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Delegates Make it Happen in Vegas



Left, National Commander Robert T. Reynolds, left, and National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, center, accept a \$25,000 check from Ford Motor Company Fund President Jim Vella for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program. Below, The Department of Michigan DAV Auxiliary delegation gathers to participate in the National Convention.

DAV members enjoy the camaraderie at the National Convention.



Left, former Major League Baseball umpire Larry Barnett, left, a member of the DAV Celebrity Entertainment program visiting VA medical centers, signs autographs for his fans at the National Convention. Below, the Department of Indiana delegation gets ready for the National Convention's first Business Session.

New York's Sodano: Recruiter of the Year

Prospero Sodano, a life member of Chapter 118, Richmond Hill, N.Y., has reclaimed the title as DAV's top membership recruiter.

Sodano was named Recruiter of the Year for signing a record 149 new members during the 2007-2008 membership year.

An Army veteran of the Cold War, Sodano has recruited some 4,000 members since he joined the DAV 36 years ago.

"During a very crucial time in the history of the organization's membership, Prospero Sodano has served as a stalwart advocate and an inspiration to his fellow veterans who he's mentored and brought into our fold," said National Membership Director Anthony L. Baskerville.



Leave No Veteran Behind



RAYMOND E. DEMPSEY

from the NATIONAL COMMANDER

Raymond E. Dempsey, a disabled Vietnam era veteran, was elected National Commander by a unanimous vote of the delegates to the 87th National Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, on August 12, 2008. Following are highlights of his acceptance remarks, which were received by the membership with enthusiastic applause and a standing ovation.

Thank you for this humbling opportunity to serve you. It is a great honor and responsibility that I take very seriously. You can be sure that I will put my heart and soul into carrying on the great traditions of this organization, working tirelessly for every veteran. Ensuring we leave no veteran behind. I would like to congratulate Commander Reynolds on a fantastically successful year. He has made all of us proud and will be a very tough act to follow.

It was an honor for our great organization to have Senator McCain come to our National Convention this year in Las Vegas and Senator Obama to have sent a personal message to us. It is a sure sign that veterans' issues have been elevated to the highest level of importance. You should all be proud that as a part of the DAV, you have been a part of the drive to make that happen.

I assure you Senators Obama and McCain are now aware of our mission and of our pledge to leave no veteran behind.

As our nation nears the election of a new commander-in-chief, we are preparing to welcome a new VA secretary. I am very much looking forward to this year and the challenges that will

come with the first year of a new administration.

No matter who is chosen as our next president and who he selects to lead the VA, we stand ready to work with the new secretary so that the needs of veterans are understood and addressed in a way that will improve the care and quality of life for disabled veterans and their families.

Come November, I ask each of you to exercise your patriotic duty and go vote. The DAV, of course, is non-partisan and doesn't endorse or oppose any candidate. So you need to do your research to figure out who best represents your views.

Again, we will be ready to continue working for veterans no matter who wins.

As a disabled veteran and an Illinoisan, it is especially satisfying that Major Tammy Duckworth was honored at the same convention that you chose me as National Commander. We have a real Illinois connection going this year.

In line with our promise to leave no veteran behind, it is important that we as an organization do not forget about disabled veterans who were not injured in combat. Focusing only on the combat-wounded leaves many seriously disabled

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National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson notes that expanding outreach and enhancing service to disabled veterans, including those who served in Iraq and Afghanistan, has been among the DAV's many accomplishments.

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Delegates to the 87th National Convention in Las Vegas adopted more than 100 resolutions setting the organization's legislative priorities for the year ahead and heard presidential candidates John McCain and Barack Obama talk about important issues affecting disabled veterans and their families.

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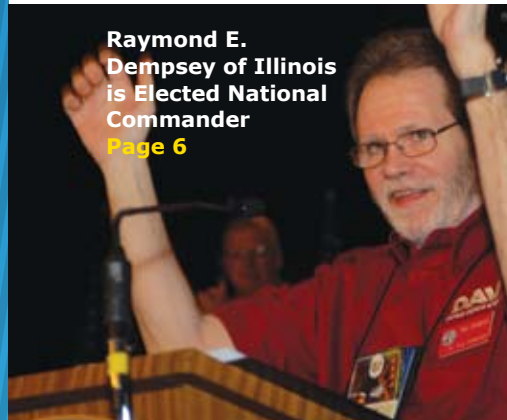
Federal funding for veterans health care and other vital programs may again be delayed as the fiscal year 2009 VA appropriations bill stalls in Congress.

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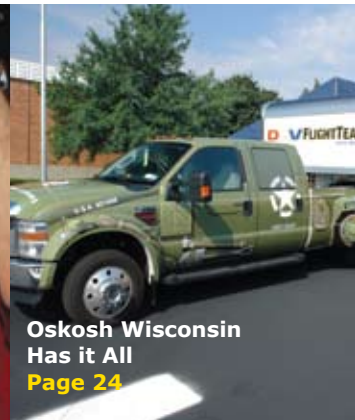
National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey and Auxiliary National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier head a slate of National Officers for the 2008-2009 membership year.



Tammy Duckworth, an Iraq war veteran who lost both legs when a rocket-propelled grenade struck her helicopter, is DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year. Page 5



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Raymond E. Dempsey
National Commander

Arthur H. Wilson
National Adjutant & Publisher

Gary Weaver
National Director
of Communications

David E. Autry
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Successes and Challenges



ARTHUR H. WILSON

from the NATIONAL ADJUTANT

This year we have seen some remarkable accomplishments and changes in our DAV. And while our achievements certainly justify a measure of optimism, we must remain steadfast in our resolve and prepare to meet the many challenges that are sure to come our way.

One of the most exciting changes this year involved the Colorado Trust. When the Trust was created in 1996, it was agreed that it would retain the namesake of the Department of Colorado until another donor contributed an equal or greater amount than its \$500,000 initial donation.

This year, the Department of Florida did just that, with a \$222,401 donation, which brought the Sunshine State's total contribution to \$500,001, to the newly named Columbia Trust.

Since 1996, the Trust has awarded nearly \$14 million in grants to support the National Transportation Network and the Hospital Service Coordinator programs, as well as a wide variety of service initiatives.

I am also pleased to report that we've been able to expand our outreach and service to disabled veterans, including those leaving the military or returning from duty in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Thanks in part to the generous support of the GE Foundation, we have hired and trained 13 new Transition Service Officers who will provide service and advice to separating service members at 33 military bases and treatment facilities.

Our partnership with Harley-Davidson and the cooperation of local motorcycle dealerships across the country are helping us provide benefits counseling and claims assistance to many more veterans than ever.

As the Harley's Heroes Tour continued to roar across our nation this year, our Mobile Service Offices have visited inner cities and rural communities to provide services and assistance to those

entitled to benefits. Our MSOs visited more than 600 communities around the country, providing advocacy to veterans and their families.

We've also continued our leadership role in advocating policies and services aimed at meeting the unique needs of women veterans. In June, the DAV co-sponsored the fourth National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues in Washington, D.C. By co-sponsoring and participating in these forums, the DAV has the opportunity to advocate for constructive changes in public policy. The aim is to identify important issues and explore ways the VA and other federal agencies can improve existing programs and develop new approaches to providing care to women veterans.

Among our other accomplishments has been the Stand Up for Veterans initiative, which began paying dividends this year as federal lawmakers focused on issues and legislation of vital importance to disabled veterans and their families. Not only have we focused our efforts on those injured and disabled in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, we have also set the wheels in motion to improve and enhance health care and services for disabled veterans from all wars.

Through the creative use of audio-visual and print materials, we have created greater awareness of these vital issues to reinforce our grassroots strategy to urge the President and Congress to stand up for veterans.

Thanks to so many of our members, thousands of signed petitions have been presented to Con-

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Baseball Program Impresses

During the course of trying to find out what the DAV at the Ballpark is about, I received a call from a fan services representative of the Tampa Bay Devil Rays, and to my surprise, I was informed that anybody that had a military I.D., both active and 100 percent disabled, can present their card at the box office and purchase tickets at half price for any game. I believe the Tampa Bay Devil Rays and the DAV Day at the Ballpark should be commended. **Roger P. Dillon, St. Pete Beach, FL**

Story Shines Light on Mental Health Care

I read the article "Quality Beyond Question" in the July/August 2008 issue with much agreement and understanding. The mental health care given me by the VA has kept my life worth living. My first help came at Fort Roots, North Little Rock, Arkansas. After that, several years of great programs and encouragement came from the Dallas, Texas VA hospital. Keep up the work of telling the better story about our VA system. **John Culpepper, Kerrville, TX**

New Look Earns Praise

I am a DAV Life Member. I just wanted to let you know how much I liked the new format of the *DAV Magazine*. The new graphics, color, design and overall feel of the magazine are very nice. Keep it up! **Jean Driscoll, Denver, CO**

Readers Touched By Combat Nurse Story

This letter is in response to your article on nurses in combat in the July/August 2008 issue. I was wounded in Vietnam and can never fully give my gratitude and thanks to all of the



nurses who took care of me. What seems to be instilled in all of them is giving, support, caring kindness and concern that they show the wounded. To all combat nurses who may read this, thank you for all you've done and for all you're still doing today. Names, faces and dates may change, but your deeds will never be altered—the deeds of so few that affected and comforted so many. **Phil Galvano, Keansburg, NJ**

Thank you for printing the article titled, "Saving Their Lives, Serving Their Country." The story's insight into the reality of nurses caring for combat casualties is incredible and the ability to put it all into print, bril-

DAV Magazine welcomes letters. However, due to the volume of mail, we are unable to acknowledge every letter. Letters are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space, and propriety. Letters involving individual claims are referred to the DAV Service Department, DAV Magazine, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, Ohio 45250-0301.

liant. Literally the story takes the reader through the entire combat casualty scenario. From the time the casualty is picked up on the battlefield, flown to Balad Air Base, taken to the emergency room, and in the order of treatment, to the operating room, with the inclusion of the nurse anesthetist, to ICU and Intermediate care units, the reader is made familiar with the reality of combat casualty care and introduced to the nurses who manage the care and treatment. In addition, the Air Force nurses share their concerns, feelings and emotions of providing care for their wounded warriors. I cannot speak for all military nurses, but I think most would say well done and thank you. **Frances Shea Buckley, San Diego, CA**

DAV Efforts Earn Support

I'm an avid supporter of the DAV and a proud life member. DAV's testimony on S. 2674/H.R. 5509 was the best of all the veterans organizations, hands down. The testimony showed a deep respect and honor for all disabled veterans and all veterans in general in this country. I'm going to set up an auto pay donation every month of the year to DAV. I've also set up an appointment with my attorney to put the DAV in my will. I urge all members to do the same. The DAV certainly stands up for all veterans in this country. Other organizations help veterans too, but none can even come close to the DAV. **Clyde & Barbara Ellerbee, Arabi, GA**

Chaplain's Column Inspires

Our appreciation is extended to Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Jr., for his "Chaplain's Corner" page in the *DAV Magazine*. We thank him for his inspirational and non-denominational messages to live our lives caring for all mankind. **Lt. Colonel Frank R. Brown, USA (Ret), Sparks, NV**

National Commander Robert T. Reynolds presents the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award to Tammy Duckworth, Director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs.



Duckworth Named Disabled Vet of the Year

When a rocket propelled grenade (RPG) struck the Black Hawk helicopter that Tammy Duckworth copiloted in Iraq, her injuries were so severe that her fellow soldiers assumed she was dead. Her right leg was gone, her left leg was barely attached and her right arm was nearly severed.

Now, fewer than four years from narrowly surviving death, she's recognized for overcoming the challenges her injuries caused and going to battle to support her fellow disabled veterans and their families.

On Aug. 9, DAV National Commander Rob Reynolds recognized Duckworth, who now serves as director of the Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs, as the DAV's Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year for 2008 at the National Convention in Las Vegas.

Duckworth, who is arguably the most renowned disabled veteran of the new generation, began her advocacy for disabled soldiers and veterans when she'd barely started rehabilitation at Walter Reed Army Medical Center.

She awoke from a coma to find herself the highest-ranking amputee in the facility. She took her position seriously, working with her fellow injured troops, hospital staff and even congressional leaders to address the concerns of recovering soldiers and their families.

Before she was released from medical care, she was urged by congressional leaders to run for Congress in 2006 in her home state of Illinois. Despite a narrow loss in the general election, Duckworth's campaign went national and brought many of the issues near and dear to veterans to the fore.


In November of 2006, Duckworth was appointed Di-

rector of Veterans' Affairs for her state by Gov. Rod R. Blagojevich. Under her leadership, Illinois has been lauded nationwide for its progressive and innovative programs and services for veterans. It continues to set an example for other states.

Despite her disability, she embraces life's opportunities. She continues to serve as a major in the Illinois National Guard and is back in school flying airplanes with the eventual goal of piloting a helicopter again. In April, she participated in the DAV/VA co-sponsored National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in Snowmass Village, Colo.

"I'm not going to let some insurgent who got lucky with an RPG decide how I'm going to live my life," Duckworth told the DAV. She said she was humbled by the recognition.

"I feel sort of new to this. I know there are many, many disabled veterans out there who have been slogging in the trenches and working very hard. They are the unsung heroes," she said. "I'm deeply honored. If I can represent my buddies in a way that doesn't embarrass them, then I'm happy to do it."

"Tammy is the most highly regarded, renowned veteran to come out of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. We couldn't have a better representative. She came home after suffering severe disabilities and has dedicated her life to building better lives for disabled veterans and their families," Commander Reynolds said. "She's a credit to all veterans and an advocate who will continue to make a difference in our cause for many years to come." 

National Commander-elect Raymond E. Dempsey, right, receives his cap of leadership from National Commander Robert T. Reynolds following Dempsey's unanimous election.



Raymond Dempsey Elected to Lead DAV; Members Set Priorities for Coming Year

By Thom Wilborn

Pledging to leave no veteran behind, Raymond E. Dempsey was unanimously elected National Commander before 3,200 delegates and guests at the 87th National Convention in Las Vegas, Nev.

“Ensuring no veteran is left behind also means making sure everyone knows how to get needed care,” said Commander Dempsey. “We, as veterans helping veterans, need to aid those who are suffering.”

Sandra Dobmeier of South Dakota was elected Auxiliary National Commander (See page 36 for a full listing of DAV and Auxiliary National Officers.)

The election of National Officers was the final event of the National Convention which showcased the leadership of the DAV as the world’s finest veterans service organization. Sessions broadcast live on the Internet featured messages from presidential candidates Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.) and Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.).

Dempsey praised Robert T. Reynolds for “a tremendously successful year” as National Commander and acknowledged



that he would be “a tough act to follow.”

Forced to pause for several standing ovations, Dempsey thanked the convention delegates for the opportunity and responsibility to lead the DAV. “I will do all I can to make sure that your efforts—and mine—ensure that no veteran is left behind,” he said.

“I liked the National Commander’s speech,” said David Bolton, Commander of Chapter 20 in Des Moines, Iowa. “He is a powerful speaker and showed a lot of leadership.”

The convention began as then-National Commander Reynolds gave the initial report reviewing his year in office, thrilling the crowd with an entertaining video of his “cross-country ride” from Washington, D.C., to Las Vegas to deliver his powerful report of DAV’s accomplishments during the membership year.

“It is our job to inform and educate members of Congress about the vital issues affecting disabled veterans and their families.” Reynolds told the membership. “All of you have key roles to play in those efforts—to call on our government to stand up for veterans.”

“Throughout this year I have experienced the spirit of the

DAV wherever I went—the spirit of veterans helping veterans, of delivering service to those who have served our nation and their families and of proclaiming the good work that we all do to honor our mission,” he said.

Cautioning against becoming lax in support of the mission, Reynolds said, “If we are not alert, Congress and the Administration can slip back through the looking glass to make bad plans look good.”

Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield followed with a charge to DAV members to continue their mission of supporting the rights and benefits of disabled veterans and their families.

“In retrospect, our history together makes one thing very clear,” said Mansfield. “Quite simply, you and I bore the sacrifice on foreign battlefields, but also on the ‘No Man’s Land’ of the federal battlefield.”

