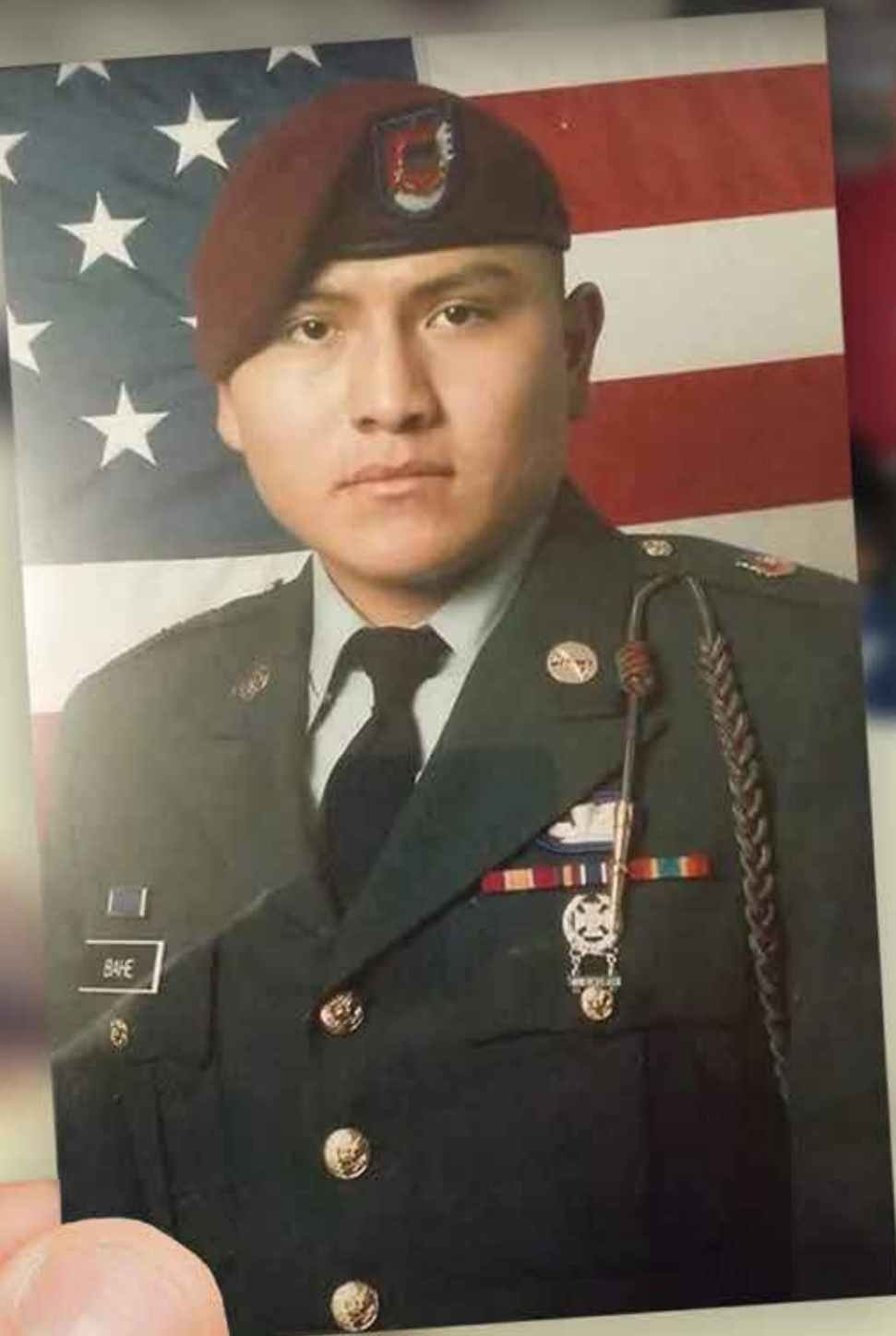




THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

MARCH | APRIL 2017

MAGAZINE



Patriot Nations

Honoring Native American veterans

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2017 Department Conventions

DEPARTMENT	CITY	CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS	DATES	BANQUET
Alabama	Mobile	Renaissance Riverview Plaza	June 1–4	June 3
Alaska	Fairbanks	Westmark Hotel	April 14–15	April 15
Arizona	Tucson	Sheraton East Tucson	June 7–10	June 9
Arkansas	Little Rock	Holiday Inn Presidential	June 9–10	June 10
California	Reno, NV	Grand Sierra Resort & Casino	June 7–10	June 10
Colorado	Denver	Doubletree Hotel	May 17–19	May 19
Connecticut	Cromwell	Courtyard by Marriott	May 4–7	May 6
D.C.	Washington	Embassy Suites Washington, DC Convention Center	April 28–29	April 29
Delaware	Camden	Comfort Suites	May 19–20	May 20
Florida	Lake Mary	Orlando Marriott—Lake Mary	June 14–18	June 17
Georgia	Macon	Marriott Macon City Center	June 23–25	June 24
Hawaii	Honolulu	Airport Honolulu Hotel	June 9–10	June 10
Idaho	Idaho Falls	Shilo Inn & Hotel	May 3–6	May 5
Illinois	Springfield	Northfield Inn & Suites	June 22–25	June 24
Indiana	Indianapolis	Marriott Center East	June 2–3	June 3
Iowa	Council Bluffs	Country Inn Suites	July 14–16	July 15
Kansas	Mayetta	Prairie Band Casino & Resort	June 15–18	June 17
Kentucky	Lexington	Embassy Suites	June 22–25	June 24
Louisiana	Alexandria	Best Western	May 18–21	May 20
Maine	Bangor	Four Points by Sheraton	May 5–7	May 6
Maryland	Ocean City	Princess Royale Hotel	May 30–June 3	June 3
Massachusetts	Leominster	Double Tree By Hilton	June 14–18	June 16 & 17
Michigan	Sault Ste. Marie	Kewadin Casino and Hotel	June 9–11	June 10
Minnesota	Duluth	Holiday Inn Duluth	April 27–29	April 28
Mississippi	Tupelo	Clarion & Summit Center	May 5–7	May 6
Missouri	Jefferson City	Capitol Plaza Hotel	June 2–4	June 3
Montana	Great Falls	Hampton Inn	June 1–3	June 2
Nebraska	Kearney	Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center	May 5–6	May 6
Nevada	Verdi	Boomtown Casino and Hotel New Orleans	May 7–9	May 9
New Hampshire	Shelburne	Town & Country Inn and Resort	June 2–4	June 3
New Jersey	Atlantic City	Resorts Casino	June 11–14	June 13
New Mexico	Albuquerque	MCM Eleganté Hotel & Event Center	June 8–10	June 9
New York	Kerhonkson	Hudson Valley Resort	June 25–28	June 27
North Carolina	Greensboro	Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons	June 23–25	June 24
North Dakota	Mandan	Baymont Inn	April 28–30	April 29
Ohio	Dublin	Columbus Marriott Northwest	June 22–25	June 24
Oklahoma	Catoosa	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	June 20–22	June 21
Oregon	Bend	Shilo Inn & Hotel	May 11–13	May 12
Pennsylvania	Wilkes Barre	Holiday Inn Wilkes Barre—East Mountain	June 21–24	June 23
Puerto Rico	Guayanilla	Costa Bahia Hotel & Convention Center	April 21–23	April 22
Rhode Island	Warwick	Crowne Plaza	April 21–22	April 22
South Carolina	Columbia	DoubleTree By Hilton	May 17–21	May 20
South Dakota	Fort Pierre	AmericInn Lodge & Suites	April 28–30	April 29
Tennessee	Murfreesboro	Doubletree by Hilton	June 14–18	June 17
Texas	Austin	Doubletree by Hilton Hotel Austin	June 9–11	June 10
Utah	Salt Lake City	Radisson Hotel Salt Lake City Downtown	June 1–3	June 2
Vermont	Jay	Jay Peak Resort	May 11–14	May 13
Virginia	Roanoke	Holiday Inn — Tanglewood	June 8–11	June 10
Washington	Olympia	Hotel RL Olympia by Red Lion	June 8–10	June 9
West Virginia	Parkersburg	Red Roof Inn Parkersburg	June 2–4	June 3
Wisconsin	Green Bay	Radisson Hotel & Conference Center—Green Bay	June 1–3	June 3
Wyoming	Cheyenne	Little America Hotel & Resort	May 5–7	May 6

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER

DAVID W. RILEY



The first 100 days

Like you, I believe our government should be accountable for creating policies that enhance the well-being of veterans and their families, who have, through service and sacrifice, earned nothing less. As we approach the new administration's first 100 days in office, DAV has identified several key priorities for President Donald J. Trump and Congress:

First is the establishment of laws that ensure we take care of the spouses and family members who shoulder the full-time job of caring for disabled veterans.

This includes changing the current, unfair laws that deny veterans of past service eras access to needed caregiver benefits. In 2010, Congress passed legislation to create the Caregivers and Veterans Omnibus Health Services Act, but the program was

limited to caregivers of veterans injured on or after Sept. 11, 2001, leaving out tens of thousands of veteran caregivers from earlier eras and conflicts. The new administration must work to provide new funding and legislative authority to allow caregivers of veterans from all eras to fully participate in the comprehensive caregiver program.

Second, policymakers must focus on establishing equitable services for women veterans. Today, there are more women than ever serving in the military in all occupational specialties, including combat arms. Yet there are gaps in services for them when they return home,

including health care services, benefits, housing, education, employment and assistance for those who are homeless or at risk. The new administration must direct the department to review every health care program to eliminate access barriers for women, ensuring the programs also adequately address women's unique health care needs.

Third, promoting meaningful employment for veterans, especially disabled veterans, must be another key priority for those in office. The convening power

of the White House should be used to educate employers about the value of hiring veterans, particularly those with disabilities. It's critical we work together to ensure veterans are able to find fulfilling employment opportunities.

Finally, our elected policymakers should

make timely and effective mental health services available to veterans—especially those who have experienced trauma. This priority is essential for effective veteran suicide prevention efforts. Timely access to mental health services in primary care is vital to addressing and overcoming the stigma frequently associated with seeking mental health care.

I encourage you to use the DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) and join me in telling our elected officials how we expect them to govern. We cannot let off the gas when our veterans and caregivers need a voice in Washington.

Our government should be accountable for creating policies that **enhance the well-being** of veterans and their families.

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Patriot Nations: The National Museum of the American Indian's yearlong exhibit honors the courageous tradition of service of Native Americans in the military.

Photo by Bettmann / Getty Images

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DAV MAGAZINE • March/April 2017

Contact us: dav.org • Toll Free 877-426-2838 • 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076 • feedback@dav.org. Volume 59, Issue 2, *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 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.

From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



Remembering the past to safeguard our future

A thought came upon me recently as images of the latest presidential inauguration have been streaming across television, newspapers and social media. The crowds gathered against the iconic backdrop of our Capitol made me think back to historic images of the 1932 Bonus Army.

In different times, and under very different circumstances, tens of thousands of veterans and their families descended on Washington, D.C., demanding payment of the bonuses promised to them. When these veterans—many of whom were disabled—were truly down and out, they rallied together around the U.S. Capitol, the very symbol of the American people and their government. The march ended in a shameful way when the demonstrators were violently disbanded by the military they once served.

But the courage and camaraderie shown lives on. Decades later, it continues through our fight to ensure that veterans will not be forgotten, will not be used as political pawns and will not be denied the benefits they were promised and earned through service.

Even though we have not seen similar demonstrations by veterans since that time, a shared thread has run through our community to the present day, linking us to our predecessors in advocacy: passion.

If I know one thing about veterans and veterans' caregivers, it's that we are driven by an intense passion to

care for our own. In 1932, it was the passion of 17,000 veterans and their 26,000 family members who helped spur change after the government turned its back on them. Passion is what makes our organization great, as it pushes us beyond our perceived limits and gives us the strength to accomplish incredible things—sometimes for ourselves but, in the case of DAV, often for others.

We have been inching toward a season of immense change for the Department of Veterans Affairs—a system that, though flawed and in need of reforms, is our nation's best hope for keeping its promises to those who served. While many may advocate drastic and radical changes, we must not forget how many of our own brothers and sisters rely on care through the VA. A violent upheaval of the system could derail their care and cause undue hardship for countless veterans and their families.

It can be easy in divided times to let passion override reason, especially when it affects our lives or loved ones, but it's all the more important we maintain level heads when operating in such an environment. There are many considerations to keep in mind as we approach this topic, and there may be differing, strongly held opinions about the future of the VA. But it is abundantly clear that working together for the common good—as we have since the dark days following World War I—is where our great strengths lie.



