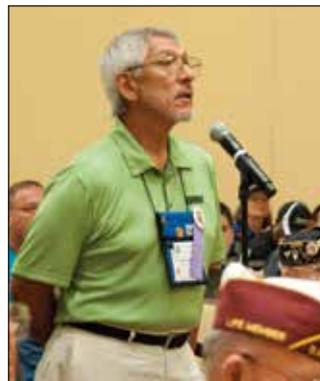
The Outreach 101 Seminar was a three-hour course on outreach and media relations. Members learned how to expand and develop their community outreach efforts. The session focused on interview techniques for engaging media outlets, the basics of press releases, media relations skills and community engagement.

The POW/MIA Seminar was a reminder that our nation must never forget those taken prisoner, missing and who are unaccounted for—and neither will DAV. It provided an opportunity to discuss efforts to ensure all who serve receive a dignified homecoming and are treated with honor and dignity.

During the Membership Seminar, participants discussed how to use social networking and other tools to engage current and prospective members, boost Chapter retention and convert more veterans to the ranks of fully paid life members. As an example, Golden Corral’s



Membership seminar attendees took an active part in the proceedings.



The Voluntary Services seminar answered questions from members.



The Social Media seminar gave participants a lot of vital information for increasing public awareness.

92nd National Convention

annual Military Appreciation Monday event provides free meals for veterans while providing DAV Chapters an important outreach and fundraising opportunity.

The Voluntary Services Seminar featured new and exciting volunteer initiatives, such as working with our national cemeteries. This will be a great way for DAV to broaden its volunteer efforts and honor our fallen veterans. Participants were brought up to date on current volunteer recruitment and retention strategies, as well as reviewed our accomplishments from last year's program.

Participants learned current and practical information on matters related to the day-to-day activities and operations of Departments and Chapters at the Inspector General Seminar. It also explained the requirements of Article 16 of the National Bylaws and what is required of a Department Commander in order to initiate disciplinary action. This was a great opportunity for new Department and Chapter leaders to learn the basics of the National Constitution, Bylaws and National Executive Committee Regulations.

DAV has undergone a new look and initiated an intensified campaign to enhance awareness nationwide. At the Communications Seminar, participants learned what DAV is doing to engage veterans and the public. Also discussed were DAV's overarching outreach efforts to date, and questions were answered on *DAV Magazine* and other outreach topics.

A Social Networking Seminar explained the importance of knowing how and when to use social media. A growing number of Americans are turning to Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Foursquare, Instagram, Vine and other social networks. The seminar included an update on how DAV is putting the information revolution to work to reach new members, inform current supporters and influence lawmakers.

The Chaplains Seminar focused on meeting the spiritual needs of today's veterans, which requires a thoughtful and ecumenical approach. Current and aspiring chaplains received foundational training on the role they may play in DAV and in the lives of those they serve. In addition, attendees learned how they can become accredited chaplains. ■

Scholarship Winner Devoted to Helping Veterans



This year's first-place winner of the DAV Jessie Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship is Max Freeman of Northport, N.Y., who was recognized at the 92nd National Convention in Orlando. The 17-year-old plans to use the \$20,000 to study computer science at George Mason University in suburban Washington, D.C.

During the past five years, Freeman has spent a total of 1,200 hours helping veterans through the VA Voluntary Service program in Northport. "Max has helped set up accessible personal computers for nursing home residents as well as helping homeless veterans find places to live and apply for jobs," said National Director of Voluntary Services Ron Minter. "Using his musical skills, he has entertained nursing home residents and worked on numerous special projects, including a database of music for surgeons to listen to in the operating room."

"Volunteering for veterans is very rewarding," Freeman said. "You're helping America's heroes. I've learned a lot from veterans, and they have served as real role models."

"Max is an outstanding young man," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "He is a five-time gold recipient of the President's Volunteer Service Award for his contributions on behalf of veterans at the Northport VA medical center. He's also an academic honor student."

"I'm honored to win the scholarship," said Freeman. "I'll probably continue to volunteer for veterans. It's a wonderful experience, and it will stick with me for the rest of my life. I want to thank the VA staff, veterans and DAV for this honor."

Other DAV scholarship winners

Jonah Drapeau, Garden City, Mich.	\$15,000
Michelle Wu, San Francisco, Calif.	\$10,000
Joseph Guggemos, Danville, Ill.	\$7,500
April Ritzer, Waite Park, Minn.	\$7,500
Amanda Perez, Trumbull, Conn.	\$5,000
Samantha Stamey, Cincinnati, Ohio	\$5,000
Jeralyn Westercamp, Cedar Rapids, Iowa	\$5,000

Retroactive Benefits Reward Veterans Filing Fully Developed Claims

Veterans filing an original fully developed claim (FDC) for service-connected disability compensation may be entitled to up to one year of retroactive benefits. The retroactive benefits, which are in effect through Aug. 5, 2015, are designed to help reduce the VA claims backlog. Only veterans who are submitting their first compensation claim as an FDC are potentially eligible for retroactive disability benefits.

veterans to get help from a National Service Officer to make sure everything the process requires is provided to the VA. Our NSOs know all the ins and outs of the process and will make sure the veteran's claim is complete."

When veterans submit all the necessary evidence with their claims, it can cut in half the time it takes for a traditionally filed claim. The VA also assigns FDCs a higher priority than other claims and continues to prioritize other specific categories of claims, including those for veterans who are seriously wounded, terminally ill, Medal of Honor recipients, former prisoners of war, homeless or experiencing extreme financial hardship.

Earlier this year, the VA announced the Community of Practice, a new partnership with veterans service organizations, including DAV, to help reduce the claims backlog by increasing the number of FDCs filed by veterans and their advocates. The VA also launched an initiative to expedite disability compensation claims decisions for veterans who have waited a year or longer. ■

"Our NSOs know all the ins and outs of the process and will make sure the veteran's claim is complete."

Garry Augustine, Washington Headquarters Executive Director



"The VA strongly encourages veterans to work with veterans service organizations to file fully developed claims and participate in this initiative, since it means more money in eligible veterans' pockets simply by providing the VA the information it needs up front," said Undersecretary for Benefits Allison A. Hickey. "At the same time, it helps reduce the inventory of pending claims by speeding the process."

Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine said that filing an FDC is often the fastest way for veterans to get a decision on their claims because they must provide all the supporting evidence the VA needs to rate their claims. "That's why it is so important for



Learn More Online

Veterans can learn more about their disability benefits on the joint Department of Defense-VA web portal eBenefits, www.ebenefits.va.gov, and the FDC program at www.benefits.va.gov/fdc/.



2013 LVAP AWARDS

Local Veterans Assistance Program

National Director of Voluntary Services Ron Minter, third from the left, presented awards to the 2013 Local Veterans Assistance Program Division Winners at the National Convention for leading volunteer efforts that served the interests of veterans and their families. DAV members from Virginia, Tennessee, Alabama, Connecticut and North Dakota accepted the awards.

POW-MIA Day

A Remembrance

The legacy of our nation's wars is written in the epitaphs of those missing. Since the beginning of World War II, more than 83,000 men and women have disappeared in the fog of war, but they are remembered with thankfulness by family members and their nation.

To honor the service of prisoners of war, as well as those who remain missing in action, the country marks National POW/MIA Recognition Day on Sept. 20. In addition to special ceremonies at the Pentagon, the entire nation will recognize the day as one of remembrance of those who had to wait until war's end before coming home...and those who still remain behind.