Mansfield challenged the DAV to protect the rights and benefits of disabled veterans in the future. “I would challenge you to make sure to pay attention to the changes that are coming,” he said. “The challenge is there to make sure, if we make this journey of change, that the bottom line is the reason the VA exists—one simple thing—to take care of veterans, stay in the battle until the end. That’s the goal.”

Outgoing Auxiliary National Commander Kathryn Wiley urged the audience to seize the moment in serving disabled

veterans and their families. “It is crucial to our success,” she said. “The Auxiliary will stand by the DAV to make sure we win the battle for disabled veterans. The future can and will be ours.”

Among convention highlights was the presentation of the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award to Illinois Director of Veterans’ Affairs L. Tammy Duckworth.

Duckworth said the DAV “has made life better for all of us. You made my life today possible even before I was injured.” A major in the Illinois National Guard, she lost both legs and suffered other injuries when a rocket-propelled grenade hit her helicopter in Iraq. “I wasn’t sure if I could live through the day, but I thought that I might be able to survive a minute,” she said recounting her painful recovery. “So I started counting down the minutes, one second at a time. I would just lay there and say to myself, ‘one one-thousand, two one-thousand’ until I got to 60, and then I would start over again.”

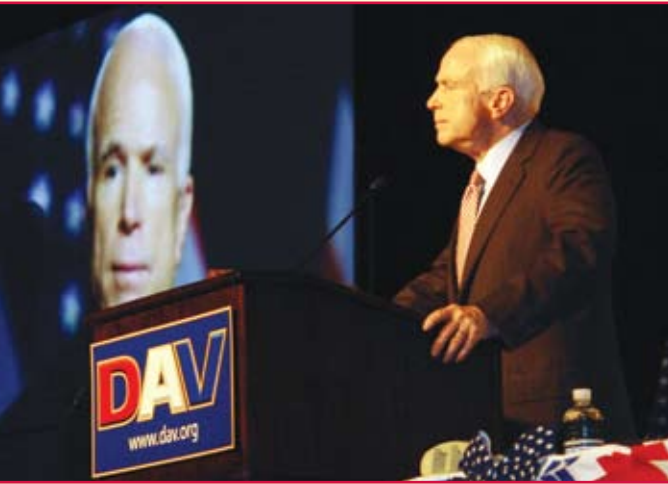
During Duckworth’s tenure as Director of Veterans’ Affairs in Illinois, the state has created more than \$70 million in new programs for veterans. “It is Washington that should do more for us,” she said. “With an aging veteran population and a growing need for the younger generation returning severely wounded from combat, the time for assured

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Above, National Commander Robert T. Reynolds presents the Bugle Award to Cleveland investigative reporter Ron Regan for his stories supporting the honor and service of the DAV. Right, Tammy Duckworth addresses the National Convention delegates after receiving the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year award. National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson delivers his report on DAV’s outstanding achievements to delegates at the National Convention. Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield tells DAV members to continue supporting the rights and benefits of disabled veterans and their families.

Presidential Hopefuls Address Veterans Issues



Republican Presidential candidate John McCain and Democrat challenger Barack Obama both promised delegates to the 87th National Convention that they would support veterans' issues, including sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care.

Illinois Senator Obama, in a pre-recorded video address, said that he supported DAV's legislative initiative, as well as full funding of VA health care, and has signed a pledge to support the legislative goals of the DAV's Stand Up for Veterans initiative.

McCain told convention delegates he doesn't sign pledges, but promised his support for sufficient, timely and predictable funding. Referring to the obligations to keep America's promise to care for veterans, the Senator from Arizona said "the DAV has defined some of these obligations in your Stand Up for Veterans pledge. Though it is not my practice to sign pledges, I can give you my word as president, I will see that these obligations are kept, and I make that statement to you today."

Displeased with the state of veterans health care, McCain said that "Americans who have fought for the defense of our nation should always

get the highest priority" for health care. "We should no longer tolerate requiring veterans to make an appointment to stand in line for a ticket to stand in another line," he said.

McCain proposed creating a new "Veterans' Care Access Card to be used by veterans with illness or injury incurred during their military service, and by those with lower incomes."

Under his proposal, the card would allow veterans to receive medical services from non-VA providers when they were unable to access VA health care due to long waiting times, travel distances or lack of specialty care.

Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, who spoke the next day, said he was concerned that the proposal could do long term harm to veterans health care, despite the intentions of Senator McCain, by diverting federal funding from VA to private sector providers.

"A well-meaning suggestion? I'm sure it is," said Gorman. "But private sector agencies have called VA health care the best and safest care available in this country. Why give up a system noted for its quality of care, cost effectiveness and comprehensiveness of care for one proven to be inferior?"

Obama's video presentation praised the service and sacrifice of disabled veterans who have made possible the freedom America enjoys.

When veterans return from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan "they deserve the same health care as veterans have always received," he said. "Recovering troops should go

to the front of the line."

Obama supported cutting the red tape that bogs down disability claims, fully funding the VA to eliminate delays in health care and to allow all veterans to receive health care at the VA. "We need to make sure the VA gives all our veterans world-class health care," he said.

Gorman said Obama's call for opening up the VA to all 25 million veterans would swamp a health care system that's faced with "insufficient clinical space, insufficient points of access and an insufficient work force that now serves some 7 million veterans."

"We would go back to a point in 2002 when it took six months or longer to see a doctor and as long as a year to see a specialist," Gorman said. "Opening the system would mean health care costs would skyrocket to the point no one would receive timely or quality care."

Gorman said, "Expansion of the system to serve so many veterans is not the answer at least until we



first fix the problems that now bind the system."

"Comprehensive, fully staffed and fully funded programs need to be in place so that all veterans are treated the same: with dignity and the assurance they receive the benefits they are entitled to in a timely and quality manner," said Gorman.

Convention

(Continued from page 7)

[VA] funding is now. The VA should have 100 percent of the funds it needs to care for our veterans.”

“I believe that we want our warriors to be secure in the knowledge that when they are hurt, we will take care of them,” Duckworth said.

The joint opening sessions also included presentations of the Bugle Award to investigative reporter Ron Regan; Outstanding Auxiliary Member of the Year award to Marjorie Fleming; George H. Seal Memorial Trophies to George A. Beadles, Jr., of Chesterfield, Va., and Miriam A. Daley of Arlington, Mass.; and the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarships.

National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson’s report to the National Convention provided an overview of the remarkable changes in DAV. “We’re using innovative new tools and programs, creating new and sound programs and building on the public’s trust and support to advance our legislative priorities,” he said.

Wilson said the 2007-2008 membership year has been marked with achievement in every area—service, legislation, voluntary Services, membership and communications. “We have advanced the cause of disabled veterans at every venue, ensuring that those who make our laws and those who live by them always remember the service, dedication and sacrifice of disabled veterans and the members



of the DAV.”

House Veterans’ Affairs Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.), speaking at the National Convention’s second business session, stressed the nation’s obligation to veterans. Citing more than 800,000 men and women who have served in Iraq and Afghanistan, Filner said that 95 percent of the wounded are surviving their injuries. “That means there are more severely injured veterans returning home,” he said. “It is part of the cost of war to deal with the warriors. And we cannot ever forget the veterans from earlier wars.”

“Of course the job will never be done right until the DAV’s goal of assured funding, or mandatory funding, of the health care for our nation’s veterans is put in place,” said Filner. “We have got to have that bill, and we’re going to get that done. We’re going to be united in saying that every young man and woman who comes back from these wars gets all the care, love, attention, honor and dignity that they deserve,” he said.

Filner told the delegates that he had three priorities in Congress: mandatory funding for VA health care, the GI Bill for the 21st century and ending the VA backlog of 800,000 claims. “We need to get that backlog down to where it belongs, and we can do that with more professional and accountable claims adjudicators,” he said.

Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman warned convention delegates that the Dole-Shalala Commission proposal to create an entirely new disability compensation system

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Above, House Veterans Affairs’ Committee Chairman Bob Filner (D-Calif.) tells the National Convention that sufficient, timely and predictable funding for VA health care is one of his legislative priorities. Right, National Commander Robert T. Reynolds, left, and National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, center, receive a \$200,000 donation from Ford Motor Company Fund President Jim Vella to purchase seven new vehicles for the DAV Transportation Network.



VA Employees Recognized for Service and Dedication

The men and women who received the National Commander's Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs Employee Awards may work far apart in different jobs, but they share a strong dedication and commitment to the veterans they serve.

Kim T. Michalowski of the VA Regional Office in Milwaukee, Wisc., received the National Commander's Award for Outstanding Veterans Benefits Administration Employee. He is a retired command sergeant major who served more than 35 years in the Army on active duty and the reserves. Dr. John J. Garcia, the Chief Medical Officer at the Frank Tejeda VA Outpatient Clinic in San Antonio, Texas, and the Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee, served in the Navy, Air Force and Army during the Vietnam War, Panama, the Gulf War and the Iraq War, where he was injured and disabled.

Daniel J. Barford, the cemetery representative at the Dayton, Ohio, National Cemetery, is a recipient of the National Cemetery Administration Employee Award. Jana Klein, a Field Representative at the VA's Board of Veterans Appeals in Washington, D.C., is the daughter of a career member of the U.S. Army and received the BVA Outstanding Employee Award.

"These dedicated employees exemplify the best of the VA who work hard to ensure that veterans receive the very finest services," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "They go much farther than the extra mile to honor the service and sacrifice of disabled veterans."

Michalowski supervises a team of 22 veteran service representatives and five veterans claims examiners who process

pension-related claims for a 12-state region. Michalowski also works with the National Guard transition office bringing VA service directly to veterans returning from Iraq and Afghanistan.

"It is always good to work with a professional agency that wants to do the best it can for our veterans," said Michalowski. "We have a very good relationship with the DAV. When we work together to help veterans, it is the best thing we can do."

In addition to his work at the VA clinic in San Antonio, Dr. Garcia is the Surgeon General of the Texas Army National Guard and a member of DAV Chapter 5 in San Antonio. As Chief Medical Officer, he created a team to identify veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan to assist them in the transition to the VA health care system.

"I had a significant injury in Iraq and it took me a year to rehabilitate," said Dr. Garcia. "That's the reason I joined DAV. The DAV and I suddenly had a kinship."

Barford, a Vietnam veteran, is a trained and licensed funeral director in Ohio who joined the Dayton National Cemetery in 2006, partly because it was a family tradition. His father, a career Army officer, had worked 25 years for the National Cemetery Administration and its forerunner.

"I probably got the greatest awareness of veterans while I was in the service," Barford said. "When I got into the funeral business in 1990, veterans' services became a very important part of my career. It was very emotional for me, and I do it every day now."

Klein's job at the Board of Veterans Appeals takes her to 58 regional offices and the Department's Insurance and Educational Centers to coordinate actions for medical appeals.

"I think I'm motivated because of my dad," Klein said. "I think of the wives who have cared for their disabled veteran. I know the impact that has on a veteran's family. My dad served in World War II, Korean and Vietnam, and was a disabled veteran. When I talk to wives and adult children of veterans, I know what they've gone through because I've lived it."

"It is easy to understand why these individuals are so deserving of the National Commander's Awards," said Adjutant Wilson. "As VA employees, they are keenly aware of the service of our veterans and the complexities of disability injuries," he said. "It is that shared dedication to assist those who have suffered in service to our nation that makes them outstanding VA employees."



House-Passed VA Spending Bill Awaits Senate Vote

By Joseph R. Chenelly

As has become commonplace, those who oppose mandatory and advance funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs are showing exactly why they are wrong.

Although the House of Representatives has approved legislation adequately funding veterans health care and other programs for 2009, the VA is once again facing the new fiscal year with uncertainty and an inability to plan ahead.

“We love the funding level, but the lack of timeliness is unacceptable and is already hampering the VA,” said National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante.

As approved in the House Aug. 1, the 2009 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act would put \$47.7 billion in discretionary funding into the VA, but the Senate closed shop for a five-week hiatus, saying it plans to take up the bill when it returns in September. But that is just weeks before the next fiscal year starts Oct. 1.

“Even if it is passed before the new fiscal year starts and the President doesn’t veto it, the VA will have endured months of needless and harm-

ful uncertainty,” Violante said. “The VA needs to know how much money it is going to have well in advance. They cannot plan for hiring new staff, retaining those already employed or the many other critical moves every organization needs to be able to plan for. It is impossible to have realistic long-range plans when you don’t even know how much there will be in the coffers next month.”

The DAV applauds the House leadership for passing the bill with enough money for the VA, \$4.6 billion above the 2008 funding level. The bill was the only one of 12 appropriations bills the House passed before lawmakers adjourned for the end-of-summer break.

It passed the House with wide bipartisan support, 409 to 4. Voting against the bill were Reps. Jeff Flake (R-Ariz.), John Campbell (R-Calif.), John Duncan (R-Tenn.) and Ron Paul (R-Texas). Twenty-one other lawmakers were present but did not vote.

The DAV, along with the other three veterans service organizations that co-author *The Independent Budget*, voiced outrage Aug. 1 at a White House claim that Congress is overspending on veterans programs. The President threatened to veto any of the remaining spending

bills that exceed the Administration’s request unless Congress finds \$2.9 billion in offsets elsewhere in the federal budget.

The VA bill is \$2.9 billion more than the President requested.

As the House prepared to debate the measure, the four veterans service organizations told Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi that they “vigorously defend the crucial increases in VA funding” which the administration has underfunded in its budget requests for the past several years.

“This budget, a budget that intends to bind the wounds of war and to care for those who have worn the nation’s uniform, should never be used as a political lever to force policies of one branch [of government] on the other,” read a July 31 letter to Speaker Pelosi.

Continued delays in VA funding demonstrate that reforming the current funding process is needed to make veterans health care sufficient, timely and predictable, said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman. “It is vital for Congress to provide funding necessary to meet the health care needs of veterans and to do so in a timely manner.”

President Signs Memorial Coin Bill

President Bush has signed legislation authorizing the U.S. Mint to produce a silver coin to commemorate veterans who have become disabled as a result of their military service. A surcharge of \$10 on the sale of each limited-edition coin goes to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to establish a memorial to disabled veterans in Washington, D.C.

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin Act easily passed in the House in May of 2007 by a vote of 416 to 0. The House version was approved by unanimous consent in the Senate June 11.

"This is a major victory for our efforts to honor the service and sacrifice of the nation's disabled veterans," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "The proceeds from the sale of these special coins and the generous contributions from

DAV Departments, Chapters and individual members, among others, will make the dream of this memorial to disabled veterans a reality."

"This bill enables the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation to touch the lives of many individuals as we continue our mission of building the nation's first memorial in Washington, D.C., honoring the sacrifices of the three million living disabled American veterans, and all those who have passed before them," said Lois Pope, Co-Founder and Chairman of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation.

"Minting of these unique commemorative coins will provide another avenue for raising funds to complete the construction of the memorial. The estimated total cost is \$60 million," said Adjutant

Wilson, who also is President of the Memorial Foundation.

The design of the coins is to be "emblematic of the service of our disabled veterans who, having survived the ordeal of war, made enormous personal sacrifices defending the principles of our democracy," according to the legislation. The measure also stipulates that the coins will be 90 percent silver and 10 percent copper and are to be minted in 2010.

Reps. Dennis Moore (D-Kan.) and Mark Kirk (R-Ill.) introduced the measure (H.R. 634) in the House, while the Senate version (S. 2119) was brought in by Tim Johnson (D-S.D.). Both bills had broad bipartisan support.

Tim Johnson (D-S.D.)



IRS Urges Disabled Veterans to Seek Economic Stimulus Funds

The Internal Revenue Service says that disabled veterans have until Oct. 15 to file claims for economic stimulus payments.

The IRS launched a campaign this summer to contact those who are eligible, but have failed to file claims. They include people receiving benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for disability, pension or survivors' benefits. The agency will send special letters to those eligible with directions on how to make the claim, a sample tax form and a tax form that can be completed and mailed to the IRS. This will be the second special mailing to eligible disabled veterans.


