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Veterans Day 2008 was marked with an expansive ceremony at the base of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall Nov. 11. Dual color guards, one made up of veterans of the Vietnam War and one of active duty soldiers, presented the colors as Taps was sounded.

Paying Homage at the Wall

First Junior Vice Commander Wallace E. Tyson, right, and Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, left, present a wreath at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Nov. 11. They took part in the Veterans Day activities in Washington on behalf of the DAV at the Wall and at Arlington National Cemetery.



Grassroots Need to Grow Deeper



RAYMOND E. DEMPSEY

from the NATIONAL COMMANDER

Our dedicated effort to serve all veterans is one of the hallmarks of the DAV's mission to those who have served and sacrificed for our nation's freedom.

Today, there are thousands of sick, injured, and disabled veterans from the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan who need our help.

It is the true commitment of our organization to ensure that these veterans are not forgotten or left alone battling their disabilities. It is our members who are making a special effort to reach out to them.

Today's veterans are younger than most DAV members. They are mostly unaware of what our service programs can do to help them. And, more important, they need to be encouraged to become a part of the DAV as millions of veterans of previous wars have done.

Building an intergenerational bridge to the veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is our commitment to befriend and support them and part of our mission to build better lives for disabled veterans and their families.

In opening our arms to this new generation of veterans, we are building a better and stronger DAV, both today and in the future.

Our newest generation of veterans is articulate, energetic, and dedicated to mission. They have the right stuff to strengthen the DAV and to

move us forward into this new century.

These veterans need experienced partners who will work for them and share the camaraderie of those who have traveled this road before them.

As we include more of our newest generation of veterans, we can advance our issues more effectively and thoroughly. The duty falls to us to ensure that the rights and benefits of all disabled veterans are respected and preserved. It is the commitment of our membership to serve our fellow disabled veterans, including active participation in the DAV to make sure our grassroots program continues to be successful.

I urge you to meet and talk about the benefits of the DAV to this newest generation of veterans. Each of us can help build this bridge to those who have suffered and sacrificed in the current wars.

The new generation of disabled veterans wants to be a part of something larger than themselves. They care about their disabled brothers and sisters in arms. And as we reach out to them, we will find them delighted that we care and that our mission is one of honor.



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Raymond E. Dempsey
National Commander

Arthur H. Wilson
National Adjutant & Publisher

Gary Weaver
National Director
of Communications

David E. Autry
Deputy National Director
of Communications

Arvel "Jim" Hall
Assistant National Director
of Communications

Thomas L. Wilborn
Assistant National Director
of Communications

Rob Lewis
Marketing & Special Events
Manager

Dan Clare
Assistant National Director
of Communications

Joseph Chenelly
Assistant National Director
of Communications

James A. Chaney
Production Manager

Regaining Veterans' Trust



ARTHUR H. WILSON

from the NATIONAL ADJUTANT

I can't tell you how many times I've heard veterans complain that the Department of Veterans Affairs lost documents they submitted to support their benefits claims.

When the VA Inspector General's Office discovered hundreds of important documents in shredding bins at many of its 57 regional offices, the DAV was understandably outraged. We immediately called for the VA to take urgent corrective actions to ensure the integrity of claims submitted by veterans or their dependents.

To its credit, the Veterans Benefits Administration acted swiftly to halt shredding at its regional offices and recovered documents that were key to veterans' claims decisions. And in a matter of days, the VBA developed an action plan to address this very serious problem. That includes additional training for claims workers and increased oversight. Disciplinary action also was taken against employees involved in the apparent deliberate destruction of documents.

The VA's Compensation and Pension Service also established temporary procedures for handling assertions that a claim or evidence was previously submitted to the VA and not properly retained and considered. (See details on page 11.) Those procedures, which grant claimants the benefit of the doubt as to whether they had a document or evidence lost or improperly handled, are limited to documents submitted between April 14, 2007, and Oct. 14, 2008. Those temporary procedures expire in November 2009.

Those new policies and procedures for proper handling and disposal of documents are commendable, but repairing the VA's severely damaged credibility will require much more.

The DAV has long advocated improvement in the accuracy and timeliness of the benefits delivery system. Adequate staffing levels, along with proper training and greater accountability for claims workers, are essential.

The VA also needs to harness technology such as electronic record-keeping to keep track of all that paperwork. When the VA processes more than 100 million pages each year, important documents are bound to get misplaced or lost. That can delay benefits decisions by months or result in improper denial of claims.

The DAV keeps track of submittals from our clients with a state-of-the-art case management system. Not only does this enable our National Service Officers to work more efficiently, this permanent record can be used to confirm that one of our clients has indeed submitted a document in support of a claim.

By being open and above board about the mishandling of documents and establishing special procedures in response to the records incident, the VA has demonstrated its willingness and commitment to solving identified problems. Preventing future problems with document handling, it is hoped, has been accomplished as well.

What happened was a serious breach of trust. But more important, and arguably more difficult, is that the VBA culture that forces adjudicators to push claims off their desks instead of deciding them correctly must be changed. Until that happens, many veterans will continue to view the benefits delivery system with a degree of suspicion and outright skepticism.

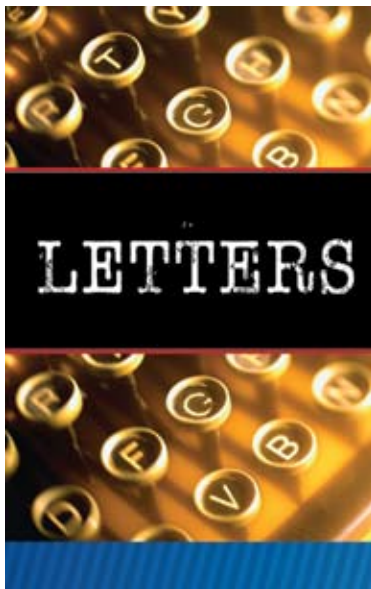
The DAV will monitor implementation of these policies and procedures and accountability measures at each regional office to help ensure equitable treatment of veterans and their dependents. Diligent oversight by the Under Secretary for Benefits is essential to the integrity of the claims adjudication system as well.

Respect for All Disabled Veterans

I agree completely with our National Commander, who wrote, "In line with our promise to leave no veteran behind, it is important that we as an organization do not forget about the disabled veterans who were not injured in combat. Focusing only on the combat wounded (especially of recent years) leaves many seriously disabled men and women in the shadows. How or when a veteran is disabled should not be a concern of ours, as long as the veteran served honorably." VA medical service and treatment should be available to anyone disabled as a result of military service. Many disabled veterans from World War II and Korea are finding a different world and bureaucracy. **Richard E. Law, Las Vegas, NV**

Pentagon Narrows Combat-Related Definition

The article in the Nov./Dec. 2008 *DAV Magazine* regarding the Pentagon's decision to narrow the definition of combat-related injuries is tragic and frustrating on many levels. I was outraged to read about Under Secretary David Chu making decisions that can affect future and existing veterans in such a manner. Under the current system, when a veteran has to include additional disabilities over time, or increases in disabilities, their entire rating is reevaluated. This allows the risk of losing their ratings, as well as gaining new ones. Mr. Chu's change says nothing about existing veterans being grandfathered for medical conditions already diagnosed and undergoing years of treatment.



Based on this article, it appears Mr. Chu simply made the revision without oversight authority. This is a situation that should never have occurred and I hope, for the sake of tens of thousands of existing disabled veterans, a correction is made as soon as possible. **Timothy Grund, Colorado Springs, CO**

Agrees with Congress on CRSC

From what I am reading, you are not happy that only the combat service personnel are to get the Combat-

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.

Related Special Compensation and the non-combat retirees are left out. Sorry, but I have to agree with Congress on this, but I would also say that should also apply to all personnel discharged under a combat medical discharge. Some service personnel would have liked to have continued their service but the military decided that it was best for the military to medically discharge them. Those personnel who served and were totally disabled and discharged under medical condition had no choice and therefore are being denied their CRSC as well. But again I feel that combat-related is the proper call. **Sidney W. Middleton, II, Iola, TX**

Salute to Our Last Doughboy

I just finished reading "The Last Doughboy Remembers," the story of World War I veteran Frank Buckles in *DAV Magazine*. It is good to remember those who served and fought during "the war to end all wars." Now just one remains. I remember other World War I soldiers, too. It is fitting that November 11 is set aside as a day to honor all who served in every war. **Freddie Gardner, Bryant, AR**

Thanks to Airshow Program

Thank you for bringing the B-25J *Panchito* to the Dayton International Air Show July 19 and 20. My family enjoyed the show, and we are thankful for your support of disabled veterans. My father-in-law is a disabled veteran and attended the show with me for the first time this year. Again, thank you, and we hope to see you again. **Kristi Ferguson, Fairborn, OH**

A Widow's Quest Succeeds

By Jim Hall

Constantine L. George was a service-connected disabled veteran rated at 100 percent at the time of his death on May 25, 2007. When his widow, Frances, filed for survivor's benefits with the VA, she was denied.

Frances George had never thought she would have to battle the VA for her benefits, but for more than a year after her husband's death, she continued on her own to try to secure dependency and indemnity compensation (DIC) from the VA without success. Then a DAV Department of California Service Officer directed her to the National Service Office in Los Angeles, and she got the help she needed.

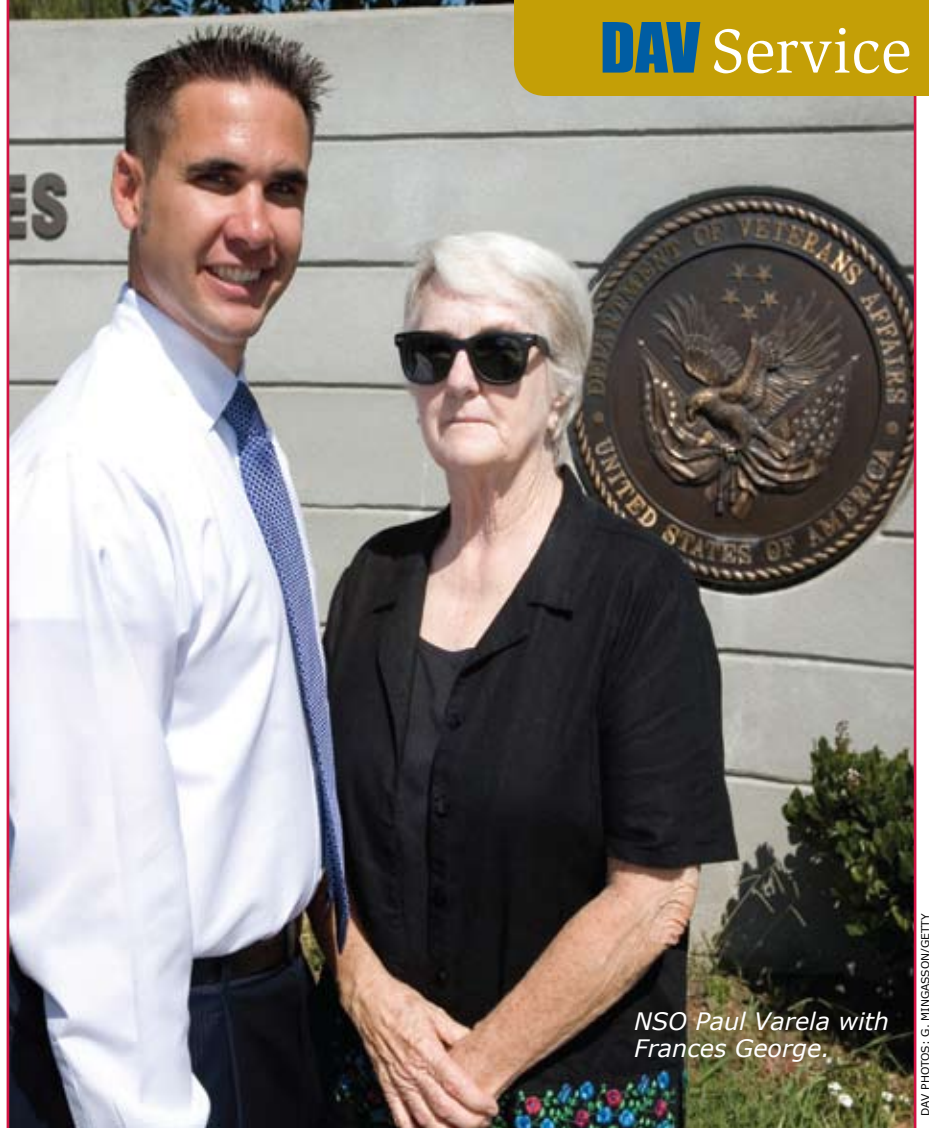
It wasn't long before Frances started feeling she had made the right decision. She received a call from NSO Paul R. Varela, the Supervisor of the Los Angeles office, and things started looking optimistic.

"Paul (NSO Varela) was very compassionate and seemed to have my interest at heart," Frances said. "He understood what I was going through and picked up the gauntlet and ran with it."

Constantine George was a machine gunner on a jeep during a patrol in Italy in April 1945, when a German tank came out of the forest and fired a round at the jeep, knocking it over and killing the two soldiers in the front seats. George survived with head wounds and a broken collarbone, leaving him unconscious until he woke up days later in a field hospital.

Like so many others, George returned from service in World War II a disabled veteran and, following his honorable discharge, began rebuilding his life.