Today, hundreds of Department of Defense (DoD) specialists around the world are dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of those missing. The Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office (DPMO) consists of archival researchers, intelligence collectors and analysts, field investigators, scientists and other experts. They all practice the art of the recovery of remains by scouring the world—from mountain peaks to murky swamps to the bottom of the sea—to find those who rest on the field of battle.

“For decades, the DPMO has led the search to recover the remains of the men and

women who served our nation, and each of them have a remarkable record of service,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess.

“DAV is dedicated to the fullest possible accounting of our missing in action,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. “In recent years, DPMO and its associated commands have recovered and identified an increasing number of MIA remains, and are committed to even greater recoveries.

“This is one of most compassionate acts of recovery and identification,” Augustine said. “It brings closure to the families who have lived without answers to the question of what happened to their loved ones as long as 70 years ago.”

“DAV recognizes that the efforts of the DPMO and the DoD are a challenge, but it is necessary that our nation leaves no person behind,” Burgess said. “For most of our citizens, POW/MIA Recognition Day comes once a year. For the families with missing loved ones, it is a mystery that remains unanswered every day.” ■

Servicemembers assigned to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command place a POW/MIA flag on the wreckage of an aircraft during recovery operations on the island of Espiritu Santo on the Republic of Vanuatu. Two specialized teams excavated several ground and aircraft crash sites in search of Americans who remain unaccounted for from World War II. (Photo by Sgt. 1st Class Adelita C. Mead/DoD)



DAV Fights to Keep Up with Unprecedented Surge in Demand for Service

By Joseph R. Chenelly

Every year until DAV's 100th anniversary in 2020, each September/October issue of *DAV Magazine* will chronicle a decade in our organization's history. This year's installment provides some historical background and highlights of important issues and events that affected disabled veterans and their families during the 1950s. The Korean War and its aftermath marked DAV's fourth decade of service.



In 1950, less than five years after World War II concluded, a new world crisis struck when troops from communist North Korea invaded its neighbor to the south, engaging the Western Powers in one of the bloodiest conflicts in U.S. history. The killing didn't stop until a truce was signed on July 27, 1953, by which time 5.7 million Americans had served during the Korean War. More than 36,000 died, and 103,000 came home wounded. Even now, the war is not officially over.

At the same time, the Cold War began as our nation moved to protect freedom and democracy from communism and repression. Men and women were called

to sacrifice during a war that was and still is mostly unknown.

The early 1950s saw the total population of veterans in the United States swell to 19.8 million, which equated to about 12 percent of the entire population.

"It was left to DAV to ensure the sacrifices of these heroes did not go unnoticed or their needs unfulfilled," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "This meant a workload that the founders of DAV could never have foreseen—a caseload that intensified daily."

In 1950, delegates to DAV's National Convention elected Boniface R. Maile, a Michigan attorney, to the organization's



National Commander Boniface Maile presents Secretary of State George Marshall with the DAV Award for Outstanding Citizen of 1950 during a ceremony at the Pentagon.

highest office. Wounded in World War II, Maile was destined to play a major role in DAV's leadership for a half-century to come.

"The first few years of the decade saw a push in Congress, continuing the trend from the late 1940s, enacting hundreds of laws affecting veterans' benefits and services.

"It was a great financial problem for the government to meet the needs of so many veterans, just as it was a challenge for DAV," said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "While membership dues covered several DAV programs, most of the organization's expenses were paid with funds raised from the general public. That is still the case today."

At the 1955 National Convention, Marine Maj. Gen. Melvin J. Maas was elected National Commander while he was still on active duty. Wounded in combat on Okinawa, Maas was stationed for two years at the Pentagon, where he was known as "the blind general." For a time, he also chaired the President's Committee on Employment of the Physically Handicapped, with which DAV has been associated since its earliest years.



Maj. Gen. Melvin Maas was stricken with total blindness in 1951 but continued to serve in the Marine Corps. He was elected National Commander in 1955 while still on active duty.



Korea was the first major conflict to be fought by the U.S. after the military desegregated. Here, black soldiers and white soldiers of the 2nd Infantry Division man a machine gun side by side.

Maas cited the committee's work during his acceptance speech as National Commander, bringing employment of disabled veterans back to center stage as an issue of concern for DAV. Educating the public about the plight

of disabled veterans was important, he said, but educating industry should be DAV's top priority. The adopted slogan said, "It is good business to hire the handicapped."

From 1925 to 1958, through good years and bad, one man held the National Adjutant's post. But at the 1958 National Convention, Crab Corbly announced his intent to retire.

The organization chose its new leader, John E. Feighner, who had served as National 4th Junior Vice Commander before Corbly hired him in 1945 as Assistant National Adjutant. Feighner took the reins in troubled times.

"We conducted a meeting in St. Louis in 1959, and it was a do-or-die meeting," said the late Dale Adams, who went on to lead DAV

as National Adjutant until he retired in 1988. "We knew the organization was in trouble, and we formed a committee from a group of National Service Officers. I was the chairman of it, and we wrote a manifest, which I presented to the Executive Committee. It laid down certain stipulations that had to be done for the organization. They adopted the report."

"The organization was working hard to provide services to disabled veterans, but serious financial problems hampered its efforts," said Adjutant Burgess. "Though DAV was in decline, new leadership was coming to the fore." When Cicero F. "Cap" Hogan retired as Director of Claims, his replacement was Dale Adams, who came to the job with 15 years of experience as a DAV National Service Officer.

It was a difficult time for DAV that forced everyone to sacrifice. "I missed the service work; that's where the pleasure was—doing something that was a challenge for me," said Adams. "The world changed for me when I became National Service Director, because then I was in a management position rather than on the frontline. I made an attempt to preserve what we had, but I had to cut the cost in Washington by 80 percent."

As what was a challenging decade came to a close, a new war began in Southeast Asia. How DAV was planning in the 1950s for the future would soon be put to the test. ■

Charitable Service Trust Pays Off for Veterans



Veterans suffering from trauma, blindness or terminal illness will benefit from the latest grants awarded by the DAV Charitable Service Trust (CST) and its program, which assists organizations in reaching out to provide much-needed services.

“Our board has made wise decisions regarding which agencies are doing the best for our veterans,” said Trust Board Chairman Richard Marbes. “The CST advances programs that don’t easily fit into the scheme of what is traditionally offered through VA, state veterans programs or veterans service organizations.”

“While the CST cannot replace every dollar Congress and the Administration shift away from veterans programs, we feel it is our duty to step up when cuts in funding threaten to seriously reduce rehabilitation and therapy programs essential to injured and ill veterans,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “We do that with the support of generous donors to the Trust. The gifts received by the Trust are handled with the utmost efficiency, with 94 percent going toward programs that help veterans.”

The latest grants include funding for Trauma Resolution Center Inc., of Miami, where veterans are treated for post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and traumatic brain injuries. It provides up to 40 hours of treatment for each veteran. The CST grant of \$10,000 will expand the program to include weekly on-site services provided by specialists in traumatic stress and grief.

“Expanding these services responds to the increasing needs of returning service members,” said Marbes. “An enhanced partnership with the Miami VA medical center

will create a unified base of support for veterans.”

A grant of \$15,000 will go to Hospice of the North Coast in Carlsbad, Calif., which provides compassionate medical, emotional and spiritual support for terminally ill veterans and their families. “The agency’s mission is to help people find peace during the end stages of their lives,” said Marbes, “and they recognize the need for services specifically aimed at ill and injured veterans.”

NewView Oklahoma will receive \$10,000 toward its employment services that help visually-impaired veterans find meaningful jobs. The organization also provides vision rehabilitation services, which include assistive technology and safe-travel training to an estimated 50 veterans. Specifically designed for visually impaired veterans and their families, the program also offers computer training to improve the veteran’s quality of life. “All of their services are provided at no charge to veterans,” said Marbes.

