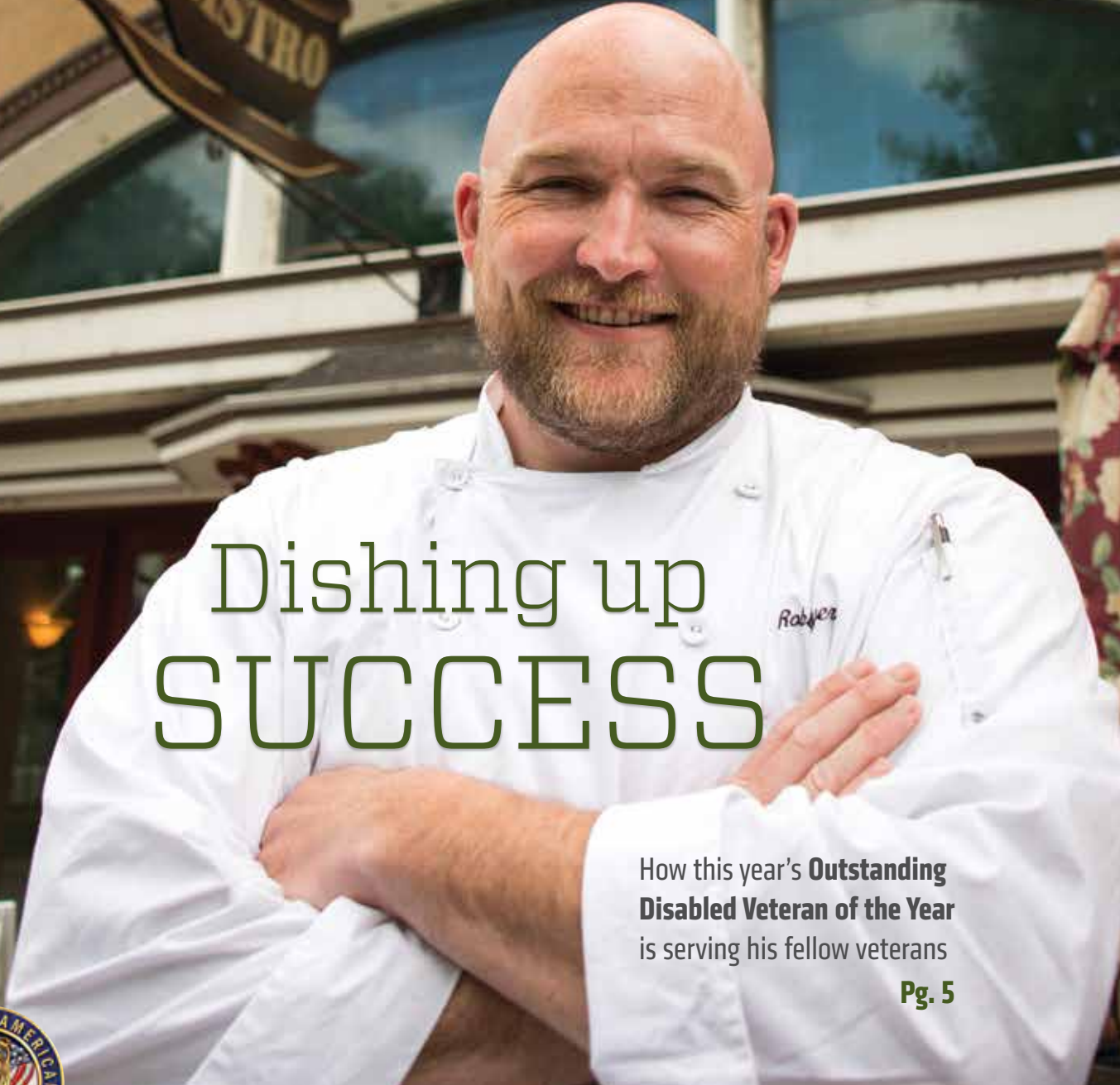




THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

JULY | AUGUST 2015

MAGAZINE

A full-page photograph of a smiling man with a beard, wearing a white chef's coat, standing in front of a building with a sign that says 'Lyric BISTRO'. The man's arms are crossed, and his name 'Robby' is embroidered on his coat.

Dishing up SUCCESS

How this year's **Outstanding
Disabled Veteran of the Year**
is serving his fellow veterans

Pg. 5



WWW.DAV.ORG



[FB.COM/THE.DAV](https://www.facebook.com/the.dav)



[@DAVHQ](https://twitter.com/DAVHQ)

AVAILABLE FOR TABLETS AND MOBILE DEVICES



Mile High City

to host DAV National Convention



August 8-11, 2015 | Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel
located at 1550 Court Place

The Mile High City offers visitors the perfect blend of outdoor adventure and urban sophistication. Denver's snowcapped peaks make for the perfect backdrop of this year's convention.

Beyond meeting your fellow veterans and influencing DAV's future, the city offers a multitude of unique adventures for convention attendees. Denver is known as the Arts Capital of the West, and it is teeming with unique museums and galleries.

A beautiful, family-oriented city, Denver has dozens of different escapes for outdoor enthusiasts, sports fans and curious travelers.

From boutiques, spas and shops to amusement parks and recreation, attendees will have every chance to advocate for injured and ill veterans and enjoy everything the Mile High City has to offer, including a return performance by Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band during Fun Night at the convention.

Hotel reservation information is available at www.starwoodmeeting.com/Book/DAV2015 or by calling 888-627-8405. Be sure to tell them you are reserving under the "Disabled American Veterans" room block if making reservations by phone. ■



Learn More Online

Visit dav.org/events for more information about the convention and special guidance regarding altitude concerns. To plan additional activities and find discount tickets to venues, visit www.visitdenver.com/DAV.



Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band will perform during Fun Night.



Travel Assistance

The Transportation Security Administration (TSA) can facilitate the screening of injured or wounded veterans. After making flight reservations, veterans (or their care coordinators) should contact a TSA Cares representative by calling toll-free 855-787-2227 weekdays from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. and weekends and holidays from 9 a.m. to 8 p.m. (Eastern time). A representative will either provide screening information relevant to the veteran's disability, or the veteran may be referred to experts at TSA to help them through the screening process.

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER

RON F. HOPE



It's been the greatest honor

Words cannot adequately express how I feel as I write this last column. It's been the greatest honor, privilege and joy to serve as your National Commander. Taking care of the men and women who undoubtedly have what the words "service," "sacrifice" and "freedom" entail is a sacred promise DAV has made to America's veterans, and I always kept that in mind.

It was a very busy and productive year. As you all know, for two straight years DAV marched on Congress' doorstep to make ourselves clear that we expect our lawmakers to do the right thing for the men and women who had the courage to wear our nation's uniform. Passing advance appropriations into law to ensure veterans and their families would continue to receive their earned benefits in the event of a government shutdown was, quite simply, the right thing to do. And I'm proud to say that DAV made that happen.

In 2015, we again found ourselves on Congress' steps to say that we expect them to pass the Caregivers Expansion and Improvement Act. This bill will open the VA family caregivers program to all eligible veterans of any era who were severely injured while serving our country.

As I prepare to leave this post, I want to take one more chance to impress upon you how critical this legislation is. The family caregivers program provides home health training, peer support and a financial stipend to caregivers of injured

veterans. It would also provide caregivers access to mental health support and enrollment in the VA's civilian health and mental health programs, if they are not already eligible. This is something I know you can all get behind, as many of you have personal experience with this issue.

Providing equal benefits for family caregivers of wounded and ill veterans for the decades of service and sacrifice before 9/11 is simply the right thing to do, as well as plain common sense. I urge you to let your elected representatives know you will hold them accountable—with your votes.

DAV's Transportation Network remains top-notch, and I'm very proud that we provide such an important service to our brothers and sisters. But we're seeing a shortage of drivers. If you have the time and are not otherwise engaged, I respectfully ask that you consider volunteering for this important program.

Like many of us, DAV came into my life when I desperately needed it and, as a result, I wanted to become active in the organization and help continue our legacy of service to America's veterans. I plan to stay an active part of DAV and hope you will as well.

Thank you for placing your trust in me to represent our wounded and injured veterans. In my mind, there's no greater group of men and women on Earth, and I'm as proud to stand with all of you today as I was when I joined DAV more than two decades ago.

CONTENTS

1 National Commander Ron Hope reflects on time in office, encourages members to stay active and engaged as organization prepares to usher in new leadership.

3 Show of strength in our communities: National Adjutant Marc Burgess discusses continued engagement through local outreach.

12 A look at the benefits of the VA as a “teaching system” for both veterans and physicians

14 Ford launches new program aimed at helping women veterans make the transition from military to civilian life.

18 Through a DAV member's persistent efforts, a mysterious crash site becomes a memorial for those who served in the military's Cold War era operations.

20 DAV takes to Capitol Hill demanding lawmakers set goals, take action to improve care and services for women veterans.



DAV MAGAZINE • July/August 2015

Contact us: www.dav.org • Toll Free 877-426-2838 • 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076 • feedback@dav.org. Volume 57, Issue 4, *DAV Magazine* (ISSN 0885-6400). Editorial Office: DAV Magazine, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. Telephone 859-441-7300 or toll free (877) I AM A VET. Published and circulated bimonthly bulletin by the Disabled American Veterans, a Congressionally chartered, nonprofit organization, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250-0301. DAV Home Page is www.dav.org. Available on recording for the blind and those with physical handicaps that preclude reading printed material. The magazine is mailed free to DAV and Auxiliary members who are paid subscribers. Nonmembers may subscribe for \$15 per year. Periodical postage paid at office of publication, Newport, KY 41071, and at additional offices. Printed in U.S.A. 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. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to DAV Magazine, DAV National Headquarters, P.O. Box 145550, Cincinnati, OH 45250-5550.



FEATURES

5



The 2015 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year takes combat cooking to culinary perfection as he brings the national spotlight to key veterans' issues.

15



DAV recognizes the VA's top performing employees for their exemplary service to the veterans community.

22



A story of survival: DAV life member Lester Tenney discusses his experience during the infamous Bataan Death March.

Ron F. Hope National Commander

J. Marc Burgess National Adjutant/Publisher

Daniel J. Clare National Director of Communications

Ashleigh Byrnes Deputy National Director of Communications

Joseph R. Chenelly Assistant National Director of Communications

Steven Wilson Assistant National Director of Communications

Charity A. Edgar Assistant National Director of Communications

M. Todd Hunter Associate National Director of Communications

Doreen Briones Production Manager

Shannan Archer Senior Graphic Designer

From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



Engaging opportunities

I have been thinking a lot about our members lately and the dedicated work each of you puts forth in your own communities to help veterans lead better, more fulfilling lives.

It's humbling how many of you continue to give so much for others, after having already given enormously for your country.

Many of you have asked how best to engage with the newer generation of veterans and wonder how to bring them in and get them involved in DAV's activities at the local level. I suspect it may be easier than we think.

What most of us have in common, once we leave the military, is a desire to give back and serve others. This is what often led us into service in the first place and what inspired us to get involved with DAV.

We know that the services DAV offers impact lives in dozens of different ways. It's easy, knowing how successful our current efforts are, to overlook new opportunities to get involved and engage with other veterans. We know the saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it," but consider creative new approaches as ongoing maintenance for our current operations.

Today's veterans are eager to be active, though they sometimes choose other ways to get involved. What this means for all of us is meeting them on

their turf. Don't wait for them to come to you; seek them out and find creative approaches to invite them to be part of the great organization you have helped create. Something simple, like sponsoring a movie night over pizza, a family barbecue for new veterans and their families, or setting up a recurring community bike ride or hike could bring our newer generation into

the fold and share our mission with them.

Are you a member of a local gym? Why not bring along copies of *DAV Magazine* to leave behind for a fellow veteran to pick up? Or how about handing out information flyers and DAV pamphlets at the end of a community 5K race? Maybe set up a monthly coffee meet-up specifically for women veterans to get together.

We should be exploring all options and expanding beyond our normal comfort zones to share the good work of this organization and give others the opportunity to get involved.

There is a lot of new talent and energy now pouring into our community, and we will only stand to become better as an organization if we work to harness it. And we will only harness it if we take the time to go out and approach our fellow veterans, invite them in, listen to their concerns and hear their fresh, new ideas.

Don't wait for
[veterans] to
come to you;
seek them out
and find creative
approaches to
invite them to be
part of the great
organization
you have helped
create.



LETTERS

VA medical center experiences

I'm a 100-percent permanently disabled Vietnam veteran. I go to the VA hospital in Saginaw, Mich., and I occasionally go to Detroit. When I go to either hospital, I've been treated with great respect. I also have zero complaints about medical treatments. The staff go out of their way to help me. Sometimes I'm almost embarrassed by all the attention! Keep up the good work.