Cholangiocarcinoma

I write in reference to cholangiocarcinoma, also known as bile duct cancer. The cancer is caused by ingesting a parasite. It can stay in the body for decades before symptoms arise. Many Vietnam veterans battle this fatal, deplorable, unmerciful cancer. My dad died on Aug. 11, 2016, of cholangiocarcinoma. Please help bring awareness to cholangiocarcinoma for other brave soldiers who may be living with one of the last killers of the Vietnam War. **Kelly Babekuhl, Dassel, Minn.**

VA mental health care study

Regarding the November/December 2016 *DAV Magazine* article "Congressionally approved study lauds VA mental health care," I noticed that all seven quality measures in which the VA rated higher than private care were medication related. It is my experience as a mental health professional that the majority of nonpsychotic veterans seeking mental health services neither need nor want lifelong prescription drugs to deal with their problems. The number 1 complaint I hear from my veterans is that the VA pushes pills while failing to address options with better long-term quality of life outcomes for veterans. No disrespect to the author, but the article reads too much like a VA press release for my comfort. **Steven P. Goligowski, San Angelo, Texas**

Putting choice in context

I had an appointment for an eye exam through Veterans Choice today, and this office works well for that program. My overall experience at the Madison VA has been exceptional. I want the VA system to remain! We need to strengthen the system and take the necessary steps to do that. **H. Ward Dittmar, Freeport, Ill.**

Veterans who want a choice obviously are not satisfied with their VA doctor, or we would not be discussing the matter. Those who are satisfied will see no change. Where is the problem? It will be the responsibility of the vet who opts for choice to find a doctor who accepts VA. **Jimmy Tiller, Lexington, Ga.**

'Straight-out war' on federal bureaucracy

I worked for the VA for many years. I am a veteran as well and get my care at the VA. Every job, career or business has their bad apples, but that does not mean everyone in the VA system is bad. Ninety-nine percent of the employees, staff and management are good, hardworking, dedicated and veteran oriented. The problem is the union and government regulations that prohibit firing anyone no matter how horrible or dangerous they are. **Bonnie Schmidt, Sioux Falls, S.D.**

Ecstasy as a relief for PTSD

I'm writing in regard to studies being done to help veterans with PTSD. MDMA is not the same as "ecstasy" or "Molly." Substances sold on the street under these names may contain MDMA, but frequently also contain unknown or dangerous adulterants. In laboratory studies, pure MDMA has been proven sufficiently safe for human consumption when taken a limited number of times in moderate doses. **Brent Wilcox, location withheld by request**

Editor's Note: In November, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration authorized Phase 3 testing of MDMA, which is currently listed as a Schedule 1 substance by the Drug Enforcement Administration. If trials go well, the FDA could approve legalized use of MDMA for treatment of post-traumatic stress disorder by 2021.

DAV on social media [facebook.com/DAV](https://www.facebook.com/DAV)

So many reasons why Brantley Gilbert is one of my favorite [artists]. The story behind this song is one of the top reasons. And the fact that he did this for the DAV. Much respect to a great artist and incredible songwriter #OneHellOfAnAmen **Daniel Reedy, Lynchburg, Va.**

OMG, [Jazmin Bravo] has been the one I've been seeing in San Diego. She guided me in reaching my 100% rating. She even went with me on an appeal board. I can't say enough about her. Thank you Jazmin for all your help. **Ed Hidalgo, San Diego**

twitter.com/DAVHQ

@PG1701 @TrumpInaugural @DAVHQ Why can't Veterans have the same healthcare as CONGRESS. @realDonaldTrump @RepJeffMiller @transition2017 **@Laurie6805**

Correction

On Page 20 of the January/February issue, Texas Chapter 32 member M.C. West was misidentified as Chapter 32 Commander A.J. Jones.

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](https://www.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.

A continuing transformation

Dr. David Shulkin takes over as head of VA, vows 'swift' and 'responsible' reform

On Jan. 11, then-President-elect Donald Trump nominated Dr. David Shulkin to lead the Department of Veterans Affairs. Shulkin, who DAV named Outstanding Federal Executive of the Year for 2016, has served as the VA's undersecretary for health since July 2015.

"I have no doubt Dr. Shulkin will be able to lead the turnaround our Department of Veterans Affairs needs," said Trump in a statement following the announcement. "His sole mandate will be to serve our veterans and restore the level of care we owe to our brave men and women in the military."

As the chief executive for the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Shulkin has overseen and directed the delivery of health care to the more than 9 million veterans enrolled at the VA—the largest integrated health care system in the nation.

"It is my honor to serve as President-elect Trump's secretary of Veterans Affairs. President-elect Trump's commitment to caring for our veterans is unquestionable, and he is eager to support the best practices for care and provide our Veterans Affairs teams with the resources they need to improve health outcomes," said Shulkin in a statement following his nomination. "We are both eager to begin reforming the areas in our Veterans Affairs system that need critical attention, and do it in a swift, thoughtful and responsible way."

During the selection process, DAV, alongside many other veterans groups, voiced encouragement for the

incoming presidential administration to nominate a secretary who would work to ensure progress made within the VA over the past two years would not be lost.

"We are pleased that President-elect Trump has chosen Dr. David Shulkin to continue and complete the transformation of the Department of Veterans Affairs currently underway," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. "As undersecretary

for health, Dr. Shulkin worked closely with DAV and others to strengthen and reform the VA health care system."

Beyond Shulkin's experience managing VHA and the more than 305,000 health care professionals and staff it employs, the Pennsylvania native brings a wealth

of private sector experience as well, having served as president and CEO of Beth Israel Medical Center in New York from 2005 to 2009 and as president of Morristown Medical Center in Morristown, N.J., from 2010 to 2015.

"My experience in the private sector and relooking at business models has allowed me to come in and challenge some of the issues in the Veterans Health Administration that, frankly, needed to be questioned," Shulkin said. "Bringing best practices from the private sector will help me achieve our outcome, which is to provide better care to our veterans."

Shulkin, the son of an Army psychiatrist and grandson of a World War I veteran, was unanimously confirmed for the post in mid-February. ■



"Bringing best practices from the private sector will help me achieve our outcome, which is to **provide better care to our veterans.**"

—Dr. David Shulkin



National Commander Dave Riley (seated in scooter) leads DAV's delegation of representatives down Pennsylvania Avenue during the inaugural parade for President Donald J. Trump. The delegation included (from left) Maryland Past Department Commander Lamarr Couser, National Interim Committee member Jim Procnier, Maryland Chapter 1 Adjutant Chuck Linton, Virginia Chapter 10 1st Junior Vice Commander Layton Lamphere and Riley's wife, Yvonne.

DAV represented at Inauguration Day

Events shed light on veterans groups and the patriots they serve

By M. Todd Hunter

From sea to shining sea, the United States stands as a beacon of freedom from the tyrannies, injustices and inequalities that exist in lands not as fortunate as ours. Yet through our imperfect history and turmoil that arises from our many differences—political, racial, gender, geographical and otherwise—the peaceful transition of power remains a staple of American democracy.

At noon on Jan. 20, our nation continued this tradition as Donald J. Trump stood on the steps of the Capitol in Washington, D.C., placed his left hand on the Lincoln Bible and raised his right hand to take the oath of office and be sworn in as the 45th president of the United States.

“It is time to remember that old wisdom our soldiers will never forget,” President Trump said during his inaugural address, “that whether we are black or brown or white, we all bleed the same red blood of patriots, we all enjoy the same glorious freedoms, and we all salute the same great American flag.”

After the president’s speech, DAV joined in the day’s events—just as it has done when requested by other presidential administrations of the past century—to show our newly elected leaders that disabled veterans

and the various issues they face are represented by our organization.

DAV National Commander Dave Riley and his wife, Yvonne; National Interim Legislative Committee member Jim Procnier; Maryland Chapter 1 Adjutant Chuck Linton; DAV Department of Maryland Past Commander Lamarr Couser and Virginia Chapter 10 1st Junior Vice Commander Layton Lamphere represented the organization by marching down Pennsylvania Avenue from the Capitol grounds to the White House during the inaugural parade.

Riley, the first quadruple amputee to serve as DAV National Commander, rode his motorized scooter for a majority of the procession and, upon approaching the president’s reviewing stand, opted to walk the rest of the way so he could render a proper salute to the new commander in chief.

“What an exhilarating experience,” remarked Riley. “To see all those faces along that parade route and to see all the kids waving American flags, it was really patriotic. It somehow made me even more proud to be an American.”

Later in the evening, Riley attended the Vettys Presidential Inaugural Ball and Awards, hosted by the Academy of United States Veterans. The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial, which is located

in Washington, D.C., was honored with a Veterans Community Award for its extraordinary quality of public service, advocacy efforts, contribution and outstanding service to the veterans community. Dennis Joyner, President of the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation, accepted the award. Also in attendance were DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess, Past National Commanders Rob Reynolds and Dick Marbes, and Lois Pope, a major contributor and prominent philanthropist who was instrumental in building the memorial.

"When veterans become ill or injured as a result of their service, their entire lives are changed," said Joyner. "It takes a community—families, friends, fellow veterans—to help that veteran recover and learn how to live their new normal. It was my community that helped me on my road to recovery, and that's why we wanted to create the memorial. It's an honor to accept this Veterans Community Award on behalf of the Memorial and our community of veterans' advocates."

The evening culminated with the Veterans Inaugural Ball—Salute to Heroes. The black-tie event was organized by the Veterans Inaugural Committee, which includes DAV and 14 other congressionally chartered veterans service organizations. The ball featured a special performance by Rascal Flatts lead vocalist Gary LeVox and was emceed by "The Price is Right" host and comedian Drew Carey, who served in the Marine Corps Reserve. Guests included senior military officers, elected and government officials, celebrities, corporate citizens and other members of the armed forces. The evening also featured 34 Medal of Honor recipients, nearly half of the recipients alive today. DAV honored the same group of men the prior evening at the DAV Medal of Honor Reception.

Newly sworn-in Vice President Mike Pence paid tribute to the Medal of Honor recipients at the ball.

"I am very humbled to be in your presence," Pence said. "We honor those of you in the room, and those who have come before and have gone above and beyond. You are an inspiration to all of us. And I know you are an inspiration to our new president."

House Speaker Paul Ryan also extended his thanks to veterans and service members.

"The reason we can have a peaceful transition of power is because of you," said Ryan. "Please know that we will never forget who keeps the peace. To all of our veterans and all of our service members, I simply want to say thank you." ■



(Clockwise from bottom): President of the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation Dennis Joyner, DAV Past National Commander Dick Marbes, philanthropist Lois Pope and DAV National Commander Dave Riley pose with the Veterans Community Award at the Vettys Presidential Inaugural Ball and Awards hosted by the Academy of United States Veterans. The academy presented the award to the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial for its extraordinary quality of public service, advocacy efforts, contribution and outstanding service to the veterans community.

**"We will never forget
who keeps the peace.
To all of our veterans and
all of our service members,
I simply want to say **thank you.**"**

—House Speaker Paul Ryan



Nearly half of all living recipients of the Medal of Honor attended the DAV Medal of Honor Reception the night before the inauguration.



DAV helps homeless veteran back on his feet

By Charity Edgar

Often, a complex chain of events leads a veteran into homelessness. Service-related health conditions can result in unemployment that potentially invites substance abuse issues and financial or legal struggles, ultimately leaving the veteran unable to afford housing and creating a difficult cycle to break.

However, a single act can be the catalyst in a chain reaction that puts a veteran back on track. Navy veteran Joseph Lightwies was homeless for decades, but connecting with DAV National Service Officer (NSO) Joe Kauffman in 2015 proved to be the spark that changed his life for the better.

Lightwies sought help through the Philadelphia DAV National Service Office for the status of an appeal after another veteran told him about the organization's claims services.

"Once I realized DAV was going to try to help me, I decided to become a member, and I've been one ever since," said Lightwies, who was discharged from the

Navy in 1968. Following his military career and until his health forced him into retirement, Lightwies had been working for many years as a carpenter.

At the veteran's request, Kauffman was able to transfer power-of-attorney over to DAV and informed Lightwies that the appeal was pending, based on a remand with the Board of Veterans' Appeals, and until that was completed, a decision would not be made.

Three months later, Lightwies reached out to Kauffman again and revealed that he was sleeping in his car. Recognizing the severity of the veteran's living conditions, Kauffman immediately jumped into action and connected him with the homeless outreach coordinator at the local VA medical center. Kauffman had the staff fax him confirmation of Lightwies' housing situation, which expedited the appeal based on VA policy for prioritizing claims processing for homeless veterans.

"When someone has been struggling as much as Joseph was, you do whatever you can to help the veteran receive a favorable outcome as quickly as

possible,” said Kauffman, a Marine Corps veteran. “Finding Joseph a place to live and helping him get back on his feet was critical.”

Kauffman, a two-time Iraq War veteran, joined DAV as a benefits advocate as soon as he learned about the organization’s mission.