Frances and George married the Saturday after she graduated from high school in 1951. By then George had passed the postal service exam, and he and Frances moved to Maine



NSO Paul Varela with Frances George.

DAV PHOTOS: G. MINGASSON/GETTY

where he began a 28-year career.

Following George's retirement from the postal service, he and Frances moved first to central Florida in 1978 and then to North Hollywood, Calif., in 1987.

"We really liked California," Frances said. "We even worked as extras from time to time on TV shows and movies. It was the best fun job I ever had."

George continued to be treated at the West Los Angeles and Sepulveda VA medical centers. His disability grew worse, and he was constantly in pain.

His worsening condition led him to apply for compensation at 100 percent, based on individual unemployability on Feb. 7, 1997. The VA denied the claim. He reapplied on June 8, 1998, and was later granted the compensation effective on the June 8 date.

As NSO Varela would later discover, though, these two dates would make a world of difference in the widow's life.

On examining the claim folder, it was noted that George died on May 25, 2007, months shy of qualifying under a VA regulation that would have provided DIC payments to his widow.

"It is truly heart-wrenching when a veteran passes on, just short of the 10-year mark," NSO Varela said. "If the veteran had lived just a few more months, his spouse would be taken care of. At first that's how it seemed."

NSO Varela continued to look for a way to secure the widow's benefits. Then he found it. The VA had committed

two serious errors in denying George's claim for individual unemployability.



Frances George

The first error regarded age, NSO Varela explained. VA regulations state that age is not a factor to be considered when determining eligibility for compensation, including claims for individual unemployability. The rating board noted the veteran was unable to secure a

substantial and gainful occupation for various reasons, including his age. The DAV quickly identified the error.

NSO Varela also noted an error in the VA's failure to schedule George for an examination in conjunction with the 1997 claim for increased compensation due to individual unemployability. The rating board considered a VA examination from the 1940s, but did not undertake the necessary

development to determine the veteran's current level of disability.

The two errors were enough to find clear and unmistakable error with the 1997 rating board determination, and on April 29, 2008, NSO Varela submitted the necessary paperwork to the VA.

On May 2, 2008, Frances answered her phone. It was NSO Varela.

"Paul was very excited," Frances said. "He said he had some good news, and he did."

On May 2, 2008, the VA found there had in fact been an error in the 1997 decision, and NSO Varela immediately called Frances to let her know she would be receiving her DIC.

"Working with veterans and their dependents has been one of the most rewarding experiences of my life," NSO Varela said. "There is no better feeling than helping someone obtain benefits they earned through service. I'm not sure if there's a better motivator than to go to work each day knowing you may be responsible for bettering someone's life."

For Frances George, the DAV was there when she truly needed help.

"The DAV is top notch," Frances said. "I would recommend DAV and its NSOs wholeheartedly at any time to anyone who is eligible. It's comforting to know the DAV is there for the families of disabled veterans."

Recent Veterans Can Request Military Physical Disability Review

Veterans who have been medically separated from military service since Sept. 11, 2001, will have the opportunity to have their disability ratings reviewed to ensure fairness and accuracy.

The Department of Defense's new Physical Disability Board of Review will examine each applicant's medical separation, compare DoD and VA ratings, and make a recommendation to the respective Service Secretary. A disability rating cannot be lowered, and any change to the rating is effective on the date of final decision by the Service Secretary.

To be eligible for a disability rating review, applicants must have been medically separated between Sept.

11, 2001, and Dec. 31, 2009, with a combined disability rating of 20 percent or less, and not found eligible for retirement.

While the Air Force is the lead for the review process, case tracking and reporting, a joint service board will conduct the evaluation and review of each case. Applicants will not be able to appear in person but may include any statements, briefs, medical records or other supporting documents with their application. After the document review is completed and a final decision is made, each applicant will be notified of the decision and any further information regarding a change of rating.

Information is available on the

DoD's Military Health System Web site www.health.mil/pdbr.

The Physical Disability Board of Review intake unit can be contacted at the following address:

**SAF/MRBR
550 C Street West
Suite 41
Randolph AFB, Texas
78150-4743**

For more information and assistance with a DoD disability rating review, contact your nearest DAV National Service Office. A complete list is on pages 20 and 21.



2009 DAV Legislative Agenda

DAV's annual legislative goals guide the organization's advocacy for disabled veterans. Those goals are drawn from resolutions adopted by the delegates to our National Convention each year.

Making certain that this country lives up to its commitment to disabled veterans and their families and survivors is one of the DAV's primary objectives. A nationwide grassroots effort by DAV and Auxiliary members has been very successful in preserving and improving veterans' programs.

And while the DAV has achieved an unmatched record of service and advocacy on behalf of our nation's former servicemen and women, we must continually defend against efforts to curb or eliminate benefits and services for disabled veterans and their families.

As the official voice of America's service-connected disabled veterans, our task is to build government and public support and awareness of veterans' issues and help secure adequate federal funding for the Department of Veterans Affairs that will ensure the viability of programs for our nation's disabled veterans.

DAV's annual legislative goals guide the organization's advocacy for disabled veterans. Those goals are drawn from resolutions adopted by the delegates to our National Convention each year. The following are some of the major objectives our organization will pursue during the 111th Congress.

Disability Compensation & Other Benefits

- Support legislation to repeal provisions allowing attorneys to charge veterans a fee for benefits counseling or any claims services before the Department of Veterans Affairs.

- Oppose any change that would redefine service-connected disability or restrict the conditions or circumstances under which it may be established.
- Oppose any proposal that would offset payments of Social Security Disability Insurance benefits or any other federal benefits by the amount of VA compensation.
- Oppose any change in law to provide for lump-sum payments of VA disability compensation.
- Support legislation to provide service connection to atomic veterans for all recognized radiogenic diseases.
- Support legislation to remove the prohibition against concurrent receipt of military retired pay and VA disability compensation for all longevity retired veterans.
- Support compensation of Persian Gulf War veterans for illnesses circumstantially linked to their service in the Persian Gulf War.
- Support an expansion of POW presumptions.
- Support presumption of exposure to traumatic stressors for veterans who served in a war zone and suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder.
- Oppose any scheme to means-test disability and death compensation.
- Increase disability compensation.
- Restore protections against unwarranted awards of veterans' benefits to third parties in divorce actions.
- Support legislation to remove the offset of Survivor Benefit Plan payments and VA dependency and indemnity compensation.

Medical & Health Care Services

- Support legislation to make VA health care funding sufficient, timely, and predictable.
- Ensure that priority access and timely, quality health care services are provided to service-connected disabled veterans.
- Ensure proper screening and treatment for traumatic brain injury and post-deployment mental health issues.
- Support equal medical services and benefits for women veterans.
- Support the repeal of VA and Department of Defense co-payments for medical care and prescriptions.
- Support repeal of beneficiary travel pay deductibles for service-connected disabled veterans and support increased benefit travel reimbursement rates.
- Support legislation to provide relief for family caregivers.
- Support enhancement of long-term health care to service-connected disabled veterans.

General Issues

- Support increases in grants for automobiles or other conveyances available to certain disabled veterans and to provide for automatic annual adjustments based on the increase in the cost of living.
- Provide an increase in the specially adapted housing grant and automatic annual adjustments based on increases in the cost of living.
- Support legislation to reduce premiums for Service Disabled Veterans Insurance consistent with current life expectancy.
- Increase the face value of Service Disabled Veterans Insurance.
- Extend eligibility for Veterans Mortgage Life Insurance to service-connected veterans rated permanently and totally disabled.
- Seek the immediate release of any American who may still be held captive following World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, the Persian Gulf War and Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom, and seek immediate return of the remains of any Americans who died during those wars.
- Provide educational benefits for dependents of service-connected veterans rated 80% or more disabled.
- Encourage all disabled veterans, their families, and friends to become registered voters and to vote.
- Increase the burial allowance for service-connected disabled veterans.

- Extend military commissary and exchange privileges to service-connected disabled veterans.
- Extend space-available air travel aboard military aircraft to 100% service-connected disabled veterans.
- Condemn public desecration of the flag of the United States.
- Construct a memorial to commemorate the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans.
- Eliminate the delimiting date for eligible spouses and surviving spouses for benefits provided under Chapter 35, Title 38, United States Code.
- Support legislative measures assisting disabled veteran-owned businesses.



Long-Awaited Increase in Mileage Approved

■ As of Nov. 17, 2008, the mileage reimbursement rate for travel to VA facilities increased from the 28.5 cents per mile to 41.5 cents per mile, under the fiscal year 2009 VA Appropriations Act.

Service-connected disabled veterans, veterans receiving VA pensions and veterans with low incomes are eligible for the reimbursement of travel expenses for medical care, compensation and pension examinations, vocational rehabilitation counseling, and the like.

The VA appropriations law instructed the VA to retain the current deductible amounts for beneficiary travel at \$7.77 for a one-way trip and \$15.54 for a round trip, with a calendar month cap of \$46.62. However, under the 2008 Veterans' Mental Health and Other Care Improvements Act, on Jan. 9, 2009, those deductibles decrease to \$3 for a one-way trip, \$6 for a round trip, with a maximum of \$18 per calendar month.

According to the VA, deductibles can be waived if they cause a financial hardship to the veteran.

This is the second raise in the rate in less than a year. Prior to an amendment of the beneficiary travel regulations effective February 2008, for which the DAV was a proponent, veterans received a meager 11 cents per mile for travel in relation to health care and 17 cents per mile for compensation and pension examination recalls due to insufficient laboratory, radiology, and similar studies.

Compensation Rate Increase Biggest in Decades



PHOTO: AP/ MATT ROUNKE

Nearly 3 million service-connected disabled veterans and survivors will see a 5.8 percent increase in their January check.

The nation's nearly 3 million service-connected disabled veterans and survivors will see a 5.8 percent increase in monthly benefits beginning in January. This is the largest increase since 1982.

The increase in disability compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, and pensions for 2009 matches the cost-of-living adjustments in Social Security and in military and federal civilian retired pay. Last year's increase was just 2.3 percent.

As in past years, the increase is rounded down to the next lower whole-dollar amount.

Those affected by the increase include veterans receiving compensation for disabilities incurred or made worse during their military service, as well as wartime veterans who are totally disabled from civilian-life causes and who receive a pension under an income-based program.

The increase also applies to survivors of veterans who died in service or from a service-connected condition and those who are served by an income-based program for survivors of wartime veterans.

Service-Connected Disability Basic Compensation Rates

Disability Rating	Monthly Rate	
	2008	2009
10%	\$ 117	\$ 123
20%	230	243
30%	356	376
40%	512	541
50%	728	770
60%	921	974
70%	1,161	1,228
80%	1,349	1,427
90%	1,517	1,604
100%	2,527	2,673

Special Monthly Compensation

	Monthly Rate	
	2008	2009
K	\$ 91	\$ 96
L	3,145	3,327
M	3,470	3,671
N	3,948	4,176
O or P	4,412	4,667
R1	6,305	6,670
R2	7,232	7,651
S	2,829	2,993
Clothing Allowance	\$ 716	

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation

(Effective Dec. 1, 2008)

Veteran's Pay Grade	Monthly Rate	
	2008	2009*
E-1-E-6	\$ 1,091	\$ 1,154
E-7	1,129	1,194
E-8	1,191	1,260
E-9	1,242	1,314
W-1	1,153	1,219
W-2	1,198	1,267
W-3	1,234	1,305
W-4	1,305	1,380
O-1	1,153	1,219
O-2	1,191	1,260
O-3	1,274	1,347
O-4	1,349	1,427
O-5	1,485	1,571
O-6	1,674	1,771
O-7	1,808	1,912
O-8	1,985	2,100
O-9	2,123	2,246
O-10	2,328	2,463

* Surviving spouses of veterans who died on or after Jan. 1, 1993, receive \$1,154 a month. For a spouse entitled to DIC based on the veteran's death prior to Jan. 1, 1993, the amount paid is based on the veteran's military pay grade. Add \$246 a month to the basic rate if the deceased veteran had been entitled to receive 100% service-connected compensation for at least eight years immediately preceding death and the surviving spouse was married to the veteran for those same eight years. Additionally, the monthly allowance rate for each dependent child under age 18 is \$286.



DAV PHOTOS: KRIEGER/GETTY

Kevin Quigley, right, a retired Ford employee, helps Alvin Hoffman, a disabled World War II veteran, at a local grocery store. The DAV's Local Veterans Assistance Program is designed to encourage and reward creative volunteerism to improve the lives of veterans and advance the DAV's mission.

A Special Difference for Disabled Veterans

By D. Clare

Kevin Quigley was driving toward an expressway on-ramp near his Wayne County, Mich., home when he first laid eyes on Alvin Hoffman. The World War II veteran seemed out of place as he trudged along with his groceries.

"I circled back around and found him on a rock. I thought he was lost. There weren't a lot of homes. It was a mile and a half from the grocery store and he was walking," recalled Quigley.

What began as a simple act of kindness, with Quigley giving the elderly man a ride home, soon turned into a pleasant routine. For the past 14 years, Quigley has helped Hoffman get his groceries and done odd jobs around his home.

Quigley is one of three people in the elderly man's life who make independent living possible. Along with Hoffman's neighbors all of the retired automotive industry employee's basic needs are met.

Over the years, Quigley learned about the Army veteran's combat service — service which contributed to his extreme loss of hearing.