“This program augments VA’s plan to expand vision and blind rehabilitation for veterans who are visually impaired,” said Adjutant Burgess. “It targets our newest generation of veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

“The Charitable Service Trust is an outstanding grant program that delivers the best to veterans,” he said. “It has helped hundreds of organizations since it was founded in 1986, making it possible to extend and enhance these private programs. It really pays off for our nation’s injured and ill veterans.” ■



NewView Oklahoma assists the visually impaired.



CFC Code #11322

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER SUSAN K. MILLER



United in Service

My most sincere thanks to all of you for allowing me the honor of being elected to the highest office of the DAV Auxiliary. I humbly accept the responsibilities of this office. I know all about the achievements of those who have served before me, and I ask our heavenly Father for guidance, strength, knowledge and continued good health so that I can accept this challenge and be worthy of the trust you have put in me.

I have many people to thank, besides all of you. First is my father, who signed me up as a junior member, paid for my life membership when I became eligible and dragged me along to Chapter, Unit and Department activities, as well as some national conventions. It was his dedication to this organization that has kept me involved, and my mother was right there with him. I never dreamed that I would end up here, serving as your National Commander. I must also thank all of Colorado and the 17th District, whose support has been phenomenal.

My theme is “United in Service.” I truly believe that if we are all united, we can achieve great things. With the assistance of every member, we are sure to further the goals of our Auxiliary programs. It is the efforts of each individual that make our Auxiliary successful. If we are “United in Service,” working together, we can’t help but achieve success.

Membership continues to be vital to our success. I hope to see more male members and extended family members become active in the Auxiliary. It is through a strong membership that our organization will continue to make a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. We are just starting our new fiscal year. Now is the time to start working on membership!

I look forward to seeing many of you at our National Fall Conference, Oct. 3-5, in Cincinnati. It will be a great learning experience for all of us, as the National Chairmen will each be presenting their respective programs. I hope to see many of you there.



DAV Member's Life Experiences Lead to High Honors

By Ashleigh Bryant

Tennessee native Julia Sheriden knows the woes of women veterans. After graduating from high school, she left for Marine boot camp at Parris Island, S.C., and began building a military career.

But at the end of her third year, just before she was set to make sergeant, Sheriden was attacked by a fellow Marine.

"It was pretty brutal," she recalled. "I was held captive for several hours and suffered a lot of injuries. I took a direct blow to both sides of my jaw and to the back of my head. Brain injury, stabbing—I almost died. And the Marine Corps response was kind of to ignore that it happened."

Once she was able to return to work, Sheriden fought crippling headaches and cognitive issues. Shortly thereafter, her career dreams were ended when she was denied the opportunity to re-enlist. Worse yet, it seemed she would not be given a proper medical discharge for her injuries.

"At the time, I was so lost in my own injuries and trauma that I wasn't able to fight for myself," said Sheriden. "Then my mom said, 'I'm going to come down there, and you're going to ask for a physical evaluation board. And then you're going to call the Disabled American Veterans.'"

In 1981, Sheriden went to DAV to file her disability claim and became a life member. Though she only received a rating of 10 percent, working with DAV helped secure her medical discharge and preserve her rights.

But after a few months of separation, she encountered problems similar to those faced by many veterans today. She was unable to work, her separation stipend was running out, she needed to find a permanent place to live, and there was no place to turn for help.

"I spent about six months homeless, just bouncing from couch to couch," Sheriden explained. Though unsure about her eligibility for unemployment benefits,

she finally decided to apply. "Lo and behold, there was a woman veteran there, and she sat down and gave me 'The Talk.'"

"The Talk," as Sheriden calls it, is one that she has been giving to her fellow veterans ever since. "It's about believing in yourself, sticking it out, not quitting and finding a direction. It remotivated me."

Sheriden went back to college and, while

waiting in the VA office one day, met a veteran who was having trouble with his disability claim. He was rated at just 20 percent for a serious knee injury, so Sheriden helped him file for a higher rating.

"A few months later, the guy found me on campus and told me he was re-rated at 50 percent," she said. "I just changed that day. Even though I couldn't be an active-duty Marine anymore, I realized that I might still have importance."

She began to get more involved with DAV, becoming a Chapter Service Officer and a Chapter Commander,



DAV member Julia Sheriden was honored at the 2013 Washington State Jefferson Awards breakfast in April, prior to traveling to Washington, D.C., to represent her home state at the national level.

all while continuing to battle the VA for 18 years over her own claim. These experiences led her to establish her own nonprofit organization, Outreach and Resource Services for Women Veterans (OARS).

OARS was officially granted nonprofit status in 2012 in the state of Washington and assisted roughly 150 women in its first year. Sheriden's program is a one-stop online resource for women veterans, offering one-on-one consultation and links to resources for benefits, education, crisis assistance and trauma recovery services.

For her work with OARS, Sheriden was named the 2013 winner of the prestigious Washington State Jefferson Award, which recognizes individuals who exemplify outstanding community service.

"It's such an honor, but this isn't about Julia Sheriden. This is about veterans," she said. "I think about the people whose claims I didn't succeed with, who passed away before they got what they deserved. I feel like I'm honoring them when I accept the award, and I can talk to people about our lives as veterans. It tells people about how much dedication veterans have to helping other veterans.

"It's really rewarding to know that people—thousands and thousands of them—respect what I do and what we



A DAV life member for more than 30 years, Sheriden's work embodies the spirit of veterans helping veterans.

do as DAV," she said. "It shows that people realize women veterans have needs and issues, and the time to help is now, to make sure veterans are able to have the highest quality of life possible. This award kind of brings my life full circle." ■



Learn More Online

To learn more about OARS, visit oars4vets.org.

Helping Hands Award

(Continued from pg. 15)

Primeaux believes it's very important for the government to recognize veterans of all backgrounds. That's why he's giving his support to the Seminole tribes in Florida, who are leading an effort to place a statue of an American Indian on the National Mall in Washington, D.C. He said the tribes are aiming for the statute to stand at the entrance to the Vietnam Memorial education center, presently under construction. "It's important for the government to remember that it's a collective group of American veterans who have stood up for our nation. That statue would represent the American Indian veteran along with Alaskan, Hawaiian and Pacific Islander natives."

Primeaux said he hopes current and future veterans can learn from his story and how it was a long and sometimes difficult road to get his earned benefits. "I don't want veterans today to go through what I went through for 15 years," he said. "I tell veterans that if you're in the service and you get so much as a hangnail, get that in your service record."

"I'm very pleased with the advocacy work Dr. Primeaux does for our nation's veterans," said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. "The work our fellow veterans and their neighbors do on behalf of our cause is just as vital as what we do in Washington."

In addition to radio, Primeaux has appeared on the big screen 14 times. He's also performed in nine TV series and has appeared in several documentaries. One of his best-known films is "Rough Riders," a 1997 movie about Theodore Roosevelt's volunteer cavalry group. Primeaux's character represents the 60 American Indians who were among the Rough Riders who fought in the 1898 Battle of San Juan Hill.

He's proud to be affiliated with an organization like DAV, which takes the fight for veterans' benefits straight to Capitol Hill. "All VSOs have their great points," Primeaux said. "I've tried them all. But DAV is my service [representative]. I consider DAV the best there is. Their title says everything—they work for disabled American veterans." ■

Staff Changes Announced

At the National Executive Committee meeting following the National Convention's final business session, National Adjutant Marc Burgess announced some important staff changes at both National Headquarters and National Service and Legislative Headquarters.