Dave Ross, Bancroft, Mich.

With everybody telling their tales of woe, I thought I would relate a positive story. On Sept. 11, 2014, I had a total knee arthroplasty (replacement) on my right leg. The surgery was performed at the Cheyenne VA Medical Center in Wyoming. I was in the hospital for only two days, but the care I received was phenomenal. Everybody was just outstanding. I've gone to the Cheyenne VA since about 1985, and I have always received excellent care! I look forward to my left knee replacement in the future.

Paul R. Netta, Cheyenne, Wyo.

I am a Korean War veteran, and I will tell you I have been to VA medical facilities in Omaha and Lincoln, Neb., and was always treated very well by everybody.

Glen Shoemaker, Cortland, Neb.

I am still waiting too long, driving too far and not always being treated the way I find acceptable at my VA hospital. I have been going to the VA for about 30 years. I want the VA to stick around. I want to be treated by people who understand the special circumstances we have as veterans. I want the other patients around me to be veterans. But the VA needs to admit there are big problems at every hospital. Right the ship and drive on! Maybe the politicians in Washington need to tell them it is OK to not be perfect. If they don't have the guts

to do that, they're going to lose the VA to private doctors. A lot of veterans think that'd be better, but I don't. **Brent Haskill, Dewey, Ga.**

Just a few questions

An article the *DAV Magazine* concerning Mr. Walls ("Not Left Behind," Jan/Feb 2015 edition) got me thinking about my life. I was brought to the East Orange VA campus on a four-hour-a-day program. I spoke with a DAV representative who helped me put in a successful claim for seizures and spinal cord damage. A few days later, the DAV representative called to ask me if he had my permission to add depression to my medical claim. He believed this was also a symptom I was displaying. An examination was set up at a New York VA medical center. While taking the mental exam, the doctor asked me four or five questions. I broke down and began crying. The questions hit something deep down inside of me. I am so grateful for the DAV rep calling me. My status was raised to 100 percent. I am dealing with this problem, seeing it for what it is and overcoming it. I am so grateful for the DAV for being there for me.

William Everett, East Orange, N.J.

Another angle of concurrent discrimination

This is in response to the letter titled "Stop the discrimination" in the March/April issue of *DAV Magazine*. There is an important difference between medical retirement after less than 20 years of service and

a length-of-service retirement. Medical retirements converted to a Department of Veterans Affairs Disability payment, upon approval and rating by that department, are not qualified for any type of "concurrent" pay. "Concurrent" insinuates two or more payments due, which is not the case in such a situation. I believe the only "discrimination" remaining in the government's concurrent receipt policy is that those who retired for length-of-service must have a disability rating of 50 percent or higher to qualify for concurrent receipt. Rather than picking an arbitrary disability percentage, any and all disability payments should qualify. The loss of earning potential for disabled retirees does, after all, put them in a poorer position to provide for their families by earning supplemental income. **Tommy W. Thompson, Bossier City, La.**

Facebook on Memorial Day facebook.com/DAV

For 47 years, I haven't forgotten the men from my company who died in 'Nam. Not a day goes by that I don't think of them. **Paul Samuel**

My brother Michael James Mooney was a Marine who was killed in action in Vietnam on Aug. 10, 1969. He was 18. I love and miss you so much! I will carry your memory forever and will keep it alive! HE AIN'T HEAVY — HE'S MY BROTHER! I will keep the memory of all who paid the ultimate price. **Sharon Daniels**

WRITE TO US We welcome letters from our readers. Please mail them to *DAV Magazine*, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076, or submit them via email to feedback@dav.org. We regret we are unable to acknowledge every letter due to the volume received. We also welcome feedback on our Facebook (facebook.com/DAV) and Twitter (twitter.com/davhq) pages. Letters used are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety. Messages involving individual claims are referred to the DAV Service Department.



From Korengal to the KITCHEN

Vet of the year shines spotlight on those who served

By Ashleigh Byrnes

Like many veterans, the transition from military to civilian life brought numerous unforeseen challenges for DAV's 2015 Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year, Robbie Myers. In 2012, the husband and father of five (with a sixth on the way) was medically discharged from the Army. His family returned home from Germany with little income and nowhere to turn. Myers found himself essentially homeless, living in a tent while his wife and children stayed with family.

All that changed when he was selected to compete on the "Military Salute" episode of the Food Network's "Chopped," going head-to-head against three other

military cooks. He swept the competition, claiming the title of Chopped Champion and highlighting veterans' struggles with post-traumatic stress disorder when featured on the show's championship round.

Myers had served as a cook in the Army and came home after two combat tours in Afghanistan—one of them in the storied Korengal Valley—carrying the symptoms of a traumatic brain injury and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Though his outlook seemed bleak at times, life began to change once he decided to seek help.

"Robbie was courageous enough to seek help when he needed it, which is certainly not easy to do," said National Commander Ron Hope. "He's shown great strength along his road to recovery, as well as a deep commitment to caring for his fellow veterans."

Myers, who now lives with his family in a small

“ You don’t hear the **good stories** about veterans; you always hear the bad ones. Or, you hear the struggles and you don’t hear those **victories**. We want to hire veterans—as many veterans as we can—and **put veterans on the map for the good.** ”

—Robbie Myers, Army veteran

town in upstate New York, said he was humbled by his nomination for Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year.

“When [Commander Hope] called me and told me, I was just thrown back, extremely honored by the fact that I even went through that process and was selected,” said Myers. “I hope I can represent as well as some of the past recipients of this award.”

Myers topped the culinary competition and is now hosting his own cooking show called “Come and Get It.”

Myers, along with the show’s producers, is dedicated to maintaining an all-veteran cast and crew.

“You don’t hear the good stories about veterans; you always hear the bad ones. Or, you hear the struggles and you don’t hear those victories,” said Myers. “We want to hire veterans—as many veterans as we can—and put veterans on the map for the good.”

A majority of the proceeds from Myers’ show will benefit veterans’ organizations, with an emphasis on addressing PTSD and employment issues for veterans returning home from combat.

“A lot of these men and women who have served are homeless or unable to work, and it’s a shame because they are literally some of the best people you can bring into your business to work for you—some of the most loyal and dedicated people you’ll ever come across,” said Myers. “I think that’s another part of why we’re doing the show, to get rid of that stigma. We’re really backing just getting as many veterans on the team that’s going to be part of filming the show.”

“The story of Robbie and his family proves that when you provide the right support to our veterans,



Myers sifts through military awards, both for his brave service under fire and for his culinary talents, with youngest daughter, Violet, on his lap.

they will thrive,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “We’re thrilled to see someone as talented and dedicated as he is bringing veterans’ issues to light on a national scale. It’s really a testament to his character and his devotion to his fellow veterans, and we’re exceptionally proud to recognize him for all he does for this community.”

Myers, whose dedication to his fellow veterans goes far beyond the battlefield, said he believes DAV’s mission is what it’s all about.

“Keep doing what you’re doing—the absolute best people to take care of veterans are veterans,” Myers said. “What you have done as an organization as a whole has probably saved and helped countless amounts of lives of our fellow veterans. I think that we owe it to each other to look out for each other, and I think DAV is doing a hell of a job.” ■



Alexis and Jason Courneen speak in support of pre-9/11 veteran caregiver benefits at the introduction of legislation to improve such support.

Help for the unsung heroes

A step in the right direction for caregivers

By Ashleigh Byrnes

After more than a decade of war, a study by RAND Corp. found that more than 1.1 million family members and friends are caring for injured and disabled veterans who have served since Sept. 11, 2001. These caregivers often do so without a formal support network.

For the 5.5 million veteran caregivers in the U.S., this information is likely nothing new—it remains, simply, a daily fact of life. For 4.4 million of those caregivers, things are often even more challenging as they perform their duties without the additional benefits from the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers program.

The RAND report, released in 2014, helped to draw much-needed attention to the dire situation many caregivers face and offered a resounding echo to the critical changes DAV has long called for.

“Five years ago, DAV played an instrumental role in developing the legislation requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to establish a comprehensive caregiver support program for family caregivers of severely injured veterans. Unfortunately, when lawmakers finally passed the legislation, it limited these benefits only to caregivers of veterans injured after 9/11. Caregivers of veterans from Vietnam, Korea, World War II and other eras were not eligible,” Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine said. “DAV believes that family caregivers of all severely ill and injured veterans—regardless

of when they served—should be eligible for comprehensive caregiver support.”

In late April, Sen. Patty Murray introduced the Military and Veteran Caregiver Services Improvement Act of 2015, a bill that aims to expand the resources available to family caregivers.

One of the biggest changes the bill would make is expanding program eligibility to include veterans of all eras of service. According to the VA, as many as 88,000 family caregivers of veterans are currently ineligible because the veteran was injured or fell ill prior to September 11, 2001. Expanding eligibility for this program is one of DAV's highest legislative priorities.

The bill also focuses on making the following changes:

- Allowing veterans to transfer their Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits to their dependents;
- Expanding eligibility to include a wider range of illnesses and injuries;
- Removing restrictions on who is eligible to become a caregiver;
- Placing more emphasis on mental health injuries and traumatic brain injury (TBI); and
- Making caregivers eligible for child care programs or offering stipends for child care.

DAV member and Coast Guard veteran Alexis Courneen and her husband, Jason, attended the introduction of the bill. While serving aboard ship in 1998, Alexis was severely injured when she was struck by

(Continued on pg. 35)

After four combat deployments, Marine turns to DAV

Robert Sherman knew it was time to worry about himself after repeatedly putting it all on the line in Iraq.

Injured at war in Iraq, Robert Sherman didn't dwell on his pain. "You just don't think about it. You stay vigilant and make sure your Marines are accountable, and they all know what they're doing and what's expected of them."

But when he returned home, Sherman didn't find that same accountability waiting for him. That is, until he found DAV.

Sherman came from a "big military family" so when 9/11 happened, he knew he wanted to serve his country.

After three deployments, his time with the Marines was up. He met and married his wife and was just starting to settle into civilian life, but plans quickly changed. Sherman was called back to duty.

"It's difficult, especially when you're out, and you think you're done," he said. "The newlyweds, like so many military families, found themselves facing some issues when Sherman returned. But Sherman said he and his wife overcame them, thanks to a lot of patience."

He recalls scanning American streets for spots where improvised explosive devices might be hidden. "It takes a while to really disconnect. You come home, and you're thankful. But you're deployed for six or seven months straight, it becomes your nature, and it's hard to turn off."

Sherman also carried home the pain of service-connected injuries: one to a knee and another to a shoulder, which would require a joint replacement. But at a time when he



After DAV helped him through the difficult VA claims process, Sherman wanted to learn more about what the organization does for veterans. "In my opinion, it is heroic. So few have such a noble purpose as those within the DAV."

needed to focus on his wife, stepchildren and his health, he said he found the VA claims process "extremely frustrating and time-consuming."



Left: Sherman during one of four deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. **Right:** Sherman, with his dog this past Memorial Day, noted the significance of remembering our nation's fallen. "Sometimes you just wonder if people recognize it because they just carry on with their daily lives, business as usual," he said.

"It seemed like I was getting the runaround from the VA," said Sherman. "It's a godsend that DAV's there."

Within three short months of seeking help through DAV, he got the help he earned from the government he served.

Sherman is certain his homecoming could have taken a very different turn without the free services of DAV. "There were guys that I was with, in similar situations, that would file claims and did not use DAV," Sherman said. "They waited well over a year to get any kind of response from the VA."

Speaking about the reaction of others to his military service, Sherman explained. "Not too many people ask." He sometimes wishes they would, so he could honor friends who didn't come back.

"In my mind, it's more about the appreciation for those guys and their families," said Sherman. "It's something that veterans take very seriously. And sometimes you just wonder if people recognize it because they just carry on with their daily lives, business as usual."

That's a big part of what Sherman said makes DAV a unique organization: keeping veterans' concerns in the public spotlight and letting veterans know that others truly do care and remain at their sides.

"I get the DAV newsletter and updates on what the DAV does to protect our rights, especially with the government shutdowns and different things, and making sure the veterans are being taken care of," he said. "It's just an absolutely wonderful organization."

Sherman said he wishes more of his fellow veterans knew about DAV.

His message for them: "Don't be afraid to pursue what you've rightfully earned." And contact DAV. "That's why they're

there. It's a great, great group of people." ■



Learn More Online

If you need free, professional assistance obtaining care and benefits, find the National Service Office nearest you at www.dav.org/veterans/find-your-local-office.