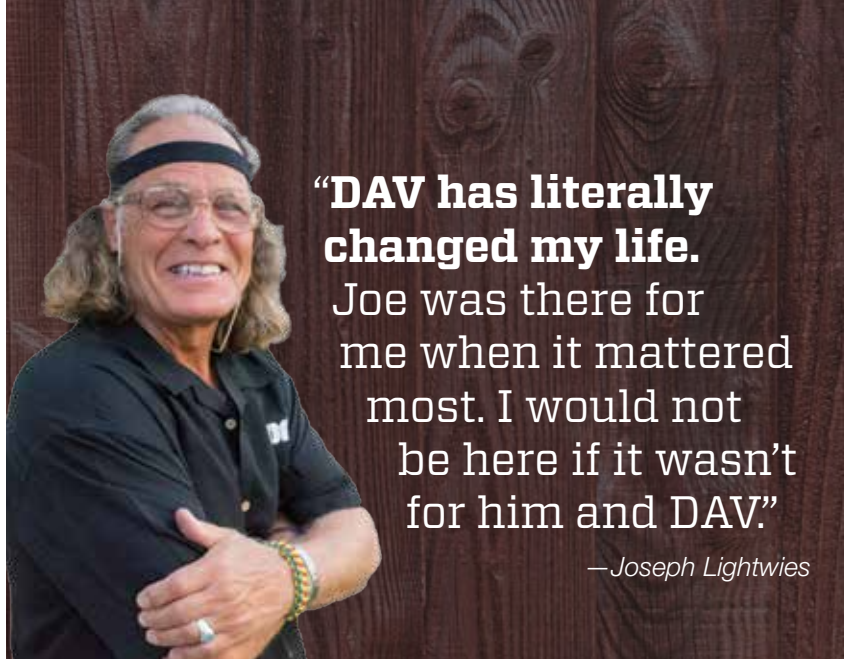
“I knew right away it was something I wanted to do. It just felt right to help other veterans,” he said.

The VA set up an examination for Lightwies’ appeal, but he missed the appointment, since he never received the written notice. Kauffman informed Lightwies that he would work with the appeals team to reschedule the exams. Kauffman also asked the appeals team to call and confirm the appointments with Lightwies since he did not have a permanent mailing address.

The appointment was scheduled for July, and less than a month later, Lightwies had a decision in hand, granting a service connection for post-traumatic stress with major depressive disorder.

The lump-sum, retroactively awarded amount meant Lightwies no longer needed to worry about where he would find his next meal. He could focus on working with the VA to secure housing, a benefit the veteran was unaware he was eligible for before Kauffman informed him.

“I’m happy anytime I can help veterans, but in Joseph’s case, I felt so incredibly relieved when this decision came through because I knew it would change his life,” said Kauffman. “He has a source of income now—that he earned through service—to



“DAV has literally changed my life. Joe was there for me when it mattered most. I would not be here if it wasn’t for him and DAV.”

—Joseph Lightwies

keep him off the streets and a good perspective on life and a positive attitude to keep him successful.

“I became an NSO so I could help veterans like Joseph,” added Kauffman.

“Every DAV national service officer has been on the other side of the table going through the claims process themselves. They understand firsthand the difficulties that can be encountered during appeals, and they work tirelessly to help their fellow veterans receive the benefits they earned,” said National Service Director Jim Marszalek. “When there is an absolute sense of urgency—like cases with extenuating circumstances like Joseph’s—NSOs can ensure the claim is processed expeditiously.”

“No one who served our country should be huddled under a bridge, in a shelter or camped out in their car,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. “I am proud of the work DAV is doing and the partnerships we have forged through the public and private sector to fight this national tragedy.”

In January 2017, with assistance from the VA, Lightwies picked up the keys to his new home.

“DAV has literally changed my life,” said Lightwies. “Joe was there for me when it mattered most. I would not be here if it wasn’t for him and DAV.” ■



Learn More Online

Get a tour of Joseph’s first home in decades at www.dav.org/first-home.



“I’m happy anytime I can help veterans, but in Joseph’s case, I felt so incredibly relieved when this decision came through because I knew it would change his life.”

—Joe Kauffman

Independent Budget highlights critical veterans' issues

IB coalition releases veteran programs' budget recommendations to new Congress, administration

By Mary Dever

DAV, along with Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars, released in February *The Independent Budget Veterans Policy Agenda for the 115th Congress (IB)*, outlining legislative and fiscal requirements for the programs, services and benefits administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The veterans service organization (VSO) partners have developed and presented independent budget projections for veterans programs to Congress and the president for more than 30 years, to inform both lawmakers and the administration about the needs of veterans and to offer substantive solutions to address the many health care, transition and benefits challenges veterans face.

The recently released report lists six critical issues facing the veteran community and provides recommendations to lawmakers, the administration and the VA to address the following needs:

- Strengthen, reform and sustain the VA health care system.
- Reform the VA claims and appeals process.
- Realign and modernize the VA's capital infrastructure.
- Improve the comprehensive assistance for family caregivers of severely injured veterans.

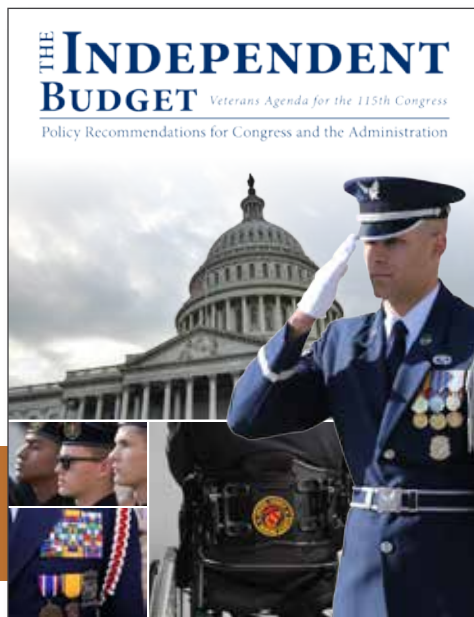
- Ensure the VA provides high-quality, effective programs and services to meet the unique needs of women veterans.
- Resolve budget restraints that negatively impact veterans programs.

"For the past two years we have been discussing these critical issues and making recommendations to reform VA's health care and benefits system to ensure injured and ill veterans have access to timely and accurate benefits decisions and quality health care services," said DAV National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. "Now is the time for action—we want to see Congress move forward and resolve these issues."

The top three critical issues listed below are in line with DAV's key legislative priorities for 2017:

Strengthen, reform and sustain the VA health care system

"The question of how to strengthen and reform the VA health care system was the dominant issue for VA, the House and Senate Committees on Veterans' Affairs, and the veterans community during most of the 114th Congress," said DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. "Now it's time for a long-term solution that reflects the consensus of virtually all of the major stakeholders. The best way to transform veterans health care is by creating an integrated network



of VA and community providers, with VA serving as the coordinator and primary provider of care.”

According to the *IB*, “With the current veterans’ Choice Program scheduled to expire this year, and millions of America’s veterans continuing to choose and rely on VA for their medical care, it is time for Congress and the new administration to act and create the future VA health care system that America’s veterans deserve.”

Comprehensive support for caregivers

Congress enacted Public Law 111-163, requiring the Department of Veterans Affairs to provide comprehensive caregiver assistance and services to family caregivers of severely injured veterans. However, due to cost concerns, Congress limited participation in the program to veterans injured on or after Sept. 11, 2001.

Countless caregivers of veterans are not eligible for this critical benefit because of an arbitrary delimiting date. While progress was made last year on this issue, legislation was not enacted to resolve this inequity.

“After a lifetime of caregiving, many family caregivers are aging, and their ability to continue in their role is declining. They deserve benefits and services to mitigate the negative physical, emotional and financial consequences of caregiving,” said DAV Deputy National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado. “It’s now up to Congress to enact legislation to authorize comprehensive supports, benefits and services to family caregivers of severely ill and injured veterans of all eras.”

Reform the claims and appeals process

According to the *IB*, “The current backlog, dysfunction, and resource needs for the appeals process is the major driver for urgent fundamental reform. Much of the dysfunction within the appeals process relates directly to inadequate resources to efficiently process both claims and appeals simultaneously. Veterans Benefits Administration’s overall demands simply outpaced their capacity.”

IB recommendations to reform the claims and appeals process include comprehensive legislation to modernize, streamline and reform the benefit claims appeals process while fully protecting veterans’ rights.

“Legislation introduced in the last Congress—which was developed and agreed to by senior leaders of VA,

the Board of Veterans’ Appeals, veterans groups and other stakeholders in 2016—must be enacted early in the 115th Congress to avoid further delays for veterans awaiting appeals decisions and to reduce the rising backlog,” said Augustine.

“It is ultimately up to Congress and the administration to make the right decisions on behalf of America’s veterans,” said DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess.

It is time for
Congress and the
new administration
to act and create
the future VA
health care system
that America’s
veterans deserve.

The Independent Budget

“It is our duty, as a collaborative VSO voice, to make sure lawmakers are educated and have all the facts necessary to make that happen. Now with new congressional leadership and a new president in the White House, we need to ensure we don’t lose the momentum we have gained on these critical issues to veterans and their families.” ■



Learn More Online

Read more about the critical issues and *IB* recommendations to Congress to improve the lives of disabled veterans and their families at www.independentbudget.org.

Putting 'choice' in context



What isn't being said about veterans' 'choice'

By Mary Dever

After three years of crisis and controversy, decisions about how to strengthen and reform the Department of Veterans Affairs health care system need to be made this year. Central to that debate will be designing a system that creates new options for veterans who currently have access challenges while not reducing access or quality for veterans who choose and rely on the VA for most or all of their care. As that debate is taken up by the 115th Congress, DAV continues Operation: Keep the Promise and its Setting the Record Straight campaign to ensure veterans' voices, particularly those of ill and injured veterans, are heard.

Since the waiting-list scandal at the Phoenix VA medical center exploded in the spring of 2014, the idea of providing veterans with more choice has been at the center of the debate over how to improve veterans health care. However, some politicians and partisan interest groups seem more interested in providing veterans with "choice" than the best possible health care outcomes.

Unfortunately, the frequent use of the term "choice"—without any clear definition or specifics—has added to the complexity and confusion of this debate. To help clarify matters, DAV recently launched a new video, "Putting Choice in Context," along with accompanying social media and grassroots efforts, to educate veterans and policymakers about what choice could really mean.

For example, some people have said that choice would allow veterans to pick their own doctors. But since many doctors don't accept choice payment rates, relying on choice could leave veterans without the ability to find a qualified physician. Some have claimed that providing all veterans with choice would lead to better quality health care. However, independent studies by RAND Corp. and others have consistently shown that the VA already provides equal or better care than the private sector and that choice will lead to more fragmented care, which correlates with worse health outcomes.

Finally, some say that choice will increase access for veterans, but for millions of veterans the opposite would be true. If choice expands and moves more veterans to the private sector, the VA would be forced to close some hospitals and clinics and curtail medical services in others, meaning less access and less choice for the millions of veterans who rely on the VA for most or all of their care. Further, the private sector is not capable of handling a large influx of veterans and often lacks the level of specialized care required by service-connected veterans. ■



Learn More Online



To watch "Putting Choice in Context," visit dav.org/settingtherecordstraight.

Visit rand.org/pubs/research_reports/RR1165z4.html to download the RAND Corp. report that summarizes three assessments conducted under the Veterans Choice Act.

From the NATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES DIRECTOR

JOHN KLEINDIENST



Springing back into action

With the harshest of Mother Nature's winter months behind us, spring and summer are right around the corner, and it's time to spring back into action in our local communities by volunteering and assisting our nation's veterans.

By now, I am hoping most of you have either read about, heard from a friend or family member, or even taken part in DAV's inaugural monthlong volunteer initiative, Forward March.

This volunteer initiative was meant to encourage all those who have received DAV's assistance or who have benefited from a veteran's sacrifice to "pay it forward" by giving just one hour of service to a veteran in need during the month of March through DAV's Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP).

Through LVAP, the options for volunteers to provide direct assistance to veterans and their families are virtually limitless. You can perform yard work, help run errands, set up a computer system, clean out the gutters, shovel snow from a sidewalk or assist with cooking or cleaning—any task that improves a veteran's life.

A lot of folks think volunteering requires a long-term commitment of their time, which, of course, is always appreciated. However, even a small investment of one's efforts can make a difference in someone else's life.

The Forward March campaign reinvigorated support for veterans. Participating

volunteers received incentive awards for their participation, and all Forward March volunteers will receive a thank-you gift from DAV upon the submission of their LVAP form.

To submit your volunteer hours for DAV's Forward March campaign, please visit **www.dav.org/forwardmarch** and complete the LVAP form.

Many veterans in our local communities are in need of some assistance on a daily basis, which is why our next challenge is to take the momentum created from the Forward March campaign and build on it by spreading the word about DAV's vast volunteer opportunities. We should be encouraging folks to volunteer—whether it's in a hospital, on the road with the Transportation Network or through LVAP.