"He's my friend, and he's an amazing connection to the past. There just aren't that many World War II veterans left. I appreciate his service and enjoy the time I get to spend with him," said Quigley, who is a retired Ford metal model maker.

With veterans of Hoffman's generation aging and a new

generation of veterans returning from the battlefields of Iraq and Afghanistan, the needs of disabled veterans are on the rise.

"Our traditional voluntary service programs make an incredible difference for hundreds of thousands of veterans every year. But the unique, random acts of kindness that brighten lives deserve recognition as well," said National Director of Voluntary Services Edward E. Hartman.

The new Local Veterans Assistance Program, or LVAP, was established to encourage DAV members, youths and patriotic citizens to use their time, talents and good will to help veterans. It recognizes the quiet heroes who reach out in creative ways to make a difference.

"Just about any service someone provides to enhance the lives of veterans is considered worthy of consideration," Hartman said. "From a DAV member participating in service work or fundraising activities, to a friendly neighbor who cleans an elderly veteran's gutters or gives a young veteran a lift to the base when his buddies are returning from deployment."

In addition to honoring the DAV through their compassion, credited hours give volunteers the recognition they deserve, according to Hartman. Volunteers with special skills or cer-

(Continued on page 15)



Mishandled Documents at VA Lead to Temporary Claims Procedures

By Thom Wilborn

The Department of Veterans Affairs has ordered temporary procedures for processing benefits claims from veterans and dependents whose applications may have been mishandled by VA personnel. The special procedures, which relax some administrative submission requirements, were ordered after VA investigators found hundreds of claims-related documents awaiting destruction at many of the agency's regional offices. Some of those documents, if disposed of, could have affected the benefits awarded to veterans and survivors, VA officials said.

These special procedures cover missing claims or evidence submitted between April 14, 2007, and Oct. 14, 2008, when officials halted document destruction. The VA will process any missing applications or evidence submitted under these special procedures as though the documents had been originally submitted on the date identified by the claimant.

The documents waiting to be shredded were discovered during a VA Office of Inspector General's (OIG) audit to determine if the regional offices were effectively processing claims-related mail.

"Compounding the problem is that the VA doesn't know what documents had been destroyed before the shredding was uncovered," said National

Service Director Randy Reese. "The VA has no idea what might have been destroyed before the OIG discovered the problem and the effect on a veteran's claim."

Under the temporary procedures, veterans will be asked to resubmit the lost documents to VA within 30 days, but they will have one year to assert their request for consideration under the temporary special claims handling procedures. The VA will recognize a veteran's or representative's assertion that a claim or supporting evidence had been previously submitted to VA during the 18-month window. The effective date will be as though the claim was received on the date asserted by the claimant.

Dates of submission before April 14, 2007, will be established based upon receipt of credible evidence supporting the date of submission. The burden of proof, however, will be greater for the veteran, and additional evidence will be required to support a claim that documents had been submitted. The evidence required would include a transmittal sheet, date-stamped documents from a claims representative, delivery confirmation and other documents.

The date of claim will be the first of the month if a veteran cannot remember the exact day a claim was submitted during the 18-month grace period. Those submitted during April

2007 would have a date of April 14.

"The grace period extended by the VA will make it easier for veterans who believe that claims or supporting documents may have been destroyed or missing from their files," said Reese. "We appreciate the VA taking swift action to lift the specter of claims wrongfully denied during that time. But the action covers just an 18-month period and gives veterans only one year to notify the VA about possible lost documents."

The audit of regional offices in Detroit, St. Louis, St. Petersburg, Fla., and Waco, Texas, found claims documents affecting veterans had been placed in shred bins. The VA immediately halted all shredding nationwide until a review of regional offices nationwide.

The nationwide OIG audits found hundreds of documents that could affect a veteran's claim improperly placed in shred bins in 41 regional offices. Documents ranged from DD-214 records of military service to private physician's records and claims for books under the G.I. Bill.

National Service Director Reese assures veterans who submitted claims evidence thorough the DAV that records are kept to validate that evidence has been properly submitted. Reese said any documents submitted by veterans to DAV Chapter, Department or Transition Service Offices, are routed through National Service Offices and are re-

(Continued on page 36)



DIRECTOR'S COMMENTARY

from the NATIONAL LEGISLATIVE DIRECTOR

Critical Issues

As President-elect Barack Obama and the new 111th Congress prepare to govern the country, they face many challenges and opportunities. While the economy and record budget deficits will be dominant issues, benefits and health care for sick and disabled veterans must also be a top priority.

In the coming months, the DAV will be meeting with administration officials, lawmakers and their staffs to educate them about the critical issues facing our nation's disabled veterans and their families and survivors. We will continue the hard work of building support for vital legislation to meet the needs of those who have served and sacrificed for our country.

Among the key issues for disabled veterans and their families is the need for sufficient, timely and predictable funding for the veterans health care system.

In many cases, the VA is unable to properly treat the physical and mental scars of war, in part because its budget is late and unpredictable. Under the current budget and appropriations process, the VA doesn't know when it will get its funding from Congress, nor does it know how much money it will receive from year to year. This causes unnecessary delays and backlogs in the system and threatens the quality of care provided to sick and disabled veterans.

The problem of VA financing is so important that the DAV and eight other veteran service organizations formed the Partnership for Veterans Health Care Budget Reform to encourage Congress to provide sufficient, timely and predictable funding for veterans medical care. Our

solution is simple: Congress should allocate funding for the VA health care system one year in advance of when the funds are actually needed — a method already used by Congress to finance some housing and education programs.

As a presidential candidate, Sen. Obama openly supported the year-in-advance proposal, as did Sen. John McCain. This proposal also has the support of an overwhelming majority of the American people and an influential group of Republican and Democratic members of the House and Senate. It also has the solid support of the Military Coalition's 37 member organizations, as well as the federal labor union which represents most VA health care workers.

The VA must have a sufficient, timely and predictable funding stream that will enable it to provide timely access to top-quality health care for our veterans.

This is especially important as the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan will continue to add hundreds of thousands of veterans in need of mental and physical treatment and rehabilitation. About 18 percent of the men and women who served in Iraq and Afghanistan are at risk for post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) or depression, according to an authoritative RAND Corporation study. Another 19 percent have experienced traumatic brain injury (TBI), often the result of blasts from powerful improvised explosive devices that violently shake the brain. In all, more than 300,000 Iraq and Afghanistan veterans are suffering from PTSD, depression, or TBI. Many thousands of their comrades have

(Continued on page 30)

Disability Evaluation Program Expands

The experimental Disability Evaluation System (DES) is about to significantly grow.

Under this program designed to cut red tape, the Department of Veterans Affairs performs an exit examination for servicemembers who appear to military physicians to be unfit for further duty. Upon completion of the examination, the records are forwarded to VA's Veterans Benefits Administration for assignment of a service-connected disability rating and then to the military evaluation board for a decision on continuing service.

The VA announced in November that the pilot DES is being implemented at 19 more military installations. The program has been tested in the two major military medical centers in the Washington,

D.C., area for about a year and is supposed to provide those leaving the military with easier, quicker access to their veterans benefits through streamlined disability evaluations. But the DAV has closely monitored the program since its testing first began and has recently formally expressed concerns and suggested changes and enhancements.


"The DES pilot program remains complex, and even at this early stage, it is clear the servicemember, DoD and VA roles are convoluted and overlapping," National Service Director Randy Reese told a senior executive with oversight of the program. "There is already a propensity to blame system failures on

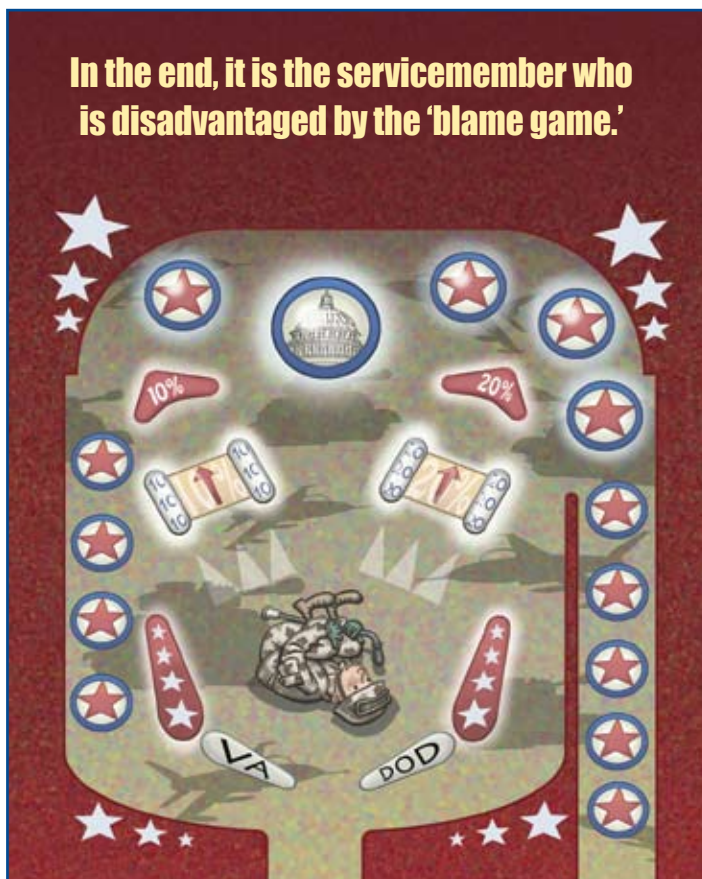
the servicemember, Congress, and each other [DoD, VA]. In the end, it is the servicemember who is disadvantaged by the 'blame game.'"

DAV Transition Service Officers and National Service Officers, whose services are provided at no cost to servicemembers, are trained to conduct or participate in pre-discharge transition assistance briefings, review service medical records and confer with rating specialists, physicians, and other participants in the discharge process. They represent veterans and active-duty military personnel in discharge reviews, correction of military records and physical evaluation boards at more than 75 military separation sites nationwide.

The first two bases to become part of the pilot program expansion were Fort Belvoir,

Va., and Fort Meade, Md. The remaining installations slated to soon begin the program are Fort Carson, Colo.; Fort Drum, N.Y.; Fort Stewart, Ga.; Fort Richardson, Alaska; Fort Wainwright, Alaska; Brooke Army Medical Center, Texas; Fort Polk, La.; Naval Medical Center San Diego; NMC Bremerton, Wash.; NMC Jacksonville, Fla.; Camp Pendleton, Calif.; Camp Lejeune, N.C.; Vance Air Force Base, Okla.; Nellis Air Force Base, Nev.; MacDill Air Force Base, Fla.; Elmendorf Air Force Base, Alaska; and Travis Air Force Base, Calif.

A list of NSOs and TSOs can be found on the DAV Web site at www.dav.org/veterans. A listing and map of service offices is on pages 20 and 21. 





Study Finds: Gulf War Illness Is Real

By Thom Wilborn

A report delivered Nov. 17 by a congressionally mandated committee of scientists and veterans has determined that Gulf War illness is a very real disease caused by exposure to toxic chemicals, including pesticides and a drug given to protect servicemembers from nerve gas.

The Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses, which included Assistant National Legislative Director Adrian M. Atizado, says the disease has no effective treatments and has urged that Congress appropriate \$60 million a year to study and develop new, effective medical care.



Atizado

"Gulf War veterans have suffered for nearly two decades while their illnesses were studied and researched," said Atizado. "Their health worsened, and their complaints were discounted or blamed on deployment stress despite the fact that Gulf War veterans have lower rates of post-traumatic stress disorder than veterans of other wars."

Gulf War illness is a combination of memory and concentration problems, persistent headaches, unexplained fa-

tigue, and widespread pain. It may also include chronic digestive problems, respiratory symptoms and skin rashes.

The report estimates that at least one in four of the 697,000 veterans of the 1991 Gulf War suffer from the illness, which it primarily attributes to the drug pyridostigmine bromide, given to troops to protect against nerve gas and pesticides widely used during the Gulf War.

The committee also found associations between Gulf War illness and low-level exposures to nerve agents, smoke from oil well fires, large numbers of vaccines, and other toxins.

The Department of Defense says that about 100,000 servicemembers were potentially exposed to low-level nerve agents resulting from the demolitions of Iraqi munitions near Khamisiyah, Iraq, in 1991. A 2007 study found that low-level exposure to nerve gas could cause lasting brain deficits in Gulf War troops.

Gulf War veterans also have significantly higher rates of amyotrophic lateral sclerosis than other veterans. Servicemembers who were downwind from the Khamisiyah demolitions have died from brain cancer at twice the rate of other Gulf War veterans.

The committee's report says research is now available to consistently indicate that "Gulf War illness is real,

that it is the result of neurotoxic exposures during Gulf War deployments and that few veterans have recovered or substantially improved with time."

It called for a renewed federal research commitment to find treatments to improve the health of Gulf War veterans and to prevent similar problems in future deployments.

"This should be an urgent national goal to restore as much as possible the health and well-being of Gulf War servicemembers," said Atizado. "These veterans have suffered too long hoping for answers and assistance."

The report and findings were presented to the Department of Veterans Affairs in hopes for an end to the declining federal funding for Gulf War research and treatment, and the creation of renewed federal research commitments to improve the health of affected Gulf War veterans.

"In addition, we would hope the VA would make Gulf War illness a presumptive disability for those who served in the Gulf War," said Atizado. "The time has come for the VA and the nation to recognize that Gulf War illness is a fact, and should be considered in deciding the disability of our veterans."