As many as one in four disabled veterans and retirees have not yet filed a claim for economic stimulus payments Congress authorized in February.

Disabled veterans who do not normally file a tax return are eligible for the payments, but they will need to file a tax return before Oct. 15 in order to qualify for the stimulus



funds. Once the tax return has been filed, the IRS will calculate eligibility and the payment amount. Even though some disabled veterans do not normally file a tax return because their benefits are not taxable, they must file a return in order to receive the payments.

The stimulus payments of up to \$600 (\$1,200 for married couples filing joint returns) have no effect on federal benefits received and are not taxable. In addition, filing a tax return to receive a stimulus payment does not mean that disabled veterans will have to start filing tax returns again.

The IRS offers face-to-face tax preparation sessions with the help of community groups and at senior housing, VA medical centers and assisted living facilities. There are also 400 local Taxpayer Assistance Centers that provide tax preparation assistance to disabled veterans. A list for addresses and office hours can be found on the IRS Web site www.irs.gov under "Contact My Local Office," or contact your nearest DAV National Service Office. 

NAACP Recognizes DAV Membership Director

National Membership Director Anthony L. “Tony” Baskerville was awarded the Jesse Brown Distinguished Leadership Award at the 34th Annual National Association for the Advancement of Colored People Armed Services and Veterans Affairs Award Dinner July 16.

A disabled Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam era, Baskerville began his career as a National Service Officer in 1975. Early on, he served as a Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program Coordinator. Before PTSD was officially recognized, Baskerville was one of the pioneering service officers who addressed the needs of homeless veterans.

He’s served on the President’s Committee on the Employment of People with Disabilities under President Clinton, and the U.S. Small Business Administration’s Veterans Affairs Task Force for Entrepreneurship.

Since taking the reigns of the Membership Department in 2005, Baskerville has worked tirelessly to ensure the organization continues to meet its membership goals. He’s led the charge to reach out to veterans of more recent conflicts. With 1.2 million members, the director is responsible for maintaining the strength and community support needed for the DAV to carry out its mission.

Currently, he is working closely with information technology professionals to find new methods for outreach and recruiting, including the use of social networking sites to find new avenues for the veterans’ community to communicate.

The Jesse Brown Distinguished



Baskerville

Leadership Award recognizes leaders who work diligently to ensure that all veterans are provided the benefits and services they have earned through honorable service to their country.

Past recipients include Congressman Lane Evans, Congresswoman Maxine Waters, Congressman Charles B. Rangel and Dr. Erwin Randolph Parson.

Jesse Brown was a former DAV leader who was appointed Secretary of Veterans Affairs on Jan. 22, 1993. He served in that post until 1997. A combat-disabled Marine Corps veteran of the Vietnam War, Brown is remembered as one of the premiere veterans’ advocates.

As the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, he expanded the services offered to female veterans, homeless veterans and veterans who were exposed to illness-causing chemicals as a result of military service. Secretary Brown died on Aug. 15, 2002, and is buried at Ar-

lington National Cemetery.

According to Baskerville, the award was of particular significance because Secretary Brown was a mentor and friend.

“I was one of many young veterans who had the extreme privilege of learning from Jesse. Receiving an award that recognizes his legacy is an unimaginable honor,” said Baskerville. “I’m grateful to the DAV for giving me the opportunity to serve so many of our nation’s deserving veterans and their families and grateful to the NAACP for taking the time to recognize all of our contributions.”

“I could think of no greater candidate for this award,” said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. “I think if Jesse were still with us he would agree. Tony has earned this recognition through three decades of service, and the entire DAV extends its congratulations to him and his family.”



DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

from the NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR

All Disabled Veterans Deserve Quality Services

Women veterans are turning to the VA in ever-increasing numbers, and the DAV is leading the way to help ensure they receive the health care and benefits they have earned through their service and sacrifice. The DAV is dedicated to making sure that disabled women veterans suffering from combat-related injuries, traumatic brain injuries, post-traumatic stress disorder and other conditions receive their hard-earned disability compensation and health benefits with the same compassion and professionalism as any veteran.

Although women are barred from many jobs in infantry, armor and artillery units and are technically restricted to support roles, the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan have shown that any American servicemember—regardless of combat status, military occupation specialty or gender—faces almost daily attacks from enemy fighters, roadside bomb blasts and other risks. And we have seen an increasing number of women returning with the most severe wounds and physical and psychological scars of war.

The VA says there are 1.7 million women veterans, or just 7 percent of the veteran population. By contrast, women comprise nearly 15 percent of America's armed forces.

While about 5.2 percent of veterans who use VA health care are women, that number is expected to jump to 8.1 percent within three years. Since 2002, 41 percent of women who left the service after serving in Iraq or Afghanistan have enrolled in VA health care.

Once seen as largely a service support agency for men, the VA is now undergoing a dramatic transition to ensure that the needs of women veterans are met. The DAV recognizes the needs and issues

of women veterans including their right to privacy and gender-specific care.

The majority of new women veterans cared for by VA today are younger and of child-bearing age. About 86 percent of women who served in Iraq or Afghanistan are under the age of 40. We are urging the VA to ensure that the medical staffs who treat them are well trained and qualified in women's health issues. Right now, the VA is struggling to find the best health care model for women veterans, and research is focusing on their unique needs.

During the recent National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues, co-sponsored by the DAV, we noted improvements made by the VA, yet there still are many barriers affecting women veterans.

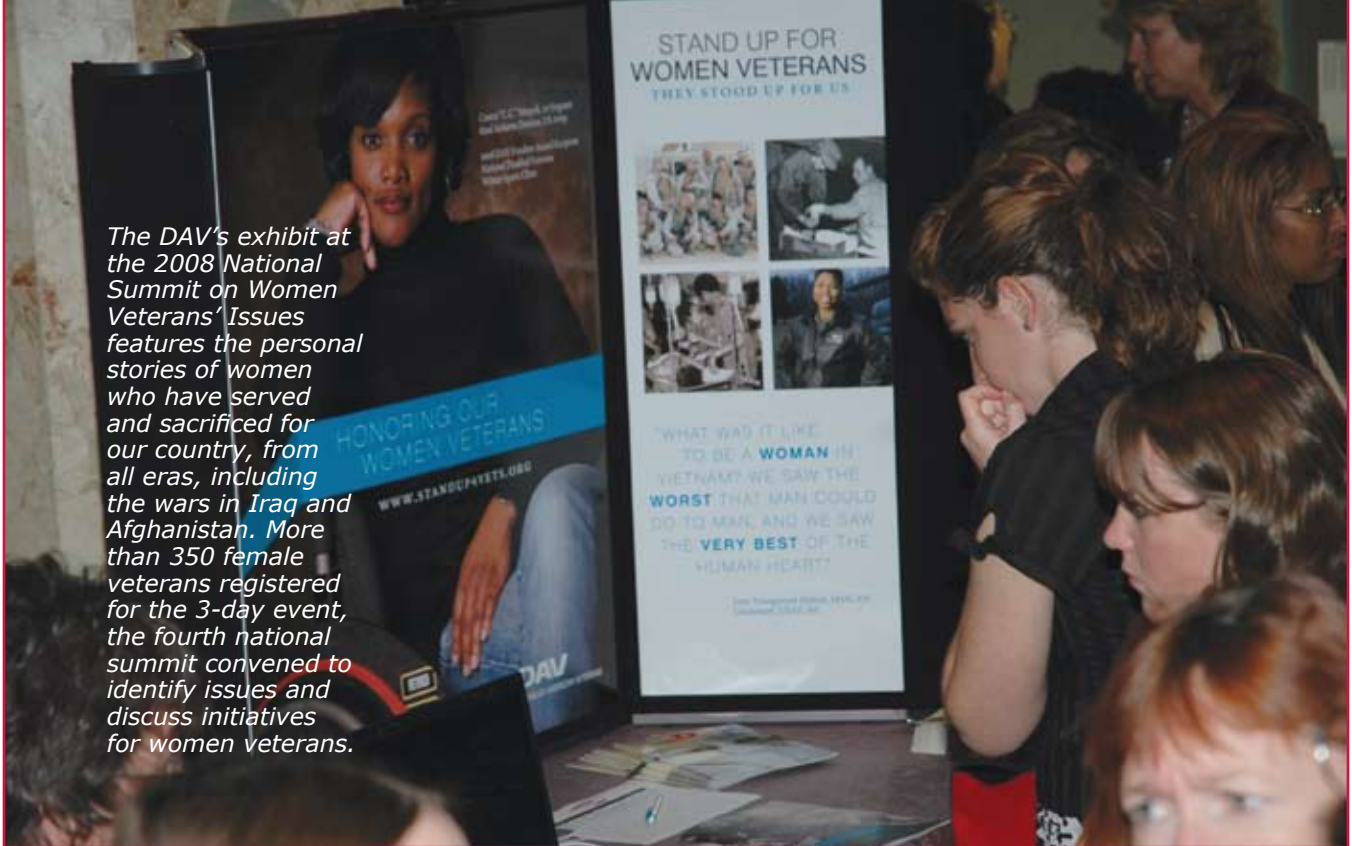
Less than half of all VA medical facilities have designated women's primary care teams. About half provide separate gender-specific care in a women's health clinic. Another barrier is that women often need child care during their appointments for VA health care. The VA also needs to offer disease prevention programs directed to young, relatively healthy women. Our task is clear: we need to break down those barriers that prevent women from seeking or receiving care and benefits from the VA.

Our corps of professional National Service Officers is aware of the needs of women veterans, but we can improve their lives with our services and knowledge of their experiences.

Our Chapters need to warmly welcome women veterans to our membership, recognizing and honoring their service and sacrifice to our nation on an equal basis.

Just as women served beside men on and off the battlefield, they should also receive their earned benefits and health care.

The DAV's exhibit at the 2008 National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues features the personal stories of women who have served and sacrificed for our country, from all eras, including the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. More than 350 female veterans registered for the 3-day event, the fourth national summit convened to identify issues and discuss initiatives for women veterans.



Women Veterans Gather to Persuade Policies



By Dave Autry

For many of the more than 400 delegates to the VA's National Summit on Women Veterans' Issues, the three-day conference provided a unique forum to have a significant impact on our nation's policies toward women veterans. The summit, co-sponsored by the DAV, also highlighted the changing roles of women in the military and the government's response to their needs — now and in the future.

Today, women make up about 15 percent of America's active force. They are eligible for assignment in most military occupational specialties; the only exception is in direct combat roles. Yet women fly combat aircraft, are assigned to missile placements, protect convoys in hostile territory,

serve on ships around the world and perform other duties that expose them to combat.

Of America's 23.5 million living veterans, about 1.7 million are women. The Department of Veterans Affairs projects that by the year 2010, women will comprise well over 10 percent of the veteran population.

With the scope and tempo of continuing operations in Iraq and Afghanistan, women have demonstrated their effectiveness in military police units and conducting patrols outside their bases, for example. Some have been recognized for their exceptional service and valor, those commendations include the Silver Star.

"As the number of women serving in the military has continued to increase over time, so has the range of their

opportunities," said Assistant National Legislative Director Joy J. Ilem. "Today, all non-combat fields and most combat-support positions are open to women. And that puts many of them at greater risk than ever."

"It is absolutely clear that these women deserve to be honored for their service and sacrifices for our country," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "Yet they traditionally have used their earned benefits at lower rates than their male counterparts. And while a number of factors that hamper women veterans from getting the health care and other benefits have been addressed, there are still serious gaps to be filled. The Department of Veterans Affairs and the veterans community must continue to work together to provide women

(Continued on page 40)


New Vans Roll Out to Help Disabled Veterans

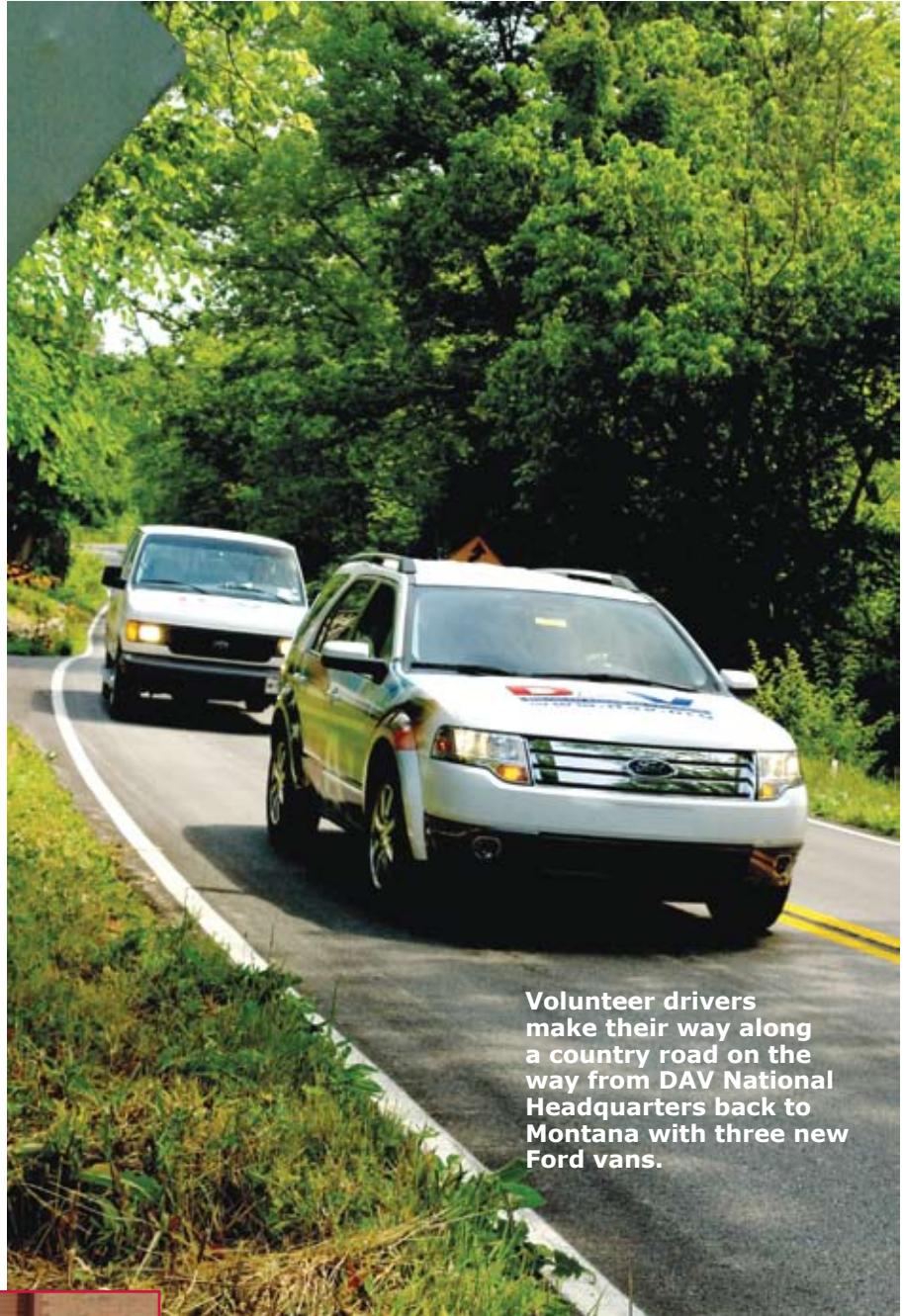
By Jim Hall

One hundred fifty new Ford vans, made possible through a continuing partnership between DAV Departments and Chapters and the Columbia Trust, are on the way to provide transportation for sick and disabled veterans to and from VA facilities for needed medical care.

The brightly decaled vehicles include 88 seven-passenger and 62 twelve-passenger vans. They represent a combined investment of more than \$3.3 million dollars in Transportation Network purchases for 2008.

Beginning in May, volunteers from throughout the nation have been picking up the vans at National Headquarters so they can be put to good use serving our nation's sick and disabled veterans. Some volunteer drivers have previously been to National Headquarters; for others it is a first visit. All have an opportunity to tour National Headquarters, meet members of the staff, pick up free posters and information and buy DAV fraternal items at the Purchasing Department before leaving.