We're fortunate to have volunteers who understand the promises made to veterans and who are committed to improving veterans' lives. The most common thing we hear from volunteers is that they get as much from donating their time as the veterans do from their generosity. It's a rewarding way to stay active and make a difference.



Learn More Online

If you or anyone you know would like to learn more about DAV's Local Veterans Assistance Program and other volunteer opportunities, visit volunteerforveterans.org.

Where are they now?

How volunteer work and the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship has impacted the lives of past recipients

By Bryan Lett

Since 2000, DAV and longtime partner Ford Motor Co. have awarded more than a \$1 million through the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship Program to young men and women for their volunteer support of veterans.

Many dedicated youth volunteers have benefited from this program, which distributes \$75,000 among eight individuals each year in honor of their tremendous contributions.

“The volunteer time these young adults invested in their communities not only played an essential role in forming their futures but also taught them a lot about themselves,” said DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. “By putting others before themselves, our past recipients of the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship have proven it can make things a little easier on themselves down the road.”

Shreveport, La., native Crystalyn Whitaker took home the top scholarship in 2008 and used it to attend Northwestern State University in Natchitoches, La., where she earned her bachelor’s degree in secondary English and history education in 2012.

Whitaker was able to make it through college with no loans at all and thanks the scholarship program for

easing the financial burden. “It took such a load off of me and my family,” said Whitaker.

Today, Whitaker is a high school teacher by day, who handles ACT test preparation throughout the Caddo Parish school district in Shreveport, and a

published poetess and spoken-word artist by night. She credits her volunteer work for paving the way forward.

“It was one of the main developers of who I am today, and I do not say this as a cliché, neither do I take it lightly,” said Whitaker. “It taught me how to serve selflessly. I learned what it meant to give without being asked—taking initiative.

“It taught me to be responsible. It honed my communication skills and built my self-confidence,” she added. “It taught me that I work well with others, and I needed to work in a field that allowed me to serve and converse with people. I enjoy teaching and helping to brighten someone’s day.”

The impact of the scholarship on Whitaker’s life goes beyond developing a positive work ethic or discovering a career path she enjoys. Her dedicated hard work and the financial benefits that it yielded have enabled her to do what many of her peers cannot.

“This scholarship is a huge part of the reason why I was able to purchase a home at 25 years old,” said Whitaker. “I was not crushed under astronomical student loan debt. This scholarship has definitely impacted my life greatly.”

Jamal Childs was awarded the top scholarship in 2009. After graduating from high school, he left his home in the nation’s capital to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University in Greensboro, N.C., where he studied graphic design. Childs graduated in the spring of 2015.

“Having the scholarship helped for sure with my family in covering costs for school,” said Childs. “It also acted as a silent motivator and incentive to continue doing better in class.”

Childs said he initially began volunteering with veterans to have something to do during the summer months, but the more he volunteered, the more he appreciated the experience.

2008 Winner



Crystalyn Whitaker,
high school teacher

"I started enjoying the program because of the area I was working in and the work I was doing in the biomedical engineering department. I legitimately always felt that I was contributing to something bigger than any single action I was taking on a given day," said



2009 Winner

Jamal Childs,
graphic designer/artist

Childs. "It helped instill compassion, humility and patience—three major components that I feel are needed when working with people in general, but especially when working with veterans."

Currently, Childs is working inside the Washington DC VA Medical Center

for Langley Provider Group, a contractor based in Baltimore, but he has his sights set on his own business.

"I've started my own art collection business named Odd Watch Productions back in June of 2016," said Childs. "Art is a passion of mine, so I've pursued it all through high school and kept it going through undergrad via graphic design. I've been working on new art pieces and projects in hopes of organizing my own solo gallery this year."

In 2010, Solene Goycochea earned a Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship for her volunteer work in the San Diego area. She attended Yale University, graduating in 2014 with a double major in economics and Spanish.

"My volunteer work at the VA has left an indelible mark on who I am as a person, and to receive a scholarship for that work was a tremendous honor that I will be forever grateful for," said Goycochea. "The Jesse Brown Scholarship meaningfully lessened the burden on my family to support me while I pursued my studies."

Goycochea got into volunteering because of her father, Alan, who was in the Army.

"He was an Army Special Forces guy and served in both Korea and Vietnam and was an instructor in the U.S. Army Jungle Warfare School in Panama," said Goycochea. "He got bayoneted in the back in Korea and lost an eye in Vietnam, and I never heard him complain

once. For me, having the opportunity to help some of the bravest and most selfless Americans was a privilege and a great honor."

Following graduation, she worked for an investment bank for nearly two years before transitioning to her

current job in New York City at the endowment for Phillips Academy, one of the top private high schools in the world.

"It is incredibly fulfilling for me to work on growing capital to provide scholarships for the students at Phillips, particularly as my success and

opportunities were only made possible by the generosity of others in the form of scholarships such as the Jesse Brown Scholarship."

"It may be the best-kept secret in the world of scholarships, but we want to make it known to our current and prospective youth volunteers," said Kleindienst. "I see the work and effort these young adults put into their volunteer service time, and I want to see as many of them recognized as possible for their invaluable contributions to DAV."

"It would be great to see more young people taking advantage of the program," he added. "We received just 32 submissions in 2015 and 52 in 2016, but provided 16 scholarships over that timespan. If you do the math, that means nearly 20 percent of applicants receive a scholarship. If you're a young man or woman looking for a rewarding volunteer experience and would like to lessen the financial burden of higher education, there may not be a better place to start."

The scholarship is open to volunteers who are 21 or younger and have contributed a minimum of 100 hours credited through DAV or DAV Auxiliary. ■



Learn More Online

To learn more about the Jesse Brown Memorial Scholarship program or to download nomination materials, visit www.dav.org/help-dav/volunteer/jesse-brown-scholarship.



2010 Winner

Solene Goycochea,
portfolio analyst

Veterans Treatment Courts expanding, evolving

By Bryan Lett

Judge Robert Russell is no stranger to establishing courts. He created the drug treatment court in Buffalo, N.Y., in 1995 and the city's mental health treatment court in 2002, providing offenders a comprehensive approach to address addiction, dependency and mental health issues that can lead to legal or criminal issues.

During his time on the bench overseeing these courts, Russell also began to notice an influx of veterans on his court dockets, and he decided it was time to address the problem.

Russell recognized that many veterans have a difficult time readjusting to life after service. He proposed a court program designed specifically to address the needs of veterans in the criminal justice system and connect them to the benefits and treatment they earned while serving. Russell then began organizing meetings with representatives from the Department of Veterans Affairs, various veterans groups and volunteer veterans from the community to plan the concept of the Veterans Treatment Court.

In January 2008, Russell established and began presiding over the nation's very first Veterans Treatment Court in Buffalo. Today, there are over 300 such courts across the country.

Russell recently reflected on the court's beginning, his motivation for the project and the path ahead while delivering the third annual DAV Distinguished Speaker Lecture at Harvard Law School.

"When I think about Veterans Treatment Court, what differs from my drug court or my mental health court is the prior experiences of our veterans," said Russell. "Those prior experiences really can be a tremendous benefit. We are looking at a group of individuals—men and women who served—who have patriotism, camaraderie, teamwork and self-reliance. How can we tap into that spirit to give them the best opportunity at success?"

Russell found his answer in the veterans who volunteer to be mentors.

"The secret sauce is the men and women who



Judge Robert Russell delivers the third annual DAV Distinguished Speaker Lecture at Harvard Law School. Russell founded the first Veterans Treatment Court in 2008 and spoke about the court's beginning and the path ahead.

volunteer," said Russell. "His or her motto is to leave no one behind. They are co-facilitators, advisories and sponsors for support."

In Wisconsin, Veterans Treatment Court mentor and DAV Chapter 17 Junior Vice Commander Mike Hert noted the importance of stepping in to help guide veterans going through the program.

"As mentors, we embody the DAV mission as we ensure the dignity and respect of the mentees while assisting them with reaching their God-given potential," said Hert.

"We encourage members who want to get involved and give back to consider volunteering as a mentor for this program," said DAV National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. "This is a long-term investment of time but is truly a life-changing way of helping a fellow veteran in need."

The court reflects the structure of a military unit: The judge becomes the commanding officer; the volunteer veteran mentors act as fire team leaders; the court team becomes the company staff; and the veteran defendants become the troops.

The 2015 Bureau of Justice Statistics report, "Veterans in Prison and Jail, 2011–2012," indicates that more than 20,000 veterans who served in combat in Iraq or Afghanistan are in jail or prison. The report also shows that veterans serving out a sentence are

twice as likely to have post-traumatic stress disorder than nonveterans, and that veterans are more likely to be incarcerated on their first or second arrest than nonveterans.

“Today’s deployments have been associated often with the development of behavioral issues that can contribute to veterans becoming involved with the legal system we currently have,” said Dave Gorman, former DAV Washington headquarters executive director, who

established the first Veterans Treatment Court in Boston in 2014. Sinnott said she remembers the story of a young Marine who spent a year in Fallujah, Iraq, and returned home with no prior record. Suffering from PTSD, he racked up three driving-while-intoxicated charges in just over a year’s time before he tragically took his own life.

“When you hear about a case like that, you wonder what could have been done,” said Sinnott.

“We are looking at a group of individuals ... who have patriotism, camaraderie, teamwork and self-reliance. **How can we tap into that spirit** to give them the best opportunity at success?”

—Judge Robert Russell

introduced Russell for the Harvard lecture.

“Our mission is to not only have [veterans] diverted from our traditional criminal justice system and from the penal system, but to afford them an opportunity to regain stability in their life,” said Russell.

Judge Mary Hogan Sullivan of Dedham District Court in Massachusetts was overseeing a drug court when she happened upon a Veterans Treatment Court. Sullivan—whose son is a Marine who now has five deployments under his belt—ended up founding Massachusetts’ first Veterans Treatment Court in 2012 and has played a pivotal role in expanding the courts throughout the state.

Along with the expansion of the courts in Massachusetts, Sullivan and others discovered defendants who were veterans but did not identify as such.

“I think a big part of it is the shame factor—they served, and now they are embarrassed,” said Sullivan.

Sullivan noted another surprising trend uncovered through the expansion of the courts has been the age of veteran defendants.

“When we started our court, we anticipated that the bulk of the people we served would be young veterans who served in Afghanistan and Iraq, but that has not been the case,” said Sullivan. “It’s not something related to just a recent war—as it covers several generations—and that’s another reason I think these courts are important and need to expand.”

Building off Sullivan’s success, Judge Eleanor Sinnott, a former Navy military intelligence officer,

“Who knows if a Veterans Treatment Court would have helped this individual, but it certainly would have given him his best chance.”

“Because Veterans Treatment Court is supported by a multidisciplinary team, they can respond effectively to veterans who may be struggling with mental health problems including PTSD and substance abuse,” said Gorman. “They receive supervised treatment rather than being incarcerated.”

Sinnott warns that the process is not an easy one and should not be taken lightly. The program requires total sobriety with close monitoring and regular drug and alcohol testing.

“Anyone who tells you that just because most of my cases end in a dismissal that they are getting off easy, absolutely not,” said Sullivan. “This probation is so intensive, it generally takes 18 months to two years to complete.”

One obstacle Russell hopes to tackle in the future is making Veterans Treatment Court accessible to all veterans in need.

“It will continue, and I think one of the goals is having the availability of Veterans Treatment Court available to every veteran in need, no matter where they are,” said Russell. ■



Learn More Online

Contact your county to inquire about local Veterans Treatment Courts or access a list of locations at justiceforvets.org/veterans-treatment-court-locations.

TURNING PASSION INTO ACTION

By Mary Dever



How Iraq veteran Kayla Williams, director for VA's Center for Women Veterans, used her experiences as a veteran and caregiver to create change

Like so many women, Army veteran Kayla Williams wears many hats, often switching frequently throughout any given day. She currently serves as the director of the Department of Veterans Affairs' Center for Women Veterans. But in addition to her responsibilities as an advocate and leader in the veteran community, Williams also knows what it's like to be a mother, a wife, a caregiver and a woman veteran in a system designed for men.

Her passion for this work and her expertise are based in real-world, firsthand experience. Williams' husband, whom she met in Iraq, was severely injured by an improvised explosive device, from which he sustained a penetrating traumatic brain injury. Stepping into the caregiver role, Williams learned quickly she would also need to become an advocate for her husband's care.

"That's one of the things that led me to not continue my military career," said Williams. "He was hurt back in 2003 when the systems and services that we need to support our wounded warriors just weren't in place. And as I saw him slipping through the cracks within the Army, I knew I had to get out and help him on his road to recovery."

After a few years of struggling to get the right care, they both decided to become veteran advocates. As a woman veteran, Williams could see that the culture within the VA and the veterans community needed to change to better serve the needs of that growing demographic.