Veterans with questions about Gulf War illness should call their local National Service Office for information. ☉

Testimonial Dinner for Auxiliary Commander Dobmeier



Auxiliary National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier will be honored at a testimonial dinner Saturday, April 18, at the Holiday Inn in Grand Forks, N.D.

The event will begin with a social from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m., followed by the dinner. The cost is \$45 per person. Your dinner choice will be steak or a walleye filet. Reservations are required, and you must purchase your dinner tickets no later than April 6. Make your check payable to Sandy Dobmeier Testimonial, and mail it to Jim & Carol Groven, 2114 Summerset Court, Grand Forks, N.D., 58201. For additional information, contact Jim or Carol at 701-746-6602 or email jimgroven@hotmail.com. Be sure to indicate your dinner choice with your reservation.

Activities planned prior to the event on April 18 include a tour of Grand Forks with a stop at Widman's Candy Shop, "Home of the Chippers" (chocolate covered potato chips) as well as numerous other selections, lunch in downtown East Grand Forks on the Boardwalk where you can choose from four restaurants all located within one block followed with a stop at the mall for those interested in doing a little shopping. Transportation will be provided.

Room reservations should be made directly with the Holiday Inn, 1210 North 43rd Street, Grand Forks, N.D., 58203. Phone: 701-772-7131. Be sure to ask for the DAVA (Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary) room block rate. The rate is \$69 plus tax for 1-4 occupancy. Parking is free. The cut-off date for room reservations is March 27.

The hotel is located approximately four miles from Grand Forks International Airport which is served by Northwest Airlines. The Holiday Inn offers complimentary shuttle service to and from the airport.



Testimonial Dinner for National Commander Dempsey

DAV National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey will be honored with a testimonial dinner on Saturday, March 21, at the Fountain Blue Banquet and Confer-

ence Center, Des Plaines, Ill.

The event will begin with cocktails and hors d'oeuvres at 6 p.m., followed by dinner at 7 p.m. The cost of the evening, including beverages before and during the meal, is \$70 per person. Dinner choices include the signature Fountain Blue steak or Key Lime chicken or Mediterranean purse (vegetarian meal of spring roll pastry filled with Portobello mushrooms, toasted cous cous, vegetables, and roasted red pepper sauce). Meals include soup and salad and a special house dessert. Another dessert will feature Chicago's famous Eli's Cheesecake.

Dinner reservations and payment by check should be made to Raymond E. Dempsey Testimonial, 818 Hastings, Hanover Park, Ill., 60103. Payment along with names of attendees, contact telephone and address, and dinner choice must be submitted before March 1.

Hotel accommodations may be reserved through the Radisson Hotel Chicago O'Hare by calling 847-296-8866. Room rates per day are \$74 plus tax. Please indicate the DAV Dempsey group grate when making reservations. The deadline for hotel reservations is March 1.

The hotel is minutes from O'Hare International Airport and complementary shuttle service is available. Amenities include a fitness center, eateries, unlimited tourism and dining opportunities within a short drive of the facilities.

For additional information, contact Norman Resner at 630-830-1773.

A Special Difference

(Continued from page 10)

tifications are encouraged to use their abilities to better the lives of veterans in need.

Youth participants can use LVAP hours to apply for the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship. Eligible

volunteers under the age of 21 can earn up to \$15,000 toward college tuition.

Program representatives at local state and community levels—DAV departments and chapters—maintain records and report LVAP progress.

"The personal contributions of volunteers have always been a heartwarming source of inspiration and hope for veterans in need," said

National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "When they volunteer in the name of the DAV, they honor our efforts and recognize our community. This is a great program and I hope everyone will go out of their way to get involved."

For more information, contact the Voluntary Services Department at (859) 441-7300 or voluntaryservices@dav.org.



Returning to Active Duty? You Must Let VA Know



Every veteran receiving disability compensation from the VA is required by law to notify the VA if they are returning to active duty

By Joseph R. Chenelly

Did you get out of the military only to find you miss it too much? Are you in the Individual Ready Reserve and being called back to active duty? Are you receiving compensation from the Department of Veterans Affairs for a service-connected disability?

If so, there are some things you

need to know before you put those boots back on.

Every veteran receiving disability compensation from the VA is required by law to notify the VA if they are returning to active duty, voluntarily or by order, even if just for training.

Those monthly compensation payments have to stop while you're on active duty. Failure to do so likely will result in having to repay that money, offsetting future compensation payments.

But it doesn't end there. Once you return to veteran status, the VA may require a new physical examination and review your rating. This could result in a change in compensation.

Veterans should contact their Na-

tional Service Officer or their nearest VA office for more information before making a decision to return to active duty, according to National Service Director Randy Reese. If orders have already been cut, you need to contact the VA as soon as possible.

Once you return to veteran status, the VA disability compensation will not automatically resume. You must apply for reinstatement of the rating. The VA may grant that immediately, but it may also require you to undergo a medical examination to determine if your disabilities are still present and as severe.

If you don't apply for reinstatement within a year, you may lose money and even have to go through the entire claims process again.

Returning to uniformed service is not the only time veterans must have compensation reduced. If a veteran is incarcerated, he or she must make the VA aware of this situation at once. On the 61st day of being locked up, the VA needs to cut the payments in half if the inmate's rating is 10 percent. If the rating is above 10 percent, the payment will be reduced to what it would be if it were 10 percent. Again, failure to notify the VA likely will lead to a large debt owed to the VA.

Dependents of incarcerated veterans may apply through the VA to receive a portion of the inmate's compensation payment. The DAV has service and transition officers across the United States ready to help veterans through these and any other dealings with the VA, Reese said.

"The DAV's service officers are your liaison to the VA," he said. "They know what needs to be done and how to do it. They will make sure you are taken care of."

To find the DAV service office near you, see page 20.

Legislation: You Can Make a Difference



SANDRA J. DOBMEIER

from the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

We are now at the beginning of the first term of a new president, and many new Senators and Representatives — a time when it is crucial to make our mission known to our new national leaders.

One of the most important functions of the DAV and its Auxiliary is to educate our national leaders about the challenges disabled veterans and their families face. By doing so, we can secure the help of our national leaders to ensure disabled veterans and their families receive the benefits and services they need and have rightly earned. Each of us is an important part of making this happen.

It would be wonderful if our disabled loved ones and their families could be taken care of with a single election. But, as we know full well, legislation needed to secure benefits and services, and protect those already enacted, does not happen without work done at the grassroots level. As citizens and Auxiliary members it is our responsibility to keep our state and national elected representatives informed and request their support.

It is important to remember that issues affecting disabled veterans and their families are not partisan issues. What matters is whether or not your legislators support veterans. Make sure yours do. Get to know your legislators. Read about them and keep a track record of how they vote on our veterans issues. Work to educate them and turn them into allies who care about the disabled veterans of this great country as we

do. Voice your concern when it's warranted, and don't forget to praise their efforts on behalf of disabled veterans and their families.

DAV Magazine is a great way to stay informed. Important legislation is always discussed in the magazine and identified with the bill number. This detailed explanation allows you to write a clear and concise letter to your Senators and Representative. Read the newsletters you receive from your Chapter, Unit, or Department as well. They are often helpful, as are local news reports. The Internet is also a great source of information. If you don't have a computer, try your local library. They will even assist in getting you started if you need help.

After you are informed, take action with personal letters and phone calls to let your legislators know the needs of our veterans and tell them about the legislation needed to assist them. The DAV Web site, www.dav.org, also makes it easy to contact your elected officials. With just your ZIP code you can find the names of all of your legislators. There are even letters prepared on the issues that need to be addressed that are easy to complete and e-mail to your legislators.

The DAV and Auxiliary are a force to be reckoned with, and working together we can influence our legislators to listen and follow through for our veterans. It is important for everyone to get involved and stay involved with the legislation for our veterans. Do your part to make a difference in legislation, now and always.



These first-time attendees were among 347 members attending the 2008 Auxiliary Fall Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio. Below, Auxiliary National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier welcomes DAV National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey to the 2008 Auxiliary Fall Conference to deliver the keynote address to members and guests.

Auxiliary Fall Conference Is a Winner

By Jim Hall

It was a learning and fun win-win for everyone attending the 2008 DAV Auxiliary Fall Conference Oct. 2-5, in Cincinnati, Ohio.

"We had a great conference," Auxiliary National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier said. "We had 347 attendees this year, with more first-time attendees than ever before. We also had more male members in attendance than ever before, as well as numerous guests. It was certainly gratifying to see so many at the conference attending meetings and functions."

Conference program presentations were educational and entertaining. One included a skit with World War I flying ace Snoopy being shot down by the Red Baron, and another featured a showing of the video "Reveille" during the Americanism program.



"I believe everyone felt the conference was relaxed yet very informative and promoted program education and plenty of participation opportunities, leaving no questions unanswered," said Commander Dobmeier.

The conference got underway Thursday with Commander Dobmeier's welcome, and the excitement grew as the evening progressed. Presentations included Anita Ingram on Auxiliary Junior Activities and Senior Vice Commander Kay Egan covering the Mae Holmes

Award for Outstanding Auxiliary. Then 3rd Jr. Vice Commander Donna Adams addressed Americanism, and 1st Jr. Vice Commander Susan Henry's membership presentation completed the evening.

Friday got off to a rousing start with Dorothea Campanelli's hospital initiatives presentation, complete with a humorous skit, followed by Auxiliary Past National Commander Rose Schilpp's highly informative segment on the Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project. The morning closed with lots of questions and answers during National Judge Advocate Carol Gray's presentation highlighting the bylaws and regulations.

Friday afternoon featured a legislation presentation by 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Patrice Rapisand. Then 4th Jr. Vice Commander Susan Miller was up next covering community service and fielding questions. Past National

Commander Evelyn Dorsey spoke on the Past National Commander Outstanding Member Award, the highest individual Auxiliary award, calling for maximum participation. Also on hand were members of the Auxiliary National Staff to answer questions from members. The Friday business session ended with National History Chairman Judy Perry offering lots of information about the National History Program and some busy bees who snapped some candid photos.

With the business concluded for the day, Auxiliary members and guests were ready for some fun, and they got plenty of it at the reception on Friday evening. Everyone had an opportunity to get to know each other better and listen and dance to the music of a local band. The festivities received a dash of spice from a group of Past National Commanders, also known as the "Pinks," who showed up as cooks to stir some extra laughter into the reception, which may have accounted for the impromptu conga line later in the evening.

On Saturday morning, Commander

Dobmeier announced the arrival of guests and DAV National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson and Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman were escorted into the conference. The executive directors reported on activities directed from their headquarters, emphasizing legislative, service and administrative areas of interest to disabled veterans and their families.

"Having Commander Dempsey and Adjutant Wilson join the conference, in addition to both Executive Directors, was not only a pleasure, it also demonstrated the bond between the DAV and its Auxiliary," Auxiliary National Adjutant Judy Hezlep said. "Hearing first-hand from the directors is the kind of learning and sharing we advocate at our Fall Conference. We know it works because we hear time and time again from members about how information is brought back to Departments and Units and used to help assist disabled

veterans and their families. That's what the conference is all about."

Following National Adjutant Wilson's greeting to the conference, Commander Dempsey delivered the keynote address, praising the Auxiliary and its teamwork with the DAV and commenting on the need to continue to evolve to meet the needs of veterans and their families in contemporary times and the future.

"It is the caring and dedication displayed by [Auxiliary National Commander Sandra J. Dobmeier] and all of you that makes the DAV and the Auxiliary a great, unbeatable team," Commander Dempsey said. "No one does more to help make the lives of disabled veterans more meaningful than you, our caring family members."

"For as long as there has been a DAV, the spouses and family members of our veterans have been driving forces behind all of our successes," said Commander Dempsey. "For us to remain relevant to disabled veterans now and in the future, we must welcome the whole family into our ranks." ☺



With smiles as big as the Lone Star State, these members from the Department of Texas join more than 347 members attending the 2008 Auxiliary Fall Conference in Cincinnati, Ohio.



Attending the 2008 Auxiliary Fall Conference are, from left, Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey, and National Headquarters Executive Director Richard E. Patterson.



