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THE OFFICIAL VOICE OF DAV AND AUXILIARY

MARCH | APRIL 2019

MAGAZINE



TRAILBLAZING WOMEN

Tomorrow starts with the
history they make today.

Page 14



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2019 Department Conventions

DEPARTMENT	CITY	CONVENTION HEADQUARTERS	DATES	BANQUET
Alabama	Opelika	Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel & Conference Center	May 30–June 2	June 1
Alaska	Fairbanks	Westmark Fairbanks Hotel & Convention Center	April 12–13	April 13
Arizona	Phoenix	Embassy Suites by Hilton Phoenix Scottsdale	June 5–8	June 7
Arkansas	Hot Springs	The Hotel Hot Springs	May 16–18	May 18
California	Reno, NV	Grand Sierra Resort & Casino	June 5–8	June 8
Colorado	Denver	DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Denver	May 15–17	May 17
Connecticut	Cromwell	Courtyard by Marriott Hartford Cromwell	May 2–5	May 4
D.C.	Washington	DAV National Service & Legislative Headquarters	June 21–22	TBD
Delaware	Dover	Comfort Suites	May 17–18	May 18
Florida	Lake Mary	Orlando Marriott Lake Mary	June 20–22	June 22
Georgia	Macon	Macon Marriott City Center	May 31–June 2	June 1
Hawaii	Honolulu	Outrigger Reef Waikiki Beach Resort	June 14–16	June 15
Idaho	Mountain Home	Hampton Inn & Suites Mountain Home	May 30–June 2	June 1
Illinois	Springfield	Northfield Inn Suites	June 6–9	June 8
Indiana	Indianapolis	Indianapolis Marriott East	May 30–June 1	June 1
Iowa	Johnston	Stoney Creek Hotel & Conference Center	June 7–9	June 8
Kansas	Mayetta	Prairie Band Casino & Resort	May 31–June 2	June 1
Kentucky	Lexington	Embassy Suites by Hilton Lexington/UK Coldstream	June 20–23	June 22
Louisiana	Alexandria	Hotel Bentley of Alexandria	May 16–19	May 18
Maine	Bangor	Ramada by Wyndham Bangor	May 3–4	May 4
Maryland	Ocean City	Princess Royale Ocean City Hotel	May 29–June 2	June 1
Massachusetts	Leominster	DoubleTree by Hilton Leominster Hotel	June 13–16	June 15
Michigan	Mt. Pleasant	Soaring Eagle Casino & Resort	June 26–28	June 27
Minnesota	Duluth	Holiday Inn & Suites Duluth–Downtown	April 25–27	April 26
Mississippi	North Meridian	Drury Inn & Suites Meridian	May 3–5	May 4
Missouri	Jefferson City	Capitol Plaza Hotel & Convention Center	May 31–June 2	June 1
Montana	Missoula	The FairBridge Inn, Suites & Big Sky Conference Center	May 30–June 1	June 1
Nebraska	Columbus	Ramada Columbus & River's Edge Convention Center	May 17–19	May 18
Nevada	Las Vegas	Sam's Town Hotel & Gambling Hall	May 5–7	May 7
New Hampshire	Nashua	DoubleTree by Hilton Nashua	June 7–9	June 8
New Jersey	Wildwood	Wildwoods Convention Center	June 16–19	June 18
New Mexico	Albuquerque	Ramada by Wyndham Albuquerque Midtown	June 6–8	June 7
New York	Callicoon	Villa Roma Resort & Conference Center	June 23–26	June 25
North Carolina	Greensboro	Sheraton Greensboro at Four Seasons	June 20–23	June 22
North Dakota	Williston	The Grand Williston Hotel & Conference Center	April 26–28	April 27
Ohio	Dublin	Embassy Suites by Hilton Columbus Dublin	June 27–29	June 28
Oklahoma	Catoosa	Hard Rock Hotel & Casino	June 25–27	June 26
Oregon	North Bend	The Mill Casino Hotel & RV Park	May 17–19	May 18
Pennsylvania	Harrisburg	Best Western Premier, The Central Hotel & Conf. Center	June 13–15	June 14
Puerto Rico	Aguadilla	Punta Borinquen Resort	April 26–28	April 27
Rhode Island	Warwick	Crowne Plaza Providence–Warwick	April 25–27	April 26, 27
South Carolina	Columbia	DoubleTree By Hilton Columbia	May 16–19	May 18
South Dakota	Sioux Falls	Hilton Garden Inn Sioux Falls South	May 17–19	May 18
Tennessee	Murfreesboro	DoubleTree by Hilton Murfreesboro	June 20–23	June 22
Texas	Corpus Christi	Omni Corpus Christi Hotel	June 14–16	June 15
Utah	Ogden	Comfort Suites Ogden	May 30–June 1	May 31
Vermont	Mount Snow	Grand Summit Resort Hotel & Conference Center	May 17–19	May 18
Virginia	Roanoke	Holiday Inn Roanoke–Tanglewood	June 6–9	June 8
Washington	Suquamish	Suquamish Clearwater Casino Resort	June 20–22	June 21
West Virginia	Huntington	Holiday Inn & Suites Huntington-Civic Arena	May 31–June 2	June 2
Wisconsin	Green Bay	Radisson Hotel & Conference Center Green Bay	June 6–9	June 8
Wyoming	Cheyenne	Little America Hotel & Resort–Cheyenne	May 3–4	May 4