The following photos are a sampling of the many outstanding volunteer drivers who picked up new vans this year—volunteers dedicated to building better lives for America's disabled veterans and their families. 



Volunteer drivers make their way along a country road on the way from DAV National Headquarters back to Montana with three new Ford vans.



Bidding farewell to National Headquarters before returning to Montana with three new Ford vans are, from left, Jimmie Kerr, Commander, Chapter 10, Billings, Mont., Department of Montana Jr. Vice Commander and volunteer driver; Richard McCracken, Jr., Chapter 10 and HSC at the Billings VA Outpatient Clinic; Bill Furious, volunteer driver and Past Commander Chapter 3, Helena, Mont.; Ron Coleman, volunteer driver, Hamilton, Mont.; and Ernie Franke, volunteer driver, Thompson Falls, Mont. The vans are slated to join others at work transporting sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical facilities for needed medical care.



Wisconsin volunteer drivers arrive to pick up five new Ford vans for the National Transportation Network in their state. On hand for the send-off are, from left, National Director of Voluntary Services Edward Hartman; National Headquarters VA Voluntary Services Correspondent Joyce Barrett; volunteer drivers Davis Feutz, Terry Anderson and Wayne Utecht; Patty Davis, Hospital Service Coordinator at the Zablocki VA medical center in Milwaukee; volunteer driver Allan Kasparzak; Past National Commander and Volunteer Driver Coordinator Richard E. Marbes; and volunteer drivers Jim Cornell, William Kerwin, Bill McNeal and S.R. Davis.



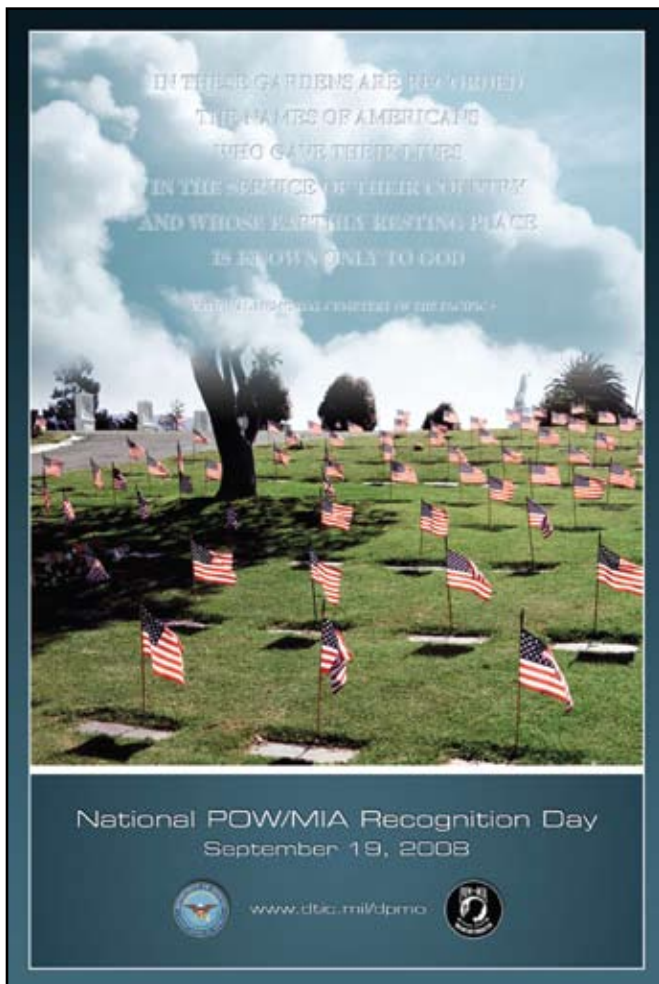
Tom Tarango, left, Chapter 10, and Valente Alvarado, Chapter 187, El Paso, Texas, tour the Fred R. Bristol Visitors' Center during their trip to National Headquarters to pick up a new Ford van. Tarango is the Transportation Clerk and Alvarado is the DAV Department Service Officer and Hospital Service Coordinator at the VA Outpatient Clinic in El Paso.



Above, Bill McNeal, a volunteer driver for the National Transportation Network, checks out the interior of a new Ford van bound for Wisconsin to help transport sick and disabled veterans to and from VA medical centers and outpatient clinics throughout the state. McNeal was among 10 drivers who arrived at National Headquarters to drive five new vans back to their state.



Left, David Martin, a Department Service Officer and member of Chapter 7, Battle Creek, Mich., behind the wheel of a new Ford Taurus X, 7-passenger van bound for the VA medical center at Battle Creek, where Martin is Hospital Service Coordinator.



A Day of Remembrance

By Thom Wilborn

Interim POW/MIA Committee member and World War II veteran Frank Tracy remembers his time as a prisoner of war at night when he beds down. He remembers the B-17 bomber and the ball turret gun that he manned at the age of 18 during bombing missions over Europe in 1944. In the quiet moments before sleep, memories return of the starkness of the prison camp near the Baltic Sea, forced marches across Europe and the threats from enemy guards.

“That’s when it comes back to you,” said Tracy, one of nearly 22,000 living former POWs, most of them World War II veterans.

“What I think of most of all is what’s happened in Iraq,” he said. “I think of those taken prisoner and killed while captive.”

“On September 19, our nation’s former prisoners of war and the families of the thousands of service members missing in action receive special tribute for their service to our nation,” said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. “Our commitment is to achieve the fullest possible accounting for those missing in action and to honor those who endured hardship, starvation and brutality while captives of our enemies.”

Each year, the nation remembers POW/MIA Recognition Day on the third Friday in September. It is marked by a special event with military flourishes, flyovers and ceremonies at the Pentagon and elsewhere. For the declining number of former POWs, it is about those who never returned.

“The heroes are those buried in foreign lands that we have not found,” said Tracy. “We will find them and we will bring them back to their mothers, fathers and their families.”

Of the 22,000 living former POWs, 550 came home from the Vietnam War and 33 from combat in the Gulf War, Somalia, Kosovo and Iraq. No American service members have been taken prisoner in Afghanistan.

“With the aging of the World War II and Korean War generations, there soon may be fewer than 1,000 former prisoners of war remaining,” said Adjutant Wilson. “Their personal sacrifices as POWs will become part of our history, and the service to our nation remembered as among the most difficult.”

“Once captured, we had no idea of what was taking place,” said Tracy. “We had no knowledge of events until we were liberated and got back to the States.”



Tracy

“When I was in the prison camp, one of my duties was to take care of the dead,” he said. “Our soldiers died from malnutrition or pneumonia. I kept a list of every prisoner of war we buried—British, Russian, Polish and American.” When liberated, Tracy gave the list to military intelligence, and about 90 percent

were recovered. “That, to me, was a great accomplishment,” said Tracy.

One by one, those missing in action are returning home. Last year the remains of 62 service members from all wars were returned home and identified. So far this year, more than 30 sets of remains have been returned to their families.

“It is important to remember that for our former prisoners of war and the families of those missing in action, every day is POW/MIA Day,” said Wilson. “We owe a great debt of gratitude to those who served under the harshest of conditions and to the 84,000 families whose loved ones have yet to come home.”

Make a Difference Now and Always



SANDRA J. DOBMEIER

from the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

It is an honor and a privilege to have been elected to serve as your National Auxiliary Commander. I would like to thank all of you for your confidence and support. I will do my absolute best to be worthy of this great honor.

I'm looking forward to a very exciting year for our Auxiliary. The need for the many programs and services we help provide for our veterans and their families continues to grow. To meet this demand, we must continue to grow our Auxiliary membership and evolve to better serve disabled veterans and their families.

Membership in our Auxiliary honors the generations of veterans who fought for our freedom and shows our commitment to the men and women who are fighting to protect our freedoms today and in the future. The mission of the DAV and Auxiliary is to build better lives for our veterans and their families. Your Auxiliary membership helps make this possible. That is why I have chosen "Making a Difference Now and Always" as my theme during my term as your National Commander.

We were able to make our national membership quota last year, thanks to the membership efforts by everyone. Congratulations to all of the Units and Departments who made their membership quota. With our membership momentum underway, we can achieve even more membership success in the coming year. Keep up the great work in membership and be ready for the announcement of our new membership incentive program, coming soon.

It is very important for each of us to encourage all eligible veterans and their family members to become members of the Auxiliary. One of the easiest ways to sign up new members is to tell them why you joined and what your membership means to you. If you explain to them what your Auxiliary does and how you

could use their help, you will be pleasantly surprised by how many eligible members will join to help your Unit.

After you recruit your new members, it is your responsibility to encourage them to become active and equally important to have activities and goals for them to accomplish. Offer new members a ride to the next meeting so they don't have to walk in alone; introduce them to other members and help them understand what happens at a meeting—make them a part of your Unit and they will continue to be a part of it.

When you make new members feel welcome and explain to them about the projects you are discussing at your meeting so they understand what you are working on, they will want to join in. When members join in, disabled veterans and their families benefit today, tomorrow and into the future.

The need is great. Sign up eligible members today, and start making a difference now and always.

Because we need each other... You and the DAV Auxiliary

A veteran's disability touches every aspect of your life. It's the same with us. That's why we formed the Auxiliary. We know the families of disabled veterans need to stick together, because danger threatens the benefits our families depend on.

As the number of veterans declines day by day, our families must pick up the torch of justice. Our membership must be large enough to convince Congress to respect surviving disabled vets and the survivors of disabled veterans who have passed away. Spouses, surviving spouses, parents, siblings, children, grandparents, grandchildren and great grandchildren are all eligible for the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary.

Stand up for yourself, your veteran, and your family!

Senior members – return the form below today with your \$15 dues
Junior members – children 17 or under – \$3

Name _____

Disabled vet's name _____

Vet's code number _____

Address _____

(see address on back cover)

Send to: DAV Auxiliary, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076

Life Membership can save money over the years, covering all dues and fees for your lifetime.

Life dues are based on age: 18-30, \$250; 31-45, \$230; 46-60, \$200; 61-70, \$180; 71-79, \$140; 80 and over free. A down payment of \$40 is all that is required to start a life membership with three full membership years to pay it in full.

Judicial Review: A Question of Balance

By Dave Autry



PHOTO: Elaine Wilson/US Army

Terrie Wurzbacher, a medical officer for the Physical Evaluation Board at Fort Sam Houston Texas, reviews a soldier's file. With the new DAV partnership, soldiers will receive free legal representation to navigate the evaluation and rating system.

Twenty years ago, *DAV Magazine* noted that “no issue has proven more confusing—and more divisive” than the role of judicial review in the VA claims adjudication process. And when legislation creating what was then the Court of Veterans Appeals was signed into law in 1988, it did not completely end decades of debate on the subject. True, some of the thorniest issues had been resolved, but the debate on other aspects turned in a new direction.

“The DAV fought long and hard against some earlier approaches to judicial review that would have imposed tremendous costs on the VA adjudication system without providing anywhere near comparable benefits,” said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson.

“Those proposals would have overburdened a federal courts system that was ill-equipped to handle veterans’ claims.”

In the end, the approach that ultimately became law avoided those pitfalls by allowing full judicial review of VA rules, protecting the interests of claimants who challenge those rules and providing a significant degree of independence for the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (BVA). For one, it required presidential appointment and Senate confirmation of the BVA chairman and vice chairman.

“When the veterans court opened for business in September 1989, the DAV had a team in place to represent claimants in the judicial review process,”

said National Service Director Randy Reese. “The DAV certainly took the lead in this area and was the only veterans service organization practicing before the court for its first eight months.”

And for the next 20 years, the DAV continued as a leader in the very specialized area of veterans law, advocating on behalf of veterans and their families seeking their just and rightful benefits.

As a matter of fact, the DAV was the first veterans service organization to submit an appellate brief to the court and was the first to present oral argument by a non-attorney practitioner. The DAV also won the first fact-based decision handed down by the court. (A 1999 law changed the name of the court to the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims.)

“DAV’s active participation and leadership in the judicial appeals process since the court was established is something we can be very proud of,” said Reese. “We have helped thousands of veterans and family members gain access to the federal court to redress wrongful denial of benefits, which has

led to creating precedent case law that will continue to steer the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims into the future.”

In addition to providing free representation, the DAV also has long been a leader in developing programs to provide pro bono, or no-cost, services to claimants. For example, in 1992, the DAV partnered with the Veterans Consortium to establish a pro bono program.

In 2007, the DAV also began a unique partnership with three prominent national law firms that agreed to provide free legal representation for injured soldiers at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in navigating the military’s disability evaluation and rating system.

The law firms LeBoeuf, Lamb, Greene & MacRae; King & Spalding and Foley & Lardner contacted the DAV after learning that many servicemembers with disabilities faced navigating the disability evaluating and rating process without the benefit of representation.

“Because of our considerable expertise in reviewing service medical records and representing clients before military Medical Evaluation Boards and Physical Evaluation Boards, the DAV agreed to provide attorneys with these law firms some training and guidance regarding the unique nature of the military disability rating system,” said Reese.

And now the DAV has taken another bold step and has joined forces with Finnegan, Henderson, Farabow, Garrett & Dunner, one of the nation’s leading intellectual property law firms, to offer free representation to

to veterans referred by DAV seeking judicial review of adverse decisions on veterans benefit claims.

“This new partnership will result in greatly expanded, high-quality service to our clients in obtaining benefits from the VA,” said National Adjutant Wilson. “In a number of cases, they will now have the resources of Finnegan and its pool of



Wilson

very talented lawyers in exercising their right to indepen-

dent judicial review of benefit decisions.”

Under the agreement, Finnegan will review BVA decisions referred by DAV in which there was complete or partial denial of a claim for the purpose of identifying those appropriate for judicial review. The firm then will provide representation to appellants before the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims—all on a pro bono basis.

It is expected that Finnegan will handle 100 to 200 appeals before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, all of which will be selected from the hundreds that DAV handles—and will continue to handle—at VA’s Board of Veterans’ Appeals.

In addition, any unsuccessful appeals to the veterans court will be evaluated by Finnegan for possible further appeal to the next higher court, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit.

Finnegan also will review decisions by the Army Physical Evaluation Board in the cases of some recently discharged veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan for possible appeal to the U.S. Court of Federal Claims.

“The DAV’s foremost concern continues to be ensuring that our clients have the very best representation possible as they pursue their claims for disability compensation and other earned benefits from the VA,” said Wilson. “We are very pleased that a prestigious firm such as Finnegan has volunteered to provide pro bono representation to our nation’s

veterans and their families before the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This now provides DAV the opportunity to create a better balance in our National Service Program. This includes allowing us to devote additional resources to our operations at the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, where the workload is increasing at a rapid pace.”


“As DAV organizes, streamlines and transfers its pending judicial appeals to Finnegan, we can enhance our efforts to improve our National Appeals Office and refine our appeals work processes,” Reese said. “This will ultimately result in more and better advocacy and representation to the men and women the DAV was created to serve.”

This new partnership will result in greatly expanded, high-quality service to our clients in obtaining benefits from the VA



Racing for Our Heroes

American LeMans race car driver Jason Carter brought the “Racing for Our Heroes” program to DAV National Headquarters during the annual meeting of the Commanders and Adjutants Association in July. The program provides visits to LeMans and IRL races around the country to

recently wounded veterans. The program is supported by a grant from the DAV’s Charitable Service Trust. The visit showcased Carter’s race-ready Porsche and several young veterans, many of whom signed up to become fully paid DAV Life Members. 





23rd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic



MIRACLES ON A MOUNTAIN SIDE



Department of Veterans Affairs



Disabled American Veterans

Snowmass Village, Colorado

March 29 - April 3, 2009





Oskosh Has It All ...

On one of his last trips as DAV National Commander, Robert T. Reynolds led the DAV Flight Team to the EAA AirVenture Fly-In at Oshkosh, Wisc. Often called the "Super Bowl of Airshows," EAA AirVenture once again invited DAV to participate in several high-profile events. To show its appreciation to the EAA, the DAV sponsored a Warbird Volunteer picnic and, in conjunction with EAA Warbirds of America, DAV put on an event that turned out to be one of the most talked about nights of the week—the appearance of Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band, courtesy of the DAV.