"These individuals will lead our top posts with integrity and foresight," said Burgess. "They will ensure DAV is poised to make sure our nation fulfills its promises to the men and women who served, now and into the future."

Barry Jesinoski has been appointed Executive Director of National Headquarters and the organization's Chief Financial Officer, and Garry Augustine was named Washington Headquarters Executive Director. James Marszalek was appointed National Service Director, and National Service Officer Steven Wolf has been appointed Assistant National Service Director. The appointments became effective Aug. 13. Prior to the convention, Paul Varela was appointed Assistant National Legislative Director effective July 1.

"It is a pleasure to lead DAV at this historic time, and I support Adjutant Burgess' appointments enthusiastically," National Commander Joseph W. Johnston said. "The veterans assuming these new posts have a deep understanding of our culture and traditions and will further the legacy we've worked for generations to establish."



Jesinoski

National Headquarters Executive Director

In his new position, Jesinoski will oversee DAV's voluntary services, fundraising, accounting, administration, information technology, communications, outreach, logistics and plant operations. He is a life member of Chapter 2, San Diego.

"Barry has a wealth of management experience and a keen understanding of DAV, which makes him an ideal choice for the position," said Burgess. "He has done a superb job in all of his positions and knows how to get things done."

"We have a great team in Cold Spring, Ky., and I'm looking forward to leading many of the exciting new

initiatives that are enhancing our outreach to veterans and our support of the organization, its Departments and Chapters around the nation," Jesinoski said. "No other charitable organization does more for veterans or provides so many life-changing services than DAV. And together we will make our organization even stronger and more effective."

Prior to his appointment, Jesinoski was Executive Director of National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C., where his duties included oversight of the DAV National Service and Legislative Programs. He is very well respected by members of Congress, the White House and the Department of Veterans Affairs, and he will continue to work closely with our National Service and Legislative staff.

Medically discharged from the Marine Corps in 1993, he began his DAV career as a National Service Officer Trainee and graduated from the NSO Training Academy in Denver in June 1995. He climbed the ranks from assistant supervisor at the National Service Office in Seattle before taking the helm as office supervisor in San Diego. In 2001, he was promoted to National Area Supervisor of Area 9 (which encompasses California, Oregon, Nevada, Arizona and Hawaii) before being appointed Associate National Service Director in Washington, D.C., where he was later promoted to Assistant National Service Director. In 2007, he was appointed Deputy Director of Human Resources at National Headquarters. In 2009, he assumed duties as Director of Human Resources. A native of Ottertail County, Minn., Jesinoski is a senior professional in human resources, having been certified by the Human Resources Certification Institute in January 2008.

Washington Headquarters Executive Director

As Washington Headquarters Executive Director, Augustine is responsible for National Service and Legislative Programs. He is DAV's principal spokesperson before Congress, the White House and Department of Veterans



Augustine

Affairs. In his new role, he will continue to lead our advocacy efforts in Washington, as have others before him. Thanks to that leadership, DAV has built a solid reputation in the halls of power. As such, the organization's expertise and insights in veterans affairs makes it a valuable resource for members of Congress and the administration regarding important policies and issues.

Augustine's started in DAV as a Hospital Service Coordinator in 1988 for the Department of Ohio at the Cleveland Wade Park VA Hospital before becoming an NSO Trainee. He was assigned to the Cleveland office, where he was promoted to assistant supervisor in 1997 and supervisor in 2000. He served as supervisor at the Cleveland DAV National Service Office until being appointed Assistant National Service Director at Washington Headquarters in 2002. He was appointed Deputy National Service Director in January 2004 before being named National Service Director in 2010.

A Cleveland native, he enlisted in the U.S. Army after graduating from high school in August 1969. As a member of the 198th Infantry Brigade in South Vietnam, he was severely wounded by a land mine explosion during a combat patrol operation in the Batangan Peninsula on April 9, 1970. He was medically discharged from the Army in December 1972.

Augustine earned a bachelor's degree with honors from Ohio University in 1978 and a master's degree in sociology at Cleveland State University in 1983, the year he became a DAV member. He is a life member of Chapter 42, Mentor, Ohio, and has served in various Chapter positions, including commander and adjutant, as well as on committees and as director of service for the DAV Department of Ohio. He was also selected as one of the Outstanding Young Men of America for 1989.



Marszalek

National Service Director

Marszalek assumes responsibility for DAV's National Service Program, which employs some 270 professional National Service Officers and 34 Transition Service Officers at 100 offices in the United States and Puerto Rico. Our NSOs and TSOs are the foremost experts in veterans'

benefits, and their knowledge and advocacy make DAV the nation's premiere veterans service organization.

Marszalek entered the Marine Corps in 1996 and was honorably discharged in April 2000.

"Jim Marszalek is exactly the caliber of individual we want guiding DAV's National Service Program," said Adjutant Burgess. "Our organization saw major leadership changes this year, and we are glad to have experienced people like him ready to step in and ensure the seamless transition in the oversight of our most important work for veterans."

Following graduation from the NSO Training Academy in 2001, Marszalek was assigned as an NSO Trainee at the DAV National Service Office in Cleveland. He later served as assistant supervisor at the DAV National Service Office in Seattle. In 2004, he was assigned as supervisor of the National Service Office in San Diego, until he was transferred in 2006 to supervise the service office in Pittsburgh, and National Area 1 before his appointment to the national staff.

"We have watched Jim's career progress throughout the years," said Augustine. "He is an experienced and exceptionally capable leader, and he has our full confidence to keep the National Service Program on course for the future."

Marszalek is a life member of Chapter 76 in Pittsburgh.

Assistant National Service Director

As Assistant National Service Director, Steven Wolf plays an important role in the day-to-day operations and oversight of the National Service Program.

Wolf served in the Marine Corps from 1993 to 1997. He began his DAV career with Class 12 of the NSO Training Academy, and his first assignment was Milwaukee, in 2002. In June 2004, he was assigned to DAV's office in San Diego. He was promoted to assistant supervisor there in 2006. The following year he was reassigned as the assistant supervisor at the Chicago National Service Office. He was promoted to supervisor there in 2008, where he served until his current appointment.



Wolf

Assistant National Legislative Director

Paul Varela has been appointed Assistant National Legislative Director at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C.

In his new role, Varela will work to support and advance federal legislative goals and policies to assist injured and ill veterans and their families. His work will also guard against legislative erosion of current benefits and services for veterans.

“With so much at stake in the public policy arena, Varela is a welcome addition to our legislative team fighting for veterans’ rights,” said Adjutant Burgess. “I have every confidence that he will excel in his new position, just as he has throughout his DAV career.”

Varela has been DAV’s National Service Office Supervisor in Los Angeles since 2008. He served as Assistant Supervisor from 2005 to 2008 and was Associate National Service Officer from 2002 until 2005, when he was assigned to DAV’s New York City office.

Varela was a member of DAV’s National Service and Advisory Committee from 2007 to 2011, and served in an appellate review capacity on the Board of Veterans’



Varela

Appeals. He became a member of DAV’s Case Management System Technical Enhancement Committee in 2006.

He was elected by his peers to serve as president of DAV’s National Guild of Attorneys-in-Fact from 2009 through 2011 and has held a variety of offices within the Guild.

Varela enlisted in the U.S. Navy in October 1998, serving until his honorable discharge due to service-connected disabilities in 2001.

His military awards and decorations include the Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal, Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, Humanitarian Service Ribbon and Sea Service Deployment Ribbon.

He is a life member of Los Angeles Chapter 5, where he has served in all offices as well as Chapter Adjutant.