2009 DAV National Service Offices Directory

ALABAMA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
345 Perry Hill Road,
Room 1-116
Montgomery, AL 36109
Phone: (334) 213-3365

ALASKA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
2925 DeBarr Road, Rm. 3101
Anchorage, AK 99508-2989
Phone: (907) 257-4803

ARIZONA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
3333 N. Central Ave.,
Suite 1053
Phoenix, AZ 85012-2402
Phone: (602) 627-3286

ARKANSAS

Disabled American Veterans
VARO, Bldg. 65, Room 121
2200 Fort Roots Drive, (VAMC)
North Little Rock, AR
72114-1756
Phone: (501) 370-3838

CALIFORNIA

Disabled American Veterans
VARO Federal Building
11000 Wilshire Blvd.,
Room 5227
W. Los Angeles, CA 90024
Phone: (310) 477-2539

Disabled American Veterans
VARO Oakland Federal Bldg.
1301 Clay St.,
Room 1110, North
Oakland, CA 94612-5209
Phone: (510) 834-2921

Disabled American Veterans
10365 Old Placerville Road,
Suite 100
Sacramento, CA 95827
Phone: (916) 364-6796

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
8810 Rio San Diego Drive,
Suite 1160
San Diego, CA 92108
Phone: (619) 299-6916

COLORADO

Disabled American Veterans
VARO, 155 Van Gordon Street
P.O. Box 25126
Denver, CO 80225
Phone: (303) 914-5570

CONNECTICUT

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical Center
555 Willard Avenue
Newington, CT 06111
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 310909
Newington, CT 06131-0909
Phone: (860) 594-6612

DELAWARE

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical & Regional Ofc. Ctr.
1601 Kirkwood Hwy.
Wilmington, DE 19805
Phone: (302) 993-7258

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
1722 I Street, NW, Room 210
Washington, DC 20421-1111
Phone: (202) 530-9260

Disabled American Veterans
Walter Reed Army
Medical Center
6900 Georgia Avenue, NW
Building #11, Room G-14
Washington, DC 20307-5001
Phone: (202) 356-1012
Ext. 40572

FLORIDA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
9500 Bay Pines Blvd., Room 232
Bay Pines, FL 33744
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1437
St. Petersburg, FL 33731
Phone: (727) 319-7444

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical Center
1201 NW 16th St, Rm 2A146
Miami, FL 33125
Phone: (305) 575-3130

Disabled American Veterans
1000 Legion Place
Suite 1550
Orlando, FL 32801
Phone: (407) 648-6130

Disabled American Veterans
WPB VA Medical Center
Bldg. 10, Rm. 112
7305 North Military Trail
West Palm Beach, FL 33410
Phone: (561) 422-8203

GEORGIA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
1700 Clairmont Road
Decatur, GA 30033-4032
Phone: (404) 929-5956

HAWAII

Disabled American Veterans
VAMROC, E-Wing
459 Patterson Road,
Room 1-C103
Honolulu, HI 96819-1522
Phone: (808) 433-0490

IDAHO

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
805 W. Franklin St., Rm. 205
Boise, ID 83702
Phone: (208) 334-1956

ILLINOIS

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
2122 W. Taylor Street, Ste. 104
Chicago, IL 60612
Phone: (312) 980-4242

INDIANA

Disabled American Veterans
VARO Federal Building
575 N. Pennsylvania St.,
Rm. 320
Indianapolis, IN 46204
Phone: (317) 916-3615

IOWA

Disabled American Veterans
VARO, 566 Federal Building
2nd & Walnut Streets
Des Moines, IA 50309
Phone: (515) 323-7539

KANSAS

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical & Regional Ofc. Ctr.
5500 East Kellogg, Rm. 112
Wichita, KS 67218
Phone: (316) 688-6722

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical Center
4201 S. Fourth Street
Traffic Way
Leavenworth, KS 66048
Phone: (913) 651-2402

KENTUCKY

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office, Suite 390
321 West Main Street, Rm. 322
Louisville, KY 40202-6200
Phone: (502) 566-4482

LOUISIANA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
701 Loyola Avenue, Rm. 1021
New Orleans, LA 70113
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 1278
Gretna, LA 70054
Phone: (504) 589-3868

MAINE

Disabled American Veterans
DVARO - Medical Center
Bldg. 248, Rm. 113,
Route 17 East
Togus, ME 04330-3151
Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 3151
Augusta, ME 04330-3151
Phone: (207) 623-5725

MARYLAND

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office Federal Bldg.
Rm. 1229, 31 Hopkins Plaza
Baltimore, MD 21201
Phone: (410) 230-4440

MASSACHUSETTS

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
JFK Fed Bldg. Government Ctr.
Rm. 1575B
Boston, MA 02203
Phone: (617) 303-5675

MICHIGAN

Disabled American Veterans
VARO McNamara Fed. Bldg.
477 Michigan Avenue,
Rm. 1200
Detroit, MI 48226
Phone: (313) 964-6595

MINNESOTA

Disabled American Veterans
VARO & Insurance Center
1 Federal Dr., Rm. 192,
Federal Bldg.
Fort Snelling, MN 55111-4007
Phone: (612) 970-5665

MISSISSIPPI

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
1600 E. Woodrow Wilson Ave.,
Rm. 113
Jackson, MS 39216
Phone: (601) 364-7178

MISSOURI

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
400 South 18th Street,
Rm. 119
St. Louis, MO 63103-2271
Phone: (314) 552-9883

MONTANA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
3633 Veterans Drive, Ste. 110B
P.O. Box 189
Fort Harrison, MT 59636
Phone: (406) 495-2089

NEBRASKA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
5631 South 48th Street
Lincoln, NE 68516
Phone: (402) 420-4025

NEVADA

Disabled American Veterans
National Service Office
5460 Reno Corporate Drive,
Rm. 102
Reno, NV 89511
Phone: (775) 321-4895

Disabled American Veterans
Veteran's Assistance Office
4800 Alpine Place, Suite # 7
Las Vegas, NV 89107
Phone: (702) 878-7918

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Disabled American Veterans
VARO-Norris Cotton Fed. Bldg.
275 Chestnut St., Rm. 515
Manchester, NH 03101
Phone: (603) 222-5788

NEW JERSEY

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
20 Washington Place
Newark, NJ 07102
Phone: (973) 297-3378

NEW MEXICO

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
500 Gold Avenue, SW,
Rm. 3508
Albuquerque, NM 87102
Phone: (505) 346-4864

NEW YORK

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
245 West Houston St., Rm. 204
New York, NY 10014
Phone: (212) 807-3157

Disabled American Veterans
Stratton VAMC
113 Holland Avenue,
Rm. C308-5
Albany, NY 12208
Phone: (518) 626-5690

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
130 S. Elmwood Avenue,
Ste. 620
Buffalo, NY 14202
Phone: (716) 857-3354

Disabled American Veterans
VA Contact Office
344 W. Genesee St., 2nd Floor
Syracuse, NY 13202
Phone: (315) 423-5541

NORTH CAROLINA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Ofc. Federal Bldg
251 North Main St., Rm. 115
Winston-Salem, NC 27102
Phone: (336) 631-5481

NORTH DAKOTA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
2101 North Elm, Rm. 206
Fargo, ND 58102
Phone: (701) 451-4636

OHIO

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
1240 E. 9th St., Rm. 1015
Cleveland, OH 44199
Phone: (216) 522-3507

Disabled American Veterans
VA Contact Office
URS Tower, Suite 220
36 East 7th St.
Cincinnati, OH 45202-4439
Phone: (513) 684-2676

OKLAHOMA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
125 S. Main St., Rm. 1B30
Muskogee, OK 74401
Phone: (918) 781-7764

OREGON

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Ofc. Federal Bldg
1220 SW Third Avenue,
Rm. #1692
Portland, OR 97204
Phone: (503) 412-4750

PENNSYLVANIA

Disabled American Veterans
VAROIC, P.O. Box 42938
Wissahickon & Manheim Sts.
Philadelphia, PA 19101-2938
Phone: (215) 381-3065

Disabled American Veterans
VA Contact Office
1123 East End Boulevard
Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702
Phone: (570) 821-2520

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
1000 Liberty Ave., Rm. 1606
Pittsburgh, PA 15222
Phone: (412) 395-6241

PUERTO RICO

Disabled American Veterans
VA Center
#150 Ave. Carlos Chardon
#232-2
San Juan, PR 00918-1703
Phone: (787) 772-7388

RHODE ISLAND

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
380 Westminster Mall
Providence, RI 02903
Phone: (401) 223-3695

SOUTH CAROLINA

Disabled American Veterans
VARO, Suite 129
1801 Assembly St.
Columbia, SC 29201
Phone: (803) 255-4238

SOUTH DAKOTA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
P.O. Box 5046
2501 W 22nd St.
Sioux Falls, SD 57117
Phone: (605) 333-6896

TENNESSEE

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
U.S. Court House, 110 9th Ave. S.
Nashville, TN 37203
Phone: (615) 695-6384

TEXAS

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
One Veterans Plaza, 701 Clay St.
Waco, TX 76799
Phone: (254) 299-9932

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
6900 Alameda Road, Rm. 1033
Houston, TX 77030-4200
Phone: (713) 383-2715

Disabled American Veterans
VA Contact Office
5788 Eckhart Road, Rm. 2A112
San Antonio, TX 78240
Phone: (210) 699-5064

Disabled American Veterans
Brooke Army Medical Center
3851 Roger Brooke Drive,
Ste. 313-7
Fort Sam Houston, TX
78234-6200
Phone: (210) 916-5012

UTAH

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
550 Foothill Drive, Rm. G-3
Salt Lake City, UT 84113
Mailing Address:
(USPS Mail Only)
Disabled American Veterans
550 Foothill Drive
P.O. Box 581900
Salt Lake City, UT 84158-1900
Phone: (801) 326-2375

VERMONT

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical Center
215 North Main Street
White River Junction, VT 05009
Phone: (802) 296-5167

VIRGINIA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office Federal Bldg.
210 Franklin Road SW, Rm. 505
Roanoke, VA 24011
Phone: (540) 857-2373

WASHINGTON

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office Federal Bldg.
915 2nd Ave., Rm. 1040
Seattle, WA 98174
Phone: (206) 220-6225

WEST VIRGINIA

Disabled American Veterans
VA Regional Office
640 4th Avenue, Rm. 138
Huntington, WV 25701
Phone: (304) 399-9350

WISCONSIN

Disabled American Veterans
VARO, Room 162
5400 West National Avenue
Milwaukee, WI 53214-3461
Phone: (414) 902-5736

WYOMING

Disabled American Veterans
VA Medical & Regional Ofc. Ctr.
2360 E. Pershing Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Phone: (307) 433-2752



PHOTO: USMC/ CPL SEAN P. MCGINTY

Master Sgt. William "Spanky" Gibson waits to get on the aircraft that will begin his trip home. Gibson, from Pryor, Okla., accepted an invitation as one of the first three staff non-commissioned officers to become Marine Corps Congressional Fellows.

From Combat to Congress

By Cpl. Sean P. McGinty

During a speech marking the fifth year of the war in Iraq, President George W. Bush said with Americans like "Spanky" Gibson serving on our side, the enemy in Iraq doesn't have a chance.

Now, after nine months in Iraq, Master Sgt. William "Spanky" Gibson is headed to Washington, D.C., to represent the Marine Corps in the halls of Congress.

Gibson was one of three individuals selected for the inaugural Marine staff non-commissioned officer Congressional Fellowship. Gibson and the other two staff NCOs are the Marine Corps answer to a Secretary of Defense request that all services increase their presence on Capitol Hill.

The year-long Marine Corps Congressional Fellowship program opened to staff NCOs for the first time this year. It was typically open to lieutenants through lieutenant colonels, and senior government officials who work for the



Marine Corps. All military occupational specialties may apply, but the applicants must display superior performance. Also, acceptance requires a three-year obligation once the year-long tour is complete.

"I want to assist the Marine Corps globally," said Gibson, 37. "I want to show what staff NCOs can do in a position that staff NCOs have never been challenged in."

Gibson made history last year when he deployed back to Iraq after his left leg was amputated above his knee. He lost his leg after being shot in the knee by a sniper in May 2006, while serving as a joint terminal attack controller for 1st Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company.

After his operation and extensive rehabilitation at the National Naval Medical Center in Bethesda, Md., Gibson set out to prove he was fit for duty. He trained for and participated in endurance races and triathlons. In June 2007 he competed in the Escape from Alcatraz triathlon in San Francisco, where he met and asked Marine General James Mattis to allow him to return to Iraq.

Fewer than two years after adjusting to his prosthetic leg and fighting to stay in the Marine Corps, Gibson returned to Iraq with the First Marine Expeditionary Force.

After his time in Bethesda Naval Hospital, Gibson told himself he would never return to the Washington, D.C., area. He was fully focused on returning to Iraq, he said.

"I never contemplated something like this," said Gibson. "Nine months ago my thoughts were directed in getting back to the battlefield. Now I'm going to have to learn more about the legislative process, and I'll have interaction between generals and Congressmen."

As a congressional fellow, Gibson trades his uniform for a business suit while working for Rep. Steve Buyer, (R-Ind.), ranking Republican on the House

Veterans Affairs Committee.

Gibson's new duties could include drafting legislation, serving as a liaison to constituents, planning international conferences, and much more.

"I'm looking forward to understanding the legislative pro-

(Continued on page 36)

Disabled Veterans Memorial **Update**



Philanthropist Lois Pope, second from left, presents a \$5 million check to help build the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. Accepting the check is Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation Secretary and Past National Commander Dennis A. Joyner and Foundation Director and Past National Commander Kenneth G. Musselmann, right. Also pictured are National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson, left, and Emmy-winning television personality Regis Philbin.

Efforts to build the first permanent national tribute to disabled veterans received a major boost as prominent philanthropist Lois Pope presented a check for \$5 million to help build the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial.

"This is the perfect season to give thanks to disabled veterans for their sacrifices not only in the current war on terrorism, but in all our nation's conflicts," said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson. "And no single individual is as dedicated to showing the most sincere appreciation in such a meaningful way as Lois Pope."

The \$5 million check from Mrs. Pope is payment in full on a challenge grant she made in 2006 to the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation,


the organization she co-founded with National Adjutant Wilson to spearhead the fundraising to build the memorial. According to the requirements of the challenge grant, the Foundation had to raise from private philanthropic sources \$5 million, which Mrs. Pope would match on a dollar-for-dollar basis. That goal was achieved on Oct. 31.