From the NATIONAL COMMANDER DENNIS R. NIXON



Dedication is the driver of success

Many of you would probably agree that 33 years is a long, successful run for any venture, whether it's a television series, small business or even a marriage. But no matter the type of undertaking, I've found one common characteristic that leads to each endeavor's success: dedication.

For disabled veterans, that sentiment has had no better example over the past three decades than the annual National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic, which takes place March 31–April 5 this year in Snowmass, Colo., and provides veterans with traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries, neurological disabilities, blindness and amputations the opportunity to participate in Nordic and Alpine skiing and snowboarding, rock climbing, scuba diving, sled hockey, snowmobiling and a wide range of other activities.

The clinic is widely known as Miracles on a Mountainside, and there is simply no way to argue against the truthfulness of that moniker. However, these miracles do not simply appear out of thin air. Rather, they are the result of the dedication of the many selfless souls who coordinate and volunteer at the event.

As an amputee myself, I know the value of a support structure in the aftermath of a life-changing injury. I doubt it's any different for the event's nearly 400 participants as they work to regain a sense of normalcy themselves.

From the hundreds of volunteers and ski instructors who so freely give up their

time to help disabled veterans to DAV and the VA's unwavering support as co-hosts of the event, dedication to the cause of helping others has led to the clinic's success for 33 years now and, undoubtedly, will continue to do so for decades to come.

So to those who work behind the scenes at the clinic, I want to say thank you. Your dedication to the event and to America's disabled veterans will, once again, lead to many more successes and victories on the slopes.

I also understand that not everyone can be actively involved in the clinic, but that doesn't mean you cannot dedicate yourself to help disabled veterans achieve success closer to home.

As National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst points out on Page 18, DAV's web-based community VolunteerForVeterans.org makes it easier for individuals to find volunteer opportunities through a searchable online database. The tool helps connect those willing to volunteer with those in need of help. Whether it's picking up items from the grocery store for a veteran or a caregiver, doing yard work or simply giving a severely disabled veteran someone to talk to, the opportunities that can be acted upon can make a tremendous impact on the lives of our nation's heroes.

Remember, America's disabled veterans recognize your dedication. They appreciate your efforts. And most importantly, they cherish their personal successes that come from both.

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A Vietnam veteran reflects on the 50th anniversary of his “Alive Day,” which helped inspire countless other veterans to commemorate these significant moments in their lives.

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As women continue to step up and make history in our military and veteran communities, DAV will be there to advocate for equal benefits and recognition.

Photos courtesy of the Department of Defense

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Longtime DAV friend Gary Sinise launches new memoir, reflecting on how the organization helped inspire his connection to the veteran community.

Photo courtesy of the Gary Sinise Foundation

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From the NATIONAL ADJUTANT J. MARC BURGESS



We will persevere

Throughout virtually every facet of the DAV mission runs one word: perseverance.

We see countless stories of individuals who, despite life-changing injuries and illness, overcome challenges to achieve remarkable victories. Our advocates in the field never stop fighting to help veterans and their families gain access to their benefits. And our volunteers are relentless in their pursuit to make life better for the men and women who served.

Both in the military and in our lives as veterans, we persevere. We keep pressing on, no matter how difficult the road ahead. We are driven by many things: a passion to serve, the spirit of brother and sisterhood and a refusal to accept defeat.

I know that many Vietnam veterans were disappointed by the outcome of the fight to get the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act across the finish line before the end of the year, which would have righted a long-standing injustice to tens of thousands of veterans who served in harm's way and were exposed to Agent Orange.