"That gave us both new purpose, finding meaning in the ability to continue to serve in new ways as part of a community of veterans," said Williams. "Over time, that led me to my current role, where I'm able to advocate for women veterans here within the VA."

Williams started using the VA medical system in 2005 and, like so many women veterans, didn't find the support or services she needed.

"Overall, I think we've done a tremendous job in driving forward the culture change that was needed to help all VA employees—and other veterans—to understand that women are vets," Williams said, "that we do serve, and we're really chipping away at some of the old attitudes where women would regularly get asked if they were [at the VA] with their husbands.

"When I came to VA in my current role, I felt that I had a decent understanding of the challenges that women veterans face. One of the things I'm identifying now as a concern is how to effectively communicate with women vets what we're getting right, and what they can share with us about areas where we're not getting things right, so that we can continue to remove barriers," she added.

In 2014, DAV produced the comprehensive report *Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home* to explore the issues facing women veterans and to identify existing gaps in federal programs.

"Our nation must address and change the culture that ignores or minimizes women's service and their contribution to our military mission, so that they too can fully benefit from the array of services that have been established for veterans, including for those who served in combat theaters and other hardship deployments," says the report.

Williams is striving to get the VA up to par with national medical progress in regard to women's health and to make sure the women who use the VA's services understand why it may feel unfamiliar.

"Women's medicine is different now from when I was a teenager, or from what many women may be used to," said Williams. "You don't have to go to a specific doctor for routine tests like a pap smear. Your primary care doctor can do that, and that's in line with what the medical community as a whole is doing to ensure women are getting the proper care they need more effectively."

DAV National Legislative Director Joy Ilem said the work Williams and her team are doing for women veterans within the VA is commendable, though efforts to enhance care and programs for this demographic have long gone under the radar.

"DAV has been leading the way, fighting for women veterans, for decades," said Ilem. "What's happening now is a culture shift away from the old mindset regarding women in the service. There is still a lot of progress to be made and steps to take to move forward, but I would urge women who tried the VA a decade ago—and maybe had a poor experience—to give them another shot. The medical care really is competitive with the medical community as a whole."

According to Williams, the bottom line is that the VA has come a long way in upping the standard of care for women. She encourages women veterans to see what the "new" VA has to offer.

"The data are very clear: VA provides higher quality care, even on gender-specific issues," said Williams. "We are engaged in ongoing culture-change campaigns to raise awareness about the service and sacrifice of women and the responsibility to treat them with dignity and respect." ■



Iraq war veteran Kayla Williams, director of the VA's Center for Women Veterans, says it's her experiences in and out of the service that drive her to push for progress on behalf of all women veterans. (VA Photo/Robert Turtill)

WOMEN WHO'VE PAID THE COST OF WAR

By Mary Dever

Women throughout history who have sacrificed everything for their country are not forgotten but thanked this Women's History Month

By signing up for newly opened combat roles in the military, women are creating new opportunities and paving the way for future generations of women who will serve. Here's a look at just a few of the nation's courageous women who voluntarily put themselves in harm's way to protect our way of life.



Pvt. Cathay Williams, aka William Cathay (1844–1892) Post-Civil War

The first known African American woman to enlist in the United States Army, Cathay Williams enlisted under the name “William Cathay” to hide the fact she was a woman. She was born a slave outside of Jefferson City, Mo., in 1844. When the Civil War began, she was taken by Union soldiers and forced to work for the Army.

After the war, it was difficult for African Americans to find work, so many joined the military. Williams decided she would join, too.

“The regiment I joined wore the Zouave uniform and only two persons, a cousin and a particular friend, members of the regiment, knew that I was a woman,” Williams said, according to Army archives. “They were partly the cause of my joining the Army. Another reason was I wanted to make my own living and not be dependent on relations or friends.”

Williams contracted smallpox as a direct result of her service. Documents show she served right alongside the men in her unit—without being recognized as a woman—until the time she became ill. The disease caused her to be in and out of military hospitals until it was discovered she was female and immediately discharged.

Col. Ruby Bradley (1907–2002)

World War II and Korean War



West Virginia native Ruby Bradley joined the U.S. Army Nurse Corps as a surgical nurse in 1934. She was serving in the Philippines in 1941 when she was taken captive by Japanese forces. She continued to serve her fellow prisoners by nursing the ill and wounded, earning her and fellow imprisoned nurses the nickname “angels in fatigues.”

According to the U.S. Army Office of Medical History, U.S. troops stormed the gates of the Japanese camp and liberated Bradley and her fellow prisoners in February 1945. Bradley had been held in captivity for 37 months.

Bradley continued serving in the Army Nurse Corps after her release from the internment camp and went on to serve in the Korean War. She dedicated 30 years of her life to the men and women of the military, becoming only the third woman in U.S. history to be promoted to the rank of colonel.

Reflecting on her time as a prisoner of war, Bradley once said in a TV interview, “You got to get out in a hurry when you have somebody behind you with a gun.”

“Women have served in our nation’s military since the Revolutionary War, though many are unaware of this history. The often unheralded sacrifices made by the women highlighted here paved the way for the increased opportunities afforded to those who serve today.”

—Kayla Williams, director of the Department of Veterans Affairs’ Center for Women Veterans

Brig. Gen. Rhonda Cornum (1954–present)

Persian Gulf War

Rhonda Cornum joined the U.S. Army in 1978 and was serving as a flight surgeon with the 101st Airborne Division in Iraq in February 1991. On a mission to rescue a downed fighter pilot, her UH-60 Black Hawk was shot to the ground by enemy forces.

Cornum was one of three soldiers to survive the 140-mph crash. She suffered two broken arms, a bullet wound to her shoulder and knee damage, only to be dragged from the wreckage and taken into Iraqi captivity. On her way to confinement, she was sexually assaulted by one of her captors.

Cornum survived the eight-day captivity and was released back to the Army on March 6, 1991. She endured her injuries and recovered well enough to continue her military career. She retired from the Army at the rank of brigadier general in 2012.

“It helps put everything else in perspective,” Cornum said of being taken captive. “It made you recognize your strength, when previously it hadn’t really been tested much.”



56% of women veterans
do not believe they receive the
same respect and appreciation
as their male counterparts

SOURCE: 2016 DAV VETERANS PULSE SURVEY

Maj. Megan M. McClung (1972–2006), Iraq War

U.S. Marine Corps Maj. Megan McClung became the first female Marine officer to be killed during the Iraq War—and the highest-ranking female in any service—according to the Department of Defense.

McClung deployed to Iraq with I Marine Expeditionary Force in February 2006. She was killed when her Humvee struck an improvised explosive device while escorting media.

“We can’t sum up her 34 years in a brief statement,” her parents told reporters after their daughter’s death. “We know she was an outstanding Marine, a good friend, beloved sister and daughter. People always told us they felt better after spending time with her.”



34%

of male veterans feel that **women don’t get the same respect** as they do

SOURCE: 2016 DAV VETERANS PULSE SURVEY



1st Lt. Ashley White Stumpf (1987–2011)

Afghanistan War

U.S. Army 1st Lt. Ashley White Stumpf was killed during combat operations in Kandahar province, Afghanistan, on Oct. 22, 2011, when the assault force she was supporting triggered an improvised explosive device. Stumpf was assigned to the 230th Brigade Support Battalion, 30th Heavy Brigade Combat Team, a National Guard unit from Goldsboro, N.C., and served as a member of a cultural support team (CST) attached to a joint special operations task force in Afghanistan.

As part of a CST, Stumpf took on a new role for women in the military at that time, involving special units of female Army soldiers meant to build relationships with Afghan citizens.

According to “ABC News,” Stumpf “was among the first group of female soldiers to go into combat zones as part of a cultural support team. Considered by many of her fellow soldiers as the ‘quiet professional’ and the ‘heart of the team,’ she was the first member of the special unit to be killed in action.”

“This was 2011; the combat ban was still in place,” author Gayle Tzemach Lemmon, who wrote a book about Stumpf and the CSTs, told “ABC News.” “Most of America still doesn’t know that these women were out there. So they knew that everything they did would be not just their mistake, but every female’s mistake, and so I think they worked even harder.” ■

National Women Veterans Summit

As a means of addressing the needs and issues of the growing population of women veterans, the VA is hosting and DAV is co-sponsoring the 2017 National Women Veterans Summit, the first at a national level since 2011. The summit—scheduled for April 21–22 in Dallas—will include lectures and discussion panels and aims to promote forward-thinking dialogue on the topics of employment, mental health, entrepreneurship, military sexual trauma, reproductive health and cultural change.

 To learn more about the summit, visit the VA’s Center for Women Veterans website at va.gov/womenvet.

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER

FRANCES J. COSTA



Work to be done

Famed author and lecturer Marianne Williamson once said, “In every community, there is work to be done. In every nation, there are wounds to heal. In every heart, there is the power to do it.”

We in the veterans community have much work to do for those who served, and it can be done if we work together in our units and departments. Fortunately, the passion we hold in our hearts makes the work of our hands lighter. I read an article recently that said we leave a tradition for the future in caring for human beings, and we cannot let those traditions become obsolete.

Our veterans and their families need to be restored, renewed, revived and reclaimed. We can never throw anyone away. We need our older members to impart their knowledge of the workings of the DAV Auxiliary and instill our mission and goals in newer members. We desperately need our newer or inactive members to keep us moving forward by getting and staying involved. We must use the knowledge and guidelines that we are mandated to follow to keep our organization in the forefront for the needs of our veterans and their families.

Despite the pace and pressure of everyday life, our members quietly take time to reach out and help those who have the least and need the most. These are the members who leave an impression on our veterans, our legislators and the community. They are the standard-bearers who have made a difference in the lives of veterans.

We must keep an ever-vigilant watch on legislation that affects veterans, especially disabled veterans and their families—particularly when it comes to the fight to extend caregivers’ benefits for all eras of veterans, not just post-9/11 veterans. While keeping abreast of this piece of legislation, we must keep in mind that not all caregivers are women. Too often, we think of caregivers as being wives, mothers and daughters.

We have so many disabled women veterans whose husbands, sons, fathers and brothers are their primary caregivers, and they need our help as well. So when you think of veterans’ caregivers, remember they can be any of the above. We cannot let this piece of legislation become lost and must work closely with our comrades in DAV to support legislation to keep this moving forward.

As always, there is much to be done. But with the spirit of cooperation and the passion to make a difference, there is much that can be accomplished, too. Thank you for your membership and for the inspiration you give me and the families of those who have been changed by war. I encourage you to join me in supporting DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network). By doing so, you can stay up to date and make the most of our opportunities to speak with a united voice.

Learn more about DAV’s legislative priorities and join DAV CAN by visiting davcan.org.



New research on brain waves helps diagnose PTSD, TBI

■ Veterans suffering from symptoms such as irritability, restlessness, hypersensitivity to stimulation, memory loss, fatigue and dizziness are often diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injury (TBI) or both. According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, a new study shows PTSD and TBI register different brain activity in patients, and a common test may help doctors differentiate between the two.

The researchers used electroencephalograms (EEG), which are assessments that measure electrical activity in the brain. The size and direction of the brain waves can signal abnormalities. EEGs are commonly used to help diagnose conditions such as seizures, epilepsy, head injuries, dizziness, headaches, brain tumors and sleeping problems.

In this study, researchers analyzed a set of 147 EEGs given to Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. While comparing results, the researchers saw patterns of activity at different locations in the brain for TBI and PTSD. They saw brain waves moving slowly in

opposite directions, likely coming from separate places in the brain.

The study's lead researcher, Dr. Laura Manning Franke, a research psychologist at the Hunter Holmes McGuire VA Medical Center in Richmond, Va., said spotting distinct patterns of TBI and PTSD in separate parts of the brain can reduce the risk of confusing the two conditions and is key to helping improve diagnoses and treatments for veterans.

"That's the holy grail," said Franke. "We want to use the EEG to differentiate the problems, but also to predict recovery and be able to measure how people are doing in a more biological way than just measuring symptoms, although those are still relevant. But symptoms are also problematic because they're influenced by so many things that aren't the disease that we're interested in."

Franke added that while the research is promising, a larger number of veterans need to be tested to get more definitive results.

Advanced practice RNs can now practice full authority in VA medical facilities

■ To provide veterans with more access to care, in December the Department of Veterans Affairs amended provider regulations to allow advanced practice registered nurses (APRNs) authority to practice to the full extent of their education, training and certification.

"Advanced practice registered nurses are valuable members of VA's health care system," said then-VA Undersecretary for Health Dr. David Shulkin. "Amending this regulation increases our capacity to

provide timely, efficient, effective and safe primary care; aids VA in making the most efficient use of APRN staff capabilities; and provides a degree of much-needed experience to alleviate the current access challenges that are affecting VA."

APRNs are clinicians with advanced degrees and training who provide primary, acute and specialty health care services. All VA APRNs are required to obtain and maintain current national certification, regardless of individual state requirements.