"I am so pleased to honor my commitment," Mrs. Pope said. "All of these courageous men and women, these unsung American heroes, have sacrificed parts of their bodies, and in some cases their minds, upholding the democratic freedoms we so cherish and enjoy. We owe them our deepest thanks. This check is just my down payment in expressing my gratitude."

"Like many of us who came home

disabled from Vietnam, I thought the sacrifices we had made were going to be in vain," said Foundation Secretary and DAV Past National Commander Dennis A. Joyner. "But when I met Lois Pope and learned of her vision for the memorial, I knew that the scars and injuries we had suffered would never be marginalized or forgotten. To me — and, indeed, to all of us disabled in war — Lois is a real American hero."

The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial will be located in Washington, D.C., across from the U.S. Botanic Garden and within full view of the U.S. Capitol building.

DAV members and Chapters can send donations for the memorial to: DVLME, 6290 Linton Blvd., Suite 104, Delray Beach, FL 33484. 



On Oct. 29, the Golden Corral in Great Falls, Mont., burned down. Despite the disaster, owners, management and staff rallied to hold Military Appreciation Monday at a local church to thank veterans and support the DAV Transportation Network. Below, Ethel Mayers, a World War II Army Air Corps veteran, enjoyed Military Appreciation Monday at the Golden Corral in Hamilton, Ohio.



Military Appreciation Monday Breaks Records

By D. Clare

For the Golden Corral team in Great Falls, Mont., Military Appreciation Monday has always been a special event. In 2001, the year of the 9/11 attacks, owners, management, and staff opened their doors for the very first time to offer veterans thank-you meals at no cost.

Still, no one would have blamed the team had they taken the year off. After all, on Oct. 29, just weeks before this year's event, their restaurant burned to the ground.

But even before the fire had smoldered out, the owners and management had made the decision that Military Appreciation Monday would go on.

"It was one of our first thoughts. We spoke with our managers. Our employees were asking about it. They were watching their jobs go up in smoke, literally. But this event always has meant so much to people. I think we all needed a sense of continuity. We needed to tell our veterans and our community that we just weren't going to go away," said Deb Hudson, Golden Corral franchisee and operating partner.

The next day, Commander Burl Brawley of Chapter 2 in Great Falls got the call. The event would go on. It would be held at a local church. The entire staff of the store — even staff members who had moved on professionally — had volunteered their time to make it happen. Local restaurants would donate food.



"I guess you could say we were surprised, but not shocked. Our Golden Corral is really a partner for the DAV. For as long as they've been in business here they've supported us, and we've relied on their help," said Commander Brawley.

According to Brawley, Military Appreciation Monday and year-round support from the restaurant provide the single greatest financial contribution to his Chapter's volunteer transportation network.

Golden Corral provides the meals and collected donations help the Chapter purchase new vans. Free transportation provided for veterans through the program is critical. It helps them travel up to 350 miles to make it to the closest, and only, VA hospital in the state for medical care.

At a local church, 500 veterans received free thank-you meals and the Department of Montana raised more than \$750 — \$150 of which was donated from the staff. "Every penny helps as far as the van service goes. It makes a huge difference. The transportation program is a must-have based on the distance we have to go here," Brawley said.

Veterans in Great Falls weren't the only ones to benefit from Golden Corral's generosity or the company and franchise owners' "above-and-beyond" approach to veterans.

Nationwide, through Golden Corral's Military Appreciation Monday, more than 321,870 veterans received free meals. A new record was set for contribution to the DAV.

Well over \$727,809 in donations were raised to support DAV Departments and Chapters, exceeding the ever-growing record by \$80,557.

In eight years of hosting the event, Golden Corral has facilitated more than \$3,269,400. In addition to generating funds, the DAV has been given the opportunity to meet and greet more than 2 million veterans while they were benefiting from Golden Corral's generosity.

"This is the biggest event all year for many of our Departments and Chapters, and it keeps getting better every year. For many of us, it's our biggest fundraiser and one of our most important outreach initiatives," said National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey. "Beyond recognizing veterans with free meals, Military Appreciation Monday gives us the opportunity to remind our communities of our services and extend our message of hope."

Momentum for the event continues to grow. Golden Corral franchises and company-owned stores challenge one another to see whose location can generate the most awareness and money for the DAV, the event's exclusive charity.

For many stores, Military Appreciation Monday is merely the culmination of a week or more of outreach and DAV exposure to patrons nationwide. Managers and owners routinely go above and beyond to create excitement for the event.

At the Golden Corral in Georgetown, Ky., patrons were encouraged all week to make donations to the DAV. At the

culmination of the event, local ROTC cadets posted a color guard, the Kentucky National Guard parked military vehicles in front of the restaurant, a donated flat-screen television was raffled off, and a local singer performed service medleys every hour on the hour.

"This isn't a one-night or week-long event for us. We try to honor veterans every day of the year," said Raymond Wolf, the store's general manager. "We keep a Wall of Heroes up [with pictures of local and deceased veterans] and people add to it all the time. We know that we wouldn't be in business if it weren't for the veterans who've served to keep our country free, and this is a small price for everything they have done for us. We appreciate them and they appreciate us."

At a time when economic woes impact businesses and tighten finances for individual contributors, record-breaking donations generated through the event help ensure the continuance of the DAV's grassroots service efforts, said National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson.

"Golden Corral and its generous franchise owners don't have to do this. Military Appreciation Monday is the only night of the year that they can count on taking a loss financially. But they come back time and again to lend their support to our cause," said Wilson. "From their CEO to the cooks on the line, their incredible generosity is an inspiration to everyone who has served our country." ☉



Department of Texas Adjutant Eldon Armstrong, right, and Joella Jackson represented the DAV at Golden Corral in Irving, Texas. Jackson is a VA Voluntary Services Representative of VAMC Dallas, Texas, and serves as a Department Service Officer. She was able to inform veterans about benefits representation and free services, while seeking volunteers to improve the quality of care at her local hospital.



Soldiers of the Kentucky National Guard enjoyed dinner after staging military vehicles in front of the Golden Corral in Georgetown, Ky.



Offensive lineman D'Anthony Batiste, left, and defensive end Simon Fraser, center, of the Atlanta Falcons sign autographs for a hospitalized veteran during a Celebrity Entertainment Program Veterans Day visit to the Atlanta VA medical center.

NFL Teams Blitz VA Hospitals

Players from several National Football League teams brought cheer to sick and disabled veterans when they visited Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers as part of the DAV Celebrity Entertainment Program on Veterans Day.

The Atlanta Falcons, Chicago Bears, and Indianapolis Colts were among the teams to visit veterans on their special day at VA hospitals in their cities.

"The players discovered how truly heartwarming it is to visit with hospitalized veterans and show that they care for the veterans' service and sacrifice," said National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey. "The veterans were thrilled to see some of their favorite NFL stars, talk about football and get autographs and mementos of the visit."

"Many NFL teams traditionally sched-

ule visits to VA medical centers as part of their tribute to the men and women who protected our nation's liberty at great personal cost," said National Voluntary Services Director Edward E. Hartman. "We are grateful that so many teams choose the DAV as their partner in these visits."

Players usually spend an hour or two greeting veterans and sharing their stories of their NFL careers, special game moments, and anecdotes.

"Veterans Day is a special opportunity to honor those who have faithfully served our country," said Colts Executive Director of Community Relations Nicole Duncan. "The Indianapolis Colts are proud to partner with the DAV to visit with veterans and offer our thanks for all they have done to defend our freedom."

"We are extremely proud to be able to work with the DAV and support our country's veterans," said Atlanta Falcons Com-

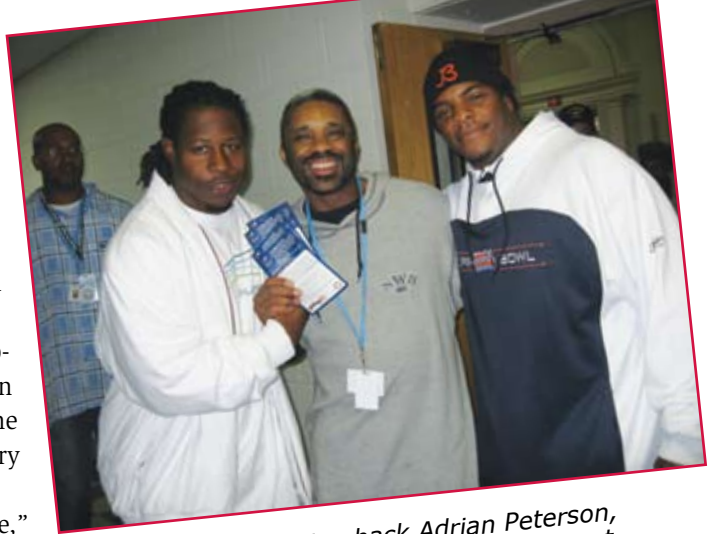
**"We are grateful
that so many
teams choose
the DAV as their
partner in these
visits."**

Edward E. Hartman

munity Relations Director Kendyl Moss. “Our visits to the Atlanta VA medical center are always enjoyed by our players and cheerleaders as they get an opportunity to thank the men and women who served our country.”

“The Chicago Bears organization is always proud to support initiatives and programs that benefit the men and women of the military,” said Director of Community Relations Caroline Schrenker. “We are so grateful to those who serve our country and protect our freedoms.”

“Without question, these visits raise the veterans’ morale,” said Commander Dempsey. “It only takes a moment for these professional football players to lift the spirits of patients, and the players’ spirits are also uplifted by meeting these men and women. Their visits are a testament to all of our DAV volunteers who are at VA medical centers every day, giving care and compassion to those who need it the most.”



Chicago Bears running back Adrian Peterson, left, and fullback Jason McKie, right, present autographed DAV player cards to a patient at the VA medical center in Chicago.



Indianapolis Colts tight ends Tom Santi, far left, and Jacob Tamme, along with team mascot Blue present memorabilia to a veteran patient during a Veterans Day visit to the Indianapolis VA medical center. The Colts were one of many NFL teams to visit sick and disabled veterans at VA medical centers as part of the Celebrity Entertainment Program during the Nov. 11 holiday.

Charitable Gift Annuities

Receive Fixed Income for Life — While You Help Disabled Veterans!



“The way things are in the world today, this has been a good investment. And we know our annuities will be a big help to disabled veterans someday!”

Bill and Marjorie Weedon, Wichita, Kansas

Bill Weedon understands how important it is to feel like your financial future is on solid ground. An Army-Air Corps and Air Force pilot, he flew missions in World War II, Korea and Vietnam. For more than a decade, Bill and his wife Marjorie have turned to Charitable Gift Annuities to increase their income and keep their wings level in trying financial times.

With your gift of \$5,000 or more, you and a survivor can receive fixed payments for life, partly tax-free... and you'll make a tremendous difference in the lives of disabled veterans.

Benefits include:

- Generous fixed payments for life, partly tax-free
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- Guardian Society recognition for your generosity.

Minimum gift:
\$5,000
(cash or stocks)
Minimum age: 60

Payments can be divided into monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual checks — or direct deposits.

Sample Gift Annuity Payout Rates

Sample gift: \$10,000

Rates are available for every age and age combination — just ask!

One Life (You Alone)			Two Lives (You then a Survivor)		
Age	Rate	Income/Year	Ages	Rate	Income/Year
60	5.5%	\$550	65 & 67	5.4%	\$540
65	5.7%	\$570	70 & 72	5.7%	\$570
70	6.1%	\$610	75 & 77	6.1%	\$610
75	6.7%	\$670	78 & 80	6.4%	\$640
80	7.6%	\$760	80 & 82	6.7%	\$670
85	8.9%	\$890	83 & 85	7.2%	\$720
90+	10.5%	\$1050	86 & 88	7.9%	\$790

To receive a personalized illustration of benefits, specific to your age(s), call Judie or Kati at 1-800-216-9802, then press 1, or return attached postcard reply.

e-mail: giftplanning@dav.org website: www.dav.org/giftplanning





from the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN

Keeping the Balance While Meeting the Challenge

"When I was boy," explained a generous hearted man, "one of our favorite swimming holes was under the railroad bridge, and to reach it we had to walk the tracks for half a mile. We boys would often step upon the rails and see who could walk the farthest without losing his balance.

"One day, another boy and I were side by side on opposite rails. In balancing ourselves, we flung out our arms at the same time and discovered that, if we clasped hands, we could both walk along more easily and securely," the man recalled.

"Years later I watched people who seemed to lose their balance in life," he said. "In acquiring possessions, some people become greedy and selfish. In misfortune, others become bitter and resentful.

"Then it came home to me: On the road through life, we keep our own balance better as we meet the challenge when we reach out to help the other fellow keep his balance, too."

In seeking to serve, we must depend on each other for strength. We are not strong enough to do it alone.

The Disabled American Veterans, our organization, depends on all of us as we keep the balance and meet the challenge.

Let us always remember that what is most valuable is not what you have in your life, but who you have in your life, and thank God that we have each other.

I extend to all of you God's blessings for this another new year, 2009.



Green Bay Youths Know More ...

Learning about veterans was the theme for Veterans Day with Mrs. Dellise's fourth grade class at Red Smith School in Green Bay, Wisc. Past National Commander and U.S. Air Force veteran Richard E. Marbes was the invited guest for the day's program and had a great time sharing with the kids.

Director's Commentary

(Continued from page 12)

other life-long disabilities, as do some 3 million veterans from previous eras.