However, in January, a federal appeals court ruled in favor of Blue Water Navy

veterans in the case of Alfred Procopio Jr., who served aboard the USS Intrepid during the war and later developed illnesses linked to Agent Orange exposure. The ruling technically now

means that any veteran who served up to 12 nautical miles off the coast of Vietnam are presumed eligible for disability benefits for diseases linked to Agent Orange. The VA can attempt to overturn the ruling by appealing the decision to the U.S. Supreme Court

within 90 days, which could result in a stay or hold being placed on all Blue Water Navy veterans claims until the outcome of the appeal is decided.

We will, of course, continue to monitor the case and fight for Blue Water Navy veterans. This is a major victory, but it may not be the end of the road. We have faced many challenges and setbacks to get to this point, and with your help and support, have shone a spotlight on this critical issue.

Though the legislation failed to get through the Senate last year, we knew it did not spell defeat—instead it was a chance to rally our strength and carry on. The battle is not yet over.

We have made our position clear to those on Capitol Hill, and we will ensure that we continue the fight in 2019. With your help, we will persevere.

This is a **major victory**, but it may not be the end of the road.



Liver Fluke Cancer Study Act

I am the wife of a Vietnam veteran who has been diagnosed with cholangiocarcinoma. I want to thank DAV for the article in the November/December 2018 magazine. Vietnam veterans have, and are, losing their lives to this cancer. Sadly, my husband died this past October. This cancer is a silent bullet until stage 4, when the patient finally exhibits symptoms. The prognosis at that point is six months to a year—or less. Vietnam veterans are a high-risk group, but the VA won't even screen for this. Please continue to be a voice in this battle.
Patricia Farrell, Tipp City, Ohio

VA health care reform

The interests of extremists on both ends of the political spectrum are ultimately going to hurt veterans. We deserve better. We earned our health care system and benefits. Any effort to shortchange veterans should be met with a unified and nonpartisan front that includes all our veterans service organizations. As a combat veteran of Vietnam, who lost my leg in service, I am certain that privatization would be a disaster for me and my fellow veterans.
Bill Caywood, Greenwood, Ind.

I have had some experience with HMOs that are run by private insurance companies where profitability is more important than proper health care. Privatization would turn our VA health care into an HMO, and if you think you are having a tough time with the VA, it would be much worse with “for-profit” insurance companies.
Jerome Pohl, Galloway, N.J.

Privatization is about the United States government turning over the Department of Veterans Affairs to the

private health care industry. There are a few senators, congressmen and congresswomen who are trying to stop this. I wish them luck. Just remember, rich people don't use the VA.
John Whalen, Brooklyn, N.Y.

'Alive Day' anniversaries

I appreciated DAV's cover story [in the January/February] issue on the 50th “Alive Day” anniversary of Jim Sursely. I served in Vietnam in 1968 and marked a half-century since my combat injury late last year. Though it's hard to believe that it's been that long, it's gratifying to have had a chance to witness our generation's commitment to making sure history doesn't repeat itself. I think one of our greatest contributions has been our fight to ensure the mistakes we made in welcoming veterans home from our war are being addressed for the young men and women returning from the current wars. Vietnam veterans have much to be proud of.
Mike Dillon, Winston-Salem, N.C.

Facebook.com/DAV Medical marijuana

DAV, I really love your organization. For over 50, years we've known what [cannabis] can do. When I was discharged I went to the VA hospital and asked them for cannabis. They came unglued, saying that is illegal. Since big pharma is not making money on this and big alcohol will lose money, the stall to legalize [marijuana] is nothing more than greed.
Lance Walden

Research? Research? Medical cannabis is legal in 30 states. These 30 states are a simple majority, so they needed to legalize medical cannabis yesterday.
William Stacy

Are you kidding? Pain relief is not a cure. It is only a Band-Aid. Too often, doctors want to treat symptoms instead of the problem. If the thing that is causing the pain is eliminated, the pain will disappear. Does pain relief cure anything? No! It doesn't.
Butch North

Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act (H.R. 299)

I am a veteran and spent one year in Vietnam. I have Parkinson's as a result of Agent Orange. I am so thankful the VA is providing me care for this disease. Please support all efforts to extend VA care to all veterans who are suffering from wartime issues.
Richard Vosika

As a provider of movement therapy devices to disabled veterans and as a strong supporter of all efforts to improve the quality of life for America's veterans, [I join] DAV in urging President Trump to motivate Congress to pass the Blue Water Navy bill. I am a Vietnam combat veteran on the Agent Orange Registry after serving near-shore and offshore patrols on the Vietnam blockade from the DMZ around to Cambodia with the U.S. Coast Guard in 1969. Good luck on this effort!
James Andrew Bowen

WRITE TO US Please send feedback to DAV Magazine, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076, or via email to feedback@dav.org. We also welcome feedback on our Facebook ([facebook.com/DAV](https://www.facebook.com/DAV)) and Twitter (twitter.com/davhq) pages. We regret we are unable to acknowledge every letter due to the volume received. Letters are subject to editing for clarity, style, accuracy, space and propriety. Letters involving claims are referred to DAV's Service Department.