DAV is the most respected and credible voice for veterans in our nation’s capitol, and the veterans appointed to these positions will ensure the advocacy we provide and legislation we promote will help fulfill our promises to the men and women who serve,” said Commander Johnston. “In this critical juncture in the history of our cause, we have placed leaders in a position to ensure DAV is heard and that our services and message will continue to bring empowerment and hope to our nation’s heroes.” ■



For every service man and woman who pays the ultimate price, 10 more are severely injured or disabled. Please help America’s wounded heroes by supporting the DAV 5K. Run, walk or ride your motorcycle in our inaugural event, sponsor a participant in the race, or volunteer at the race to honor your fellow veterans who defended our freedom.

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DATE:

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DAV[®] 5K
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EAA Warbirds of America and DAV Welcome you to a Special SALUTE TO VETERANS



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photos.

DAV brought several key events to EAA AirVenture 2013—the crown jewel of airshows—including concerts by Gary Sinise's Lt. Dan Band and the trio of ladies known as Letters From Home. Then-National Commander Larry Polzin led the veterans parade and made opening remarks at the DAV picnic. DAV's air support team's B-25 Mitchell "Panchito" also made a flyover appearance. Through the Airshow Outreach Program, DAV honors the men and women who have served and raises awareness of our message of service to veterans. An estimated 500,000 attended this year's event. (Photos by Jeffrey Phelps/Getty Images)





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

Attitude Check



It has been reported that during some of the most difficult days of World War II, Winston Churchill said the following words to inspire his people: “Let us... brace ourselves to our duties, and so bear ourselves that if the British Empire... last[s] for a thousand years, men will still say, ‘This was their finest hour.’”

What will you do in your finest hour?

With the continuing war and constant threat of war, terrorism, daily struggles, work, family responsibilities and an endless to-do list, we all may face a time we call our finest hour. How will we respond?

Every year, every month, every day, hour and minute are times of new beginnings. Maybe that is the reason that God closes the day with the curtain of night to put an end to the day that is done. It has been said, “All of your yesterdays ended last night. It makes no difference how long you’ve been alive; they’re all ended. This day is absolutely new. You’ve never lived it before.” What an opportunity!

When life seems hard, work boring and maybe our relationships ever-challenging, it might be time to try a different angle of approach on the situation or issue. It is said that how we look at things in our world, and the people in it, is a reflection of ourselves.

No matter what sorrows weigh us down or tears we may spill at night on our pillow, joy can come to each of us in every new morning. Norman Vincent Peale’s lifelong motto was, “Trust God

and live one day at a time.” After all, life is just a collection of days, minutes and hours. Your finest hour may be just ahead in one of life’s little challenges.

Christopher Columbus had to have the type of attitude we should embrace in our life. He was scoffed at and ridiculed for his beliefs and desire of wanting to sail around the earth. Yet, through his taking “one day at a time,” his finest hour came, he was finally financed, and we are the direct beneficiaries of his efforts. The rest is history, and thanks to him and others like him, today we have this great country that we love.

In September, we celebrate Labor Day. And then in October, as we enjoy the celebration and remembrance of Columbus’ accomplishments, we remember that it was done through his ability to keep the right attitude and determined faith in his God. May we be ready for the finest hours in our lives with the proper attitude. That is my prayer for us all during this time.

It is my hope that this message will help you to “mount up as on eagle’s wings” and renew a little of your strength to keep moving forward and find joy. “But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not be faint” (*Isaiah 40:31*).

Until next time, may God bless you, and may God continue to bless this great country and our DAV. Semper Fi.

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NEC 20th District

Angelyn B. Scott, San Antonio, Texas

Alternate

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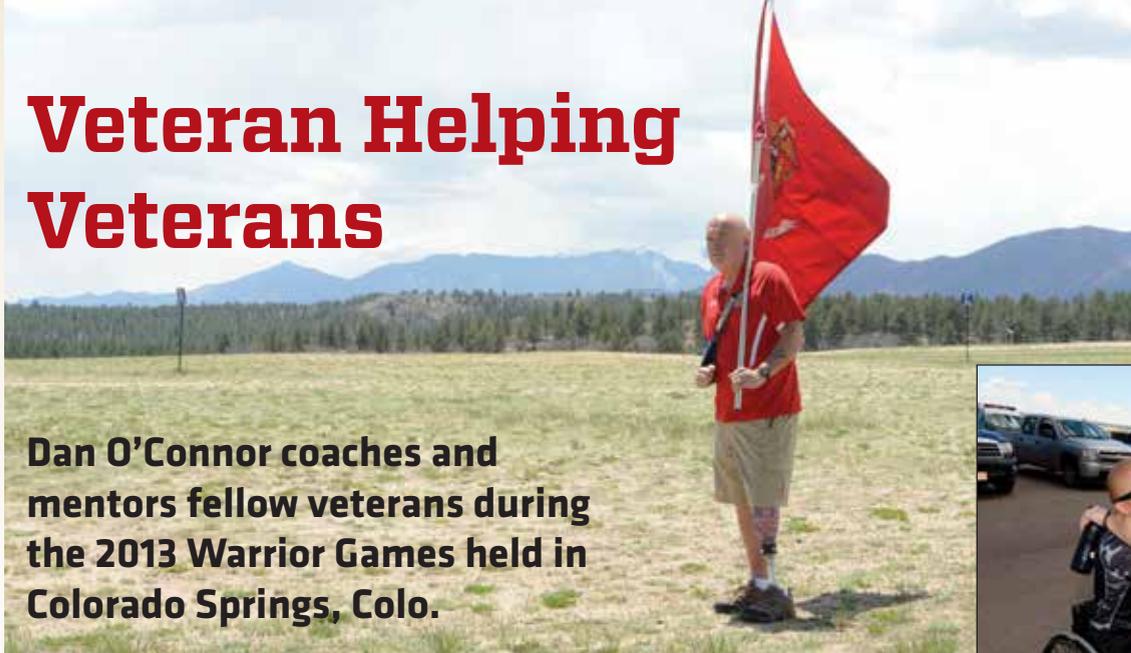
NEC 21st District

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Alternate

Jennifer Hammons, Moore, Okla.

Veteran Helping Veterans



Download the *DAV Magazine* app to view more photos.

Dan O'Connor coaches and mentors fellow veterans during the 2013 Warrior Games held in Colorado Springs, Colo.

More than 200 ill or injured service members participated in this year's Warrior Games. O'Connor, a member of Kanawha Chapter 28, W.Va., trains younger veterans in the hand cycling events. When not coaching fellow veteran cyclists, O'Connor is a contractor with a military unit who specializes in housing injured Marines. This year, Prince Harry sounded the horn that began the cycling event. (Photos by Leigh Vogel/Getty Images)



Specialized Airport Screenings for Disabled Veterans

■ Veterans may avoid intrusive airport security screening procedures under the Helping Heroes Fly Act that President Obama has signed into law and new initiatives underway at the Transportation Security Administration (TSA).

DAV is working with the TSA to enhance veterans' experiences through the TSA Cares program. The program allows veterans with special needs to contact TSA with details of their itinerary to expedite the screening process. TSA Passenger Support Specialists then help guide them through the screening process.

"We continuously work with the military, airlines and veteran's groups such as DAV to ensure that those who served our country receive excellent service in return," said Mark Howell of the TSA.

Disabled veterans with special travel needs should call TSA Cares in advance of their travel for special accommodations and expedited screening. TSA can be contacted by calling toll free at 1-855-787-2227 Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Eastern Standard Time and from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. on weekends or holidays, or via email at TSA-ContactCenter@dhs.gov.