Sherman is certain
**his homecoming
could have taken a
very different turn**
without the free
services of DAV.

1

DAV proposes new framework for VA reform

At both House and Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee hearings on the Veterans Choice Program in May, National Legislative Director Joseph Violante outlined DAV's proposal for Veterans Affairs reform going forward. The four-part plan calls for:

- Rebuilding and sustaining the VA's capacity to provide timely, high-quality care, beginning with a long-term strategy to recruit, hire and maintain sufficient clinical staff at all VA treatment facilities;
- Restructuring the non-VA care program into a single, integrated and extended care network, requiring the VA to first complete research and analysis related to the "choice" program and allowing the Commission on Care to complete its work, with Congress providing a single, separate and guaranteed funding mechanism for the VA Extended Care program;
- Realigning and expanding VA health care services to meet the diverse needs of future generations of veterans, beginning with the creation of VA urgent care services; and
- Reforming the VA's management of the health care system by increasing efficiency, transparency and accountability in order to become a veteran-centric organization.

"The past year has largely focused on short-term solutions for VA to meet the immediate needs of veterans. But as we analyze and evaluate how these strategies have worked, we owe it to veterans to also develop a long-term plan to strengthen the VA moving forward," said Violante.

2

VA fortifies homeless support programs

At the end of March, Veterans Affairs Secretary Bob McDonald announced large-scale grants to aid in combatting veteran homelessness. Nearly \$93 million in three-year Supportive Services for Veteran Families grants will go to help an estimated 45,000 homeless and at-risk veterans, as well as their families.

"We're pleased to see this funding to address the critical state of veteran homelessness," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "VA's goal to end this national epidemic in 2015 is ambitious, and this new funding push shows dedication to eliminating the problem through direct services to veterans."

These grants will be issued to nonprofit organizations in 15 communities across the country, with roughly \$30 million going to aid veterans in the Los Angeles area. L.A. is estimated to have roughly 8,000 homeless veterans living on the streets.

DAV opposes house-approved VA budget

DAV has opposed the U.S. House of Representatives' version of the fiscal year (FY) 2016 Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriation Bill, which passed in late April. Lawmakers voted 255-163 to pass H.R. 2029, despite warnings from the White House that the proposed \$76.6 billion bill would not adequately fund veterans health care, programs and services. The bill comes with a \$585 million reduction to the FY 2016 VA medical care request and a \$582 million reduction to the FY 2016 VA major construction request, both of which would negatively impact medical care and service for tens of thousands of veterans.

“It is incomprehensible for lawmakers to support further underfunding the VA and thereby denying veterans access to the health care, programs and services they were promised,” said DAV National Commander Ron Hope. “VA leaders have made clear their funding requests are critical to fixing these issues within the system. If Congress wants to stand behind veterans on the stump, they need to stand behind them with their votes as well.”

These shortfalls would diminish the VA's ability to properly staff and equip facilities, or make necessary upgrades and expansions at medical facilities and national cemeteries, as well as cut medical research.

3

DAV shows support for member-supported legislation

DAV Assistant Legislative Director Paul Varela testified before the House Veterans' Affairs Subcommittee on Disability and Memorial Affairs in mid-April to support several pieces of legislation in line with DAV national resolutions. They include: H.R. 675, the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act (DAV Res. No. 024); H.R. 732, the Veterans Access to Speedy Review Act (DAV Res. No. 192); H.R. 800, the Express Appeals Act (DAV Res. No. 192); H.R. 1331, a bill to amend Title 38 and improve treatment of medical evidence provided by non-VA medical professionals in support of disability compensation (DAV Res. No. 185); and H.R. 1414, a bill to direct the VA Secretary to make interim payments of disability compensation benefits for certain claims for compensation prior to the adjudication of such claims (DAV Res. No. 192). DAV also voiced support for H.R. 1607, a bill to amend Title 38 to clarify the estate of a deceased veteran may receive certain accrued benefits upon death of the veteran; and H.R. 1607, a bill to amend Title 38 to improve the disability compensation evaluation procedure of the VA Secretary for veterans with mental health conditions related to military sexual trauma.



Learn More Online

The full testimony is available at www.dav.org/learn-more/legislation/testimony.

4

It's academic

VA partnership with medical students means top care

Like most VA doctors, Dr. B. Price Kerfoot wears many hats. A staff urologist at the VA Boston Healthcare System, he's also an associate professor of surgery at Harvard Medical School. In both settings, he does research on how to best educate clinicians.

Dual appointments like Kerfoot's are the mainstay of VA medical staff nationwide. They are the product of a partnership between the VA and U.S. medical schools that stretches back nearly 70 years.

After World War II, there was a shortage of physicians in the VA system to take care of the huge wave of returning soldiers. Thanks to a law passed in 1946, the VA could hire physicians more easily, and VA sites would become teaching hospitals. Medical school faculty would become VA staff physicians, and the schools' residents would participate in veterans care. This arrangement has led to more than half of all practicing physicians in the U.S. gaining at least a portion of their medical training through the VA health care system.

Influx of outstanding medical expertise

"VA's affiliations with academic medical centers allows for the sharing of outstanding faculty members and trainees," said Kerfoot. "This influx of outstanding medical expertise allows VA patients to receive the most advanced levels of medical care."

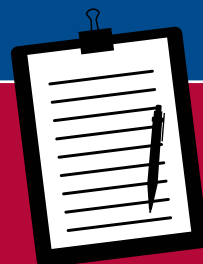
Numerous breakthroughs in medical research—particularly in the areas of spinal cord injury, limb loss, post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, as well as the treatment of diabetes, chronic pulmonary obstructive disease and even cancer—have been the result of VA medical research since the program began in 1925.

"The value of VA clinical research runs very deep," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "It has given us so many tools to help make the most severely ill and injured veterans whole again."

Dr. Ross Fletcher, a VA cardiologist in the nation's

VA as a teaching system, by the numbers

More than six in ten U.S. physicians have had VA training.



About half of U.S. psychologists have had VA training.

VA medical centers and clinics nationwide have affiliation agreements with more than **140** medical schools for physician education and more than **1,800** colleges and universities for training in **40** other health professions.

In 2013, more than **118,000** students and professionals received some or all of their clinical training with the VA.



Source: VA Office of Academic Affiliations

capital, added, “We’re able to provide very advanced therapies that would not be available otherwise.”

VA’s partnerships with medical schools provide a unique and much-needed teaching venue, allowing physicians to put valuable research into practice.

“Having such accomplished physicians using these methods to train the next generation of doctors is invaluable, both to veterans and to the medical community as a whole,” said Burgess.

Dr. Melina Kibbe is a physician-researcher doing cutting-edge work in both the VA and academia. Kibbe’s research is supported in part by VA research funds, and the work is strongly targeted to veterans’ needs.

“The research I conduct at both Northwestern and VA is directly applicable to veterans. Many veterans suffer from vascular disease,” said Kibbe. “The focus of my lab is to develop better therapies for patients with vascular disease, so we can reduce re-operations, prevent amputations and save lives.”

One of her recent trainees, Dr. George Havelka, is completing a vascular surgery fellowship based at Northwestern University and the VA.

Havelka’s research has shown how delivering nitric oxide directly to blood vessels through balloon catheters may help keep scar tissue from building up and re-blocking vessels after surgery.

Havelka, whose father was a military policeman in Vietnam, said the research experience has fueled his career. However, he is even more passionate about what it might mean for veterans and other patients.

“Ultimately, it would be great if, when we put balloons and stents in the arteries to open up a lesion [clear a blockage], we could at the same time deliver nitric oxide and inhibit that [scar tissue] from developing,” said Havelka. “This would help extend the ‘shelf life’ of our surgical interventions.”

VA trains other health professions

Alongside physicians, a variety of other health professionals receive training through the VA.

Dr. Caitlin Dowd is a second-year pharmacy resident at the Malcom Randall VA Medical Center in Gainesville, Fla. She said the VA is ahead of the curve in terms of giving pharmacists a bigger role in helping patients manage chronic diseases.

“The autonomy that pharmacists have in VA has totally shaped my attitude toward the profession,” she said. “I feel I can go into any setting now, prepared to



“It’s **exciting to be here** because there’s a lot of movement outside VA to adopt a model like VA already has. It’s pretty awesome to be in a place where this is the norm.”

—Dr. Caitlin Dowd, second-year pharmacy resident, Malcom Randall VA Medical Center, Gainesville, Fla.

Pictured: Dowd counsels Charles Nemeth, a former Navy intensive care corpsman. Nemeth is now a patient, as well as an employee, at the Gainesville VA medical center. (Photo by K. Greg Westlye)

manage a disease state in a holistic manner—ordering labs, making changes in medications, communicating with patients.”

The non-VA medical world is just catching up, she said. “It’s exciting to be here because there’s a lot of movement outside VA to adopt a model like VA already has. It’s pretty awesome to be in a place where this is the norm.”

Dowd’s VA research team has helped highlight that the North Florida/South Georgia Veterans Health System is saving about \$643,000 a year by switching patients from one statin drug to a less expensive one, while keeping the same clinical benefits.

Dowd, who has several veterans in her family, said she likes the idea of serving this population.

Havelka agrees. “The veterans on the whole seem to be a very appreciative group,” he said. “It’s nice to be able to work with them and give something back.” ■

REBOOT: Ford focuses on women veterans

Longtime DAV partner works to address growing needs in the veterans community

By Ashleigh Byrnes

Roughly 200,000 women are expected to leave military service in the next four to five years, with many unsure of the future that awaits them after their transition. DAV has long called for fixes to the many gaps still existing in gender-specific care and services but has also voiced concerns about whether the existing military-to-civilian reintegration process is adequately addressing women's needs.

In communities across the country, longtime DAV partner Ford Motor Co. has partnered with the Los Angeles Chapter of the Freedom's Sisters and National Veterans Transition Services Inc. to address these potentially unmet areas through the Freedom's Sisters REBOOT transition program. The three-week "boot camp" experience brings together between 20 to 25 women veterans and community leaders who help mentor them through the process.

"It takes a whole community to meet the needs of our veterans and to fill some of the gaps that still exist, especially for women veterans," said Deputy National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. "These seminars really bring women together and make them comfortable as they go about discussing the issues most pressing to them."

DAV's 2014 study, "Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home," highlighted the potential benefits of a gender-specific option for military transition programs.

"We have created a bond, a bond we never would have had if we did not have an all-female class," said Maria Orozco, who attended the REBOOT program. "Had there been men in our class, we could not have shared the things we shared or shed the tears that we shed."

The training is divided into three weeks, with each week dedicated to a different area of the military-to-civilian transition process. The first week covers the personal transition, the second week covers the lifestyle transition, and the third week focuses on career transition.

Mothers attending the program are able to bring young children along, helping to break down barriers that might otherwise have kept them from attending. Such barriers also have been cited as factors impacting homelessness, unemployment and access to health care among women veterans.

"We designed this program to meet the unique needs of women, and the training builds upon the participants' military training, skills and experience," said Maurice Wilson, co-founder of the REBOOT program and retired Navy master chief petty officer. "The workshop addresses the professional, social and personal aspects of life, along with connections to community resources that could also be of help."

"The unique needs of transitioning women veterans are still largely unexplored territory," said National Employment Director Jeff Hall. "We're now starting to see how focusing on specific areas or structuring programs a little differently may be more beneficial to women than to men during this process."

"We're grateful that our partners at Ford recognize the needs of transitioning veterans and for their willingness to go further to ensure women heroes enjoy the full promise that civilian life can bring." ■



Women veterans attend the Ford Freedom's Sisters REBOOT program in Los Angeles in March.



Learn More Online

Find out more about Ford's Freedom's Sisters REBOOT program at www.nvtsi.org.

Outstanding Employees

honored by

NATIONAL COMMANDER AWARDS

By Joseph R. Chenelly

“These individuals represent the outstanding support and commitment we see year in and year out by the vast majority of VA employees who are passionate about their service to veterans and their families. They were the best of the best this year, and we’re grateful they have dedicated their professional lives to honoring the sacrifices of and fulfilling the promises made to our nation’s veterans.”

Ron Hope, National Commander

**Veterans
Benefits
Administration**

Peter A. Nastasi

The 2015 DAV National Commander’s Award for Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs employee within the Veterans Benefits Administration is Peter A. Nastasi, of the VA Regional Office in Buffalo, N.Y.

A Change Management Agent (CMA), Nastasi has developed new processes improving the filing of electronic claims. Working closely with DAV staff, his efforts led directly to a sharp increase in the number of claims processed electronically.