Benefits and Transition Act signed into law

Authorizes provisions to improve veterans' quality of life

By Mary Dever

Several new minor provisions—including changes to veterans educational benefits, Department of Veterans Affairs debt notification and Memorial Affairs—were signed into law at the end of the 115th Congress, under the Veterans Benefits and Transition Act of 2018.

One popular provision included in the law stops schools from charging students late fees and taking other punitive actions when school bills go unpaid due to processing delays at the VA. If schools don't agree to the new rules, they won't be allowed to keep enrolling students using the Post-9/11 GI Bill. The law also mandates the VA provide electronic proof of income to veterans who will be receiving housing payments under the GI Bill so the veteran can provide appropriate documentation when looking for a home.

“The transition from military to civilian life is often a very stressful time for veterans and their families, many of whom rely on their earned GI Bill benefits to prepare them for the next chapter in their lives,” said National Commander Dennis R. Nixon. “This provision should help ease some of the burden on individual veterans when they're dependent on the VA to ensure payments flow smoothly.”

The law also makes changes to the VA's departmental

administration that will require them to provide standardized debt notices to veterans, while also offering an option for individuals to choose to receive debt notifications by electronic means versus standard mail. Another electronic advancement includes changing the VA's information technology systems so claimants can review and revise information about dependents electronically.

Also as part of this bill, deceased spouses and dependents of honorably serving active-duty troops can now be buried and receive headstones in VA national cemeteries through Sept. 30, 2024. Eligible dependents buried in tribal veterans cemeteries will also receive VA recognition, including adding headstones to unmarked graves.

“There are a number of provisions in this legislation that will improve the lives of veterans and their families,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “We'll be sure to stay on top of it to make sure each requirement in the law is implemented as Congress intended.” ■



Learn More Online

Read a summary about the list of provisions in this bill affecting veterans and their families at dav.la/so. Follow along with updates on veteran legislation on DAV CAN (Commander's Action Network) at DAVCAN.org.

APPEALS MODERNIZATION

IN ACTION

Veteran with languished claim receives timely decision through Rapid Appeals Modernization Program

By M. Todd Hunter

Mike Brenaman was a healthy 21-year-old soldier stationed in northern Germany when the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant disaster occurred April 26, 1986. He had little idea, though, that in the following days, he'd be exposed to a cloud of radioactive dust and debris that traveled roughly 1,000 miles from Pripjat, Ukraine, and would cause serious health issues in the decades to come.

He also couldn't foresee the challenges he would face in getting a service-connected VA disability rating for his stage 4 Hodgkin's lymphoma.

After a VA oncologist determined his illness was a direct result of his radioactive exposure, the DAV life member and chapter service officer of Chapter 47 in Oak Harbor, Wash., submitted a disability claim for his illness in June 2015. The VA denied the claim on the grounds that no prior precedent had been set for considering his cancer service-connected.

"The VA said it was going to wait until it got an answer, so my claim was essentially deferred even though I had two letters from my oncologist," Brenaman explained.

Wanting to see a Veterans Law Judge and with his appeal sitting idle for nearly 1,000 days, he turned to a fellow DAV service officer for help.

"He wanted to get to a hearing and asked me what the fastest way possible would be to do that," said National Service Officer Jacob Holland, assistant supervisor of DAV's Seattle office. "I said, 'Let's get you into RAMP and see if they'll change their decision.'"

RAMP, the VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program, was initiated in November 2017. The program is designed to streamline the appeals process by allowing

eligible veterans to choose one of two options for having their claims reconsidered: seek higher-level review or file a supplemental claim.

Despite his reluctance to participate in a relatively new VA program, Brenaman, 54, opted into RAMP in



Brenaman

Despite his reluctance to participate in a relatively new VA program, Mike Brenaman opted into RAMP and received a favorable decision from the VA in 66 days.