Certified registered nurse anesthetists aren't included in the VA's full practice authority under this final rule.

NEW ORLEANS

to host DAV National Convention

July 29 – August 1, 2017
Hilton New Orleans, Riverside

This year, the DAV National Convention returns to the Big Easy. A city known for its vibrant nightlife and culturally diverse history, New Orleans is truly like no place you've ever been.

New Orleans offers something of interest for everyone—family-friendly attractions, spectacular architecture, the sounds of jazz and zydeco music filling the air, and the extravagant, colorful fanfare of Bourbon Street.

After spending time working alongside fellow veterans to help shape DAV's future, you can experience a multitude of one-of-a-kind experiences in the city. New Orleans cuisine, largely influenced by Creole, Cajun and French flavors, is widely held as some of the best in the country. You can experience beautiful historic sites and museums throughout the French Quarter and Garden District, check off a ride on the streetcars from your bucket list, or take the kids to see the Louisiana black bear lounging in his own personal bathtub at the Audubon Zoo. With seemingly endless shopping, dining and recreational activities, New Orleans has attractions for all to enjoy.

DAV's national convention is an opportunity to advocate for ill and injured veterans, to enjoy the camaraderie of fellow DAV members, and to take ownership of this organization and its yearly agenda. However, it also allows for a hearty dose of fun in this premier vacation destination.

This year, as you make plans, please note that the convention will return to the traditional Saturday-through-Tuesday schedule. Additionally, mark your calendars as Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band have been invited to play Sunday night.

Our special room rate is \$130 per single or double. Reservations can be made online at aws.passkey.com/e/15933734 or by calling 800-Hiltons (800-445-8667) or 504-561-0500. If making reservations by phone, be sure to say that you are reserving under the Disabled American Veterans room block. ■



Learn More Online

Visit dav.org/events/2017-national-convention for more information.



Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band have been invited to perform yet again 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.

Patriot Nations

Honoring the Native American tradition of service

By Charity Edgar

Beginning with the Revolutionary War and including every major U.S. military conflict since, Native Americans have served in the armed forces in higher numbers per capita than any other ethnic group.

In 1994, Congress passed a bill authorizing the creation of a memorial honoring Native American veterans. Twenty-three years later, that vision is well on its way to becoming a reality.

“This is a tremendously important effort to recognize Native Americans’ service to this nation. We have so much to celebrate. Like so many others, I was compelled to serve to honor the warrior tradition that is inherent to most Native American societies—the pillars of strength, honor, pride, devotion and wisdom,” said former U.S. Sen. Ben Nighthorse Campbell, a Northern Cheyenne veteran of the Korean War, in *American Indian*, the membership magazine for the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI).

To honor the indigenous people who served and sacrificed, the museum is hosting the yearlong exhibition “Patriot Nations: Native Americans in



Eagle-feather war bonnets adorn U.S. military uniform jackets at a Ton-Kon-Gah (Black Leggings Society) ceremonial, held annually near Anadarko, Okla., to honor Kiowa tribal veterans. (Courtesy of the National Museum of the American Indian)

Our Nation’s Armed Forces.” The exhibition outlines the history of Native American military service and explains why the creation of a National Native American Veterans Memorial is important to not only native people but also all Americans.

“Tens of thousands of Native Americans joined the U.S. armed forces during World Wars I and II,” said Herman J. Viola, curator of the exhibition. “Forty-four thousand Native Americans served in World War II; the entire population of Native Americans was less than 350,000 at the time.”

With the contentious history between the U.S. government and Native American nations, many might find the high rates of service for indigenous people surprising, according to NMAI Director Kevin Gover.

The exhibition has personal meaning for Gover, who is Pawnee. His grandfather, Phillip Gover, was a code talker in the Second World War, serving in the famed Thunderbirds, part of the Oklahoma Army National Guard. He lost an arm during the Battle of Monte

Cassino. Even more devastating, he lost his brother, who served alongside him in the 45th Infantry Division. Grant Gover was killed in action in France.

“Native veterans were willing to fight and die for the land that was taken from them, despite the U.S. actively deconstructing American Indian nations,” explained Gover.

DAV life member Tyson Bahe served in the U.S. Army, deploying to Afghanistan twice.

“The Native American culture is one of warriors,” said Bahe, who is Navajo. “The elders pass down stories of warrior ancestors, and it is viewed as an honor to serve.”

Bahe followed in the footsteps of his mother, father and grandfather by joining the military.

“Serving in the Army was important to me because of both my family and tribal legacy of service. We have a long history of standing up to protect our land,” said Bahe, who is a member of DAV Chapter 21 in Gallup, N.M.

Serving those who served

Unique challenges face Native American veterans following military service.

Jeff Eller is an assistant supervisor in the Muskogee National Service Office, and he also plays an important role as a liaison to area Native American veterans for the DAV Department of Oklahoma.

“There are many Native American tribes headquartered within our state, and we saw an unmet need—too many veterans did not have access to the benefits they earned through service,” explained DAV Department Adjutant Danny Oliver. “We established a Native American Veteran Outreach Program, which Jeff serves as the director of, and we now have service officers located in tribal veteran centers. This program enables us to better serve our Native American brothers- and sisters-in-arms.”

A combat-disabled Army veteran, Eller is a member of the Cherokee Nation; his wife is Creek.

“The treatment Native Americans received in the past didn’t impact their pride in their land and the commitment to protect it. That is why there is such a legacy of service from the tribal community,” said Eller.

He said that, while Native Americans did serve in the military, some veterans may still be distrusting of the government and therefore less likely to seek out the benefits earned through service.

“It is extremely important for me to bridge that

“The treatment Native Americans received in the past didn’t impact their pride in their land and the commitment to protect it. That is why there is such a legacy of service from the tribal community.”



Jeff Eller, Assistant Supervisor, Muskogee National Service Office

gap between the elders and the government and let the veterans know there are benefits they have access to,” said Eller. “We have to break down that barrier so that they feel comfortable and trusting of us to represent them.”

A recent change in the Code of Federal Regulations allows eligible tribal organizations to become accredited to provide representation for claims and appeals before the Department of Veterans Affairs. The tribal representation will have to meet the same stringent requirements facing DAV and other veterans service organizations.

Eller, along with other Oklahoma service officers, has conducted training at Cherokee, Choctaw and other area native nations and helped with the benefits process.

DAV assists veterans with nearly 300,000 benefit claims annually, and in 2016, DAV attained more than \$4 billion in new and retroactive benefits to care for veterans, their families and survivors.

“DAV’s history of helping veterans speaks for itself,” said Eller. “Benefits assistance is a learned experience, and we want to take that to all veterans, including Native Americans who might be more difficult to reach due to cultural or logistical barriers.

“There is so much pride in their tribe and in the nation,” he added. “There is honor in what Native American veterans have done and what they have endured.”

“We are warriors with a history of service.”

—Tyson Bahe, Army veteran, DAV life member, Chapter 21 in Gallup, N.M.

“Native American veterans served a country whose government did not always keep its promises to them,” said DAV Washington Headquarters Executive Director Garry Augustine. “DAV honors these men and women who served, including the 140,000 living Native American veterans. ‘Patriot Nations’ and the forthcoming National Native American Veterans Memorial recognizes these veterans who went above and beyond in answering the call of duty.”

Honoring the patriot nations

Jerletta Halford-Pandos is the assistant adjutant of the DAV Department of Oklahoma and of both Cherokee and Choctaw descent. She said she looks forward to the creation of the National Native American Veterans Memorial, which is slated for a Veterans Day 2020 dedication. The call for design proposals will soon be underway.

“Land was taken from my ancestors, but they still vowed to protect it. That’s a part of my history, and I’m proud to be a veteran who has continued this Native American legacy of service,” said Halford-Pandos, a 22-year Army veteran who also serves as adjutant for Chapter 9 in Sapulpa.

While the exhibition and museum will be educational for anyone, regardless of their heritage or military service, it holds special meaning for Native American veterans.



DAV life member Tyson Bahe, Cherokee, followed his family’s long history of military service when he joined the Army as a cavalry scout in 2008. He served for five years and deployed to Afghanistan twice. (Courtesy of Tyson Bahe)

“There is a strong sense of camaraderie within the native community. It wasn’t often, but when I did see another Indian on deployment, especially Navajos, we immediately had a unique bond. Seeing fellow natives provided a sense of home during a time of war,” said Bahe.

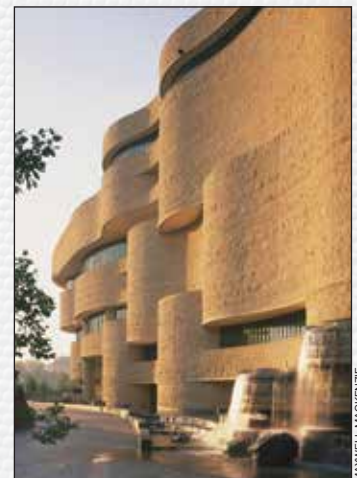
He added that the memorial will honor this bond between native veterans and their land, and it will show American citizens how long indigenous people have been fighting for them.

“We are warriors with a history of service,” he said. ■

See “Patriot Nations: Native Americans in Our Nation’s Armed Forces”

The Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian reveals the remarkable history of Native American veterans through art, photography and essays in a 16-panel exhibition documenting 250 years of native peoples’ contributions in U.S. military history. The exhibition will remain on view until January 2018 in the museum’s Sealaska Gallery in Washington, D.C. A companion traveling exhibition can be seen across the country, with the following stops:

- Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina, Pembroke, N.C., April–July 2017
- Mid-America All-Indian Center, Wichita, Kan., May–September 2017
- Potawatomi Nation Cultural Heritage Center, Shawnee, Okla., June 2017–January 2018
- United States Military Academy, West Point, N.Y., October–November 2017



From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



Guiding principles for the greater good

Religion, in spite of an individual's personal views, can often create polarizing discussions. There are those who won't discuss it, those who share their beliefs passionately and openly and those who feel religion has no place in their lives.

And many people in this day and age have been hurt, confused or betrayed by religious experiences in the past and aren't exactly sure where they stand on the subject.

Generally speaking, these same categories of people exist within organizations like DAV. While we all share a passion for helping disabled veterans, we

each have a different level of involvement, experience and vigor which we use to interact with the organization and fellow members.

There are many well-meaning, intelligent leaders—within both the religious and veteran communities—who may unintentionally create barriers for others when they accept positions of authority by working to serve their own agendas rather than considering the greater good.

We have, much to the benefit of the organization, rules that guide us in our day-to-day actions within DAV. Religious

sects also are generally bound to certain guidelines. I would ask that, apart from those hard-and-fast rules, you also examine the guiding principles of these groups to help direct your path as a leader and your role as a member.

Ask yourself this:

What are your intentions? When we try, on our own, to accomplish our own agenda without consulting or adhering to the constitution and bylaws or our organization or tenets of faith, we are often met with frustration by those around us. Don't let your leadership be a barrier to other members, but instead work together in support of DAV's core

Don't let your leadership be a barrier to other members, but instead work together in support of DAV's core principle: **veterans helping veterans.**

principle: veterans helping veterans.

Within the DAV framework, members rule and leaders facilitate; there is plenty of freedom in conducting matters that benefit veterans, their families and survivors without having to "lord" it over them. It doesn't matter what veterans service organization you join, there is no perfect entity. By putting the needs of our fellow veterans first and following the spirit and intent of our charity, we can use DAV as a vehicle to truly help keep the promises to our fellow veterans.

In His Service to You.



Help America's heroes

Leave a legacy gift to DAV

We would love the opportunity to thank you and to welcome you to the DAV Guardian Society now for remembering America's disabled veterans in your future plans.

As a member of the DAV Guardian Society, you will have the satisfaction of knowing that you are standing beside great men and women like Col. Charlene Holt by ensuring that DAV continues to be here to meet the ever-growing needs of the ill and injured veterans we serve.

As a member, you will also receive:

- A distinctive lapel pin.
- A personalized Certificate of Appreciation.
- A window decal.
- Recognition in the DAV Guardian Society Newsletter.

(unless anonymity is preferred)

TO LEARN MORE

- Call Stephanie Vorhees at **800-216-9802**, ext. 1,
- Email giftplanning@dav.org or
- Return the attached **postcard**.



How will you be remembered?

Ensuring veterans get all the help they need

Army Col. Charlene Holt is a third-generation veteran who admires DAV's work so much that she named DAV in her estate plans years ago, and she has been a good friend to the cause ever since. "I wanted to make sure DAV would always be there for the troops and their families," she explained. "They need all the help they can get."

Holt should know. A medical doctor, she joined the U.S. Army Medical Corps at age 40, then served for 22 years between active and reserve duty. After she left the service, she called upon DAV to assist with her benefits claim. Her appreciation of DAV has grown, despite looking back on all the paperwork and red tape that was involved in processing her claim. "I can't imagine what it is like for someone going through the claims process without DAV," Holt said, "especially without a medical background."