We will again be working on legislation that will improve proper screening and appropriate treatment for TBI, including the so-called mild and moderate forms of the injury. Legislation to address the issue was introduced last year but was not passed in the 110th Congress.

Likewise, we will continue advocating for legislation that would provide financial and psychological support to family caregivers of severely injured veterans. It is spouses, parents, children and siblings who drop everything — withdraw from school or quit a job — to be at the bedside of wounded combat veterans, and remain with them throughout their treatment, recovery, and rehabilitation. Our gov-


ernment simply must meet the needs of family caregivers, as well as those of sick and disabled veterans.

That includes meeting the health care needs of our women veterans. The VA medical system, a relic of a male-dominated military past, is simply unable to adequately treat the influx of women coming home from combat theaters. Just eight percent of all VA medical centers across the country have a full-time female program manager. Sufficient female staff is vital to meeting the specialized needs of women veterans, particularly the 19 percent of women veterans surveyed between 2002 and 2006 who say they had experienced military sexual trauma.

The last Congress failed to pass bipartisan legislation that would have made significant improvements in care for women veterans, and the DAV will redouble efforts to have a bill approved in the 111th Congress.

With many daunting domestic and

international challenges ahead, the Obama administration and the 111th Congress face grave choices that will require all of us to sacrifice. But we must never forget the very real sacrifices already made by millions of American veterans who have been injured or disabled as a result of their service. We must do all that we can to ensure that they get timely access to the highest quality medical care our nation can deliver. Passing the year-in-advance funding legislation, as well as policies to support women veterans and family caregivers, would help to ensure we keep that promise.

With the continued support and active commitment of our members, the DAV's grassroots efforts will succeed in convincing the new leadership in Washington to make these critical issues a national priority in 2009. The future of our nation's sick and disabled veterans and their families and survivors hangs in the balance. 

Fred R. Bristol Visitors Center Presented Afro-Union Colors



A museum quality reproduction flag representing several regiments of U.S. Colored Troops of the American Civil War was presented to the DAV National Headquarters Fred R. Bristol Visitors Center. The original standards were issued in 1864 by Maj. Gen. Benjamin F. Butler to the troops for their service in the victories over Confederate forces at Wilson's Wharf, Suffolk, Petersburg, and New Market Heights. At left, DAV National Service Officer Carroll C. Saucier, Roanoke, Va., and, right, H.O. Brown, Commander, Chapter 41 Department of Virginia, make the presentation. The colors will be displayed with ephemera and medals of that period.



23rd National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic



MIRACLES ON A MOUNTAINSIDE



Department of Veterans Affairs



Disabled American Veterans

Snowmass Village, Colorado

March 29 - April 3, 2009



New Research into TBI, PTSD

■ Researchers at the Department of Veterans Affairs and the University of California at San Diego have launched a \$60 million, five-year study into post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI), common disabilities among veterans of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

"More study is needed into the effects of these disabilities and how to best treat them," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director David W. Gorman. "Unless they are properly diagnosed and treated, these debilitating conditions can result in greater suffering by our veterans."

Part of a congressionally mandated medical research program, the study follows on the heels of an Institute of Medicine report that cited the need for more effective treatment for PTSD.

During the study psychologists, psychiatrists, neurologists, neurosurgeons, trauma surgeons, and rehabilitation specialists at academic research centers will determine what happens to servicemembers who suffer traumatic injuries, including mild head injuries such as concussions. That information then will be used to design treatment for servicemembers with TBI who also develop PTSD.

"Hopefully the results of this study will find better ways to treat those who suffer from these disabilities," said Gorman.

A parallel study is also looking into PTSD specifically in women and the link between PTSD and TBI. The two disabilities can overlap in complex ways, making accurate diagnosis and effective treatment difficult.

Iraq War Veterans Exposed to Toxins

■ Those who have served at the largest U.S. military base in Iraq may have been exposed to cancer-causing dioxins and hazardous medical waste.

The DAV encourages all veterans who served at Joint Base Balad for any period of time to contact a National Service Officer at once to determine if they are at risk

and eligible for assistance. Joint Base Balad is the central logistics hub for U.S. forces in Iraq.

The heart of the danger is an open-air "burn pit" that incinerated almost 250 tons of waste daily. The smoke from the pit routinely polluted the breathing air at the base. Into the pit went Styrofoam, unexploded ordnance, petroleum products, plastics, rubber, dining facility trash, paint, solvents and medical waste, including amputated limbs, according to a military expert.

A former Air Force expert in occupational and environmental workplace hazards was recently quoted in the *Military Times* newspapers saying the burn pit was an "acute health hazard for individuals. There is also the possibility for chronic health hazards associated with the smoke."

According to the *Military Times* report, troops may have been exposed to dangerous poisons including arsenic, freon, carbon monoxide, ethylbenzene, formaldehyde, hydrogen cyanide, nitrogen dioxide, sulfuric acid, xylene and benzene, an aircraft fuel known to cause leukemia.


Joint Base Balad is about 40 miles north of Baghdad and includes what was formerly Logistics Support Area Anaconda, the largest Army supply center in Iraq. 



PHOTO: D. CLARE

The heart of the danger is an open-air "burn pit" that incinerated almost 250 tons of waste daily.



Left, veterans pass the time awaiting DAV's professional claims services outside of the Mobile Service Office at FedEx Field. Below, National Service Officer Stephanie A. Cooper, left, one of the many NSOs assisting veterans at the Washington Redskins Veterans Health Fair, helps Hopeton Brown of La Plata, Md., complete his disability claim in the Mobile Service Office at FedEx Field.

DAV Service Teams Up with the Washington Redskins

By Thom Wilborn

More than 100 veterans got free claims assistance and counseling at a pre-Veterans Day health fair hosted by the National Football League's Washington Redskins at FedEx Field in Landover, Md., Nov. 8.

"This was an excellent opportunity to bring service to a great number of veterans," said National Service Director Randy Reese. "The huge turnout at the DAV's Mobile Service Office stationed outside FedEx Field gave the opportunity to seek claims advice and representation from the DAV."

About 400 veterans underwent free medical screening and received immediate test results from health care professionals who set up operations in the Redskins locker room. Several of the team's cheerleaders signed auto-



graphs for veterans who were given an exclusive on-field view of the players' entrance to FedEx Field.


"The DAV offered our services as a half-dozen National Service Officers (NSOs) provided information and claims representation throughout the day," said Reese. "Our volunteers also provided transportation and assisted in managing the large crowd."

The health fair was sponsored by the Washington Redskins, GlaxoSmith-Kline and the Men's Health Network, with the support of DAV and other veterans service organizations.

The free health care screening encouraged men and women veterans to be careful with their health. Those attending received free educational materials on various health conditions.

Glaxo Smith Kline Vice President Howard K. Thomas extended his thanks to the DAV and other VSOs which he said represent our nation's warriors each and every day. "I would like to extend our sincere gratitude on behalf of all my colleagues here at GSK, and in particular recognition of Veterans Day, we thank you for your service to our country," he said. "This event is a small, important step in giving back to those who have sacrificed and given so much."

"This was an outstanding event, and we couldn't have done it without the DAV and its outreach efforts," said Men's Health Network Marketing Director Theresa Morrow. "Men's Health Network certainly looks forward to continue working to reach veterans across the country with important health information and screenings."

Washington Redskins Client Services Manager Stephanie R. Baldwin said that "DAV helped to make it fantastic." 

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

11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION ASSN. - February 22-25, 2009, Myrtle Beach, South Carolina, Contact: Herb Shapiro, Phone: (410) 827-6410, Email: HLSHAP@atlanticbb.net.
ARMY COUNTER INTELLIGENCE CORPS VETERANS (ACICV) - May 3-7, 2009, Reno, Nevada, Contact: Dick Snyder, Phone: (813) 634-4489, Email: rbcinder6@verizon.net.

2D/39TH INFANTRY, 9TH INFANTRY DIVISION (VIETNAM), ECHO COMPANY - May 14-17, 2009, Nashville, Tennessee, Contact: Jim Stone, Phone: (248) 478-8673, Email: echo239romeo@hotmail.com.

7/15TH FIELD ARTILLERY - June 4-7, 2009, Omaha, Nebraska, Contact: Richard Pennell, Phone: (402) 805-0106, Email: cbat71568@yahoo.com.

158TH REGIMENTAL COMBAT TEAM - June 4-7, 2009, Colorado Springs, Colorado, Contact: Ralph Brake, Phone: (757) 926-4290, Email: ghseebald@aol.com.

ANZIO BEACHHEAD VETERANS OF WWII, INC. - April 26-29, 2009, Savannah, Georgia, Contact: John Boller, Phone: (631) 691-5002, Email: juniorglb@msn.com.

ANZIO BEACHHEAD VETERANS OF 1944, WWII - April 22-26, 2009, Williamsburg, Virginia, Contact: Clyde Easter, Phone: (276) 728-7293.

86TH CHEMICAL MORTAR BATTALION - April 22-26, 2009, Nashville, Tennessee, Contact: George Murray, Phone: (256) 820-4415.

L COMPANY, 21ST INFANTRY REGIMENT, 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION - May 13-17, 2009, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Contact: George Vlasic, Phone: (910) 287-5618, Email: geonanvlasic@atmc.net.

297TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION, WWII - June 4-7, 2009, New Jersey, Contact: Mari Ippolito, Phone: (973) 857-6552.

8605TH AAU; 5TH ASA FS; DET 5, 2ND SIG SVC BN - April 16-19, 2009, Williamsburg, Virginia, Contact: Dick Dixon, Phone: (601) 485-7567.



MARINES

3RD & 4TH DEFENSE BATTALIONS, WORLD WAR II - May-09, St. Louis, Missouri, Contact: Joseph P. Dunn, Phone: (856) 629-8043.

USMC VIETNAM TANKERS ASSN. - August 19-23, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: John Wear, Phone: (215) 794-9052, Email: usmcvtla@comcast.net, Website: www.usmcvtla.org.



NAVY

CLAMAGORE VETERAN'S ASSN. - October 26-29, 2009, Patriots Point, South Carolina, Contact: George Bass, Phone: (352) 332-7953, Email: geobass@earthlink.net.

USS AMPHION (AR-13) - April 19-22, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: Lloyd Stagg, 7407 Lillie Lane, Pensacola, Florida 32526.

USS ARCADIA (AD-23) - April 19-22, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: USS Arcadia, Phone: (838) 256-6008, Email: mcaanreunion@yahoo.com.

USS BAINBRIDGE (DD-246) - April 24-26, 2009, Cornelius, North Carolina, Contact: Allan Thompson, Phone: (704) 892-0578, Email: ATThompson35912@Roadrunner.com.

USS BLUE (DD-744) - September 24-27, 2009, Nashville, Tennessee, Contact: Dennis Kearns, Phone: (845) 565-4061, Email: DD744Blue@yahoo.com.

USS CADMUS (AR-14) - April 19-22, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: Robert Baschmann, Phone: (716) 655-5415, Email: mcaanreunion@yahoo.com.

USS CAMBRIA (APA-36) - April 23-26, 2009, Washington, DC, Contact: David Stoll, Phone: (419) 738-3786, Email: destoll@bright.net.

USS FDR (CV-42) - May 13-17, 2009, Jacksonville, Florida, Contact: Ray Hough, Phone: (318) 645-7673, Email: rghough@bellsouth.net.

Website: www.usssfdrcv42reunion.com.

USS GRAY (DE/FF-1054) - September 16-20, 2009, Branson, Missouri, Contact: George Cone, Phone: (785) 594-2948, Email: gccone@ku.edu.

USS GURKE (DD-783) - May 28-31, 2009, Rapid City, South Dakota, Contact: Thomas Stephenson, Phone: (408) 263-2836, Email: dd783_reunion@tstephenson.com.

USS KENNETH D. BAILEY (DD/DDR-713) - May 14-17, 2009, Chicago, Illinois, Contact: Robert Nowak, Phone: (413) 592-1355, Email: Blueobblue@aol.com.

USS MARIAS (AO-57) - April 19-22, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: USS Marias, Phone: (828) 256-6008, Email: mcaanreunion@yahoo.com.

USS NICHOLAS (DD/DDE-449 & FFG-47) - April 19-24, 2009, Charleston, South Carolina, Contact: Thomas F. Sallee, Sr., Phone: (843) 821-9171, Email: nancysallee@bellsouth.net.

USS PAWCATUCK (AO-108) - April 23-27, 2009, Washington, D.C., Contact: David Willis, Phone: (623) 214-9835, Email: dwshs53@aol.com.

USS PURDY (DD-734) - April 15-19, 2009, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Contact: Larry DiPasquale, Phone: (610) 433-4787, Email: chiefdi@juno.com.

USS RATHBURN (FF-1057) - September 23-26, 2009, Branson, Missouri, Contact: Bob Rowe, Phone: (901) 837-6106, Email: fs5124@wildblue.net.

USS TARAWA (CV/CVA/CVS-40) - April 30-May 3, 2009, Buffalo, New York, Contact: Cliff Gardner, Phone: (401) 539-1149.

USS TARAWA (LHA-1) - April 30-May 3, 2009, Buffalo, New York, Contact: Malcolm A. Lanham, Phone: (304) 965-5916, Email: TarawalHA1@aol.com.

USS WARRINGTON (DD-843) - April 29-May 3, 2009, San Diego, California, Contact: Stan Prager, Phone: (916) 791-6700, Email: Stashuman843@msn.com.