More Ships Added to Agent Orange List

■ The VA has updated the list of U.S. Navy and Coast Guard ships that operated in Vietnam, adding more ships and expanding information for others. There are now 285 ships on the list, which can help Vietnam-era veterans find out if they qualify for presumption of Agent Orange exposure when seeking disability compensation for related diseases.

The list can be viewed at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp.

Changing of the Guard at DAV National Service Foundation

Retired National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson has succeeded Gary P. Burns as President of the National Service Foundation Board of Directors. Burns had held that position since 2001.

"I have known Gary as a colleague and friend for more than four decades and his leadership in both our national organization and as head of this effort has been astonishing," said Wilson.

Burns served on DAV's professional staff for 30 years. He began as a National Service Officer trainee at the Togus, Maine, office in January of 1970. He was transferred to the White River Junction, Vt., office to serve as its Supervisor that same year. Two years later, he returned to Togus as Supervisor where he remained until his retirement in February of 2000.

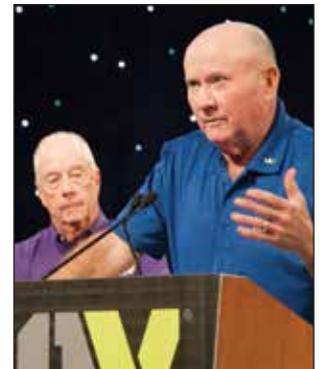
He was elected to the Foundation's Board in 1996 and was elected President in 2001.

For more than a decade, his guidance has allowed the Foundation to provide increasing support to DAV's nationwide service initiatives. Under his watch, the Foundation awarded nearly \$16.5 million in grants to Departments and Chapters for their volunteer programs.

Remarkably, since his term began, the Foundation's Net Assets increased from \$27.7 million in 2001 to more than \$98 million today.

Additionally, he's advocated for key programs that have strengthened public support of veterans throughout the country. Those include the "Hallowed Grounds" documentary, the National Summit on Women Veterans Issues, pro bono representation for veterans before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and the groundbreaking work of renowned photographer Nina Berman which depicted experiences of veterans suffering from exposure to burn pits in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Gary Burns has dedicated the majority of his life to serving his fellow veterans and has been a steadfast friend of our cause," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "He's been a tremendous leader who will continue to be an active voice in DAVE. We are grateful for his tenure leading the Foundation." ■



Gary P. Burns passes the National Service Foundation torch to Arthur H. Wilson.

His Decision: 'It Was **the Right Thing** for Us to Do' Ensuring DAV Is There for Years to Come

Brian Tanner found so much inspiration in the way DAV helps his fellow veterans that he decided to support the organization himself, with a unique kind of gift.

With his family's approval, the Army veteran decided to make DAV a partial beneficiary of his VA life insurance policy. The organization stands to gain \$5,000 from this act of generosity, quite a nice salute from Brian to other vets who came home wounded from war.

Life insurance policies of any kind—not just those from the VA—provide an excellent way for DAV members and friends to support the organization's mission with "planned gifts."

Though it's so easy, life insurance is often overlooked as an asset people can use to make a charitable gift. But Brian, a married father of one, was happy to look into it. His most important consideration was "to ensure DAV is there for years to come for our returning veterans."

Like so many members, Brian is grateful DAV was there to help him get through the VA disability claims process. He also noted DAV's dedication to providing transportation to sick and injured veterans who need help getting to VA medical appointments.

The veteran of the Army's 82nd Airborne Division has post-traumatic-stress disorder to the point of agoraphobia. Unable to leave the house or go to work, he found hope in a new dog that is being trained as a service animal. This special companion will learn how to alert Brian to oncoming panic attacks, enabling him to regain more control of his life.



*Brian Tanner, Illinois
Guardian Society member
and his very special dog*

Many options exist for donors like Brian, who wish to make a planned gift involving life insurance. They include naming DAV as the partial or contingent beneficiary of a policy, or the sole beneficiary of a policy that's no longer needed for its original purposes. Or, donors can transfer ownership of existing, paid-up policies to DAV. In this case, they may get a tax deduction for the lesser of a policy's current value or what was paid into the policy over the years.

For Brian, any option was a welcome one. "My family and I decided it was the right thing for us to do to help other veterans," he said.

■ If you have created an estate gift for DAV, we'd like to thank you through the Guardian Society, our appreciation for future gifts. Members receive an engraved certificate, the society's lapel pin and a name listing in the society's newsletter.

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

■ To inform us of a future gift you have planned for DAV, use the Cincinnati address above, or for information on doing so, please call **1-800-216-9802, ext. 1, email giftplanning@dav.org, or visit dav.giftplans.org.** You may also return the attached postcard to learn more.



PROTECTING THOSE WHO SERVED



DAV Chapter Gets \$10,000 Renovation Grant...

French Creek, W.Va., Chapter 36 Commander Dick Page, front center, and Chapter Adjutant Ron Fowler, front right, accept a \$10,000 Governor's Community Participation Grant from State Sen. Clark Barnes, front left, to renovate the Chapter building. Attending, left to right, include Senior Vice Commander Robert Lewis; Bill Depoy; Upshur, W.Va. County Administrator Megan Pomeroy; Gary Gaunt and Chaplain and Junior Vice Commander Arnold Bennett. (Photo by Melissa Toothman/The Inter-Mountain)

DAV Ambassador Sings...

Alabama's DAV Ambassador and national recording artist McKayla Reece performs with the 98th Army "Silver Wings" band at Fort Rucker's Freedom Fest to celebrate America's 237th Independence Day. A DAV representative appointed by the Department of Alabama, Reece said the military and soldiers have always had a special place in her heart. "It's always important to support your troops," Reece said. "They are the ones who protect us every single day of our lives. Freedom is not free, and no one should think that [it is]. They are the people who deserve respect, and we should give it to them." (Photo by Tracey Reece)



Golden Corral Fundraiser..

Department of Alabama Commander Dave Riley (left), Department Adjutant Chad Richmond (center) and Past Department of Alabama Commander Charles Fisher attended the annual fundraiser at the Anniston, Ala., Golden Corral July 19. Riley said events like this are designed to encourage fellow veterans to venture out in a friendly environment for fellowship and interaction among fellow veterans. The event raised approximately \$1,375 for Alabama DAV Chapters to assist veterans.



Pa. Town Rallies Around DAV

■ DAV's National 2nd Junior Vice Commander David Riley served as the guest speaker for the 8th Annual Willow Creek Triathlon in Bradford, Pa., in August. The event raised more than \$30,000 to be split between DAV Chapters in the counties of McKean and Warren, with those proceeds directly supporting the Transportation Network.

"The generosity of this triathlon has not gone unnoticed," said Riley, who spoke to athletes and guests after the race. "The Willow Creek Triathlon truly showed how a community can rally around our vets and show them what they were deployed to defend. Great event!"

Over the past eight years, the event has brought in more than \$111,500 to support ill and injured veterans through DAV. The 2014 Willow Creek Triathlon is slated for Aug. 2, and more information can be found through their website at willowcreektriathlon.org. 

Share Your DAV News!

Send in photos of the things your Chapter or Department is doing. Images should be submitted in JPEG format, 300 dpi or larger. Photos should be accompanied by a description, and all persons should be identified when possible. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety. Send your Chapter/ Department news to feedback@dav.org.



Renovated Trailer Flies Many Flags

■ Old Glory, DAV's flag and many others stream from the newly renovated trailer that Billings, Mont., Chapter 10 displays at events as part of its Flags Over America program.