National Service Officer Jacob Holland, a Marine Corps veteran of Afghanistan and assistant supervisor of DAV's Seattle office, helped Army veteran Mike Brenaman get a favorable appeal decision through VA's Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP). Brenaman's appeal had been sitting idle for nearly 1,000 days before receiving his decision a mere 66 days after opting into RAMP. "People need to trust RAMP, and Mr. Brenaman is a perfect example of why it works," said Holland.

June 2018 and sought a higher-level review since he already had documentation stating his lymphoma was service-connected.

"I wasn't excited about it because I wasn't sure it'd be effective," he said.

Holland felt otherwise.

"I told him, 'With RAMP, we're essentially knocking off two birds with one stone,'" explained Holland, himself a Marine Corps veteran who served in Afghanistan. "One, we're getting you a decision faster. And two, if you do have to go to the Board of Veterans' Appeals, this will be the fastest way possible."

In late August 2018—a mere 66 days after opting into RAMP—Brenaman received a favorable VA decision, which increased the 80 percent disability rating he had from other conditions to 100 percent total disability.

It was welcome news he held closely until he attended annual chapter and department service officer training at the Department of Washington Fall Conference, where he heard other members voice skepticism of RAMP.

"Mr. Brenaman stood up and said, 'I can assure you this is a program that does work,'" Holland recalled. "And if it wasn't for Mr. Holland, who explained this to

me, I would not have gotten my disability granted."

"He was wanting a hearing, but at the end of the day, he didn't need one, because the evidence supported his claim," said Holland. "People need to trust RAMP, and Mr. Brenaman is a perfect example of why it works."

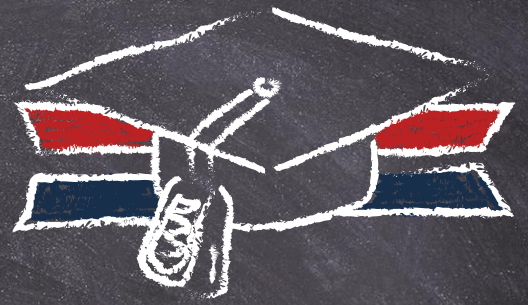
Brenaman's prognosis is improving as well. After 16 rounds of initial treatment, his cancer has been downgraded to stage 2 as he partakes in immunotherapy for the foreseeable future. He attributes his new disability rating for relieving an incredible amount of stress in his life and maintains that the worst part of the appeals process is waiting for an answer from the VA.

"It's crazy to wait that amount of time to try to see a judge when you can move on in the right direction with the RAMP program and get an answer in a short amount of time," he said. "I think it's a fantastic program, and I'm going to talk to all my clients about it when they're eligible for it."

As for Holland, it all comes down to one simple mantra: veterans helping veterans.

"It's something I hold close to my heart and something I really love to do." ■

New GI Bill implementation plan announced



On the heels of payment delays, VA says student veterans will receive full benefits in 2019

By Mary Dever

Department of Veterans Affairs officials have promised that by Dec. 1 of this year, the major problems plaguing student veterans will be solved—namely, incorrect payment amounts and technology glitches that caused delays in educational benefits delivery.

“For veterans dependent on the [Forever] GI Bill as their sole source of income while attending school, the delays in payments have been devastating,” said National Commander Dennis Nixon. “The VA owes these veterans the benefits they were promised and should ensure nothing like this happens in the future.”

It was a tumultuous fall semester for student veterans using the Forever GI Bill. Part of the new GI Bill changed calculations for veterans’ housing allowances, now requiring the allowances to be based on the ZIP code where students attend classes rather than defaulting to the main campuses.

When the VA attempted to make this adjustment in order to meet the planned Aug. 1 deadline for implementation, its IT systems failed. At the same time, the VA was also working to process a high volume of veterans’ education claims for the fall semester. This, in turn, led to major delays delivering veterans’ monthly

housing allowances—a benefit many rely on heavily to cover daily living expenses as they pursue an education.

In an effort to correct course, VA officials announced they are pushing back implementation to Dec. 1, 2019, freeing up resources to get students paid on time.

“Redesigning the way [the Veterans Benefits Administration] calculates Post-9/11 GI Bill housing rates during a busy academic season was like flying a plane while building it, and that was unfair and frustrating to veterans and taxpayers,” VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said in a statement. “That’s why we are resetting our implementation of the law for the next year to ensure we get the technology and formula right to put veterans first.”