Nastasi has been working for the Department of Veterans Affairs in Buffalo since February 2009. During the first three years of his VA career, he worked in the Education Division as a veterans claims examiner and a senior veterans claims examiner, specializing in Post-9/11 GI Bill claims processing. In 2012, Nastasi began his current position, in which his primary focus is managing changes set forth by the VA Secretary. As the CMA, his roles and responsibilities cover the full scope of VA business lines. Nastasi advocates for creating awareness, understanding and acceptance of all transformation at his office.

Leading and communicating change in the midst of so many new transformation initiatives is critical to the success of the VA, and Nastasi does both exceptionally well, according to DAV staff he works with regularly.

Throughout his VA career, Nastasi has been selected to work on a variety of unique projects. In 2009, he was selected as a subject-matter expert for the Post-9/11 GI Bill Long Term Solution Project. From 2011 through 2014, Nastasi served on three separate four-month details as an overseas military services coordinator for the Benefits Assistance Service Office in Washington, D.C. He provided assistance and transition briefings to thousands of service members, veterans and their families across Europe.

In March 2012, Nastasi was selected by the Operations Center in Washington, D.C., to conduct Organizational Change Management training at more than a dozen regional offices for thousands of VA employees nationwide.

According to Howard Brittain, DAV National Area Supervisor in Buffalo, “Mr. Nastasi continuously upholds professionalism in his work and maintains a great relationship with DAV. His dedication and eagerness to assist veterans is always evident and is hugely valuable to the veterans in Central and Western New York State, as well as the rest of the United States.”





The Outstanding Veterans Health Administration Employee this year is Teresa Parks, the VA's director of the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which is the most visible event highlighting the partnership of DAV and the VA. She has been dedicated to serving injured and ill veterans with the VA for nearly two decades.



Parks coordinates all activities and lodging for the world's largest rehabilitative event of its kind. Every year, she goes above and beyond to aid veterans with traumatic brain injuries, spinal cord injuries, orthopedic amputations, visual impairments, certain neurological conditions and other service-connected injuries to ensure each individual has a meaningful, fun experience and gains a sense of accomplishment.

The institutional knowledge Parks brings is invaluable, and she has been a true partner alongside DAV, empowering veterans at the clinic.

"Everyone at the clinic loves her," said DAV National Director of Voluntary Services John Kleindienst. "The cheers are the loudest whenever she is introduced, and she's earned that."

DAV works closely with the more than 300,000 Department of Veterans Affairs employees across the country on a daily basis, with the mutual goal of keeping the nation's promise to veterans, their families and survivors. Each year, DAV recognizes a few exemplary VA employees with an award from the National Commander.



Gregorio Kishketon is this year's VA National Cemetery Administration Employee of the Year. He served veterans, their families and survivors at the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery.

Kishketon's commitment to fallen veterans and their survivors, his positive influence as an employee and his personal dedication to volunteer work with veterans were noted numerous times by those nominating him.

"Kishketon is driven to provide excellent customer service, which is essential to achieving the National Cemetery Administration's (NCA) mission," his nomination read. "He appreciates and understands the needs of our veterans and their families."

Kishketon was recently promoted from cemetery representative to the Memorial Program Service Office in Washington, D.C. In addition to numerous commendation letters, he also earned an NCA Contribution Award and a "Time Off" Award in 2014.

Kishketon is enthusiastic about participating in outreach activities for the cemetery. His personal time is spent volunteering with and for veterans. He regularly donates his time and skills to DAV, as well as other charities and veterans' organizations.





The award for Outstanding Local Veterans Employment Representative will be presented to Army veteran Curtis Chalupa of Fort Worth, Texas, during the 2015 DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Convention in Denver.

According to the Texas Veteran Commission, Curtis contacted more than 481 employers to talk about veteran job seekers and their unique skillsets. He helped 133 veterans, including 25 disabled veterans, find employment—the most in the state among Local Veterans Employment Representatives.

“A disabled veteran himself and a recipient of the Purple Heart, Curtis remains absolutely aware that hiring disabled veterans comes first and keeps that in mind as he contacts employers and advocates for those veteran candidates,” said DAV National Commander Ron Hope.

Chalupa is assigned to the North Texas region, which encompasses Dallas and surrounding areas. The 24-year veteran’s service includes combat tours of duty during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm, peacekeeping operations in Bosnia and Operation Iraqi Freedom, as well as a second tour in Iraq in 2004.

“It’s people like Curtis who are often the only difference between a disabled veteran finding a job or not being able to sustain a fulfilling lifestyle for themselves and their families,” said Jeff Hall, DAV National Employment Director. “I’m very proud of his accomplishments and hope he is as well.”



The 2015 National Commander’s Award for the Outstanding Disabled Veterans Outreach Program will be awarded to Brad Aune at the 2015 DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Convention in Denver.

Aune’s military service spanned two decades—four years as a Marine and 18 in the North Dakota Army National Guard. His service includes two combat tours.

Aune is an employment specialist at Job Service North Dakota where he developed several unique programs designed to assist veterans in finding fulfilling employment, including a program aimed at incarcerated veterans.

“It is not uncommon for Brad to encounter veterans who feel they have no hope of finding a job,” said DAV National Commander Ron Hope. “But, rather than let a bad situation turn worse, Brad conducts training at the Cass County Jail and teaches subjects like job-search techniques, resume-writing and interview skills, just to name a few. He’s found great success in moving veterans from a place of incarceration to a place of self-sufficiency.”

Aune is also passionate about eradicating veteran homelessness.

“We learned Brad is a true force multiplier,” said National Employment Director Jeff Hall. “He serves on the Fargo-Moorhead Homeless Coalition Committee to stay abreast of issues and opportunities regarding homeless disabled veterans.

“Finding a way to make a living is certainly one factor in ending homelessness, and I applaud Brad’s enthusiasm for his continued service to his brother and sister veterans,” Hall said.



Secret tragedy becomes **NATIONAL MEMORIAL**

Newly dedicated Silent Heroes
of the Cold War National Memorial
honors those who served in shadows

By M. Todd Hunter

An inscription in the polished, black granite of the newly dedicated Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial reads, “A TENEBRIS AD LUCEM,” Latin for “From dark to light.”

But it's more than an inscription. It's an attitude that turned a tragedy for 14 families nearly 60 years ago into a national memorial for millions of American service members who donned the uniform during the Cold War, as well as the behind-the-scenes personnel who supported them.

Roughly 30 miles outside Las Vegas near the summit of Mount Charleston lies the debris of a mysterious plane crash, which for years has been a favorite landmark of those hiking to the peak. Many local outdoorsmen are familiar with the site, but not much had been known about it for nearly a half-century, other than the type of aircraft, a Douglas C-54 Skymaster, and the date of the accident, Nov. 17, 1955.

A propeller from the Douglas C-54 is displayed near the memorial, along with a fixed telescope pointed directly at the crash site for visitors to view.



Steve Ririe, founder and chairman of the board of directors for the memorial, made the hike often as a Boy Scout growing up. He always wondered about the details of the wreckage because of the shroud of secrecy surrounding it. But after making a solo trip up the mountain in September 1998 and noticing how much debris had been taken away through the years, he decided he needed to find out exactly what happened and do what he could to preserve the site.

“I had this strange experience that just sent me on this course to find out who [the crash victims] were,” said Ririe. “My search went through the Air Force, the National Archives and eventually the CIA.”

It turns out that the C-54 was directly involved with the then top-secret U-2 spy plane program—a joint venture between the CIA, Air Force and Lockheed Corp. that played a significant reconnaissance role during the Cold War. The program was in development at Groom Lake, Nev., better known as Area 51.

With U-2 airframe production increasing, and because of the program's secrecy, in October 1955, Lockheed employees began flying on Air Force C-54s from their headquarters in Burbank, Calif., to Area 51, to keep from arousing curiosity among the public. The crash occurred during a snowstorm less than seven weeks after flights began, killing all 14 Air Force crewmen and Lockheed employees aboard. It was the greatest single loss of life in the entire U-2 program.

In November 2000, the Air Force gave Ririe the official accident report, which had been recently declassified. It included the names and information of the men who died in the crash, next-of-kin

information, narrative descriptions of what happened, maps, flight plans, pictures, interviews and more.

With possession of the official account, Ririe finally had the necessary facts to tell the full story to the public—including the families of those on board, many of whom knew few or no details of the crash. But little did Ririe know, his interest in the crash and involvement with the Boy Scouts would soon intersect once again.

“I was a Scout leader at the time, and the grandfather of one of my Scouts was a state senator,” Ririe explained. “He invited me to his home and asked if I’d accept the responsibility of building a memorial. And I said OK.”

Ririe’s commitment that day marked the beginning of a nearly 15-year process to build the memorial, which included land acquisition, government approval via congressional resolutions, fundraising and establishing a project committee.

A key acquisition for Ririe along the way was Michael L. Emerson, a Marine veteran and DAV life member with vast experience in developing memorials. He now serves as assistant chairman on the memorial’s board of directors.

“Michael was incredibly instrumental in getting this done,” said Ririe. “Any time I hit a roadblock or didn’t know what to do, Michael told me what needed to be done and led me in the right direction.”

With a solid board of directors and Emerson’s guidance, the memorial broke ground on Nov. 17,

2012, and the official dedication occurred on May 29 of this year. The memorial includes a granite wall with a polished inscription dedicated to the many heroes of the Cold War. The opposite side of the wall displays two stars—one dark, one light—as well as recognition for those who made the memorial possible. A propeller from the doomed C-54 is displayed nearby, along with a fixed telescope pointed directly at the crash site for visitors to view.

According to Ririe, the Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial is actually two separate memorials. One honors victims of the plane crash, officially known as U.S. Air Force 9068, and the other honors those who served in secret during the Cold War.

“The plane crash was the genesis of that memorial, but it was more the understanding of what we learned about the impact of all those people who worked in secret during the Cold War and never got any credit,” said Ririe. “They are heroes who had their history purposefully erased for the benefit of our national security, and not enough has been done to recognize them.”

“A lot of people sacrificed their lives to protect our country during the Cold War,” Emerson said. “We want this memorial to remind people of the sacrifices made and of those who support the military have done over the years.”

“This memorial is a perfect example of non-veterans and veterans alike coming together to honor the unheralded service of so many heroes who served during the decades-long Cold War,” said Marc Burgess, DAV National Adjutant. “Its history and beauty honor our nation’s veterans tremendously and properly help shed light on all those who served in the shadows.” ■



Michael L. Emerson, DAV life member and Assistant Chairman of the Board of Directors for the Silent Heroes of the Cold War National Memorial, sits at the memorial after its dedication near Mount Charleston, Nev., May 29. “A lot of people sacrificed their lives to protect our country during the Cold War,” Emerson said. “We want this memorial to remind people of the sacrifices made and of those who support the military have done over the years.”



Calling for change

DAV demands action on women veterans' policies and practices

By Ashleigh Byrnes

DAV has called on Congress to set specific goals for Memorial Day 2016 to enhance federally funded care and services for women veterans.

"This is an opportunity—while VA leaders are working to create a better system—to ensure women veterans' issues are included in the discussion and enhanced," Deputy National Legislative Director Joy Ilem said in testimony before the House Veterans' Affairs Committee in late April. She requested that, at a minimum, Congress accomplish the following goals within the next year:

- Every VA medical center must employ a part-time or full-time gynecologist.
- VA must implement and utilize clinical reminders on prescribing teratogenic medications (which could disturb the growth and development of an embryo or fetus) to younger women and capture vital gender-specific information like breast and cervical cancer screening results and abnormalities.
- VA must develop standards to ensure health care facility infrastructure meets the specific needs of women veterans and prioritize these standards in future projects.
- Authorize child care services as a permanent program to support better access to VA health care, programs and services.
- Create a VA-DoD interdisciplinary work group to develop gender-sensitive mental health programs for women veterans, including peer-to-peer support.
- Increase the number of safe transitional and supportive beds designated for women veterans and the number of housing programs available to women veterans with minor children.
- Conduct a Government Accountability Office study on the VA's ability to meet women veterans' health care needs, including specialized programs for



"...Serving women veterans with **greater respect, consideration and care** must become a priority."

*Joy Ilem,
Deputy National
Legislative Director*

women seeking care for amputations, post-traumatic stress disorder, burns, blindness, spinal cord injury and traumatic brain injury.

“This is absolutely about a culture change,” said Ilem. “And that has to come from the top down, so we truly need the commitment of Congress and the VA Secretary.”

These recommendations stem from gaps identified in DAV’s 2014 study, “Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home,” along with the 27 other recommendations the report makes.