Some Assembly Required.



**Build That Great Meal With Us...
Military Appreciation Monday 2008**

Golden Corral and the DAV are partnering for another great Military Appreciation Monday on November 17, 2008, between 5 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. Military Appreciation Monday is Golden Corral's way to saying "Thank You!" to our nation's veterans and active duty military. Be sure to visit the DAV information table to meet members of Chapters in your area and check out the free DAV information.



**Mark your calendar now for Monday,
November 17, 2008.**

MANY FACES

OF DAV
GUARDIAN
SOCIETY
MEMBERS

MANY WAYS TO GIVE!



PROTECTING THOSE WHO SERVED

For more information
on how to
leave your own
legacy for
disabled veterans,
please call us at

1-800-216-9802

or email

giftplanning@dav.org

or return the attached
postcard reply.

www.dav.org/giftplanning



Larry and Jane Tisdell
Seminole, FL



Bill and Marjorie Weedin
Wichita, KS



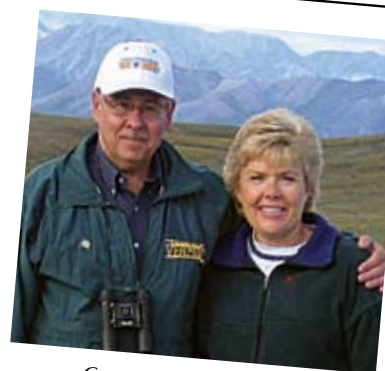
Ray Chan
Pinole, CA

The DAV Guardian Society honors those who inform us that the DAV (P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250) is included in their will, trust, charitable remainder trust, retirement plan or insurance policy.

If you have already created such a gift,
please let us know!



Dr. Harry Springfield
Sun City, AZ



Greg and Bette Schifferle
Essex Junction, VT



Lt Col Shirl Finley
Rocklin, CA

National Adjutant

(Continued from page 3)

gress asking them to support legislation related to the core issues of our Stand Up for Veterans initiative. We are counting on the continued grassroots effort by DAV members to build the momentum and achieve our goals.

Your DAV also is leading a coalition of veterans groups urging lawmakers to approve advance appropriations for veterans medical care. This budget reform proposal would give the VA much more certainty over its funding by knowing its budget a year in advance. The change would mean that veterans would no longer be a political football, while Congress would still retain its discretion to approve appropriations


and maintain its oversight ability.

I am also pleased to report that groundbreaking for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial is tentatively scheduled for early 2009 as efforts to raise the necessary funds continue with the wonderful support of DAV Departments, Chapters and individual members.

The DAV has supported the memorial for more than a decade, and has pledged up to \$3 million to match donations made by our Departments and Chapters. We were also very pleased when businessman and veteran H. Ross Perot this spring pledged \$3 million to help build the memorial.

And President Bush recently signed legislation—unanimously passed by the House and Senate—that authorizes the

Treasury to mint an American Veterans Disabled for Life Commemorative Coin in 2010. Revenue from a surcharge on the coin will help fund construction of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

DAV's year has been marked with achievement in every area and enabled us to provide more and better services to disabled veterans and their families. With your continued support, we will build on our successes and make even more improvements as we look to the future. Together, we will ensure that those who make our laws and those who live by them always remember and honor the service, dedication and sacrifice of this nation's disabled veterans. 

Job Help for Veterans Earns Recognition

One of the crucial steps in building better lives for disabled veterans is the help they receive in finding a job. The individuals and corporations who strive to ensure employment opportunities for disabled veterans have been recognized for their efforts at DAV's 87th National Convention.

"Those who help or hire veterans have a special place in our nation," said National Commander Robert T. Reynolds. "When veterans leave the service, their paramount thought is how are they going to support themselves and their families?"

Finding a gratifying and productive job is important to restoring the confidence of disabled veterans. Work brings self-respect, pride in accomplishment and a sense that there is a productive life with disability.

"To do that requires special people who are dedicated to helping veterans find jobs and employers who are eager to hire them," said Reynolds in presenting the 2008 National Commander's Employment Awards.

These awards recognize the professional service and dedication of those Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialists and Local Veterans Employment Representatives who help veterans obtain and keep jobs and the large and small employers that hire disabled veterans.

The employment representatives and companies recognized with National Commander's Employment Awards at the 87th National Convention are:

Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program Specialist: Jerome Studivant, Jr., Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas Veterans Commission, San Antonio, Texas.

Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative: Roger Stillman, California Employment and Development Department, Sacramento, Calif.

Outstanding Large Employer of the Year: Securitas Security Services, USA, Inc., Houston, Texas, and Outstanding Small Employer of the Year: Triad Logistics Services Corporation, Wichita Falls, Texas.

"These outstanding employment professionals and employers are valuable assets to our nation's veterans," said Reynolds. "They set the standards of excellence that others should follow to honor the service and sacrifice of our nation's veterans."



DAV Member Helps Youth Reach New Heights

When Col. Jack D. Howell retired from the Marine Corps in 1990, he wanted to give back to the country he loved and had spent a career serving. As a Junior ROTC instructor and life member of Chapter 86 in Flagler Beach, Fla., he worked in some of the toughest inner-city schools on the eastern seaboard in his first years as a civilian.

With a background in aviation from his military career, Howell developed Teens-In-Flight, a nonprofit organization to help children learn how to fly airplanes.

The program is centered on the belief that the greater the reward available for young people, the better their chances of reaching their full potential. Howell, who was wounded in Vietnam, has drawn on his personal aviation experience as he's helped children learn to fly for more than a decade.

After developing flight programs for low-income families and "at risk" teenagers, Howell believed the tremendous opportunity for a young person to earn a private pilot license should be ex-



tended to families who bear the burden of sacrifice on behalf of the nation.

"I thought of the military funerals I had been a part of," Howell said. "I wanted to do more for the kids to honor the sacrifices that were being made in this war."

Teens-In-Flight gives scholarship priority to the children of service members killed in action in Iraq and Afghanistan. Second priority goes to the children of parents who were wounded in action.

Scholarship amounts are based on the cost of attaining a license through an aviation school. On Howell's estimation, Teens-In-Flight participants are given a \$9,000 opportunity for free.


The program is able to offer opportunities through donations — the majority of which are made by aviation

companies and private donors.

Whenever possible, the organization seeks partnerships with aero clubs and morale, welfare and recreation offices on military installations.

Teens-In-Flight is still in its infancy, according to Howell. The program began in Jacksonville, Fla., then expanded to Flagler County, Fla. It is now in Colorado Springs, Col., where it serves Fort Carson families.

"We want to do the right thing and give back to these kids. We'd like to do more for the children of all disabled veterans who want to participate," said Howell. "They deserve every opportunity our nation can provide."

For program eligibility requirements and more information on Teens-In-Flight, visit www.teens-in-flight.com. 



Above, Col. Jack Howell gives Teens-In-Flight students an aircraft familiarization class. Left, Howell, a disabled Marine veteran of the Vietnam War, hopes his program will create a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for the children of disabled veterans and fallen service members.



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



DR. CHARLES W. EDWARDS, JR.

from the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

How To Carry Your Burden

A monarch of long ago had twin sons. There was some confusion about which one was born first. As they grew to young manhood, the king sought a fair way to designate one of them as crown prince.

Calling them to his council chamber, the king said, "My sons, the day will come when one of you must succeed me as ruler. The burdens of sovereignty are very heavy. To find out which one of you is better able to bear them cheerfully, I am sending you together to a far corner of the kingdom. One of my advisors there will place equal burdens on your shoulders. My crown will one day go to the one who first returns bearing his burden like a king should."

In a spirit of friendly competition, the brothers set out together. Soon they overtook an aged woman struggling under a burden that seemed far too heavy for her frail body. One of the boys suggested that they stop to help her. The other protested: "We have a burden of our own to worry about. Let us be on our way."

The objector hurried on while the other stayed behind to give aid to the aged woman. Along the road, he found others who also needed help. A man who was blind took him miles out of his way, and a man with no legs slowed him down.

Eventually he did reach his father's advisor, where he secured his own burden and started home with it on his shoulders. When he arrived at the palace, his brother greeted him with dismay and said, "I don't understand, I told our father the burden was too heavy to carry. However did you do it?"

The future king replied thoughtfully, "I suppose when I helped others carry their burdens, I found the strength to carry my own."

Thank you, my fellow disabled veterans, for helping me carry my burden.



Working for Veterans...

Department of Maryland Commander Gregory N. Jones, left, accepts a \$2,400 donation from Tim Peifley, general manager of the Rite Aid Distribution Center in Perryman, Md. The money, which will support Department service programs, was raised from Rite Aid employees who contributed \$100 for every hour that Peifley and other managers worked alongside them at the distribution center.



CFC Workplace Giving:

Contributions Help Current and Future Veterans

Prothetics research. Guide and assistance dogs. Studies on traumatic brain injuries. A nationwide hospital transportation program. Substance abuse counseling and assistance for homeless veterans. Support for pain management. Comfort for survivors.

When people support the DAV Charitable Service Trust through workplace giving programs or the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), they champion a wide variety of initiatives and programs that build better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

From supporting the purchase of vans that take sick and disabled veterans to and from appointments at VA hospitals to supporting research to address the service-connected physical and mental health issues that veterans face, workplace giving has allowed the program to continuously extend its reach.

“When it comes to supporting disabled veterans, no charity does more in as many areas as we do. Every year we increase the scope of programs we support and the amount of money we efficiently deliver to support veterans,” said Charitable Service Trust Chairman Richard E. Marbes.

According to the chairman, donors who contribute through workplace giving are living up to a patriotic commitment to veterans while making an investment in the future.


“Hundreds of thousands of veterans enjoy better lives because of the Trust. Meanwhile, countless veterans from the current war and future generations will benefit from research on prosthetics and traumatic brain injury,” said Marbes, who is a service-connected amputee. We’re grateful for the support we’ve received over the years and thank federal employees and others who support our cause.”

To make sure your CFC donation supports the DAV Charitable Service Trust, be sure to use CFC Code #11322. The Trust is listed in the CFC brochure under “Military, Veterans and Patriotic Service Organizations of America.”

You may also designate the Trust through any local United Way campaign as well as state, municipal and various corporate workplace campaigns.

If the Disabled American Veterans Charitable Service Trust isn’t listed in your contribution materials, just write on your contribution form to have your payroll deductions

made to the DAV Charitable Service Trust, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY, 41076. It’s that easy to help so many in need.

Free information brochures and posters are available for DAV and Auxiliary members who want to help spread the word about the Trust to others. To request information or materials, send a request to DAV Charitable Service Trust, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076. Information may also be obtained by calling toll-free 877-426-2838, extension 3316, or e-mail your request to cst@dav.org. 



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Left, Department of Maryland Past Commander Glynn Parker, left, jokes with the mascot of the Bowie, Md., Baysox and the handler before throwing out the first pitch at a DAV Day at the Ballpark game. Right, DAV member Harry Wallis throws out the first pitch before a DAV Day game hosted by the Lakewood, N.J., Blue Claws.

Another Winning Season for DAV Day at the Ballpark

The 2008 DAV Day at the Ballpark program was a roaring success for sick and disabled veterans. More than 12,000 DAV members and their guests from VA hospitals and nursing homes attended 50 special major and minor league games this season.

“This is one of the great programs of outreach and service to disabled veterans,” said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. “I have been told many times how appreciative our guests are for the opportunity to get away from a medical facility to enjoy an afternoon or evening at the ballpark.”

Wounded and injured veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan were guests of DAV Departments and Chapters at many of the games. And players from several teams visited VA medical centers to brighten the day for hospitalized veterans.

Disabled veterans threw out the first pitch, received on-field recognition for their service and sacrifice to our nation and formed color guards for the National Anthem before the games.

In addition, more than three million special DAV baseball cards containing information of our service to disabled veterans were distributed to baseball fans this season. Adjutant Wilson said, “The fans at our nation’s ballparks know that the cost of our freedom is the disability of the men and women who serve their country.”



Disabled Afghanistan War veteran Bernie Lujan, left, gets instructions from the Albuquerque Isotopes’ mascot, Orbit, before throwing out the first pitch at the DAV Day at the Ballpark game.



VA Suicide Prevention Hotline

OnLine Claims Applications Available

■ Online applications are now accepted from veterans, survivors and other claimants filing initial claims for disability compensation, pension, education and vocational rehabilitation and employment benefits.

The VA will process applications received through its online application Web site (www.va.gov/onlineapps.htm) without the claimant's signature. The electronic application will be sufficient authentication of the claimant's application for benefits. Normal development procedures and rules of evidence will still apply to all online applications.

The on-line application also provides a link to apply for VA health care benefits and much more. For more information, contact your nearest DAV National Service Office.

VA Announces Homeless Assistance Grants

■ Homeless veterans and those who help them received a significant boost in their efforts when the Department of Veterans Affairs made 55 new awards to public and private nonprofit organizations that assist homeless veterans.

The announcement of awards to 55 community-based organizations in 24 states will add over 1,000 transitional housing beds to the 9,400 beds already available for homeless veterans because of VA grants for the homeless.

For more information, visit the VA Web site at www.va.gov.

Vet Centers Coming to 39 Communities

■ Combat veterans will be able to receive readjustment counseling and other assistance in 39 additional VA Vet Centers across the country.

The existing 232 centers conduct community outreach to offer counseling on employment, family issues and education to combat veterans and family members, as well as bereavement counseling for families of service members killed on active duty and counseling for veterans who were

■ Veterans and other residents of metropolitan Washington, D.C., have begun seeing outreach advertisements on buses and inside subway cars about the VA's suicide prevention hotline.

The red-white-and-blue displays, the centerpiece of a new three-month outreach campaign, highlight VA's suicide prevention hotline — **1-800-273-8255**. If the campaign is successful in raising awareness, VA officials plan to extend the promotional campaign to other parts of the country.

The ads are the latest outreach tool in a suicide prevention program that includes creation of a toll-free, round-the-clock hotline, which began operation last summer; the expansion of hours at VA's 153 medical facilities to care for veterans with mental health problems; the hiring of suicide prevention counselors at each VA medical center; and special training programs for all VA employees in medical centers and clinics to alert them to warning signs for suicide and other emotional problems.



sexually harassed on active duty.

Vet Center services are available at no cost to combat veterans and are staffed by small teams of counselors, outreach workers and other specialists, many of whom are combat veterans. The Vet Center program was established in 1979.

The new VA Vet Centers scheduled for completion in the fall of 2009 include Madison, Ala.; Maricopa, Ariz.; Kern, Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, Sacramento, San Bernardino and San Diego, Calif.; Fairfield, Conn.; Broward, Palm Beach, Pasco, Pinellas, Polk and Volusia, Fla.; Coob, Ga.; Cook and DuPage, Ill.; Anne Arundel, Baltimore and Prince George's counties in Maryland; Macomb and Oakland, Mich.; Hennepin, Minn.; Greene, Mo.; Onslow, N.C.; Ocean, N.J.; Clark, Nev.; Comanche, Okla.; Bucks and Montgomery, Pa.; Bexar, Dallas, Harris and Tarrant, Texas; Virginia Beach, Va.; King, Wash.; and Brown, Wisc.





Left, then National Commander Robert T. Reynolds presents the \$15,000 Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship to Crystalyn Whitaker of Shreveport, La. Right, Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman presents his report to the National Convention.



Convention

(Continued from page 9)

could mean disaster for disabled veterans. “For the first time, VA disability compensation for service-connected disabilities would be means tested,” he said. “Compensation would be reduced from today’s levels if a veteran overcomes disability, rehabilitates himself and earns a salary or receives Social Security benefits. Forgotten are the sacrifices so few have made for so many.”

Gorman said the proposal is included in two separate pieces of legislation, one in the House and one in the Senate. “The DAV has vigorously opposed these proposals and will continue to do so,” he said. “The answer to fixing the disability system and its absolutely unacceptable backlog of cases is not to throw the current system away and replace it with a new one.”