"We do it to educate our citizens about the flags that have flown over our nation since colonial days," said Chapter Adjutant Ed Saunders. "We began the program about 20 years ago when the trailer was custom-made by members."

Through the years, the trailer's condition has deteriorated due to weather and wear. Short of the \$4,000 needed to pay for the renovation, Chapter 10 approached Montana State University's Billings College of Technology for help. Students in the auto collision repair and refinishing class donated their time to repair and repaint the trailer. An automotive repair shop donated the paint for the project.



Army Buddies...

Veteran of the Year, retired Master Sgt. Lawrence Faulkner, left, talks with the Humanitarian of the Year, retired Sgt. Salvador Ayala, during the Salute to Arms luncheon May 27 at The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Simi Valley, Calif.



Guitars for GIs...

On April 23, members of Chapter 28, Manhattan, Kan., presented 18 guitars and gig bags to the Fort Riley Wounded Warriors Battalion. Those who complete a six-week course will be allowed to keep their guitar. From left, Wounded Warrior Battalion SGM Pattason; Paul Barkey; Artt Mann; James Bartlett; Steve Robinson; Allan Rothlesberg, Commander; Legislative Chairman Douglas Gibson; and Wounded Warrior Battalion Commander Zielke.



Eagle Scout Service Project Aids Ill Veteran...

Cris Mezzina of Troop #204 in Jackson Township, N.J., built an accessible ramp for Pamela Smejkal, a veteran of the war in Afghanistan who suffers from Rheumatoid Arthritis. DAV Chapter 74 of Freehold, N.J., sponsored Mezzina for his Merit Badge. The ramp was dedicated on May 27.

Veterans' Preference...

New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie, back center, met with DAV Chapter Commander Joseph Fornarotto, second from right, and members of Belleville/Nutley Chapter 22 to dispel the rumor that he was planning to cut the preference of civil service to veterans. According to Fornarotto, Christie was very cordial and said he would not cut any benefits for veterans.



Department of Florida Convention...

National Adjutant Marc Burgess shows off a shirt presented to him by the Department of Florida at the Department's Convention.

Disabled American Veterans National Headquarters Unaudited Statement of Financial Position • June 30, 2013			
Unrestricted Assets		Unrestricted Liabilities	
Current Assets	\$ 32,188,586	Current Liabilities	\$ 124,352,566
Investments, at Market	331,656,278	Total Liabilities	124,352,566
Land, Buildings and Equipment, Net of Depreciation	5,565,245	Unrestricted Net Assets	
		General and Net Assets Designated by the Board of Directors	245,057,543
		Total Unrestricted Net Assets	245,057,543
Total Unrestricted Assets	\$ 369,410,109	Total Liabilities and Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 369,410,109
Life Membership Assets		Life Membership Liabilities	
Current Assets	\$ 9,480,035	Current Liabilities	\$ 495,369
Investments, at Market	53,568,387	Reserve for Future Distribution of Life Membership Dues	62,553,053
		Total Life Membership Liabilities and Reserve for Future Distribution of Life Membership Dues	\$ 63,048,422
Total Life Membership Assets	\$ 63,048,422		

REUNIONS

ARMY

3RD FIELD HOSPITAL (SAIGON) November 8-10, 2013, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Duane S. Thompson, Phone: 800-291-2150, Email: info@3field.rmhc.org, Website: www.3field.rmhc.org.

14TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION ASSN.

September 19-21, 2013, St. Louis, MO, Contact: Frank Lomoro, Phone: 760-927-8240, Email: cappita1@yahoo.com, Website: www.14thcombatengineers.org.

42ND INFANTRY PLATOON SCOUT DOG, 101ST ABN DIVISION VIETNAM 1966-1967

October 4-6, 2013, Branson, MO, Contact: Jackie McIntyre, Phone: 612-522-9377, Email: 42ndmom@comcast.net.

65TH COMBAT ENGINEER

October 10-15, 2013, Branson, MO, Contact: Ken Dixon, Phone: 706-260-5661.

87TH INFANTRY DIVISION LEGACY ASSN.

October 2-5, 2013, Atlanta, GA, Contact: Karen Lilley, Phone: 978-563-1477, Email: klilley71@comcast.net.

314TH ASSN., WWII, INC. & THE 79TH

RECONNAISSANCE TROOP

September 27-29, 2013, McLean, VA, Contact: Harriet M. Epstein, Phone: 703-560-4137, Email: harriete@cox.net.

ARMY CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION AGENTS ASSN.

October 2-6, 2013, San Antonio, TX, Contact: William F. "Doc" Sautter, Phone: 770-596-6706, Email: leo.cidaa@yahoo.com, Website: www.cidaa.net.

BATTLE OF THE BULGE CHAPTER 62 MEETING

December 15, 2013, West Palm Beach, FL, Contact: George Fisher, Phone: 561-585-7086, Email: GeorgeFVBOB@aol.com, Website: www.VBOB62.com.

VETERANS OF ABU COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 327TH

INFANTRY REGIMENT OF THE 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION September 26-29, 2013, Oak Grove, KY, Contact: Billy R. Robbins, Phone: 252-382-2300.

MARINES

LIMA COMPANY, 3RD BATTALION, 9TH MARINES

1967-1969 September 5-8, 2013, Branson, MO, Contact: Gary Schick, Phone: 417-623-5954, Email: garythegrunt@aol.com.

TEXAS CHAPTER 3RD MARINE DIVISION

October 3-6, 2013, Haringen, TX, Contact: Mike Sohn, Phone: 210-654-3310, Email: jumient2@hotmail.com.

NAVY

ESCORT CARRIER (CVE'S) SAILORS & ARMEN ASSN., INC.

October 18-23, 2013, New Castle, DE, Contact: George Manik, Phone: 732-269-0866, Email: georgejmanik@gmail.com, Website: www.escortcarriers.com.

MIDWAY ISLAND VETERANS, DEPENDENTS, CIVILIANS AND BATTLE OF MIDWAY SURVIVORS

June 5-8, 2014, Glasgow, KY, Contact: Mike Wilson, Phone: 270-579-2525, Email: bartmike105@gmail.com.

USS CLEVELAND (LPD-7)

October 10-13, 2013, Memphis, TN, Contact: Jack Greeson, Phone: 972-775-4115.

USS GEORGE K. MACKENZIE (DD-836)

September 4-7, 2014, San Diego, CA, Contact: Stan Baggett, Phone: 619-426-5138, Email: slbag66692@cox.net.

USS MIDWAY (CV-41) VETERANS ASSN.

September 12-14, 2013, San Diego, CA, Contact: Ron Pope, Phone: 972-735-7850, Email: ronaldpope79@yahoo.com, Website: www.ussmidway.net/home.html.

USS PERKINS (DD-26, DD-377, DDR-877)

October 9-12, 2013, Glen Burnie, MD, Contact: Cindy Keenen, Phone: 719-243-0970, Email: schamoo50@hotmail.com.

USS SARATOGA (CV-3, CVA/CV-60)

October 3-6, 2013, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Harvey A. Hirsch, Jr., Phone: 757-562-5521.

USS STEINAKER (DD/DDR-863)

April 24-27, 2014, Pensacola, FL, Contact: Russ Noble, Phone: 231-944-2148, Email: olnoble@att.net.

USS SUMNER CO. (LST-1148)

October 11-12, 2013, Evansville, IN, Contact: Pat Sullivan, Phone: 812-254-5018, or Len Edelen, Phone: 812-949-1382.

USS WILHOITE (DE/DER-397)

September 10-13, 2013, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Roy Camp, Phone: 386-561-6039, Email: camp1sr@yahoo.com, Website: www.usswilhoite.org.