Brigitte Marker, DAV’s National 4th Junior Vice Commander, along with members of DAV’s Interim Women Veterans Committee, attended the hearing and met with lawmakers to help advance DAV’s recommendations for more equitable, gender-specific services for women.

“We have shown Congress that DAV is leading the fight in a very serious issue and working to bring about changes that will help many veterans in the years to come,” said Marker. “Our presence at these meetings and hearings not only shows that we support our women veterans but that we are leaders in the VSO community, taking on an issue that will only become more important as the number of women in uniform grows.”

Several pieces of legislation specific to women veterans’ issues have been introduced since the beginning of the year, with DAV support. These include provisions to improve women veterans’ access to quality health care and child care services and improve VA’s



Members of DAV Women Veterans Interim Committee (from left) Kathleen Schultze, Kimberly Tatham and Idalis Marquez (far right), along with National 4th Junior Vice Commander Brigitte Marker (center right) toured the Women in Memorial Service for America Memorial prior to meeting with lawmakers to discuss key issues.

ability to meet the long-term reproductive health care needs of veterans who have suffered a genitourinary disability or condition during military service.

“Millions of women have answered the call of duty and put themselves at risk to preserve our nation’s security and our way of life,” said Ilem. “They served this country faithfully—many with distinction. Acknowledging their dedication and resilience and serving women veterans with greater respect, consideration and care must become a priority.” ■

Female MST survivors lag in seeking assault-related health care

The VA study, “Post-sexual Assault Health Care Utilization among OEF/OIF Servicewomen,” released in April, points out that, despite a heightened public awareness of the issue of military sexual trauma (MST) and increased efforts by the Department of Defense to end these crimes, fewer than a third of female service members who experience MST will seek post-assault health care.

Researchers interviewed 1,339 veterans and active-duty women who had experienced sexual assault, with 207 reporting the assault took place during military service. The study found those who reported the crime were more likely to seek and receive health care, which includes treatment for gynecologic, gastrointestinal,

sexual dysfunction and chronic pain symptoms, as well as for mental health issues like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, anxiety and substance abuse.

Female MST survivors typically become heavy users of health care resources in the years that follow their assault.

“Sexual assault is widely considered the most serious and traumatic crime possible, short of homicide,” said the study’s lead author, Dr. Michelle Mengeling. “One of the first steps in potentially mitigating some of the negative health effects of sexual assault is seeking immediate post-assault medical and mental health care.”



Read the full study at www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/25767967.



Bataan Death March survivor shares experience

Former World War II POW Lester Tenney poses with a drawing depicting himself being hit with a sword by a Japanese officer during the Bataan Death March. Tenney was one of a group of American POWs who visited Japan in September 2010. Although Japan had hosted former POWs from other nations since 1995, it was the country's first-ever sponsored trip aimed at reconciling with American POWs. (AP Photo/Jae C. Hong)

DAV life member Lester Tenney reflects on the forced POW march that left thousands of his fellow American service members dead during World War II.

By M. Todd Hunter

After learning what Lester Tenney endured in April 1942 and for more than three years thereafter, one may not be inclined to consider him lucky.

Surrounded by malaria and dysentery, and with little to no food or water, Tenney was one of an estimated 80,000 American and Filipino prisoners of war who endured the Bataan Death March, a forced

60-mile trek in temperatures exceeding 100 degrees.

During the brutal march, his captors, the Imperial Japanese Army, beat him and many others with sticks and rifles. His teeth were knocked out. His head and nose were split open. His ribs were broken.

So why would anyone consider him lucky?

Of the roughly 12,000 American troops who set off on the march, Tenney was one of only about 1,700 who survived to the end of World War II. Today, fewer than a hundred survivors are estimated to still be alive.

"It was called a 'death march' not because of how many died," Tenney explained while in Washington, D.C., to attend Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe's address before Congress in May. "They called it a 'death march' because of the way they died. If you stopped on the road, you were killed. If you had a malaria attack, they killed you. If you had to stop

Of the roughly 12,000 American troops who set off on the march, Tenney was one of only about 1,700 who survived to the end of World War II.

to defecate, they killed you. If you just couldn't take another step, they killed you."

He later added that his captors' indifference to the lives of his fellow brothers-in-arms was evident in the manner the Japanese executed them.

"They'd bayonet you to death, shoot you or, in some cases, decapitate you," he said.

Such coldness was compounded by one man being buried alive while the bodies of others were simply left on the side of the road. That led Tenney to quickly realize on the second day of the march that he needed to continually set goals if he wanted to survive the brutality.

"I would see a herd of caribou in the distance, and I would say to myself, 'I must get to that herd of caribou,'" he explained. "Then when I got to the herd of caribou,

I'd find another goal and another goal and another goal. Every day was another goal."

At 94, Tenney claims he has lived his life setting small goals for himself every day since. It's a frame of mind that undoubtedly helped him endure his forced labor in Japanese coal mines after surviving the march—working 12 hours daily for more than three years.

A high-school dropout, Tenney returned home from the war, got married, raised a family, earned a Ph.D. and enjoyed a career as a finance and insurance professor at Arizona State University. After retiring in 1983, the DAV Life Member wrote *My Hitch in Hell* about his experiences as a POW.

Today, Tenney spends his time sending care packages to American service members in Iraq and Afghanistan and often travels around the country talking about his experiences—all without holding a grudge about the atrocities he experienced decades ago.

"By being able to roll with the punches, I think it's a lot easier to live," he remarked.

"As our nation pauses to reflect on the 70th anniversary of V-J Day this August, it's important to recognize those who persevered until victory during World War II," said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "Lester Tenney is one such individual and a perfect example of the exemplary service paid forth by those belonging to the Greatest Generation."

"I do believe that every man that came back from Bataan is disabled in some manner, either mentally, emotionally or through physical attributes," Tenney concluded. "And I think we're all a member of the DAV in one way or the other." ■



Watch Video Online

Watch an interview with Lester Tenney at www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPbAd1TUGJA.

Lester Tenney as a young U.S. soldier during World War II. This image stood on display at "The Price of Freedom: Americans at War" exhibit at the National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C., in 2004. (Joe Raedle/Getty Images)



Alice Ostrand

Caregiver, volunteer

By Steven Wilson



Alice Ostrand, Adjutant of DAV Auxiliary Custer Unit 1, has been named DAV Auxiliary Outstanding Member of the Year.

"I was shocked," Ostrand said of learning she'd won the national level award. "I never expected it at all."

Ostrand, of Broken Bow, Neb., has firsthand knowledge of the challenges facing caregivers of disabled veterans. Six months after marrying her husband, John, a veteran of World War II, he was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis, and the disease debilitated him at an alarming rate. Ostrand cared for her husband for more than 38 years before he passed on.

She has held each office and been chairman of every program within her Unit in her 40 years of continued membership. At her first district-level DAV Auxiliary meeting, Ostrand's reputation as a veterans advocate, coupled with her charitable works within the veterans community, led to her election as Department of Nebraska's Junior Vice-Commander.

She has also served as Department Senior Vice-Commander, Department Commander, Department Judge Advocate and Department Adjutant.

Ostrand's numerous DAV and DAV Auxiliary

awards date back to 1975. These accomplishments include being named Volunteer of the Year and earning the DAV Auxiliary Department of Nebraska's Most New Members Award—an accolade she won for four consecutive years. The governor of Nebraska even recognized her for traveling the entire state to advocate for veteran- and caregiver-related issues. In total, Ostrand has accumulated more than 1,000 hours in the VA Voluntary Services program.

"The reason I do this work is to say thank you to DAV," Ostrand said. "When my husband was in the hospital, and this wasn't even a veterans hospital, [a DAV representative] walked in to our room and said he could help.

"The DAV Auxiliary is the way I get to say thank you."

"Alice's accomplishments are too many to list," said DAV Auxiliary Commander LeeAnn Karg. "She's a tireless advocate and volunteer, and I doubt we'd find someone with more firsthand knowledge on the challenges caregivers face. She's truly a blessing and inspiration." ■

Auxiliary Fall Conference dates set

■ The 2015 Auxiliary National Fall Conference will take place Oct. 1–3 at the Galt House in Louisville, Ky. The conference will open with a health fair at 10 a.m. Thursday and includes a banquet dinner Friday, for an extra fee, and a closing reception Saturday.

The registration fee is \$35, plus \$40 for the banquet. To make hotel reservations, call 1-800-843-4258 or

visit www.galthouse.com by Aug. 30.

The rates are \$125 per night for a single/double. Parking at the hotel is \$12 per night. Shuttle service is provided through Sandollar Limousine Executive Transportation for an additional fee.



For conference information, visit auxiliary.dav.org/news/Events.aspx.

To make advance shuttle reservations, visit www.sandollarlimo.com.



From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

LEEANN B. KARG



Goodbye and thank you

This is probably the hardest article I have ever had to write. You have no idea what a privilege it has been to represent you as your National Commander this past year. I have met so many beautiful people during the past six years, and it has meant the world to me.

As a young teenager growing up in a rural area, I never imagined that I could have an opportunity to impact so many lives. You are truly a family to me, and I will never forget you. Though I may not always know your name, I promise I will remember your face. Please do not hesitate to remind me of who you are as we all continue the Auxiliary's journey.

The world is made up of so many different people, and I have a great appreciation for everyone that I have come in contact with. Thank you, each and every one of you! If we have not met, I look forward to meeting you in Denver for the DAV and DAV Auxiliary National Convention.

This country is a magical place to live. Sometimes we take for granted what we

really have. Some people are trying to change us, and we need to put our feet down and tell them no!

I believe in what our nation was founded on, and so did my family who came here from war-torn, oppressed countries. God bless the United States of America!

I have traveled from the east to the west and have been pleasantly surprised at the outpouring of hospitality and love in every state that I visit.

Our forefathers also promised that we would take care of our veterans. They went to war to protect our way of life, and we need to "keep the promise." They did not say "No," nor did they walk away. My veteran, and the many men and women like him, deserve all they have received, and so much more, because of the trials and tribulations they have endured for our nation. They are the reason that I do what I do, and I will continue to do it until I am no longer able. God bless America, and God bless DAV and the DAV Auxiliary.

DAV Auxiliary Membership Application

Membership year is July 1 to June 30.

DATE _____

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION IN UNIT NO. _____ STATE _____

☐ MS. ☐ MRS. ☐ MR.

NAME (please print) _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP CODE _____

DATE OF BIRTH (required) _____ PHONE NO. _____

EMAIL _____

APPLICANT'S SIGNATURE _____

Type of Membership

☐ New Junior (complimentary through age 17)

☐ New Junior Life – \$20 down payment

☐ New Life – \$20 down payment

Age	Life Amount
Birth-30	\$250
31-45	\$230
46-60	\$200
61-70	\$180
71-79	\$140
80 +	Free

AMOUNT PAID

\$ _____

Mail application and payment to DAV Auxiliary, 3275 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076.

New legislative director selected

“It is a **great honor** to be able to serve veterans and their families by working to ensure their rights and benefits are protected.”
—Joy Ilem

National Adjutant Marc Burgess announced his appointment of Joy Ilem as National Legislative Director, effective Aug. 1, following the announcement of longtime director Joseph Violante’s retirement.

Ilem has served as Deputy Legislative Director since June 2009, with nearly two decades of service experience as a member of DAV’s professional staff. She has spent 16 years with the national legislative team.

“Joy brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to this position, as well as an incredible passion for veterans’ advocacy,” said Burgess. “There are a number of critical issues on the horizon for veterans, and she will no doubt lead the organization’s legislative team with the same distinctive commitment that has earned her respect throughout the VSO community.”

An Army veteran, Ilem served from 1982 to 1985 as a medic and began her DAV career in 1995.

In accepting this appointment, Ilem becomes the first woman veteran to lead a DAV national program. She has been largely focused on health policy issues related to the VA’s specialized care for veterans with polytrauma, amputations, blindness, spinal cord injury, traumatic brain injury and post-deployment mental health issues.

Additionally, she has been at the forefront of women veterans’ issues. She served two terms on the federally chartered VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, providing support and testimony in conjunction with the 2010 Stand Up for Women Veterans Act that resulted in passage of Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act. She also facilitated the DAV-sponsored Capitol Hill screenings of the films “Lioness,” “Service: When Women Come Marching Home” and “Journey to Normal: Women of War Come Home,” to raise awareness of gender-specific issues.

Most recently, Ilem coordinated DAV’s landmark 2014 report, “Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home,” which identified service gaps for women in federal programs in areas of health care,

transition services, disability compensation, employment and housing.