Gorman also said maintaining the VA’s superb health care system, which is the best in the nation, is providing sufficient, timely and predictable funding as called for in the DAV’s Stand Up for Veterans initiative.



“Over the past 18 years, the VA has received its budget on time only twice,” he said. “That’s a disgrace. You can’t run a business that way. So why does Congress expect the VA health care system can operate that way and, in the process, abandon their responsibility?”

Gorman said it is vital to continue the VA’s excellent health care as a way to honor the service of veterans from the current wars. But he expressed concern that the VA may unwittingly be creating a two-tiered system of benefits—one for the newest generation of veterans and another for veterans of previous wars.

“This is not how it should be,” he said. “We should do all we possibly can to ensure the new veteran receives all the benefits he or she is entitled to in a timely and quality manner. However, it should not be at the expense of other veterans.”

Following his report, Gorman presented the National Commander’s Outstanding VA Employee awards to individuals representing the Veterans Health Administration, the Veterans Benefits Administration, the National Cemetery



Above, Dr. Elizabeth M. Yano, who helped develop VA women’s health research, addresses the National Convention’s Women Veterans Workshop. Center, National Voluntary Services Director Edward E. Hartman, left, and James G. Leahy, Chief Merchandising Officer for the VA Canteen Service, address the Voluntary Services Workshop at the National Convention. Right, Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committee Benefits Counsel Amanda Meredith answers questions during the Service and Legislative Seminar.

Administration and the Board of Veterans Appeals. (See page 10.) Awards also were presented to outstanding veteran employment representatives and employers who help veterans obtain needed jobs to restore their lives. (See page 27.)

Following the session, a series of seminars and workshops took center stage to give members the latest information on veterans issues.

Reps. Chet Edwards (D-Texas), Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) and Jon Porter (R-Nev.) advocated improved veterans programs. Edwards and Porter signed the DAV pledge to support sufficient, timely and predictable funding for the VA under the Stand Up for Veterans program. Berkley had been among the first to sign the pledge.

“It is a new day in Congress when it comes to honoring veterans,” said Edwards, the House Military Construction and VA Appropriations Subcommittee Chairman. “By working with the DAV, we are working to ensure the veterans are treated with the dignity they deserve.”

Noting the \$11.8 billion increase in funding for VA over the last two years, Edwards said “veterans deserve and have earned every dime of the funding. The Congress, with the help of the DAV, has passed more funding for VA than any Congress in history.”

“Our veterans are entitled to the best,” said Berkley. “That’s the least we can do when veterans come home. Do we really want to balance the budget on the lost arms and legs of our veterans?”

Porter supported additional research and funds for programs dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and

traumatic brain injuries, which have become the signature injuries of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. And he supported the Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project so that the stories of our nation’s veterans are preserved for posterity.

Porter praised the DAV for its care and support for veterans. He said the DAV is due a great deal of credit for a new VA medical center in Las Vegas and nursing home improvements.

A videotaped message from Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-Nev.) called for expanded concurrent receipt of military longevity retirement pay and disability compensation, VA budget increases, improvements to TriCare and passage of the Wounded Warriors Act.

The Service and Legislative Seminar featured professional staff from the VA and Congress who answered questions from the delegates concerning programs and legislation. Other seminars and workshops addressed membership, voluntary services, communications, women veterans and POW/MIAs.

National Membership Director Anthony L. Baskerville reported to the convention that efforts to sustain the DAV membership are bringing in more veterans from the current wars and most recent conflicts. “This is accomplished through the creation and dissemination of membership applications and brochures, and the implementation of direct mail campaigns to prospective members,” he said.

“The recruitment and retention of members is essential to ensure the future of the DAV and its programs of service,”



Above, Rep. Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) tells the National Convention’s Benefits Protect Team Workshop that veterans deserve the best services possible, Right, National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante, left, holds the DAV pledge to Stand Up for Veterans signed by Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas), right.



said Baskerville. "In the near future, we will see increased involvement in new avenues that reach out to the public and encourage more veterans to become involved in our important cause."

On the convention's last day, reports on the National Service Foundation and Charitable Service Trust were given to delegates, followed by donations totaling \$142,420 from Departments, Chapters and individual members to the Columbia Trust and the Perpetual Rehabilitation Fund.

When the convention work ended, delegates were treated to an evening of food and music at the introduction of National Officers. It was one of three special nights, including Fun Night with dancing and entertainment and the National Commander's reception.

As convention delegates headed homeward, they carried with them a wealth of information, knowledge and renewed

spirit to begin the DAV's new year and perhaps hummed a few bars of "Rocky Mountain High" in anticipation of the 88th National Convention in Denver, Colo., Aug. 22-25, 2009. ☉



National Service Director Randy Reese, left, and Gary Burns, right, President of the National Service Foundation, present the Pacesetter Award for Togus Maine to National Area Supervisor James Marszalek.

Judy Hezlep Reappointed DAVA National Adjutant

At this year's DAV and DAVA National Convention, Auxiliary members saw a changing of the guard. For the first time in more than 20 years, an incoming DAV Auxiliary National Commander appointed an Auxiliary National Adjutant not named Maria Tedrow.

With Tedrow on hand to see the baton officially passed, newly elected Auxiliary Commander Sandy Dobmeier appointed Judy Hezlep to her first full term as Auxiliary National Adjutant.

"Judy has the wisdom, dedication and willingness to persevere needed by the Auxiliary," said DAV Auxiliary National Commander Sandy Dobmeier. "I'm excited to be the



National Commander who has the honor to appoint Judy to her first full term as Auxiliary National Adjutant."

Hezlep has held various leadership positions at the National, State and Unit level, but her most recent appointment is the opportunity of a lifetime.

"It's truly an honor to be entrusted with this position of leadership within the Auxiliary," Hezlep said. "I've learned the ropes from the best. I am proud to be named as Maria's successor."

Hezlep took over the reins as Auxiliary National Adjutant after Tedrow retired in April. She was hired by the DAVA as a clerk typist in 1965 and worked her way up to Assistant National Adjutant in 1986. Hezlep said she also learned about leadership from Tedrow's predecessor, Kit Seale Feighner.

Hezlep said she has seen many changes in her more than 30 years with the



DAVA. No change had more of an effect on the organization than when the Auxiliary began accepting men in 2005. (Males under 18 are also accepted as junior members.)

"It was a difficult transition in many ways, but we are seeing men fill in leadership roles left empty by declining membership," Hezlep said. "The change has blessed the Auxiliary with more members."

Membership decline is one of the most difficult challenges facing Hezlep as leader of the DAVA, but she insists she is ready to lead her organization in turning around the shrink-

ing member rolls.

"The potential is out there. We just have to give it more effort, be creative and create synergies with the DAV," Hezlep said. "We don't have any sort of fundraising in the Auxiliary. We need those membership dues in order to remain active, vital and ready to assist the DAV with its mission of care and compassion for disabled veterans and their families."

Hezlep is a charter member of Clermont County Auxiliary Unit 63 in Cincinnati, Ohio. She is eligible for membership in the Auxiliary through her late grandfather, George Rogers, a disabled World War I veteran.

"Judy will bring a wealth of experience to her new role at the head of the DAV Auxiliary," said DAV National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "The DAV's mission is greatly aided by our Auxiliary, and I know this support will be as strong as ever with Judy leading the way."



Foreground, National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey, from left to right, National Chaplain Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Jr., 4th Jr. Vice Commander Mary J. Bencivenga, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Donald L. Samuels, 1st Jr. Vice Commander Wallace E. Tyson, Senior Vice Commander Roberto Barrera, 3rd Jr. Vice Commander Larry A. Polzin and National Judge Advocate Michael E. Dobmeier.

**DAV NATIONAL OFFICERS
2008-2009**

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Senior Vice Commander

Roberto Barrera, Del Rio, TX

1st Jr. Vice Commander

Wallace E. Tyson, Raleigh, NC

2nd Jr. Vice Commander

Donald L. Samuels, Gallatin, TN

3rd Jr. Vice Commander

Larry A. Polzin, Sylmar, CA

4th Jr. Vice Commander

Mary J. Bencivenga, Toms River, NJ

National Judge Advocate

Michael E. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, ND

National Chaplain

Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Jr., Austin, TX

Past National Commander

Robert T. Reynolds, Alexandria, VA

NEC 1st District

Joseph A. Costa, North Attleboro, MA

Alternate

George F. Fincel, Gloucester, MA

NEC 2nd District

Ronald D. Tears, Rochester, NY

Alternate

Dennis L. Krulder, Vaphank, NY

NEC 3rd District

Wayne W. Desjardins, Bangor, ME

Alternate

Robert A. Nicodemus, Enfield, NH

NEC 4th District

H. Rick Newell, Jr., Hartford, CT

Alternate

Daniel Flynn, Manchester, NJ

NEC 5th District

Darlene A. Bielecki, Erie, PA

Alternate

James E. Uckele, Phoenixville, PA

NEC 6th District

Robert E. Bent, Springfield, VA

Alternate

Jacob N. Stafford, Oceana, WV

NEC 7th District

Roger H. Sullivan, Lady Lake, FL

Alternate

John Haynes, Monticello, FL

NEC 8th District

Arthur J. Taylor, Clarksville, TN

Alternate

Carman E. Cherry, Clarksville, TN

NEC 9th District

Marian J. Truscello, Leesville, SC

Alternate

Ernest H. Stroud, Kershaw, SC

NEC 10th District

J. Dave Boozer, Adrian, MI

Alternate

David Van Hill, Flat Rock, MI

NEC 11th District

Frank D. Williams, South Vienna, OH

Alternate

Raymond Hutchinson, Hillsboro, OH

NEC 12th District

Mark Arron, Chillicothe, IL

Alternate

Dennis Thompson, Alsip, IL

NEC 13th District

William D. Bottom, Elkhart, IN

Alternate

Joseph S. Carroll, New Palestine, IN

NEC 14th District

Van D. Karg, Dussel, MN

Alternate

Daniel Hill, Virginia, MN

NEC 15th District

Raphael N. Wahwassuck, Sr., Waynesville, MO

Alternate

Kristine S. Childers, Roca, NE

NEC 16th District

Fred L. Powers, Bakersfield, CA

Alternate

Delphine Metcaff-Foster, Vallejo, CA

NEC 17th District

Frank Maughan, Ogden, UT

Alternate

Jimmie Snider, Loveland, CO

NEC 18th District

Robert DiGirolamo, Phoenix, AZ

Alternate

Donnell H. Gentry, Peoria, AZ

NEC 19th District

Stan Barton, Tualatin, OR

Alternate

Brigitte Marker, Klamath Falls, OR

NEC 20th District

Vincent C. Morrison, Houston, TX

Alternate

Eldon Armstrong, Grand Prairie, TX

NEC 21st District

David W. Spurgin, Mena, AR

Alternate

Sean Neff, Dardaville, AR

**AUXILIARY NATIONAL
OFFICERS 2008-2009**

National Commander

Sandra J. Dobmeier, Grand Forks, ND

Sr. Vice Commander

Kay Egan, Lehigh Acres, FL

1st Jr. Vice Commander

Susan M. Henry, Memphis, TN

2nd Jr. Vice Commander

Patrice Rapisand, Fort Worth, TX

3rd Jr. Vice Commander

Donna M. Adams, Glendale, AZ

4th Jr. Vice Commander

Susan K. Miller, Las Animas, CO

National Judge Advocate

Carol A. Gray, Grand Rapids, MI

National Chaplain

LeeAnn B. Karg, Dassel, MN

Past National Commander

Kathryn A. Wiley, Soap Lake, WA

NEC 1st District

Susan M. Stulsky, Centerville, MA

Alternate

Mary C. Bixby, Marshfield, MA

NEC 2nd District

Frances J. Ortiz, Otisville, NY

Alternate

Diane Wisnesky, Constable, NY

NEC 3rd District

Sylvia J. L. Heath, Mechanic Falls, ME

Alternate

Aura-Lee Nicodemus, Enfield, NH

NEC 4th District

Doris Martelli, Twp. of Washington, NJ

Alternate

Marjorie J. Fleming, Willingboro, NJ

NEC 5th District

Marian A. Sawdey, Erie, PA

Alternate

Loretta J. Nosko, Erie, PA

NEC 6th District

Barbara A. Forbes, Ft. Washington, MD

Alternate

Etter M. Bowers, Chesapeake, VA

NEC 7th District

Marna Barnshaw, Bradenton, FL

Alternate

Jean E. Sursely, Apopka, FL

NEC 8th District

Janett E. Reece, Meridian, MS

Alternate

Juanita H. Upton, Mendenhall, MS

NEC 9th District

Harriett M. Hudson, Summerville, SC

Alternate

Monica Stroud, Kershaw, SC

NEC 10th District

Alma Marie Veitenheimer-Taylor, Mears, MI

Alternate

Loraine M. Connelly, Livonia, MI

NEC 11th District

Marjorie J. Davies, Alliance, OH

Alternate

Jacqueline Hansen, Ripley, OH

NEC 12th District

Sandy Resner, Hanover Park, IL

Alternate

Carla Lee Reynolds, Mt. Zion, IL

NEC 13th District

Debra Loetz, Michigan City, IN

Alternate

Kathleen L. Miller, Michigan City, IN

NEC 14th District

Cheryl Lee Knispel, Rapid City, SD

Alternate

Joyce Jefferson, Rapid City, SD

NEC 15th District

Veronica L. Bergquist, Wichita, KS

Alternate

Velma Lee Steinman, Jefferson City, MO

NEC 16th District

Leona M. Galloway, Chino, CA

Alternate

Josephine M. Benner, Stockton, CA

NEC 17th District

June H. Schow, Ogden, UT

Alternate

Patricia J. Brunsvik, Ogden, UT

NEC 18th District

Iris Brzezinski, N. Las Vegas, NV

Alternate

Katherine L. Morris, Henderson, NV

NEC 19th District

Juanita Wiley-Hackler, Stratford, WA

Alternate

Roberta (Robi) A. Riley, Vancouver, WA

NEC 20th District

Teresa M. Herrle, Seguin, TX

Alternate

Joyce E. Humes, San Antonio, TX

NEC 21st District

Linda S. Stake, Heber Springs, AR

Alternate

Brenda J. Prentice, Mountainburg, AR



Left to right, 1st Jr. Vice Commander Susan M. Henry, 4th Jr. Vice Commander Susan K. Miller, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Patrice Rapisand, National Chaplain LeeAnn B. Karg, National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier, Sr. Vice Commander Kay Egan, 3rd Jr. Vice Commander Donna M. Adams, and National Judge Advocate Carol A. Gray.



Helping Homeless Veterans ...

Anthony Browne, Commander of Chapter 1 in Cincinnati, Ohio (second from left) and Chapter Chaplain Le Roy Harrison (fourth from left) present a check for \$20,000 to Joseph House, Inc. The donation is the third installment of a 5-year, \$100,000 pledge by Chapter 1 to Joseph House, a homeless veterans' agency which provides housing and helps veterans recover from alcoholism and drug addiction.



Phone Cards for Military ...

Members of Chapter 82, Marlborough, Mass., display phone cards they are sending to servicemen and women and their families so they can stay in touch with each other. Money to purchase the phone cards was made possible by the most successful "Forget-Me-Not" drive in the history of Chapter 82, according to Chapter Commander John Manning. Members, pictured from left to right, are Commander Manning, Treasurer Robert Page, Adjutant Wayne Maurice, Gaston Renoud and Chaplain John Harrington.

Survey Evaluates VA Mental Health Care

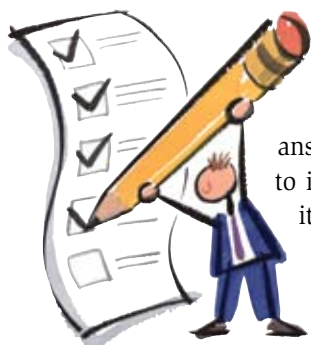
■ An interviewer from a nonprofit research organization named RAND might be calling you to ask some questions about the mental health care that you have received from the Veterans Health Administration. Here are some facts about this telephone survey.

Why is RAND interviewing veterans? The Department of Veterans Affairs has asked RAND to evaluate the mental health care veterans receive. To conduct this evaluation, RAND wants to talk with some 9,000 veterans about their experiences with these types of services.