USS WILHOITE (DE/DER-397) - September 30-October 3, 2009, Omaha, Nebraska, Contact: Tom and Addie Morrissey, Phone: (402) 483-6889, Email: adtomorrissey@msn.com.



AIR FORCE

20TH AIR POLICE SQUADRON REUNION 1953-1963, RAF WETHERSFIELD, ENGLAND - May 12-14, 2009, Chattanooga, Tennessee, Contact: Earl Czech, Phone: (763) 784-8975, Email: Cearlretired@aol.com.



ALL SERVICES

1ST ANNUAL VIETNAM VETERANS - October 10-12, 2009, Cypress, Texas, Contact: Chace Freel, Phone: (713) 823-8777, Email: chace.freel@yahoo.com.

Inquiries - 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 Navy man, AKCS Robert (Deadrock) Livingston, who was stationed with me at the Naval Air Station, Memphis, Tennessee, Naval Air Reserve Unit from 1974 to 1978. Please contact Chick Wood, 7016 87th Street, Gig Harbor, Washington 98332.

- Searching for fellow servicemen who served with the 1st of the 40th Artillery Unit in Dong Ha Viet Name during 1966-1968. Please contact Thomas Hanan, 17538 Becky Lane, Adams, New York 13605, Phone: (315) 232-2576.

- Searching for my fellow servicemen who served in the Army during WWII, Camp Fannin, Texas, Camp Livingston, Louisiana or Camp Pickett, Virginia. Please contact Robert J. Sweitzer, 985 W. Sheridan Avenue, Hayden, Idaho 83835, Phone: (208) 772-9660.

- Searching for anyone assigned to the 2953rd CLSS at Tinker AFB, Oklahoma in 1971, especially those involved in the TDY to Tuy Hoa, Vietnam to work on jet engines. Please contact Larry Brown, 308 Beeson Road, Moselle, Mississippi 39459, Phone: (601) 549-0654 or (601) 270-7842.

- Searching for anyone who was stationed at Fire Base OASIS in the Central Highlands from December 1968 to May 1969 who remembers hearing of my fall from Jeep while I was manning an M-60. Please contact Gregg Walker, P.O. Box 15, Colrain, Massachusetts 01340, Phone: (413) 624-5522, Email: walkerhobo@aol.com.

- Searching for Army veterans who served or had reason to attend the Eighth Army Food Service School, APO 343, Unit-2 near Yokohama, Japan from 1947 to 1953. Please contact William C. Beck, 4980 Buckboard Circle, Concord, North Carolina 28025, Phone: (704) 782-4219. My Blog address is: <http://searchforshorty.blogspot.org/>.

- Searching for anyone who served with the 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, Charlie Company, December 1966 to December 1967, Hill #55. Please contact Lester Butch Pugh, P.O. Box 233, Kempner, Texas 76539, Phone: (512) 932-2259.

- Searching for anyone who served with Domingo R. Yorba, U.S. Army-Okinawa in the USNS Sea Lift Commander (USA TransOpsDir-W21V-2nd Log Command) from October 1970 to January 1972. Please contact Mr. A. Alan Hill, Veterans Counselor, 3600 Memorial Boulevard-Bluid #1, Kerrville, Texas 78028, Phone: (830) 792-2478.

- Searching for anyone who served with Company C Co 1276 Combat Engineers Battalion, WWII in England, France, Belgium, Holland and German June 1944-45. Please contact Oran F. Bailey, P.O. Box 436, Peralta, New Mexico 87042, Phone: (505) 869-6125, Email: Rogersbailey@juno.com.

- Searching for anyone who served in the USAF who was stationed as TDY at Phu Cat, Vietnam, in early 1968. Around the end of Tet, or a few days after, I was with 14th APRON out of Cam Rahn Bay. Please contact Eddie Sellers, 26813 Chips Lane, Parma, Idaho 83660, Phone: (208) 722-5964.

- Searching for anyone in Boot Camp during February and March of 1943 in San Diego, California. Please contact John B. Crane, P.O. Box 52, Clermont, Georgia 30527, Phone: (770) 983-3423.

- Searching for fellow Marine H & S Co., 3rd Battalion, 9th Marines, 3 Division, Vietnam 1967. Please contact Robert L. Gatz, 4421 Rockwood Drive, Louisville, Kentucky 40220, Phone: (502) 454-5567, Email: RobertGatz@bellsouth.net.

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.

Appointments



NSO John Wilson Joins Washington Staff

With the approval of National Commander Raymond E. Dempsey, National Adjutant Arthur H. Wilson

announced the appointment of National Service Officer John Wilson as Associate National Legislative Director at National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington, D.C.


As Associate National Legislative Director, Wilson will play a key role in the day-to-day operations of the DAV's National Legislative Department, focusing on benefits and servicemembers transitioning to veteran status.

Wilson began his DAV career as a National Service Officer in April 2007 at the National Service Office in Muskogee, Okla.

Before retiring from a 32-year Air Force career, Lt. Col. Wilson was respon-

sible for setting and enforcing policy to best determine servicemembers' ability to serve and disability compensation for those separated from the Air Force.

NSO Wilson, who served in Iraq and Bosnia, began his foray into government affairs when he was based at the Pentagon. There, he furthered the Air Force's training and education goals by maneuvering through Washington politics.

National Adjutant Wilson said he offers his sincere congratulations on his new position, "knowing that he will continue to carry out his new responsibilities with the same dedication and professionalism that marked his military career." 



JARHEAD Speaks Out for DAV

New York Times best-selling author Anthony Swofford recently visited DAV National Headquarters and attended Cincinnati's

Books by the Banks Festival to educate the public about the issues facing disabled veterans and their families. Swofford, whose acclaimed novel Jarhead: A Marine's Chronicle of the Gulf War and Other Battles was made into a film, was a headline speaker who touted the DAV's services and discussed the challenges veterans face transitioning to civilian life. The author toured Bethesda and Walter Reed military hospitals through the DAV and is using that experience in an upcoming book.



Shredded Documents

(Continued from page 11)

corded in DAV's Case Management System, which serves as credible evidence of submission to the VA.

"We have a Case Management System in place in which all records submitted are entered into a computer system and saved to our secure server," said Reese. "We can pull these submittals up at a moment's notice in order to confirm a veteran had submitted documents through our office. This is evidence that the VA can use to confirm a veteran's assertion that a claims document should be in the system.

"I think the DAV is more successful as a result of the Case Management System," he said, "and our NSOs handle claims on a more personal basis, whereas the VA system is so large that there is a greater possibility that VA will mishandle evidence due to the sheer volume of data that they receive."

VA regional offices receive approximately 25 million claims-related documents in the mail each year. But only about 50 percent of veterans filing VA disability claims each year are represented by a veterans service or-

ganization, which will keep a record of submitted documents.

The VA says that nearly 200 pertinent claims documents were recovered from shredding bins in St. Louis and Columbia, S.C., regional offices. The documents were traced to individuals in each office who have been placed on administrative leave pending investigation. The VA says 474 documents affecting about 465 veterans' claims have been recovered from shredder bins in offices nationwide. No discrepancies were found at some VA regional offices.

The VA stopped all shredding Oct. 14, 2008, and it had not resumed as of Nov. 14.

The VA also instituted new procedures that require employees to add the date and their initials to all claims-related documents to be destroyed. These documents are then forwarded to a supervisor for approval. This two-person review and approval process will be required before any claims documents are shredded.

All documents will be placed in a special receptacle which will be available for spot checks by office supervisors before they are shredded."

A Records Control Officer at every regional office will oversee records management and disposal. The VA

also ordered additional training for regional office staff in the proper handling and disposal of documents.

Reese said the DAV will cooperate fully with the VA during their investigation and DAV records will be made available for the purpose of assisting the VA to reconstitute records.

The DAV believes that this investigation, which Reese says has been the most open in recent memory, will help protect the integrity of claims records and increase the professionalism of VA claims adjudicators.

The OIG is continuing its investigation of cases where inappropriate shredding was traced to specific employees. They face legal and disciplinary action if they are found to have acted improperly.

"The actions taken by the VA at DAV's urging may help restore faith in the claims adjudication process," said Reese. "But it is the responsibility of the VA to be vigilant that this problem is never repeated and that the highest integrity is used in dealing with our veterans' claims.

"Contact the nearest DAV National Service Office for additional information if you have questions or need assistance with a claim," said Reese. ☉

Combat to Congress

(Continued from page 22)

cess and what it has to do with the Marine Corps," Gibson, from Pryor, Okla., said. "Now us staff NCOs can be a part of that process and have a say in it."

Selection for the program seems like a natural step for his career in the Marines, said Gibson. He explained that the majority of his experience in the Marine Corps has been focused on ground combat, but he is ready for a change.

"I think it's the perfect time to go," Gibson said. "This deployment has shown me where my place in the future is. This is going to be an environment I'm not used to, but it'll be an environment where I can help the whole military."

Though his tour in Washington, D.C., will be something he has never done before, his selection to the fellowship shows the Department of Defense has faith that Gibson's extensive experience and professionalism will represent the Marine Corps in a positive light. ☉

DAV EMBROIDERED SWEATSHIRT, SWEATPANT, AND HOODED SWEATSHIRT

Embroidery features the "DAV" logo and "Disabled American Veterans". Gray Sweats are embroidered with black thread. Navy Sweats are embroidered with gold thread. Shirts are embroidered on the left chest, pants are embroidered on the left thigh. Matching sweats made of 60/40 blend of cotton and polyester.



Marc Burgess
Director of Human Resources

Barry Jesinoski
Deputy Director of Human Resources

Tammy Shaffer
Donor Relations Supervisor



Sizes are Men's adult size. Sweatpant sizes are as follows: Small (30-32); Medium (32-34); Large (36-38); XL (40-42); 2XL (44-46); 3XL (48-50); 4XL (52-54).

Navy Sweatshirt

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502424	2XL	Quantity_____	\$26 ea	\$_____
502425	3XL	Quantity_____	\$28 ea	\$_____
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501302	L	Quantity_____	\$24 ea	\$_____
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501304	2XL	Quantity_____	\$26 ea	\$_____
501305	3XL	Quantity_____	\$28 ea	\$_____
501306	4XL	Quantity_____	\$30 ea	\$_____

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502432	L	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
502433	XL	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
502434	2XL	Quantity_____	\$27 ea	\$_____
502435	3XL	Quantity_____	\$29 ea	\$_____
502436	4XL	Quantity_____	\$31 ea	\$_____

Gray Sweatpant

501307	S	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
501308	M	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
501309	L	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
501310	XL	Quantity_____	\$25 ea	\$_____
501311	2XL	Quantity_____	\$27 ea	\$_____
501312	3XL	Quantity_____	\$29 ea	\$_____
501313	4XL	Quantity_____	\$31 ea	\$_____

Navy Hooded Sweatshirt

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502438	M	Quantity_____	\$26 ea	\$_____
502439	L	Quantity_____	\$26 ea	\$_____
502440	XL	Quantity_____	\$26 ea	\$_____
502441	2XL	Quantity_____	\$27 ea	\$_____
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502443	4XL	Quantity_____	\$33 ea	\$_____

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Plan to Attend the 2009 Mid-Winter Conference February 21-25

The 2008 elections will put a new President in the White House. A new congress convenes at the other end of Pennsylvania Avenue.

- What do these important changes mean for veterans issues?
- Will the federal budget finally provide sufficient, timely and predictable funding for the veterans health care system?
- What are the prospects for fixing the benefits delivery system?
- What needs to be done to care for today's and tomorrow's disabled veterans?

These are some of the questions you'll get answered at the 2009 DAV Mid-Winter Conference. Join Chapter and Department leaders from across the country and find out how you can make our legislative priorities a success.

The Mid-Winter Conference, held in conjunction with the Commanders and Adjutants Association Annual Meeting, begins February 21st. Get the facts and visit your Senators and Representatives on Capitol Hill. Tell them it's time for them to Stand Up for Veterans. It's your chance to have a personal say in veteran's affairs.

Plus there are exciting and informative workshops and meetings that will give you an in-depth perspective of the crucial issues facing disabled veterans and their families.

Make plans to take part in one of the most crucial gatherings of DAV leaders. It's time for our government to make veterans a national priority.

Agenda

Saturday, 2/21/09

Registration	12-4 pm
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Sunday, 2/22/09

Registration	8am-12noon
Business Session	9am-12pm
DAV Legislative Workshop	1:30pm-5pm

Monday, 2/23/09

DAV Service Workshop	9am-10:30pm
DAV Voluntary Services and Membership Workshop	10:30am-12pm
DAV IG/Adjutants Workshop	2pm-3pm
DAV Communications Workshop	3pm-4:30pm

Tuesday, 2/24/09

DAV National Service Foundation	9am-10am
DAV Charitable Service Trust	10am-11am
National Commander's Presentation To Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee	2:00pm
National Commander's Reception	6:30pm-8:30pm

Wednesday, 2/25/09

DAV Board of Directors Meeting	9am-10am
DAV National Executive Committee Meeting	Immediately Following Board of Directors Meeting



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Cut off date for reservations is: January 30, 2009

Check-out time is 12 noon. Rooms will not be available for check-in until after 3 p.m. Reservations requested beyond the cut-off date are subject to availability. Rooms may still be available after the cut-off date, but not necessarily at the same rate. Please apply 9.75 percent sales tax to room rate.