“I am humbled for the opportunity to lead our veterans’ advocacy program and to follow in the footsteps of a leader like Joe,” said Ilem. “It is a great honor to be able to serve veterans and their families by working to ensure their rights and benefits are protected, and I look forward to continuing DAV’s legislative work on their behalf.”

Violante served as National Legislative Director for 18 years. He was appointed in 1997. The New Jersey native and Vietnam-era Marine Corps veteran closes out a quarter-century of service for veterans through DAV, having achieved numerous and significant legislative victories during his tenure. Violante began his DAV career as a Staff Counsel/Judicial Appeals Representative at the Court of Veterans Appeals Office in 1990. He served as Legislative Counsel for DAV in 1992 and was later promoted to Deputy National Legislative Director in 1996 prior to being named Director.

Named one of HillVets’ 100 Most Influential and Impactful Veterans, Service Members and Supporters in the Top Lobbyist and Influencer Category, Violante has worked tirelessly to further critical legislation for veterans.

“Joe has been a true fighter for our cause, and we’ve enjoyed unprecedented success on so many issues because of his dedication, knowledge and ability to focus our efforts on the best needs of ill and injured veterans and their families,” said National Commander Ron Hope. “We wish him, his wife, Debra, and family the very best as he enjoys the exciting and well-earned next phase of his life.” ■



Joy Ilem



Joseph A. Violante

New membership director selected

“Our membership is the **life blood** of our organization.”

—Marc Burgess, National Adjutant

National Adjutant Marc Burgess announced his appointment of Douglas K. Wells Jr. as National Membership Director, effective July 1, following the announcement of director Anthony L. Baskerville's retirement after 40 years of service.

Wells brings nearly 20 years of DAV professional experience to the position, having most recently served as National Area Supervisor (NAS) in Detroit where he oversaw and supervised six other regional offices in the Midwest.

“Our membership is the life blood of our organization. It's an area where we've had tremendous achievements over many years,” said Burgess. “We are confident Doug will help us continue our efforts and develop new resources to reach out and engage the veterans we'll need to keep DAV vital.”

Wells was an intelligence specialist in the United States Marine Corps during the Persian Gulf War era, serving from 1990 to 1996 when he was medically discharged. He began work for the organization as a trainee in 1996, graduating from the DAV National Service Officer Training Academy in Denver and was then assigned to DAV's Salt Lake City service office and later made supervisor. In 2006, he moved to Detroit as assistant supervisor. He was promoted to supervisor of that location in 2012 before being appointed NAS for Area 2 this past March.

In Salt Lake City from 2001–2002, Wells served as veterans service organization liaison for the Department of Veterans Affairs Olympic Committee. In Detroit, he was named to Governor Rick Snyder's Governor-Elect Transition Committee, which was responsible for addressing veterans' issues and led to the formation of the cabinet-level Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency. He also helped reignite the Department of Michigan's recruiting efforts, helping the state exceed membership goals during the past three years.

“While we welcome Doug to his new position, we must also recognize the contributions Tony has made to DAV and his fellow veterans over four decades of selfless service,” Burgess said. “Through his careful leadership,

DAV has enjoyed unprecedented success in spite of the downward trends in membership nearly all other established veterans service organizations have faced in the past decade.”

Baskerville was previously a Service Commissioner with DAV Department of Texas and also served as a Chapter Service Officer and a Chapter Senior Vice Commander. He was on the Subcommittee on Disabled Veterans for the President's Committee on Employment of People with Disabilities and is the recipient of the 2008 NAACP Jesse Brown Distinguished Leadership Award.

He joined the DAV professional staff in 1975 as a National Service Officer in Baltimore. He was transferred to DAV's Washington, D.C., office in 1976, where he worked as a National Service Officer and DAV Vietnam Veterans Outreach Program Coordinator. In 1985, he was transferred to the National Service Office in Houston before being appointed to the service staff in Washington, D.C. There, he was appointed Deputy National Service Director for Employment. In 2001, he transferred to DAV's National Headquarters in Cold Spring, Ky., where he served as a deputy director in human resources and membership before being promoted to his current post in August 2005.

Baskerville enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps in 1971. In 1972, while assigned to Marine Barracks Cuba, he was injured during a combat preparedness exercise. In 1974, he was medically discharged due to his injury.

“Tony has been a friend and mentor to countless veterans in DAV. He has been ever-faithful to the organization and deserves all our best wishes as he begins a well-earned retirement,” said National Commander Ron Hope. “We can only hope that he knows the impact he has made in the lives of others, but his legacy will live on for generations to come.” ■



Douglas K. Wells Jr.



Anthony L. Baskerville

Shurhonda Love appointed Associate National Legislative Director

■ Among DAV's legislative staff, Shurhonda Love was appointed to the position of Associate National Legislative Director earlier this year. Love, a former Army medic and disabled veteran of the Gulf War and post-9/11 eras, joined DAV's professional ranks in 2008 and served as a trainee and National Service Officer at the National Service Office in Montgomery, Ala. She was later transferred and promoted to assistant supervisor of the National Service Office in Salt Lake City in 2011, and in 2012 was promoted and transferred to her most recent post at the National



Shurhonda Love

Service Office in New Orleans. Love also served on DAV's National Service Advisory Committee from 2010 to 2012 and has taken temporary assignments with the National Appeals Office and National Legislative Staff prior to this appointment.

"Ms. Love has already demonstrated great skill and ambition in serving her fellow veterans," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "We are grateful to have her at our National Service and Legislative Headquarters in Washington and look forward to her further support and representation of DAV on the Hill."

Disabled American Veterans National Headquarters Unaudited Statement of Financial Position • March 31, 2015			
Unrestricted Assets		Unrestricted Liabilities	
Current Assets	\$ 33,023,992	Current Liabilities	\$ 132,637,845
Investments, at Market	384,293,965	Total Liabilities	132,637,845
Land, Buildings and Equipment,			
Net of Depreciation	8,068,465	Unrestricted Net Assets	
Other Assets	150,000	General and Net Assets Designated	
		by the Board of Directors	\$ 292,898,577
		Total Unrestricted Net Assets	292,898,577
Total Unrestricted Assets	\$ 425,536,422	Total Liabilities and Unrestricted	\$ 425,536,422
		Net Assets	
Life Membership Assets		Life Membership Liabilities	
Current Assets	\$ 4,376,737	Current Liabilities	\$ 581,126
Investments, at Market	60,762,453	Reserve for Future Distribution	
		of Life Membership Dues	64,558,064
		Total Life Membership Liabilities	
Total Life Membership Assets	\$ 65,139,190	and Reserve for Future Distribution	\$ 65,139,190
		of Life Membership Dues	



bbb.org/charity

DAV is very proud we have been authorized to display the seal since 2004, in recognition of meeting the Alliance's

20 Standards for Charity Accountability, which encourage fair and honest solicitation practices, promote ethical conduct by charitable organizations and advance public support of philanthropy.



Share Your News!

Send your DAV or Auxiliary news to feedback@dav.org. Please provide a JPEG image, photo description and names of those pictured. Submissions are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety.

REMEMBRANCE

Retired Assistant NSO Supervisor Larry Dawson passes on

■ Larry Dawson, who served fellow veterans for 25 years as a National Service Officer, has died.

Dawson served in the U.S. Army from 1964 to 1972 and was hired as a National Service Officer the same year.

He began his career in Cleveland on June 26, 1972, and on December 15, 1975, he was promoted to NSO Assistant Supervisor in the Phoenix office. Dawson was again promoted

on March 17, 1980, as NSO Supervisor in Phoenix and retired as Assistant Supervisor in 1997.

"Our thoughts and prayers are with the Dawson family in this difficult time," said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. "Larry Dawson



Dawson

spent more than two decades of his life dedicated to continued and selfless service to veterans and their families. He will certainly be missed, but he changed thousands of veterans' lives for the better, and that's a legacy DAV is very proud of."

Job interview questions

They're not just for the employer



ANDY MCMILLAN/GETTY IMAGES

By Steven Wilson

It's not unusual for veterans attending DAV/RecruitMilitary veterans career fairs to be interviewed by an interested employer right on the spot. The problem, according to National Employment Director Jeff Hall, is that some veterans aren't expecting this, and they're missing out on another opportunity to shine.

Hall explained that many aspects of the job interview are not only to discover the potential veteran employee's qualifications, but also for the hiring representative to ascertain if the candidate is a "good fit" for the organization.

"I've found a best practice is to have a list of questions already in your folder, portfolio, notepad or whatever you happen to be carrying," Hall said. "But at DAV career fairs, you may not have the time to research every company for specific questions you might want to ask. So Hall advises making the questions neutral.

"Neutral questions are those you can use in nearly every interview opportunity," said DAV Human Resources Director Randy Reese. "They can give you an opportunity to express your interest in the job and have further dialogue with hiring managers."

Reese said "neutral" questions cover the organization's leadership, specifics of the job the

veteran is interviewing for or even broader questions about the company.

"If someone's in a senior leadership position, you might try, 'How would you describe your leadership style?'" Reese cited. "To show your interest in the organization and that you're a team player, you could ask, 'What are the biggest challenges facing the company right now?' or 'What is your team's top goal for this year?'"

"All of these are good questions and could be used just about anywhere," Reese said. "Be sure to write down the interviewer's responses. It shows you are placing value on what they're saying."

Hall said one of the most important things for a veteran candidate to remember is to never lose an opportunity to tell a prospective employer what a great asset they're getting by hiring a veteran.

"But you can't do that if you're missing opportunities to engage in meaningful dialogue," he said. "So, if it's me in that interview, I'm coming with three or four good neutral questions loaded, primed and ready to go." ■



Learn More Online

If you're a veteran, transitioning service member or spouse of either, or know someone who is, please consider passing this article along to them as well as other resources available at jobs.dav.org.



It's easy to leave a legacy gift to DAV

A simple line of text in your will can make all the difference in ensuring DAV continues to be there to meet the needs of future generations of disabled veterans. Stephanie Vorhees in DAV's Gift Planning Office is here to help and answer your questions about including DAV in your will. Contact Stephanie at 800-216-9802, extension 1, or by email at giftplanning@dav.org. You can also return the attached postcard, and Stephanie will contact you.

Meeting with your attorney is a great way to begin the process of naming DAV in your estate plans. You will need to use our legal name and address as follows: **DAV (Disabled American Veterans), P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250;** EIN/tax identification number: 31-0263158. Then please let us know, so we can thank you through the Guardian Society!

A gift from a friend



Anastasia Adensam (center) credits much of her support for DAV to the relationships she's built with many of the professionals at the DAV headquarters offices—people like John Barfield (left) and Peter Strickland (right) from the Major Gifts and Gift Planning Office.

Veteran's sister gives back

Anastasia Adensam is an avid DAV supporter and friend who holds DAV's mission near and dear to her heart. Adensam's late brother was a disabled American veteran.

Adensam has made it her life's mission to positively impact as many disabled American veterans' lives as she can. She's chosen to fulfill this endeavor through generous annual gifts to DAV. She has also decided to leave a legacy that inspires others to stand alongside our nation's ill and injured veterans by including DAV in her will.

"I feel blessed to support DAV's mission in a big way through my estate plans and annual contributions," Adensam said. "Knowing the dire struggles that my late brother and our current members endure after returning home often weighs heavily on my heart, and I want to do everything I can to help."

Adensam's generosity through her bequest and annual gifts, combined with support from countless members and friends, helps DAV accomplish what we do every single day to improve the lives of those who have served. Adensam receives immense satisfaction knowing that she is able to honor her brother's memory by helping other service members receive the benefits they've earned and deserve. "My late brother and men and women of today are fighting for my freedom—and coming home injured because of it. Now I want to fight for and support them through my charitable giving." ■

From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



Standards

Greetings everyone! Standards of measurement are essentially arbitrary. Nothing inherent in nature dictates that an inch has to be a certain length, or that a mile is a better measure of distance than a kilometer. Over the course of human history, however, first for convenience and then for necessity, standards of measurement evolved so communities would have certain common benchmarks. For example, laws regulating measurement were originally developed to prevent fraud in commerce.

So this raises the question: Is there a higher standard of behavior that we should live by? Everyone reading this article has heard someone saying something to the effect of “How would you like it if someone did the same to you?” or “That’s my seat. I was here first.” Or maybe you’ve heard someone say, “Come on, you promised.”

Those who make these remarks are saying the other person’s behavior does not please them. These individuals are appealing to some kind of standard of behavior that they expect the other person to know. This law or rule about right and wrong used to be called the law of nature. Nowadays when we talk about the “laws of nature” we usually mean gravitation, heredity or chemistry. But what it really should be is the law of human nature.