Will all veterans be called? RAND will randomly select about 9,000 veterans for the survey. If you are selected, RAND will send you a letter and will then call you.

Why is this important? The information RAND gets from veterans will help the VA understand how to improve the mental health services it provides.

What about privacy? All of the information that you provide is confidential. RAND is *not* part of the VA; it is a nonprofit independent research organization.



When will the interviews take place? The interviews will begin in October and continue for about six to nine months.

How long is the interview? The interview will take about 25-30 minutes on the phone at a time that works best for you. After the interview you will be sent \$10 as a thank you for participating.

Do you have to do this? Of course you do not have to talk with the interviewer if you do not want to, but it is important for veterans to help the VA to understand what works and what doesn't work from the perspective of veterans.

VA Opens Rural Health Resource Centers

■ The Department of Veterans Affairs has announced the opening of three Veterans Rural Health Resource Centers that will enable it to better understand rural health issues.

The centers will serve as satellite offices for VA's Office of Rural Health. The eastern center will be located in Vermont at the White River Junction VA Medical Center, the central region in Iowa at the Iowa City VA Medical Center and the western region at the Salt Lake City VA Medical Center.

Each resource center will be staffed with administrative, clinical and research staff who will identify disparities in health care for rural veterans and develop practices or programs to enhance the delivery of care. ©



Leading the Way ...

With area veterans cheering from the stands, Jennifer Poston flies the Colors as a DAV National Transportation Network van sets the pace on Veterans Night at the Outlaw Speedway near Wainwright, Okla. Poston, a member of Oklahoma Chapter 7, is the Hospital Service Coordinator for the Muskogee VA medical center and a Chapter Service Officer. Poston, center, was joined at the event by Past Department Commander Bill Giles, left, a volunteer driver and Chapter Service Officer, and his wife, Sue Johnson, a member of Auxiliary Unit 7.

Women Veterans

(Continued from page 15)

with equal access to VA benefits and services. We must ensure that VA programs are responsive to the gender-specific needs of women veterans. And above all, women veterans must be treated with the dignity and respect that they deserve.”

Ilem, who coordinated DAV’s participation in the meeting, said the summit provided an ideal forum for women veterans and government policy-makers to honestly and openly discuss problems and to seek solutions to them. “It is a vital part of our continuing efforts to shape public policy to ensure appropriate medical services and accommodation for hospitalized women veterans, including the availability of treatment for gender-specific conditions, appropriate care, treatment and counseling for other conditions related to military service.”

Secretary of Veterans Affairs James B. Peake acknowledged shortfalls in both health care and benefits services but told participants that the summit will be beneficial in identifying those gaps and helping to shape the VA’s response to them.

Citing the demographic shift that brings increasing numbers of women to the VA for care and the need for changes, Peake said the VA is expanding its women-centric focus to initiate new programs that meet the needs of women veterans. He also announced formation of a work group to focus on women’s needs in prosthetics and rehabilitation, hiring full-time women’s advocates in medical centers, developing quality measurements specifically for women patients and expanding medical education in women’s health for VA care providers.

A number of educational and in-



National Legislative Director Joseph A. Violante receives a Secretary’s Award recognizing the DAV’s key role in co-sponsoring the 2008 National Summit on Women Veterans’ Issues. Presenting the award is Irene Trowell-Harris, Director of the VA’s Center for Women Veterans.

formative workshop sessions covered topics such as military sexual trauma, challenges presented by foreign deployments on women in the National Guard and reserves and their families, exposures to environmental hazards, VA benefits and services and the issue of homelessness among women veterans.

In addition to the workshops, a town hall-style open forum gave audience members a chance to ask questions of the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

Providing an inside-the-VA perspective on programs and policies affecting women veterans were Center for Women Veterans Director Irene Trowell-Harris and Associate Director Betty Moseley Brown.

Both stressed the importance of this type of forum to ensure policy-makers listen to women veterans and continue to be responsive to their unique needs. They noted that the VA is dedicated to helping all veterans transition from military to civilian life—that includes ensuring women veterans, from all eras, are informed about and receive the benefits and services they have earned through their military service.

A highlight of the summit was a screening of the documentary film, *Lioness*, which focused on a unit of female soldiers and explores the realities of direct ground warfare for female

soldiers in Iraq.

The women depicted in the film went to Iraq as cooks, clerks and mechanics and returned a year later as part of America’s first generation of female combat veterans. Despite an official government policy that states that women are not supposed to partake in direct ground combat, the five women featured in *Lioness* most certainly did.

The film tells the deeply personal stories of five women who made up the core of a group dubbed “Team Lioness” by their commanders. Some of the women were used to help defuse the tensions with local civilians. The unintended consequence of this tactic was that they often found themselves fighting some of the most horrific counterinsurgency battles of the war. It explains how their experiences on the battlefield affected them and what the cost of their deployment has been as they work to rebuild their lives back home.

“The National Summit on Women Veterans Issues reinforces the fact that the VA has made progress in meeting the needs of women, but that much more still needs to be done,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman. “The summit is an important tool to help focus attention on the wide range of policies and issues of particular concern to women veterans.”

A formal report on the summit’s proceedings and recommendations from the VA is expected in January 2009. ☉

National Commander

(Continued from page 1)

men and women in the shadows. There are hundreds of thousands of American service members putting their safety in peril right now by training to fight overseas or protecting the nation here in our own backyard.

We must be just as mindful of their needs as we are of those who were wounded in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Afghanistan or Iraq. How a veteran is disabled should not be a concern of ours, as long as the veteran served honorably.

When a spinal injury landed me in the hospital at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base in 1969, the DAV came to me, helping me get back on my feet. The organization didn't care that I was injured here in the States when there was a war going on in Vietnam. They just wanted to help me.

That help, and the fact that they didn't discriminate against me because of where I was injured, meant a great deal to me, and that is why I stuck with the DAV — stuck with DAV long enough to now reach its highest office.

To have a successful tour, I need everyone to continue charging forward. Our grassroots organization sets DAV apart from everyone else. All of us, our blue caps in particular, need to ensure our government knows that we demand the VA has sufficient, timely and predictable funding. This will require reform in the way the VA is funded. Mandatory funding has always been our goal, but if lawmakers continue to refuse, we want the VA to get advance appropriations, meaning Congress can still have its oversight but approve the budget a year ahead of time. This will enable the VA to plan better and further out, eliminating many of the serious problems now caused by uncertainties at VA medical centers. Without advance appropriations or mandatory funding, veterans will be left behind.

We have a lot of challenges ahead of us this year, such as continuing to fight the Dole-Shalala Commission's recommendation to create a totally different compensation system for the veterans of Iraq and Afghanistan instead of fixing the problems in the current system.

We need to ensure the Veterans Benefits Administration provides real training and holds its staff accountable for doing their jobs the right way. Poor training equates to poor performance.

We need to press the VA to ensure it gets prepared to deal with the large number of veterans — men and women — coming out of Iraq and Afghanistan with disabilities

and challenges in their transitions to civilian life.

This means we need Chapter and Department leaders to take an active role themselves. We must lead from the front and inspire newer members to help ensure our future. We need to really embrace our younger disabled veterans. Show them they are needed to help ensure our future. Every single veteran is important to our success.

I am excited about continuing our relationship with Harley-Davidson during my term. The Harley's Heroes program is doing great things for veterans by getting our Mobile Service Offices into communities around the nation. This helps us bring benefits, counseling and service to our veterans free of charge to them and their families.

Our Voluntary Services Program is as strong as ever, making sure the sick and disabled veterans aren't left behind.

Our volunteers are in the hospitals, visiting disabled veterans at home, going where the government cannot or will not go. The DAV is leading the way in leaving no veteran behind. And I am proud to be a part of this organization and even prouder to have been chosen to lead it.

I would like to express my appreciation for the General Electric Company. The GE Foundation's \$1.5 million grant has helped our Transition Service Program to substantially grow. This program is particularly important to troops with disabilities related to their military service.

Our Transition Service Officers, National Service Officers and Department and Chapter Service Officers are on the proverbial frontlines, carrying our flag, continuing the outstanding tradition of service.

They make sure no one falls through the cracks. I am particularly proud of the jobs they do, and they are most deserving of our support.

The service officers are the DAV's infantry, so to speak, the ones most directly engaged.

Finally, I want to talk about the blue caps, the heart and soul of the DAV. Over the years I have been fortunate enough to meet many of you.

On my various trips and visits, it is always with the blue caps I feel most energized. I am astounded by their dedication. Blue caps give me a new sense of hope. I look forward to meeting more of you over the next year.

Thank you so much for this opportunity, this responsibility and this honor. I will do all I can to make sure that your efforts — and mine — ensure that no veteran is left behind.

God bless you, God bless those still serving, God bless the DAV and God bless America.



Taps for Retired NSOs

DAV National Headquarters has received notice of the deaths of retired National Service Officers (NSOs) William R. Bell, Jr., 61, and Craig A. Bridges, 62.

NSO Bell died on June 23 in Scotland, Ark.; NSO Bridges passed away on June 27 in Sparta, Ga.

"It is indeed sad to report the death of two dedicated NSOs," National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson said. "These are individuals who worked hard to become skilled NSOs dedicated to assisting disabled veterans and their families. Their careers of advocacy, assistance and relentless effort resulted in countless veterans and their families being better off today.

"We are fortunate to have counted Bill and Craig among the ranks of our NSO corps and as fellow members of our organization. It is with heavy hearts that we recognize their passing."

■ **William R. Bell, Jr.**, a service-connected disabled veteran who served in the U.S. Navy during the Vietnam War, was born Nov. 25, 1946, in Water Valley, Miss. He was a graduate of the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

He entered the U.S. Navy in 1964, serving until he was medically discharged in 1967. His service included approxi-

mately 10 months aboard the *USS Kitty Hawk*.

Following his discharge, Bell became active in the field of veterans affairs and was responsible for forming a veterans club within the university during his attendance.

Bell joined the DAV's professional corps of National Service Officers as a trainee in 1969 at Little Rock National Service Office. He continued to serve veterans and their families as an NSO until his disability necessitated retirement in 1975.

■ **Craig A. Bridges**, a combat-disabled veteran who served in the U.S. Army during the Vietnam War, was born Nov. 22, 1945, in Jacksonville, Fla. He attended Miami Dade Junior College and the University of Miami.

He entered the U.S. Army in 1968 and served until disability retirement in 1970 as a result of wounds received in combat, while serving as a member of the 11th Armored Cavalry, Blackhorse Regiment.

Bridges joined the DAV's professional corps of National Service Officers as a trainee in 1972 at the National Service Office in St. Petersburg, Fla., where he was promoted to Assistant Supervisor in 1980. In 1994 he was transferred to Oakland, Calif., to serve as Assistant Supervisor of the office there. He retired with more than 23 years of dedicated service to veterans and their families in 1996.

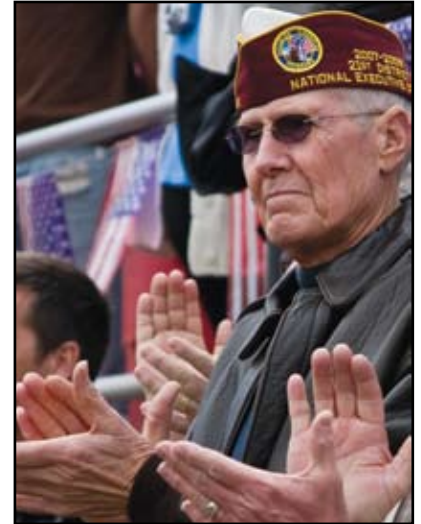
Military Family Appreciation ...

Below, ready to welcome veterans and family members to Largo Military Family Appreciation Day are, from left, Department of Florida Commander Phil Condon, Past National Commander James Sursely and Grant Raulerson, Chapter 11, Clearwater, Fla. Activities include free lunch, information for veterans and family members from various veterans' organizations, and an outing for hospitalized veterans at the James A. Haley VA Medical Center in Tampa.



"My Hero" Quilt ...

Above, Flora Brooks' quilt "My Hero" forms the backdrop for her and her hero, husband, John Brooks, left. The Quilt tells the story of John's U.S. Army days and includes photos from basic training, Vietnam and recent events. John, a life member of Chapter 15, Stockton, Calif., was severely wounded while serving in the Vietnam War. His wounds resulted in brain damage and the amputation of his legs. The quilt was previously awarded a first place ribbon and Director's Choice ribbon at the San Joaquin County Fair.



Arkansas Send-Off ... Second District National Executive Committeeman David W. Spurgin joins other citizens of Mena, Ark., as the town honored members of Company C, 1st Battalion, 153-D Infantry, Arkansas Army National Guard as they departed for their second tour of duty in Iraq. Prior to the "good luck" send-off, the community hosted a meal for the soldiers and their families. Spurgin said the town is looking forward to welcoming the soldiers home next year. (Photo courtesy of Wayne Madison Photography.)

Reunions - Because of increasing number of requests and the space limitations of our magazine, we must limit publications of unit reunions to one time only. Send such notices at least six months in advance to: Reunions, DAV Magazine, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. Thank you...the Editors.



ARMY

- 164TH INFANTRY ASSN.** - September 12-14, 2008, Valley City, North Dakota, Patricia Drong, Phone: (701) 646-6561, Email: pjdrrong@ictc.com.
- 26TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION** - October 16-28, 2008, West Point, New York, John Ducas, 53 Edgewood Avenue, Springfield, NJ 07081, Email: jducas1064@aol.com.
- 32ND INFANTRY REGIMENT ASSN.** - September 17-20, 2008, Atlantic City, New Jersey, Helen Dyckson, (727) 697-2135, Email: heland@verizon.net.
- 3RD BATTALION, 71ST AIR DEFENSE ARTILLERY** - October 18-22, 2008, Branson, Missouri, Herb Posner, Phone: (623) 975-0071, Email: bjandherb@yahoo.com.



MARINES

- INDIA CO 3/7 "BAND OF BROTHERS" 65-70 VIETNAM** - November 7-12, 2008, Washington, D.C., Roger Villarreal, Phone: (281) 930-8161, Email: marine.1@att.net.



NAVY

- NAS CHASE FIELD "ALL HANDS" REUNION** - April 24-26, 2009, Beeville, Texas, Mark Webb, Phone: (951) 278-8812, Email: npc@jps.net, Website: www.naschasefield.com.
- U.S. NAVY CRUISER SAILORS ASSN.** - May 17-22, 2009, Buffalo, New York, Robert Polanowski, Phone: (585) 365-2316, Email: skica130@aol.com, Website: www.navycruisers.org.
- U.S.S. BREMERTON REUNION ORGANIZATION, INC.** - September 13-18, 2009, Rapid City, South Dakota, James Jensen, Phone: (406) 837-4474, Email: jmbluff1@centurytel.net, Website: www.ussbremertonreunions.org.
- U.S.S. CHICAGO (CA-14, CA-29, CA-136, CG-11, SSN-721)** - April 15-19, 2009, Moline, Illinois, Barrie Gibson, (309) 283-0218, Email: barriegbsn@yahoo.com, Website: www.usschicago.org.
- U.S.S. COLUMBIA (CL-56)** - September 25-28, 2008, Chicago, Illinois, Bill Bohne, Phone: (610) 543-9073, Email: usnc156@cs.com.
- U.S.S. CUSTER (APA-WWII)** - October 2-5, 2008, Nashville, Tennessee, Dick Shaw, Phone: (407) 862-2903, Email: jshaw1114@aol.com.
- U.S.S. CUTTYHUNK ISLAND (AG-75)** - December 26-29, 2008, St. Petersburg, Florida, Jerry Mussman, Phone: (727) 527-1345, Email: JAMussman@juno.com.
- U.S.S. FECHTELER'S (DD/DDR-870)** - August 24-28, 2008, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, David Landeau, Phone: (636) 296-9739, Email: dlandeau@hotmail.com.
- U.S.S. GANDY (DE-764)** - September 7-11, 2008, Ft. Mitchell, Kentucky, Tom Lucas, Phone: (800) 603-3332, Email: LukeGandy764@aol.com.
- U.S.S. MANLEY (DD-940) ASSN.** - April 23-27, 2009, Chicago, Illinois, Joe Dennison, (386) 767-8068, Email: reunionplanner@ussmanleydd940.org.
- U.S.S. SARATOGA (CV-3, CVA/CA-60)** - October 2-5, 2008, Indianapolis, Indiana, Harvey Hirsch, Jr., Phone: (877) 360-7272.
- U.S.S. YELLOWSTONE (AD-27) ASSN.** - May 14-27, 2009, Gaithersburg, Maryland, Paul W. Bowen, Phone: (352) 854-1387, Email: bowp@worldnet.att.net.