AIR FORCE

12TH TFW (VIETNAM), 12TH FEW/SFW (KOREA), 12TH FTW (RANDOLPH, 479TH FTG PENSACOLA & 306TH FTG USAFA) & SUPPORTING UNITS

April 23-26, 2014, Pensacola, FL, Contact: E. J. Sherwood, Phone: 480-396-4681, Email: ej12tfw@cox.net.

45TH MISSILE SECURITY SQUADRON

June 16, 2014, Rapid City, SD, Contact: Steve Sehi, Phone: 402-310-4326, Email: hsolo44@hotmail.com.

90TH BOMB SQUADRON (LNI) (KOREA)

October 16-19, 2013, Palm Spring, CA, Contact: Gary Long, Phone: 480-991-4757, Email: gr190th@cox.net.

WORLD WAR II 95TH BOMB GROUP (H) MEMORIALS ASSN., INC.

October 10-14, 2013, Orlando, FL, Contact: Vanna Walker, Phone: 214-725-1942, Email: reunions@95thbg.org, Website: www.95thbg.org.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who was on B-50 chase plane for the last test at Yucca Flats on May 1, 1955. The chase plane was based at Kirtland Air Force Base, New Mexico. Please contact Ed Graham, P.O. Box 76, Mackinaw, IL 61755, Telephone: 309-359-6091 or 309-251-5549.
- Searching for anyone who served with me during "Operation Sagebrush". Please contact Don Hencke, 38133 7th Avenue, Zephyrhills, FL 33542, Telephone: 813-748-5364.
- Searching for anyone who served with the 1st Tank Battalion, Bravo Company, 3rd Platoon in Vietnam 1967. Please contact Ronald Davidson, 65 Beasley Drive, Lexington, TN 38351, Telephone: 731-225-3098, Email: bravo34@charter.net.
- Searching for Tank Commander James Weekly of the 1st Cavalry Division, Fort Hood, Texas, during early 1980s. Please contact Elden Simons, 10092 State Highway M35, Gladstone, MI 49837.
- Searching for anyone that was stationed at Camp (Fort) Drum, Watertown, NY from 1959 on that was granted a service-connected disability from any illness that the VA recognizes as a result of being in contact with A/O. Please contact Leonard Weizer at Telephone: 843-637-3769 or by Email: LenWeizer@aol.com.
- Searching for female military, U.S. Army, Cooks or others, anyone who served at Fort Jackson, South Carolina from 1970 to 1980. Please contact Zoeyosell Aamuzon, 2889 Hartwick Pines Drive, Henderson, NV 89052, Telephone: 702-897-4529 or by Email: Cschro1062@aol.com.
- Searching for survivors of WWII, A Company of the 27th AIB. My father Walter B. Brinegar was captured December 23, 1944 outside of St Vith, Belgium (during the Battle of the Bulge). If anyone has any information, please contact his daughter Mary Brinegar Durst, 13712 Princess Anne Way, Phoenix, MD 21131, Telephone: 410-667-0646, Email: mcdbrinegar@gmail.com.
- Searching for Marines who were members of D/1/1 and were wounded on a squad-size patrol south of DaNang on June 5, 1966. Please contact Charles L. Hayman at 352-553-2452 or Email: dhayman2@cfl.rr.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me on the U.S.S. Oak Hill (LS-7) during Vietnam Era, August 1964 to August 1965. Please contact Franklin P. Embernate, P.O. Box 2841, Kailua-Kona, HI 96745 or Telephone: 808-896-4680.
- Searching for anyone who served with the U.S. Army, 4th Signal, Korea 1954. Please contact Ray Fontes, Telephone: 925-634-5563 or by Email: rhfon@att.net.
- Searching for anyone stationed in Alaska during the late 1960's, early 70's who has developed a dioxin related cancer. Please contact John Randle, 10625 Summit Mountain Court, Knoxville, TN 37922, Email: john.randle@tds.net.
- Searching for anyone who knows the whereabouts of Manuel P. Perez who served in the US Navy aboard the USS Kearsarge during 1959-1962. Please contact Orlando F. Montoya, Box 423, Las Vegas, NM 87701, Telephone: 505-425-8573.
- Searching for William Skaggs who served with me in the 19th Armored Infantry Battalion, 14th Armored Division. Please contact Charles Venneman at 913-888-2208.
- Searching for Marines who were wounded or who witnessed the July 6, 1967 mine field incident, approximately 5 miles from Dong-ha, South Vietnam. Please contact John R. Smith at 703-590-7915.

Military Couples Wanted for Survey

A nurse-led research team at Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash., seeks veteran couples from all branches of service to participate in a study about reintegration after deployment.

Couples need not be married but must be in a committed relationship, living together and have experienced at least one deployment separation in the past 10 years.

This study provides an opportunity for couples to be part of groundbreaking research investigating the reintegration experiences of military couples from all services. Both members of the couple must be willing to spend about 20-30 minutes completing online surveys about themselves and their relationship.

Non-active duty participants will each receive a \$10 gift card (to Starbucks, Subway or iTunes) once all surveys have been completed.

For more information, email veteran.couple@gmail.com or call 253-968-1067.

Thank you for your service!



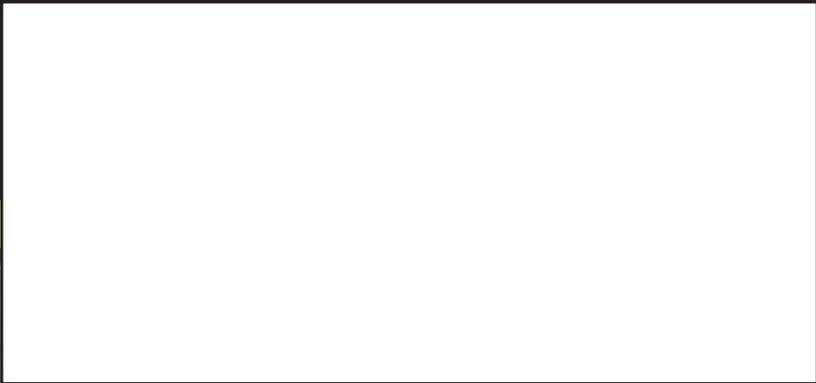
Golden Corral and DAV are partnering for another great Military Appreciation Monday, **Nov. 11, 2013**, between 4 and 9 p.m. That's the day Golden Corral restaurants nationwide welcome our nation's veterans and active-duty military men and women to a free buffet dinner and drink, and lots of camaraderie. Last year, DAV Departments and Chapters raised more than \$1 million in donations as a result of this decade-long annual tradition.

Military Appreciation Monday is Golden Corral's way of saying "Thank You!" to our nation's veterans and active-duty military. Be sure to visit the DAV information table.





FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED



Napa Driving Jacket

\$150 each



LADIES' ^L
Sizes XS-XL
and 1X-3X



MEN'S ^M
Sizes S-4XL
and XLT-4XLT

- Genuine top grain leather
- Lightweight poly fiber-fill lining
- 2 slash side pockets and inside zipper pocket
- Jackets are non-returnable.

Men's Jacket Size Guide

Order this size	S		M		L		XL		2XL		3XL		4XL	
If you wear this size	34	36	38	40	42	44	46	48	50	52	54	56	58	60

Tall jackets add 1.5" to the back length and 2" to the sleeve length of our regular specifications.

Ladies' Jacket Size Guide

Order this size	XS		S		M		L		XL		1X		2X		3X	
If you wear this size	0	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	16-18W	20-22W	24-26W				

SHOP DAVSTORE.ORG