Whenever you find a individuals who do not believe in a real right or wrong, you will find the same individuals going back on their remarks a moment later. They may break their promises to you. If you try breaking one to them, however, they begin to say, “It’s not fair.”

If there is no common standard for men and women to follow, then what is the difference between a fair treaty and an unfair one? If we do not believe in decent behavior, why should we be so anxious to make excuses for not having behaved decently? The problem is obvious. Those who make such remarks fail to practice the kind of behavior they expect from other people.

Our life experiences can dictate what standard we choose to live by, good or bad, and it is a choice we alone make. We can blame others, but in the end it is our choice. The reality is that everyone demonstrates that higher standards of behavior are written in their hearts, for their own conscience and thoughts either accuse them or tell them they are doing right.

DAV and the DAV Auxiliary are standard-bearers among veterans service organizations. Our purpose is clear in helping others. Whether within DAV, the DAV Auxiliary or on a personal journey, when it matters most, what standard will you exhibit?

In His Service for You.

DAV National Commander participates in Department of Texas Convention



Above: National Commander Ron Hope introduces the incoming Department of Texas officers. From left: Commander Jay E. Johnson, Senior Vice Commander Charles W. Edwards Jr., 1st Junior Vice Commander Robert Squyres, 2nd Junior Vice Commander Robert Delgado. **Top Right:** Chapter 61 Adjutant Linda Traux accepts an award honoring the 50 years the Chapter has been chartered.



Left: As tradition dictates, Dennis Nixon presents National Commander Ron Hope with a straw hat as Immediate Past Department Commander Tim Lindsey looks on.

Cracker Barrel teams with DAV for human checkers game at American Country Music Awards Party for a Cause



DAV received a \$10,000 donation from Cracker Barrel Old Country Store after participating in a human checkers charity event in Arlington, Texas, in April. Country music star Thomas Rhett controlled the Team DAV "checker pieces" and Past National Commander Bobby Barrera and DAV Life Member Joe Washam represented DAV. The artists for Team DAV were Rhett Akins, Dan Smyers and Shay Mooney (Dan + Shay), Danielle Bradbery, Scotty McCreery and Cassadee Pope. Team Pickler artists were Lauren Alaina, Chase Bryant, Kristian Bush, Stephen Barker Liles and Eric Gunderson (Love & Theft), and Jamie Lynn Spears.



VA Secretary visits Montana...

Sen. Jon Tester and VA Secretary Bob McDonald held a town hall meeting in Billings, Mont., which was largely attended by DAV Chapter 10 Billings. The secretary discussed several topics, including the rapid aging of America's veterans and the increasing number of women veterans.



World War II veteran witnessed historic moment...

DAV Chapter 81 Greenville, Texas, Commander John Turner and Commander of the local DAV Auxiliary, Shirley Turner, recently met World War II veteran Victor Egger. Egger was on board the USS Hornet when the famous 1942 Doolittle Raid was launched from its decks.



50th anniversary of the Civil Rights March...

In honor of the historic march, DAV National Chaplain Michael Dover stopped at the Dexter Avenue Baptist Church where Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. delivered a sermon to participants 50 years ago. From left: Mary Marshall, Robert James, Patrycia Tucker, Doris Sanders, Kendell Thomas, Viola Jordan, Michael Dover, Lurlene Feagin, John Feagin, Cary Owens, William Minter, Hattie Minter, DAV life member C. Randy Anderson, Wanda Anderson, Margurite Foley, Reverend Cromwell Handy and Cynthia Handy.



Chapter 91 hosts awards banquet...

More than 300 attendees were on hand in Decatur, Ga., to recognize the efforts of several Chapter 91 members who have shown exemplary dedication and leadership. National Sr. Vice Commander Moses A. McIntosh Jr. was the keynote speaker and highlighted the Chapter's many accomplishments, including claims assistance, hosting health and job fairs, addressing needs of local homeless veterans and the unique programs Chapter 91 facilitates for local youth.



New York VA gets new van...

Past Department of New York Commander Samuel Mantilla led the Chapter 92 Whitestone, N.Y., efforts in donating a new Ford Econovan to the James J. Peters VA Medical Center located in Bronx, N.Y. The members also attended a town hall meeting with VA Secretary Bob McDonald. Jean Cooney, who leads voluntary services at the VAMC said of the Chapter's efforts, "I am humbled and inspired by such a gesture of generosity, and our veterans will reap the benefits of this van for many years to come."

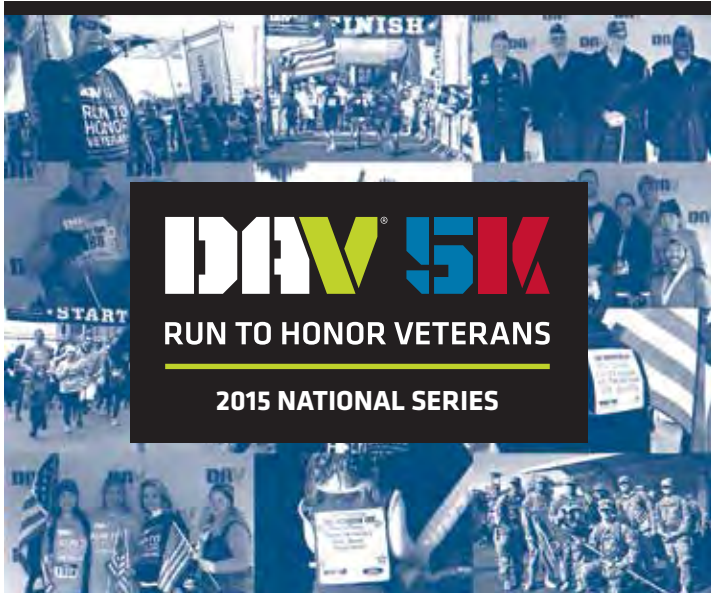


Share Your News! Send photos of your DAV or Auxiliary news to feedback@dav.org.



Spotlight on volunteers...

The 69th Annual VA Voluntary Service National Advisory Committee Meeting and Conference was held in Albuquerque, N.M., April 22–25. Pictured (from left) are DAV National Director of Voluntary Services John Kleindienst, William "Bill" Baumann and Kirk Johnson.



DAV 5K

RUN TO HONOR VETERANS

2015 NATIONAL SERIES

This November, honor the brave men and women who have sacrificed so much.

CINCINNATI ★ SAN DIEGO ★ ATLANTA

SAWYER POINT
SAT., NOV. 7

NTC PARK
SAT., NOV. 7

PIEDMONT PARK
SAT., NOV. 14

REGISTER ONLINE AT DAV5K.ORG

Presented by DAV (Disabled American Veterans) • Sponsored By:



Giving back to the community...

DAV Chapter 41 Wichita Falls, Texas, donated a wheelchair to a neighbor in need. Life member Joel Jimenez said the wheelchair was received "with a smile that can only mean 'Thank you, DAV.'"

Date	City	Location
July 9	Indianapolis, IN	Murat Shrine Temple
July 16	St. Louis, MO	Chaifetz Arena at Saint Louis University
July 23	Sacramento, CA	Aerospace Museum of California
August 6	San Diego, CA	Liberty Station's NTC Promenade @ Corky McMillin Event Center
August 20	Louisville, KY	Papa John's Cardinal Stadium
August 27	Dallas, TX	Kay Bailey Hutchison Convention Center
August 27	Denver, CO	Sports Authority Field at Mile High
September 2	Boston, MA	Gillette Stadium
September 3	San Antonio, TX	Norris Conference Centers
September 10	Houston, TX	Minute Maid Park
September 17	New York, NY	Hotel Pennsylvania
September 17	Riverside, CA	Riverside Municipal Auditorium

Visit jobs.dav.org for updates on venue locations.

Help for the unsung heroes

(Continued from pg. 7)

a several-ton buoy being lifted from the water. She has since lived with the lingering effects of a TBI and many other serious physical injuries.

Jason has been a husband to Alexis and father to their two children, all while balancing full-time employment to support the family. Together, they made the decision to close his business, pick up and move to be closer to the Boston VA medical center where she was able to access the care she needed.

If they had been eligible for many of the benefits afforded post-9/11 veterans, things may have turned out differently.

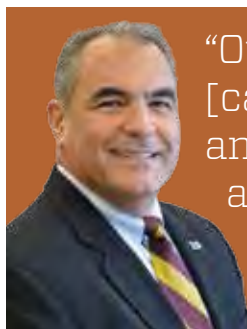
"Every time she had an appointment 200 miles from home, I had to make a decision: Did I want to be a provider today, or should I go with her?" said Jason.

Jason explained he and Alexis had been on their own for so long, they learned to make it work. However, he admitted, "If I sit here and think about what we've gone through, I get pissed off." He urged passage of the bill, so other families would be able to find some relief in an already difficult situation.

At a Senate Veterans Affairs' Committee hearing just prior to the introduction of the bill, VA Secretary Bob

McDonald stated, "We're very supportive of the legislation you've written. We think that pre-9/11 caregivers should get the same benefits that post-9/11 get."

The bill is estimated to cost \$9.5 billion over four years and would be phased in to reduce strain on the VA. The department has requested additional funding



"Our government owes [caregivers] meaningful support and recognition for their sacrifice and for the sacrifice of the loved ones they care for."

Joseph A. Violante, National Legislative Director

to support the caregiver program and funds to hire more caregiver program coordinators.

"Family caregivers provide crucial support to help veterans achieve meaningful and active lives, often at the expense of their own education, employment and health," said National Legislative Director Joseph Violante. "Our government owes them meaningful support and recognition for their sacrifice and for the sacrifice of the loved ones they care for."

"By supporting the caregiver, we support the veteran." ■

REUNIONS

ARMY

2ND BATTALION 94TH ARTILLERY (VIETNAM) Sept. 28–Oct. 1, Williamsburg, VA, Contact: Jim Lary, Ph: 501-834-9777, Email: jllary@usa.net.

2ND INFANTRY DIVISION (INDIANHEAD) ASSN. Sept. 22–25, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Bob Haynes, Ph: 224-225-1202.

4TH BATTALION 9TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (MANCHUS) Sept. 16–19, Norfolk, VA, Contact: Bob Lannon, Ph: 317-745-4287, Email: bobl99@hotmail.com.

4TH INFANTRY (IVY) DIVISION ASSN. 97TH ANNUAL REUNION Sept. 29–Oct. 3, Springfield, IL, Contact: Glen Armstrong, Ph: 414-630-2484, Email: ivyleaveseditor@gmail.com, Web: www.4thinfantry.org.

18TH & 54TH AVIATION COMPANY "OTTER NEST" REUNION Oct. 8–11, Houma, LA, Contact: Jeff Bickerton, Ph: 404-663-1820, Email: jeffbic@comcast.net, Web: www.18thand54thaviationcompanyotternest.com.

24TH INFANTRY DIVISION ASSOCIATION Sept. 17–21, Columbus, GA, Contact: Donald Bruner, Ph: 580-233-4228, Email: donbruner@suddenlink.net.

27TH INFANTRY REGIMENT (THE WOLFHOUNDS) HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC. Aug. 9–15, Charleston, SC, Contact: Bill Spence, Ph: 803-834-6984, Email: jazzysb@yahoo.com, Web: www.wolfhoundpack.org.

65TH COMBAT ENGINEER BATTALION 25TH INFANTRY DIVISION - VIETNAM Oct. 12–16, Columbus, GA, Contact: Ken Dixon, Ph: 706-260-5661.

83RD INFANTRY DIVISION ASSN. July 29–Aug. 2, Louisville, KY, Contact: Kathleen Powers, Ph: 703-455-1853.

101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION VIETNAM VETERANS ORG. Sept. 24–27, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Dave Nesbitt, Ph: 803-464-4250, Email: nesbitt101@gmail.com, Web: www.101namvet.com.

503RD PARACHUTE RCT ASSN. WW-II July 29–Aug. 2, Dayton, OH, Contact: Todd Mayer, Ph: 740-363-8644, Email: tmayer@columbus.rr.com.

509TH ENGINEER COMPANY PB - 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION - VIETNAM Sept. 3–6, Fort Riley, KS, Contact: Jerry Sexton, Ph: 405-373-0354.

630TH ENGINEER REUNION L.E. - VIETNAM Sept. 17–20, Branson, MO, Contact: Cecil Brown, Ph: 731-415-6460, Email: ceclinbrown@charter.net.

864TH ENGINEER BATTALION ALUMNI ASSN. Oct. 14–18, Ft. Leonard Wood/St. Robert, MO, Contact: Ron Jones, Ph: 703-217-3140, Email: outdoory_guy@yahoo.com.