- VF-92 SILVERKINGS 1961-65** - April 30-May 3, 2009, Branson, Missouri, John Michels, Phone: (763) 427-4077, Email: micbears@email.com.



AIR FORCE

- 377 SECURITY POLICE SQUAD REUNION** - February 5-8, 2009, Tampa, Florida, Dr. Jim Stewart, (810) 639-5755, Email: jstewart@centurytel.net.
- BORINQUEN FIELD/RAMEY AIR FORCE BASE (ALL MILITARY AND CIVILIAN UNITS) 1939-1973** - April 21-25, 2009, Ramey, Aguadilla, Puerto Rico, Ken Coombs, Phone: (603) 735-4291, Email: ken-bon@msn.com, Website: www.rameyafb.org.



ALL SERVICES

- OLD ANTARCTIC EXPLORERS ASSN. REUNION** - November 5-7, 2008, Pensacola Beach, Florida, Les Liptak, Phone: (850) 492-1666, Email: LCLiptak@cox.net, Website: www.oaea.net/OAEAReunionFL2008.pdf.
- VETERANS OF THE BATTLE OF THE BULGE** - December 14, 2008, West Palm Beach, Florida, George Fisher, Phone: (561) 585-7086, Website: www.VBOB62.com.

Moving?

Change of Address: When notifying a change of address, send former as well as new address, including zip code, to: DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550.

Inquires - This Column is for inquiries submitted to DAV members and other interested persons attempting to locate persons to substantiate a claim for service-connected injuries. Your request will be processed through various means in an effort to find the person you are attempting to locate. Requests to locate persons will be published if all other attempts have failed. Thank you...the Editors.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for a fellow Marine Corps Reserve Recruit who went to Parris Island Boot Camp with me on June 20, 1964. His name was Edward (Eddie) James. He was from Brooklyn, New York, Platoon 353, Date of birth: 1941-45. Please contact James J. Morris, III, P.O. Box 2, Wevertown, NY 12886, Phone: (518) 251-2653. Searching for any member of Bravo Battery 1/320 F.A. 82nd ABN Division in summer of 1972. Please contact Garfield Hunt, Jr., 244 Rennert Road, Lumberton, North Carolina 28360, Phone: (910) 739-7897.
- Searching for any member of the gun crew on U.S.S. Evansville PF-70 in 1952. Please contact John R. Smith, 224 Richmond Street, Lancaster, Kentucky 40444-1105, Phone: (859) 792-4652 or (859) 339-0925.
- Searching for any veterans or deceased veterans' spouses who participated in the chamber gas experiments during World War II. Please contact William H. Cramer, 3007 Borst Avenue, Centralia, Washington 98531, Phone: (541) 289-6240, Email: WMHCramer@hotmail.com.
- Searching for any Vietnam veteran who served with the 25th Infantry Division Headquarters and Headquarters Troop 3/4 Cavalry when the base camp was being built in Cu Chi South Vietnam during 1966-67. Please contact Humberto De Leon, 18 Elma Street, Brownsville, Texas 78521, Phone: (956) 621-3016, Email: deleonhumberto44@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone assigned to Kontum, Vietnam, Advisory Team 24, 24th Special Tactical Zone, who has knowledge that 1LT Frank L. Wiseburn was recommended for Silver Star medal for actions performed during the TET Offensive, January 1968. Please contact F. L. Wiseburn, P.O. Box 1132, Pearland, Texas 77588, Phone: (281) 412-7051.
- Searching for anyone from the 166 AntiAircraft Medical Detachment from 1942-1945 Army, 166 AAA GN AN-Battery C, New Guinea, Philippines. Please contact Lawrence F. Hamilton, 325 Chateau Drive, Apt. A, Moore, Oklahoma 73160, Phone: (405) 793-7444.
- Searching for anyone in the 8th Infantry Division, Operation Gyroscope, Germany 1955-57, 28th Field Artillery Battalion. Please contact Salvatore Pennisi, 7719 14th Avenue, #2, Brooklyn, New York 11228-2435, Phone: (718) 232-5928.
- Searching for anyone that served with me, aka, "Knucklehead" E, F, G Troop, 2/11th Armored Cavalry Regiment H H Co., 1/81 Armor, Ft. Hood, Texas 1969-70, Basic Training, Ft. Benning, Georgia and Advanced Infantry Training at Ft. Polk, Louisiana. Please contact Larry "Knucklehead" Blanchard, 1219 Maltby Avenue, Apt. B, Norfolk, Virginia 23504, Phone: (757) 627-5855 or (757) 350-9348.
- Searching for anyone that was in Fox Company, 14th Regiment, 25th Division (Army) in 1953-54. Please contact Sgt. Howard L. Miller, 109 South Austin Avenue, Throckmorton, Texas 76483, Phone: (940) 456-0947.
- Searching for anyone that was stationed at Don Muang RTAFB, Thailand during May 1968 that remembers my TDY trip to Japan and return via Vietnam. Please contact John Harman, 619 N. 21st Street, Copperas Cove, Texas 76522. Email: jopili@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who remembers early spring 1952 encounter with German submarine and USN AF25 (VS-24) off N. Atlantic coast. Please contact Roy A. Johnson, 405 S.E. 4th Street, Casey, Illinois 62420, Phone: (217) 932-4967.
- Searching for anyone who served in Ft. Lewis, Washington from January 1959 to October 1960 with Co. B 2nd ARB. Please contact Donald G. Salazar, 9304 Vista Clara Loop, N.W., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87114, Phone: (505) 898-5263.
- Searching for anyone who served in New Guinea in 113a-M.P. Co. Sidor, New Guinea in 1944. Please contact Gordon Mailloux, P.O. Box 793, Hagatna, Guam 96932, Phone: (671) 647-6455, Email: go_guam@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in the 3597th Maintenance Squadron at Nellis AFB in Las Vegas, Nevada, from November 1949 to March 1950. Please contact Ray B. Collins at (661) 943-0113 or his daughter, Gayla Herman at (661) 886-9540.
- Searching for anyone who served in the 58th Fighter Group during 1944 in or near Sidor New Guinea, especially anyone who witnessed "Black Sunday" April 16, 1944. Please contact Gordon Mailloux at go_guam@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in the Marine Corps Reserve at Parris Island boot camp with me on June 20, 1964, Platoon 353. Please contact James J. Morris, P.O. Box 2, Wevertown, New York 12886.
- Searching for anyone who served in the Y46 196 Light Infantry Brigade Co. B (Bravo), June 3, 1969, especially Stanley Hilling. Please contact Gerald H. Nickel, 2240 Hidalgo, Mercedes, Texas 78570, (956) 825-9011 or Email: Kauph1@earthlink.net.
- Searching for anyone who served with "A" Company, 1st Battalion, 327th Infantry, 1st/Brigade, 101st Airborne Division, April-June 1966. Please contact James E. Williams, #87636, South Central Correctional Center, P.O. Box 279, 555 Forrest Avenue, Clifton, Tennessee 38425.
- Searching for anyone who served with Co. "C", 1280th Engineer Combat Battalion. Served in England, France and Germany 1943-45, especially Capt. James R. Carlin, please contact Len Drucker, 2813 Brindle Court, Northbrook, Illinois 60062, (847) 564-2813, Email: Ld-Od2020@aol.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me A1C James Wright, III, USAF, Chaplains Assistant. Please contact James Wright, III, P.O. Box 388104, Chicago, Illinois 60638.
- Searching for anyone who served with me aboard PVT William H. Thomas enroute to Panama in August 1948. I suffered head and body injuries on August 1, 1948. Ship docked at Cristobal Colon, Panama. Please contact Homero A. delCastillo, 1815 Hidalgo Street, Laredo, Texas 78040, Phone: (956) 729-8135.
- Searching for anyone who served with me aboard the U.S.S. Ticonderoga (CVA-14) when she made a cruise to the Far East in 1960. Please contact Andy Amaral, 1123 So. Owens Street, Lakewood, Colorado 80232, Phone: (303) 986-8362.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 2/27/25 Division C. Company, Wolf Hounds, in Vietnam during 1968. Please contact William J. Williams, 4667 Cynthia Lane, Somerton, Arizona 85350-7147, Phone: (928) 627-8490.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 25th Division, 27th Wolfhound Division Co. "G", during the months of July thru December 1951. Please contact Nolan D. E. Yetts, P.O. Box 985, Grapeland, Texas 75844, Phone: (936) 687-3513, Email: evetts@cebridge.net.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 3rd Division 7th B. Co. from 1952 to 1953. Please contact Donald Van Cott, 55 New York Avenue, North Babylon, New York 11704, Phone: (631) 661-3753.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in the 534th Transportation Company, Vietnam 1966. Please contact Charles W. Mitchell, P.O. Box 575, Beattyville, Kentucky 41311-0575.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in Vietnam during 1969-70 on the following gun boats: PT Cypress, PT Dume, PT Marone. Please contact Thomas A. Charbonneau, 421 S. Tremont Street, Oceanside, California 92054, Phone: (760) 802-1940, Email: tac_air@yahoo.
- Searching for anyone who served with the 11th Motor Transport Battalion, Huskie Platoon between 1970-71 within a 100 mile radius of Danang. Please contact Judy Stoots, 3000 Cedar Springs Road, Sugar Grove, Virginia 24375, Phone: (276) 686-8789 or Email: 1js3170@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with the 192 Signal Repair Company in December 1946 at Manhiem Signal Depot. Please contact Cpl. James Murray Warr, P.O. Box 428, Clayton, Alabama 36016, Phone: (334) 775-3320.
- Searching for anyone who served with the 1st Air Resupply Det., 456th ARS GP/HQ IX Troop Carrier Support WG Greenham Commons, England, during June 1944-April 1945. Please contact Pedro Constantopoulos, c/o Doreen Cole, 1 Bennet Street, Somersworth, New Hampshire 03878, Phone: (603) 692-7139.
- Searching for anyone who served with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, H & S Co. 81mm Mortars and attached communications stationed at Camp Sukran in Okinawa during the years of 1960-61. Please contact John T. Ward, 1221 Swissvale Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15221-2404, Phone: (412) 371-3639.
- Searching for anyone who served with the B-Co. 2nd Battalion 101st 327 Airborne Division in Vietnam, during June 1967-68. Please contact Rayfus Doctor, 7300 Morrison Drive, Greenbelt, Maryland 20770, Phone: (301) 441-8429.
- Searching for anyone who served with the Naval Support Artillery in Vin Long during 1967-68. Please contact Allen E. Sherrell, P.O. Box 243, Lukeville, Arizona 85341-0243.
- Searching for anyone who served with the USMC Corpsman, October-November 1952 with Dog Company tanks out of Panmunjom, Korea. Please contact Frederick R. Alderman, 4264 Canalside Drive, Palmyra, New York 14522, Phone: (315) 597-2000, Email: betty@bettyalderman.
- Searching for anyone who took Mac Flight in 1968 from Yokota Air Base in Japan and landed in Vietnam, deplaned and loaded back up and flew into Bangkok, Thailand. In 1969, went from Bangkok, Thailand to Vietnam, deplaned and loaded back up then onto Yoko. Please contact Larry L. Thompson, P.O. Box 1574, Noble, Oklahoma 73068, Phone (405) 343-3535 or Email: 11tkmt@sbcglobal.net.
- Searching for anyone who was a student of the 13B track of the BNOG/CA course of the XVIII ABN CORP NCOA in January 1978 who was involved in the motorcycle accident, while performing our morning P.T. run on McKellars Lodge Road. Please contact Garfield Hunt, Jr., 244 Rennert Road, Lumberton, North Carolina 28360-8258, Phone: (910) 739-7897.
- Searching for anyone who was in the 11th ACR or other unit stationed in Southwest Asia in May 1991 - August 1991 and remembers the explosion in the motor pool. Please contact Calvin Barclift, 212 Creek Road, Elizabethtown, North Carolina 27909-9045, Email: calbar1971@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who was stationed at Parris Island Boot Camp with me on June 20, 1964, in particular Edward (Eddie) James, Platoon 352. Please contact James J. Morris, P.O. Box 2, Wevertown, New York 12886.
- Searching for anyone who was stationed at the hospital medical detachment at West Point Military Academy during 1959-60. Please contact Don Wallace, 1512 Larch Street, Sandpoint, Idaho 83864.
- Searching for anyone who was stationed in Vietnam, March 1968 HHC, 3rd Brigade, 9th Infantry Division, APO 96372 USARV. Please contact James P. Gannon, 74-5000 Mamelahoa Highway, Holualoa, Hawaii 96725, Phone: (808) 331-1196 or Email: gannonj003@hawaii.rr.com.
- Searching for someone whom I met at Oscar Restaurant on Lamboy Strasse in Hanau, Germany around 1980-81. I was a member of C 1/40 3rd Armored Division. Please contact Leonard Guzman, 65 Eaton Street, Apt. 308, Hartford, Connecticut 06114, Phone: (860) 296-7250.
- Searching for U.S. Air Force personnel who did Basic Training at Lockland AFB, Texas in October 1976 with 3726 Squadron, Flight 0639. Please contact Terry Williams, 419 Beene Avenue, Magnolia, Arkansas 71753, Phone: (870) 234-4046, Email: TsterWill@sbcglobal.net.

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Kimi Novak
U.S. Army, Korea



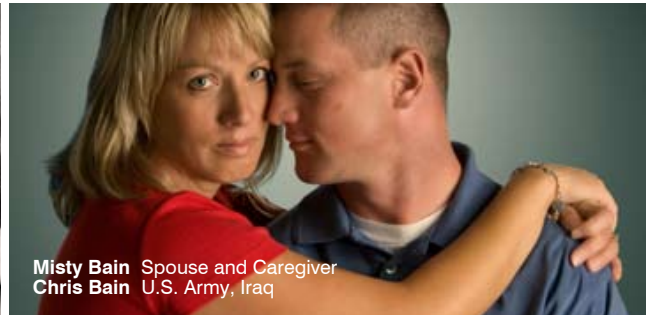
William Broadwater
U.S. Army, WWII



Noe "Lito" Santos
U.S. Army, Iraq



Tony DeStefano
U.S. Army, Iraq



Misty Bain Spouse and Caregiver
Chris Bain U.S. Army, Iraq



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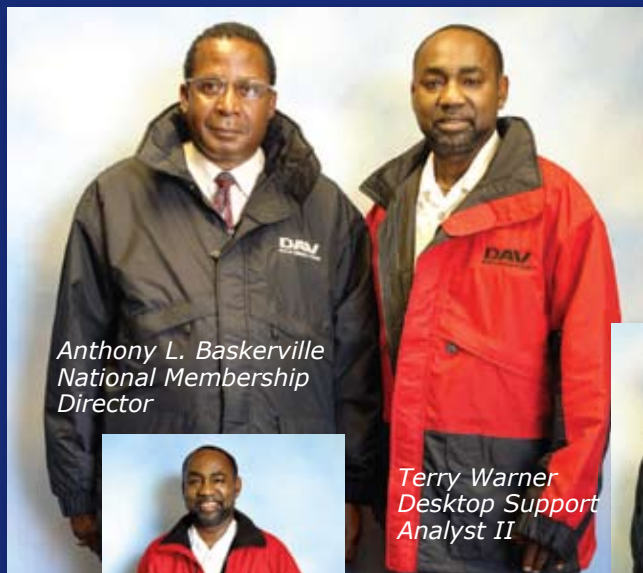
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