Holt's gratitude for DAV's expert help, and her concern for the many difficulties her fellow veterans face, led her to contact our office after reading an article about DAV estate gift opportunities. Holt appreciated that she could honor her father and grandfather, both named Clifford H. Poland, through our Guardian Society since both men inspired her military career.

Holt is long retired from active duty but stays abreast of medical and legislative issues affecting veterans as well as happenings at her former workplace, Madigan Army Medical Center in Tacoma, Wash. She has also stayed busy gathering information and submitting it to national museums concerning her father's and grandfather's military service, as well as painting as a hobby.

If you're like Holt and think veterans need all the help they can get, and if you'd like to make life easier for your fellow veterans through an estate gift or beneficiary designation, please contact us today. We'd be happy to send you our estate planning folder, which describes easy options and includes several pages to help you organize and close out your affairs.

Please let us know if you have named DAV (P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, OH 45250) in your estate plans. We'd like to thank you during your lifetime and honor you through the Guardian Society to show our appreciation to those who inform us of their plans. ■



Col. Charlene Holt

New 'smart home' ready for injured soldier and family

The DAV Charitable Service Trust provided support to the Gary Sinise Foundation to help build state-of-the-art residence for wounded soldier, family

By Mary Dever

DAV Charitable Service Trust President Dick Marbes attended a special ceremony in Chevy Chase, Md., where volunteers dedicated a new, state-of-the-art home to Army Capt. Luis Avila, his wife Claudia and their three sons. The Trust provided a grant to the Gary Sinise Foundation, the organization behind Avila's new "smart home," to support direct costs associated with improving the lives of severely wounded veterans and their families.

The result of an improvised explosive device attack in Afghanistan, Avila suffered a left leg amputation, two strokes, two heart attacks and anoxic brain damage caused by severe lack of oxygen. Ultimately, he was left almost completely paralyzed.

"Capt. Luis Avila and his family have sacrificed so much for our country," Marbes said at the ceremony, "but they have never lost their faith and commitment to each other. When Luis was severely injured during one of his five combat tours overseas, the entire Avila family was changed forever. When a veteran is severely injured in the line of duty, even the most mundane tasks turn daunting. This family has risen to challenges together. We hope this specially adapted smart home can help ease some of that burden."



Luis (center) with his wife Claudia and DAV Charitable Service Trust President Dick Marbes tour the Avila's new "forever" home in Chevy Chase, Md. The new Avila family home is in proximity to Walter Reed National Military Medical Center where Luis receives his care. Claudia says the location—on top of the home's "smart" features—gives her a sense of ease knowing Luis will continue his progress surrounded by his loved ones and his medical team. (Courtesy of the Gary Sinise Foundation)

The Gary Sinise Foundation partners with organizations and corporations to provide specialized homes for veterans to regain some of their independence that may have been lost due to their combat-related injuries.

The home features smart technology that allows Avila to be on his own for the first time since his injuries. The special features and modifications built into the new home include safety precautions, high-tech camera and voice-recognition functions, security features and enough space for Avila to navigate his way through the entire home unassisted. ■



Volunteer recognition...

National Senior Vice Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster (far left) receives a volunteer service award from San Francisco VA Medical Center's Hospital Director Bonnie Graham (left center) for 17 years of volunteering at the center. DAV representatives Andrea Mack (right center) and Thomas Mack (right) also accepted a service award for DAV's outstanding partnership with the San Francisco VA Health Care System.



Hugs for veterans...

Chapters and Units 1 and 6 from Morrow and Marietta, Ga., respectively, sponsored a cookout to get veterans together, show support and ultimately "share a hug." Atlanta VA Medical Center staff—along with DAV and Auxiliary members—joined with the Human Hug Project, an organization designed to help veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and to encourage building a support system.

Donate Your Car Today
and make a difference for a veteran.



DAV.org/cars

or call toll-free
877-999-8322



Youth making a difference...

Michael Tolliver (4th from left), commander of DAV Chapter 4 in Tampa, Fla., and National 4th Junior Vice Commander Andy Marshall (center) present a plaque to the Strawberry Crest High School Junior ROTC cadets. The plaque was awarded to the cadets for their participation in the local Golden Corral Military Appreciation Dinner.



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

Please provide a JPEG image (min. 300 dpi), a description, including names of those pictured. Submissions are subject to editing or omission due to clarity, accuracy, space and propriety.



Deer hunt for disabled veterans a success

DAV Department of Minnesota's Chapter 28 teamed up with the Olmsted County Veterans Service Officer team and the Olmsted Parks team to host the sixth annual Chester Woods Deer Hunt for local disabled veterans. Twenty-seven veterans and 10 family members attended the popular weekend retreat at Olmsted County's Chester Woods Park over Veterans Day weekend.

"This hunt has grown over the last six years," said Tom Eckdahl, Chester Woods Supervisor. "This event not only provides a very unique hunting opportunity for the disabled veterans and their dependents, but it brings together a very generous team of sponsors, coordinators and volunteers to make it happen."

Each event provides an outdoor hunting opportunity for those who may not normally get the chance to get out and hunt like they once did.

"This is an outstanding community project aimed at serving our disabled veterans," said DAV Past National Commander Jim Sursely, who has participated in this event in the past. "I am so proud of my fellow DAV members and other veterans who made this a success once again."

Patrick Zeigler, a Chapter 28 member who sustained severe brain trauma after being shot in the head during the Fort Hood shooting in 2009, was able to attend the hunt for the first time.

"It was great to have Patrick, a member of our chapter, join us for the hunt, as it provided him the unique opportunity to connect with the outdoors and participate along with other disabled veterans in a sport he loves," said DAV Chapter 28 Commander Rich Daly.

Daly also said he is thankful to the sponsors who provided financial help, meals, beverages, snacks, transportation, lodging and equipment. ■



Chief judge encourages members...

U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims Chief Judge Robert N. Davis addressed the DAV Department of Florida Mid-Winter Conference during chapter service officer training. The judge encouraged members to consider advocating for the court to get its own physical courthouse. Members asked that more court appointees be veterans. Davis, a Navy veteran, said he'd take their feedback to Washington.



Chapter donates rowing machine to VA hospital...

DAV Chapter 22 in Brainerd, Minn., donated a new rowing machine to the St. Cloud VA Medical Center. The Minnesota rowing team—consisting of service officers, chapter officers and VA employees—competed in a national competition last fall and placed first, out of 395 teams, in the Medical Facility category.

DAV requests help petitioning for centennial stamp

In 2020, DAV will celebrate 100 years of dedicated service to our nation's veterans, their families and survivors. As part of this special occasion, DAV has petitioned for a commemorative stamp to be issued by the U.S. Postal Service honoring this significant milestone.

"DAV and Auxiliary members are extremely proud of this milestone and we are asking our supporters to contact the Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee and ask that they recognize the service and sacrifices of veterans and their families in this special way," said National Commander Dave Riley.

All requests for consideration for a commemorative stamp must be in the form of a letter and mailed through the United States Postal Service. Each letter must also be mailed in a separate envelope. Please include information on what the DAV has



DAV 50th anniversary commemorative stamp

done for you or your family, which might include assistance with claims or appeals, transportation, disaster relief, hospital visits, providing an outlet to give back or other meaningful contributions.

The committee will meet in April 2017. "A stamp was issued recognizing DAV's 50th anniversary, but there's no assurance we'll be recognized this time around," said Riley. "To make it possible, we need our members to rally together and send letters of support." ■



Get Involved

To help us petition for the stamp, write to Chairwoman Klug and mail letters to: Janet Klug, Chair, Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee, 475 L'Enfant Plaza SW, Room 3300, Washington, DC 20260-3501.



Vietnam veteran recognition...

DAV Chapter 7 in Columbus, Ga., sponsored the Vietnam Veteran Recognition Program at the National Civil War Naval Museum. Each veteran (pictured standing) received a certificate of honor from Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal. Georgia Department of Veterans Service Commissioner Mike Roby presented the certificates.



National Headquarters
3725 Alexandria Pike
Cold Spring, KY 41076

Toll Free 877-426-2838, Opt. 5
davauxiliary.org
dava@dav.org

Membership Application

Date _____

MEMBERSHIP CODE NUMBER (FOR PAYMENTS ONLY)

Membership Application in Unit No. _____ State _____

☐ Ms. ☐ Mrs. ☐ Mr. Name _____ DOB ____/____/____
PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY REQUIRED

Address _____ City _____

State _____ ZIP _____ Phone (____) _____ Email _____

☐ NEW LIFE ☐ LIFE PAYMENT ☐ NEW JUNIOR ☐ NEW JUNIOR LIFE ☐ JUNIOR LIFE PAYMENT
(520 Down Payment) (Complimentary) (520 Down Payment)

AMT
PAID \$

Eligibility through _____ Relationship _____

SEND TO AUXILIARY NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS

Eligibility

Life membership is based on the applicant's age as of the current membership year

AGE	LIFE AMOUNT
80 or older	Free
71-79	\$140
61-70	\$180
46-60	\$200
31-45	\$230
Birth-30	\$250

Helping kids **just b kids.**

In 2016, DAV announced an expanded partnership with Camp Corral to expand the program's support of veterans and their families. The partnership strengthened DAV's long-standing relationship with Golden Corral, who, in partnership with DAV, provides the majority of funding for the camps.

Nonprofit Camp Corral provides free, one-of-a-kind summer camp experiences for children of wounded, disabled or fallen military service members. DAV's Just B Kids scholarship allowed 1,000 additional children to attend camps in 2016.

"DAV is proud to support Camp Corral and its mission of 'transforming the lives of military children,'" said Marc Burgess, DAV National Adjutant. "We recognize that the children of military members and injured veterans endure unique sacrifices along with their parents. Providing them with resources, and giving them a chance to be kids while connecting with children from similar backgrounds and experiences, is a critical aspect of this partnership and just one reason DAV is so proud to be a part of it."

Camp Corral was founded in 2011 as a single camp pilot program and has rapidly grown to 22 partner camps in 19 states. The organization partners with accredited YMCA and 4-H Club camps that offer military kids traditional camp experiences through activities such as horseback riding, canoeing and rock climbing. Today, Camp Corral has served nearly 14,000 military children—the majority of whom have a parent who was wounded, made ill or was killed in service. ■

APPLY TODAY!

Applications opened Jan. 12 and will close once the session is full or one month before the first day of the session. For more information or to apply, visit justbkids.org.



2017 **CAMP CORRAL** Schedule

DATES	LOCATION	CITY	STATE
June 4–10	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
June 11–16	YMCA Camp Cormorant	Lake Park	MN
	Camp Joy	Clarksville	OH
June 11–17	YMCA Camp Greenville	Cleveland	SC
	YMCA Camp Grady Spruce	Graford	TX
June 18–24	YMCA Camp Manitou Lin	Middleville	MI
June 25–30	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC
	YMCA Camp Gorham	Eagle Bay	NY
July 2–7	Triangle Y Ranch Camp	Oracle	AZ
	YMCA Camp Carson	Princeton	IN
	Eastern 4-H Center	Columbia	NC
July 2–8	Camp Wood YMCA	Elmdale	KS
July 16–21	4-H Memorial Camp	Monticello	IL
July 23–28	YMCA Camp Classen	Davis	OK
July 23–29	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
July 30–Aug. 4	YMCA Camp Shady Brook	Deckers	CO
	YMCA Camp Wewa	Apopka	FL
Aug. 6–11	YMCA Camp Seymour	Gig Harbor	WA
	Northern Virginia 4-H Center	Front Royal	VA
	YMCA Camp Weaver	Greensboro	NC
Aug. 6–12	YMCA Camp Ernst	Burlington	KY
	YMCA Camp Loma Mar	Loma Mar	CA
	Camp Fitch YMCA	North Springfield	PA



REUNIONS

ARMY

1ST & 9TH INFANTRY DIVISIONS—5TH BATTALION, 60TH INFANTRY REGIMENT, VIETNAM (ALL YEARS)

June 22–25, St. Louis, MO, Contact: Tony Sparaco, Ph: 516-293-6219, Email: tony_sparaco@yahoo.com.

1-40 CAV ABN, OEF 11-12 June 9–11, Las Vegas, NV, Contact: Kalen Dringman, Ph: 605-858-8142, Email: kalterdring@yahoo.com.

7TH BATTALION/8TH ARTILLERY June 8–10, Lawton, OK, Contact: Wayne Faas, Ph: 641-485-0083, Email: automatic8-faas@mediacommbb.net, Web: automatic8th.com/Reunion.html.

7/17 CAVALRY REUNION, RUTHLESS RIDERS & PALE HORSE Aug. 3–7, Killeen, TX, Contact: Joe Wirth, Ph: 201-661-8076, Email: joseph.wirth@yahoo.com.