DELTA BIRDDOG MEMBERS OF 199TH RAC AND 221ST RAC Sept. 10–13, St. Louis, MO, Contact: Bob McKenzie, Ph: 803-425-5551, Email: jnbmcken@gmail.com.

KOREAN WAR VET REUNION-999TH AFA BN Sept. 24–26, Milwaukee, WI, Contact: Tom & Anne Talaska, Ph: 414-421-4189, Email: amtalaska@sbcglobal.net.

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS & DESCENDANTS Sept. 3–6, Westlake, TX, Contact: Joni Newman, Ph: 937-423-1294, Email: mmpdvices@gmail.com.

THIRD ARMORED DIVISION ASSN. July 24–25, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Finley Brewster, 18310 Diamond Circle, San Antonio, TX 78258.

MARINES

1ST BATTALION 1ST MARINE ASSN. Aug. 26–30, Arlington, VA, Contact: Rick Bazaco, Ph: 866-337-9448 ext. 710, Email: reunion@1stBn1stMarines.com, Web: www.1stbn1stmarines.com.

1ST MARINE DIVISION ASSN. Aug. 18–22, San Diego, CA, Contact: Carolyn Leary, Ph: 757-625-6401, Email: carolyn@afri.com, Web: www.1stmarinedivisionassociation.org.

2ND BATTALION, 9TH MARINE REGIMENT Nov. 8–12, Arlington, VA, Contact: Danny Schuster, Ph: 978-667-4762, Email: ditson35@verizon.net.

3RD MARINE DIVISION Aug. 11–16, Orlando, FL. All eras. Contact: Richard Cleary, Ph: 520-487-0327, Email: clearyrp@msn.com.

26TH MARINES ASSOCIATION Aug. 21–23, Denver, CO, Contact: Sonny Hollub, Ph: 512-312-4168, Email: sonnyusmc@gmail.com, Web: www.26thMarines.com.

BATTERY ADJUST 3/11 MARINES Sept. 23–27, Charleston, SC, Contact: Doug Miller, Ph: 402-540-9431, Email: dmiller48@gmail.com.

GOLF 2-7 VIETNAM VETERANS ASSN. REUNION Aug. 25–30, Dillard, GA, Contact: Ray Taylor, Ph: 352-978-9746, Email: rapidray2@aol.com.

MARINE AIR GROUPS REUNION WWII TO PRESENT Sept. 16–19, Branson, MO, Contact: James Jordan, Ph: 417-535-4945, Email: james.m.jordan@hughes.net.

MARINE OFFICERS REUNION ASSN. Oct. 9–12, San Diego, CA, Contact: John Featherstone, Ph: 310-833-2190, Email: johnf9375@aol.com.

MARINES OF LONG AGO Oct. 13–16, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Joe Cullen, Ph: 203-877-0846, Web: www.marinesoflongago.com.

PLATOON 342 (JUNE-SEPTEMBER 1965) Sept. 4–6, Parris Island, SC, Contact: Charles Harmon, Ph: 702-458-3132, Email: chickster48@live.com.

NAVY

CBMU-302 ALL YEARS Oct. 16–19, Joliet, IL, Contact: Dave Schill, Email: dwschill@comcast.net.

MCB-3 VETERANS REUNION ASSN. Oct. 1–4, Charleston, SC, Contact: Harold Schrage, Ph: 818-681-7852, Email: hschrage@pacbell.net.

NATIONAL ASSN. OF NAVAL PHOTOGRAPHERS Sept. 23–26, San Diego, CA, Contact: Bill Solt, Ph: 757-427-5766, Email: sisbill@aol.com.

PATROL SQUADRON 11 Aug. 13–16, Reno, NV, Contact: Mike Brittingham, Ph: 804-560-3306, Email: captemb@gmail.com.

US NAVY AMPHIBIOUS FORCE VETERANS ASSN. Sept. 6, Chattanooga, TN, Contact: John J. Walsh, Ph: 732-367-6472.

USS ALTIRE (AKS-32) Oct. 11–15, Branson, MO, Contact: Dan Douglas, Ph: 204-966-1851, Email: ddouglas@aol.com.

USS BON HOMME RICHARD (CV/CVA-31) SHIP COMPANY AND AIR GROUP & USS BON HOMME RICHARD (LHD-6) Sept. 15–19, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Frank Pulliam, Ph: 417-684-1358.

USS BOSTON (CA-69, CAG-1, SSN-703) July 16–19, Fayetteville, NC, Contact: Barry Probst, Ph: 508-580-3808, Web: www.ussboston.org.

USS CARTER HALL (LSD-3) Sept. 16–19, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Don Brewer, Ph: 440-376-2676.

USS ELOKOMIN Sept. 24–27, Cleveland, OH, Contact: Ron Finet, Ph: 262-742-4269, Email: Finet@hotmail.com.

USS GRAY (DE/FF-1054) Sept. 3–8, Nashville, TN, Contact: Henry Chun, Ph: 808-242-7825, Email: ilovegolf@hawaii.rr.com.

USS HARRY E. YARNELL (DLG/CG-17) Nov. 13–15, Virginia Beach, VA, Contact: Paul Bolduc, Ph: 978-249-4038, Email: pbolduc@verizon.net, Web: www.ussarryeyarnell.com.

USS LONG BEACH (CGN-9) Sept. 14–20, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Don Shade, Ph: 866-352-2469, Email: LBCGN9@aol.com, Web: www.usslongbeach-assoc.org.

USS MAUNA KEA (AE-22) Sept. 10–12, St. Augustine, FL, Contact: David Cannon, Ph: 678-583-1670, Email: dcannon604@charter.net.

USS MONTRAIL (APA-213) Oct. 12–15, Biloxi, MS, Contact: Don DiCoio, Ph: 973-725-1974, Email: dicoio44@aol.com.

USS MOUNT MCKINLEY ASSN. Sept. 16–20, Milwaukee, WI, Contact: David Long, Ph: 440-292-7839, Email: davidlong1944@msn.com, Web: www.ussmtmckinley.com.

USS MULLANY (DD-528) Sept. 2–6, Columbus, GA, Contact: George & Terry Seal, Ph: 678-859-5106, Email: sallymae99@msn.com.

USS NORTHAMPTON (ECLC-1, CLC-1, CC-1, CC-26) Sept. 9–13, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: John Gauthier, Email: thenorthampton@live.com.

USS OAK HILL (LSD-7) Oct. 1–4, Portland, ME, Contact: Raylah Holm, Ph: 509-607-9021, Email: raylah@aol.com, Web: www.ussaokhillsd7.myevent.com.

USS OKLAHOMA CITY ASSN. Sept. 29–Oct. 4, Reno, NV, Contact: John F. Baker, Ph: 620-399-3999, Web: www.ussokcity.com.

USS PERKINS (DD-26, DD-377, DDR-877) Sept. 9–13, Colorado Springs, CO, Contact: Amy Keenan, Ph: 719-205-9721, Email: AmyKeenan83@msn.com.

USS PIEDMONT (AD-17) Sept. 16–20, Albany, NY, Contact: Kent Thomas, Ph: 913-381-8994, Email: kthomasgolf@aol.com, Web: www.theusspiedmontad17.org.

USS POINT DEFIANCE (LSD-31) Sept. 9, Bloomington, MN, Contact: John Nicolosi, Ph: 978-532-0717.

USS WARRINGTON (DD-843) Sept. 27–Oct. 1, Annapolis, MD, Contact: Stan Prager, Ph: 916-791-6700, Email: stashuman843@msn.com.

USS ZELLARS (DD-777) Oct. 5–9, Nashville, TN, Contact: Lester Sinton, Ph: 978-257-0876, Email: notnis1@comcast.net, Web: www.usszellars.com.

VP-23 July 24–26, Brunswick, ME, Contact: Jon C. Jewett, Ph: 603-770-0715, Email: jonjewett42@gmail.com.

AIR FORCE

18TH FIGHTER INTERCEPTOR SQUADRON Oct. 12–16, Tucson, AZ, Contact: Lou Klar, Ph: 813-237-4454, Email: bluefox18thfis@verizon.net.

526TH FIS/TFS Sept. 9–13, Omaha, NE, Contact: Don Wenzlick, Ph: 402-291-0565, Email: dhwenzlick@gmail.com.

610 MILITARY AIRLIFT SUPPORT SQUADRON July 23–26, Nashville, TN, Contact: Ed Strahan, Ph: 530-527-8422, Email: ed610mass@gmail.com, Web: www.610massalumni.com.

AIR FORCE POSTAL AND COURIER ASSOCIATION Sept. 18–20, Savannah, GA, Contact: Ernie Smith, Ph: 904-824-6097, Email: esmith-6@comcast.net.

RAF BURTONWOOD ASSN. (1941-93) Oct. 11–15, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Jim Bentley, Ph: 813-689-0199, Email: jbento214@aol.com.

ALL SERVICES

GRAVES REGISTRATION/MORTUARY AFFAIRS Aug. 6–9, Dover, DE, Contact: Gary Redlinski, Ph: 585-654-7258, Email: gtred@frontier.com, Web: www.grmareunion.org.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for anyone who remembers or was deployed with me in January-March 1968 with the 636th Security Police Squadron from Clark AFB Philippines, to Osan AB, South Korea in response to the hijacking of the USS Pueblo. Please contact Paul Flynn, 18 Riversedge Drive, Milford, NH 03055-8900, Ph: 941-228-7022.
- Searching for anyone who served at Korat Royal Thai AFB in Thailand during 1966, in particular one of the two sergeants that worked in the services area. Anyone who served during that time could be of help. Please contact John Alumbaugh, at Email: jbalumbaugh@mediacombb.net.
- Searching for information regarding Joseph Dean Humphrey, ATR 2, VA 165, who served on the USS Oriskany during 1963-64. He was killed on board ship. Looking for information pertaining to him and information from anyone who served with him or myself. Please contact Donald Grindstaff, 8741 CR 7110, West Plains, MO 65775, Ph: 417-257-9967, Email: dmbgrindstaff@centurylink.net.
- Searching for members of the Marine 3rd 155mm gun battery (SP) and the 3rd 175mm gun battery (SP) for our 5th reunion being held in San Diego, CA, Oct. 1-3. Contact Ed Kirby, Ph: 978-987-1920, or Email: ed-kirby@comcast.net.
- Searching for anyone in my platoon who took basic training at Fort Belvoir, VA, from September 1943. Contact Jerry Barshov, Ph: 718-926-5102.
- Searching for A. Hawkins, a college buddy at University of Florida, originally from Jacksonville, last known in 1975 as a LCDR naval pilot at NAS Miramar, San Diego. Contact Carl Heishman, 2615 4th Ave. S., Great Falls, MT 59405, Ph: 406-231-0005.
- Searching for anyone who served with my father, Robert G. Graham, 14th Mobile R&R Unit in Troston, England, during WWII. He was a corporal with the 40th Depot Repair Squadron before going to England and was discharged on Dec. 25, 1945. Contact Sherry Graham, 56 Oakwood Drive, Chapel Hill, NC 2717, Email: graham@live.unc.edu.
- Searching for soldiers in basic training at 1 PLT, ECHO CO, 9th BN, 2nd BDE, Fort Jackson, SC, March through May 1972 with Drill Sgt. Cintron. Contact Sam Aguilar, Email: Sam.15aguilar@yahoo.com.



INSPIRED BY YOUR SERVICE.

For more than 90 years, USAA has supported the military community, and we're proud to honor the members of DAV. USAA is committed to stand alongside you wherever life, or the military takes you.



USAA is
Honored to Serve
Disabled American Veterans

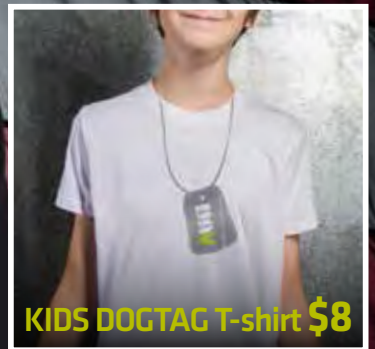
MAKE **A** STATEMENT

TRADITION
HONOR
DEDICATION

BOLD STATEMENT
T-shirt \$20

OSCARMIKE

AMERICAN-MADE, VETERAN OWNED APPAREL WITH A MISSION



KIDS DOGTAG T-shirt \$8



VINTAGE T-shirt \$20



AUX LOGO T-shirt \$20



davstore.org



sales@dav.org



877-426-2838, Ext. 3252



DAV Sales • 3725 Alexandria Pike • Cold Spring, KY 41076