8TH CAVALRY REGIMENT ASSN. May 17–21, Columbus, GA, Contact: Tommy Harris, Ph: 770-254-0705, Email: tharris@numail.org, Web: www.8cavalry.org.

19TH & 34TH INFANTRY REGIMENTS, 24TH INFANTRY DIVISION (KOREA & JAPAN 1950-53) April 24–26, Pigeon Forge, TN, Contact: Lannie Ellison, Ph: 205-349-2237.

76TH ENGINEER CONSTRUCTION BATTALION April 27–29, Lebanon, TN, Contact: Richard Cerone, Ph: 207-647-3877, Email: rfcerrone@gmail.com.

88TH INFANTRY DIVISION AND TRUST TROOPERS, SOUTHEASTERN CHAPTER May 8–11, North Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Preston Bryant, Ph: 803-245-4462, Email: plbtboat@atlanticbb.net.

97TH ENGINEER BATTALION (CONSTRUCTION) Sept. 14–17, Fort Wainwright, AK, Contact: J. Neil Jednoralski, Ph: 785-825-6847, Email: jneil.jednoralski@cox.net.

101ST ABN 2/319TH ARTILLERY ALL BATTERIES VIETNAM 1967-72 May 11–14, Nashville, TN, Contact: Jim Miller, Ph: 708-205-0548, Email: ssjimmy@comcast.net.

101ST ABN B 2/501 67-72 July 13–16, Great Falls, MT, Contact: D. Reinheimer, Ph: 314-846-9494, Email: dmrb2501@aol.com, Web: b2501airborne.com.

227TH ASSAULT HELICOPTER BATTALION April 25–29, Nashville, TN, Contact: Howard Burbank, Email: chickenman@227ahb.org, Web: www.reunion.227ahb.org.

981ST MILITARY POLICE COMPANY, KITZINGEN, GERMANY July 13–16, Branson, MO, Contact: MSG(R) David Donohew, Ph: 941-391-0955, Email: topdog01.dd@gmail.com.

A TROOP, 2ND SQUADRON, 17TH CAVALRY, 101ST AIRBORNE DIVISION ALUMNI ASSN. May 3–6, Charleston, SC, Contact: Doug Doerr, Ph: 904-509-2814, Email: ddoerr4uf@aol.com, Web: AlphaTroopAlumni.com.

D COMPANY, 1ST BATTALION, 6TH INFANTRY, 198TH LIB, AMERICAN DIVISION VIETNAM Aug. 17–21, Washington, DC, Contact: LTC (Ret) Lynn Baker, Ph: 870-253-1591, Email: LDBHistory@yahoo.com.

DELTA TROOP 7/1 ACS BLACKHAWKS VIETNAM May 18–21, Fort Knox, KY, Contact: Joe Vernengo, Ph: 586-337-3334, Email: jvern106@comcast.net.

FIREBASE AIRBORNE 101ST ABN 2/501 INF, 2/319 & 2/11 ARTILLERY May 11–14, Nashville, TN, Contact: Jim Miller, Ph: 708-205-0548, Email: ssjimmy@comcast.net.

K CO, 159TH AVIATION REGIMENT June 30–July 2, Savannah, GA, Contact: Bridget Gatewood, Ph: 410-971-9642, Email: kco159th@aol.com, Web: www.kco159th.com.

MACV ADVISORS VIETNAM April 5–9, Louisville, KY, Contact: Lewis Grissaffi, Ph: 619-922-8682, Email: luisaffi@yahoo.com.

MERRILL'S MARAUDERS & DESCENDANTS Aug. 4–6, West Point, NY, Contact: Jerrie Daly, Ph: 651-204-5504, Email: mmpdrtreas@gmail.com.

SOCIETY OF THE FIFTH DIVISION Sept. 7–11, Kansas City, MO, Contact: Robert Dudley, Email: colrdudley@aol.com, Web: societyofthefifthdivision.com.

TOCS CLASS 14-67 AT FORT EUSTIS May 21–23, Williamsburg, VA, Contact: Chris Abernethy, Ph: 832-507-0977, Email: cabernet050@gmail.com.

MARINES

1ST BATTALION 3RD MARINES (ALL ERAS) Aug. 1–6, Savannah, GA, Contact: Don Bumgarner, Ph: 562-897-2437, Email: dbumc13usmc@verizon.net.

2/3/3 VIETNAM VETERANS ASSN. April 26–29, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Art Ferguson, Email: clydesdadfergy@aol.com.

BULK FUEL ASSOCIATION April 27–30, Columbus, OH, Contact: Howard Huston, Ph: 609-432-4027, Email: hhust61@aol.com.

EAST COAST DRILL INSTRUCTORS ASSN. PARRIS ISLAND CHAPTER April 20–23, Parris Island, SC, Contact: Kenneth D. Miller, Email: usmcpidi@charter.net, Web: www.parrisislanddi.org.

"G" 2-7 VIETNAM VETERANS REUNION Aug. 3–6, Cape Girardeau, MO, Contact: Jim Stroman, Ph: 573-545-3901 or 949-510-7888.

LIMA CO. 3RD BATTALION, 1ST MARINES (LIMA 3/A) Sept. 7–10, Oklahoma City, OK, Contact: Kenneth Prewett, Ph: 405-416-0880, Email: limathreeone@gmail.com.

MARINES OF LONG AGO April 25–28, Quantico/Fredericksburg, VA, Contact: Joe Cullen, Ph: 203-877-0846, Email: aircooledmg7@aol.com, Web: www.marinesoflongago.org.

USMC VIETNAM TANKERS ASSN. Sept. 21–25, St. Louis, MO, Contact: John Wear, Ph: 215-794-9052, Email: johnwear2@verizon.net.

NAVY

USS ABNAKI (ATF-96) Sept. 6–10, Linthicum, MD, Contact: Jackie Vaughan, Ph: 410-414-5182 or 443-532-5889, Email: jackie.vaughan@comcast.net.

USS JOHN R. CRAIG (DD-885) Sept. 6–10, Norfolk, VA, Contact: Jerry Chwalek, Ph: 734-525-1469, Email: jermail@ameritech.net.

USS LAWRENCE ASSN. (DDG-4/DD-250) May 2–7, Jacksonville, FL, Contact: Craig Bernat, Ph: 814-322-4150, Email: dguts@usslawrence.com, Web: usslawrence.com.

USS LITCHFIELD COUNTY (LST-901) Nov. 8–11, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Don Lerche, Ph: 309-928-3395, Email: donlerche@yahoo.com.

USS RASHER REUNION (SS/SSR/AGSS-269) Sept. 6–11, Naperville, IL, Contact: Richard Moore, Ph: 804-815-0730, Email: drifterpilot@cox.net.

USS ROBERT A. OWENS (DDK/DDE/DD-827) Sept. 6–10, Wayne, PA, Contact: Kohn Wanko, Ph: 215-355-3982, Email: johnwanko71@msn.com

USS SATYR (ARL-23) June 1–5, North Charleston, SC, Contact: Jerry Toney, Ph: 904-641-5354, Email: toney@ussatyr-arl23.com, Web: usssatyr-arl23.com.

USS SHANGRI-LA (CV-38) June 6–12, Norfolk, VA, Contact: Leo King, Ph: 443-799-4231, Email: leok4350@yahoo.com.

USS SUTTER COUNTY (LST-1150) Nov. 8–11, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Guy Simmons, Ph: 978-476-3895, Email: guysimmons@aol.com.

USS PARK COUNTY (LST-1077) Nov. 8–11, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Mike Kempf, Ph: 317-490-4229, Email: m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net.

USS YELLOWSTONE (AD-27) Aug. 23–27, Columbus, GA, Contact: Paul W. Bowen, Ph: 352-208-5400, Email: bowp@centurylink.net.

VAW-123 50TH ANNIVERSARY REUNION May 27–29, Norfolk, VA, Contact: Rob Hablewitz, Ph: 757-461-3977, Email: rhablewitz@nesticinc.com.

AIR FORCE

485TH TACTICAL MISSILE WING June 16–18, Colorado Springs, CO, Contact: Chris Ayres, Ph: 719-650-6089, Email: clemsonayres@gmail.com.

55TH & 58TH WEATHER RECONNAISSANCE SQUADRONS June 7–10, Branson, MO, Contact: C. R. Layton, Ph: 918-446-6945, Email: conradlay@aol.com, Web: sites.google.com/site/58thwrs.

819TH RED HORSE-VIETNAM 1966-67 May 8–10, Myrtle Beach, SC, Contact: Joe Crowder, Ph: 210-673-1798, Email: njpquiltcrazy@gmail.com.

RED HORSE ASSN. Sept. 12–15, Lexington, KY, Contact: Dick Aldinger, Ph: 407-859-7436 or 407-399-8937, Email: famdinger@aol.com, Web: www.rhassn.us.

ALL SERVICES

COUNTER PARTS-LOC April 5–9, Louisville, KY, Contact: Lewis Grissaffi, Ph: 619-922-8682, Email: luisaffi@yahoo.com.

INQUIRIES

- Searching for any Air Force personnel who lived or worked in the canonment area at Don Muang Royal Thai AFB, Thailand, during the Vietnam War. Looking for those individuals who were there during the years 1967–1968. Contact Tommie L. Byford, 214-471-3671, Email: tommiebyford@hotmail.com.
- Searching for anyone stationed at Camp Carter, Vietnam, in October 1968 who remembers when three members of Danang East Security were wounded in the vicinity of Marble Mountain on Oct. 1, 1968. One was named Henry Smith. I was later told Henry Smith succumbed to his wounds in December 1968. I have been unable to find any verification of Henry Smith's death. If anyone has any information, contact Elmer Smith, 814-392-0146, Email: esmith8008@aol.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in Korea in 1951–52 and helped build Camp Casey. I was a Signal Corps sergeant in charge of 82 men. Nicknamed "Ducklegs," 8th Army, 7th Division, ICORE. Contact John Morris Hinderlinder, 326 Old Mountain Road, Goldendale, WA 98620, Email: celliofalls49@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served in Vietnam (1967–1972) with the 101st ABN 2/319th Artillery, all batteries. Contact Jim Miller at 708-205-0548, Email: ssjimmy@comcast.net.
- Searching for anyone who served with me from 1955 through 1956 in Korea, 7th Division 49th Field Artillery, located 1 mile from Freedom Bridge. Contact Bob Halligan, 78 Woodside Ave., Hasbrouck Heights, NJ 07604-1127, Ph: 201-390-2826.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in C Battery 1/8th FA, 25th ID at Schofield Barracks, HI, who remembers me saving a young boy. SP4 Bob Claridge from the unit hosted a barbecue at his home on the coast. SP4 Mike Clark, also from this unit, helped bring me to shore that day. I am looking to see if SP4 Claridge or anyone else who may have been there that day knows the name of the boy's family and also the city where the event occurred. I would like to find out what that roughly 50-year-old man is doing today. Contact Rick Albrecht, 5419 W. Dardanella Road, Apt. 219, Sioux Falls, SD 57106, Ph: 605-728-9608, Email: mrrickalbrecht@yahoo.com.
- Searching for anyone who served with me in Soc Trang or Binh Thuy, Vietnam with 82nd Med. Dustoff during 1968–69. They called me Bogus Bender. Call James R. Bender, Ph: 281-799-9335.
- Searching for anyone who was at the Song Ong Doc Navy Base in July 1970. This is about the attack on the base by enemy troops. The Coast Guard cutter was unable to provide gunfire support, but a Navy destroyer was in the location and came to help. Contact Gary H. Thompson, 1569 Eagle Drive, Kalispell, MT 59901, Email: ght77@bresnan.net.
- Searching for anyone who was in Korea 1955–56 in the 19th Ord. Co. or has knowledge of Ord. Co. Commander Richard R. Bailey or anyone in the 19th Ord. Co. Contact Don Welser, P.O. Box 123, Grayling, MI 49738, Ph: 989-745-8076 or 989-390-9174.
- Searching for Chief James Mellon, US Navy, an old friend last known in Philadelphia, PA in 1964, stationed in the Navy Yard. Contact Frances DeMarco, 626 Kings Highway, Mickleton, NJ 08056, 856-249-8435.
- Searching for contact information to locate Robert M. Elton, Lieutenant General, US Army, former DCSPER, DA (retired in 1987). Contact L. L. Davis, 2920 Ruddell Road, SE, #11, Lacey, WA 98503, 253-651-1729.
- Searching for anyone who served with John Leroy Plemons, 73rd Engineer Company (Construction Support) 1st Army, July 1963 to June 1966. Contact Karen Plemons at 317-694-7411.
- Searching for fellow retired Marine who served with me on LFM 2-60 (1/8 in the Mediterranean), in Iwakuni in 1960 and 1961 (1MAW) and again in 1970 while he was on the Inspector General staff and I was stationed at 4th echelon electronics repair in Iwakuni. Contact GySgt Claude E. Piotte, (Retired), 212 Allen Road, Billerica, MA 01821.



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