For now, Wilkie also noted, “Post-9/11 GI Bill housing allowances will be paid at the [Department of Defense Basic Allowance for Housing] rate, which in many cases will be equal to or higher than their current payment.”

The VA is seeking a new contractor for the project and hopes to have these changes in place by next December, in time for the spring 2020 semester.

The VA has issued a statement to students who are experiencing “financial hardships” by the payment delays, instructing them to contact the VA Education Call Center at 888-442-4551. ■

From the NATIONAL SERVICE DIRECTOR JAMES T. MARSZALEK



Service officer training benefits all

During the past two decades, the DAV service program has established a reach and reputation that have cemented the organization's status as the nation's pre-eminent provider of claims assistance to America's injured and ill veterans and their families. This well-earned recognition is a direct result of the significant efforts of our national service officers, who are the gatekeepers of veterans claims, as well as the more than 2,500 department and chapter service officers across the nation.

Because these dedicated benefits advocates stand at the front lines of helping our nation's heroes, they are often a veteran's first impression of DAV. Bringing veterans into a local department or chapter, educating them on their benefits and processing their VA claims epitomize our organization's continued mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. Simply put, our department and chapter service officers are DAV's bread and butter at the local level, and our organization and veterans alike greatly benefit from the justice they fight to gain.

This is why it is so important that department and chapter service officers stay mindful of the DAV Certification and Indemnification Program, which requires service officers to take part in an annual training program in order to maintain

active service officer certifications. The training sessions focus on the claims process and updating service officers on any new and existing laws, policies and procedures that impact the claims process. They are oftentimes conducted in conjunction with department conventions to help facilitate maximum participation.

Additionally, successful completion of the training ensures service officers are included on the chapter or department officers report. By being included on this invaluable document, service officers ensure they and the veterans they serve are protected by DAV in the event of an unforeseen consequential error. Summarily, the program continues to be a means of training as well as protection for all department and chapter service programs that wish to participate.

DAV would not be the shining example of veterans service without the dedicated efforts of our department and chapter service officers. We appreciate all they do to ensure the success of this program as well as all of the organization's endeavors, and I encourage all of them to be proactive about this invaluable training, as it plays an incredibly consequential role for veterans, individual officers and the organization itself. If you have any questions about the program, do not hesitate to contact a member of DAV's national service staff.

The first 'Alive Day'

As *DAV Magazine* continues featuring members whose lives were forever changed a half-century ago, we highlight the man credited with the concept of wounded veterans celebrating their 'Alive Day.'

Jim Mayer, a DAV life member, lost his legs from wounds sustained in combat in Vietnam. This April, he marks 50 years since his injury. He is widely credited for coining the term "Alive Day" to refer to a second birthday or life celebration for those who survived life-threatening combat injuries.



By M. Todd Hunter

Vietnam didn't waste its time making an impression on Jim Mayer. A week into the 23-year-old infantryman's deployment, a village elder insisted Mayer and other members of his platoon follow him into a hut to view a small coffin. Inside it was a young Vietnamese boy who had been playing in a rice paddy and tripped a land mine.

"Just the trunk of his body was left," Mayer said. "It was an awful sight, and it really stuck with me."

As if the realities of war needed to be further reiterated to him, they were fortified by the letters his platoon mates received from other soldiers who had already been wounded.

"They were just saying 'I'm alive' or 'I took my first step as an amputee,' and I remember thinking, 'If that happened to me, I'd take my M-16 and take care of myself,'" he said.

Little more than two months later, on April 25, 1969, Mayer nearly received the same fate as the boy inside the coffin when he also triggered a land mine that was placed in a Vietnamese rice paddy. As he stepped over

a 2-foot wall, he heard a click, froze and was sent flying in the air by the 60mm mortar shell the enemy had hidden there. When he hit the ground, he looked down and saw that the bottom of his left leg was gone and his right leg was severely damaged. He said his shock kept him from feeling the pain.

"The first thing I said to my friend that reached me was 'I'm going to live,' which was really bizarre because I had really thought if I was blown up that bad that I would just end it," Mayer explained. "But it was just a 180. It was just will. I don't even know where it came from."

Through the efforts of the platoon medic, Mayer was evacuated and remained conscious until he reached the operating room at the 25th Infantry Division hospital at Củ Chi. That's when the shock wore off and the pain kicked in. When Mayer woke up two days later, a priest informed him that he had administered last rites while he was on the operating table. The priest also asked Mayer to look down.

"That's when I saw that both of my legs were gone below the knees."

It was then—with a generous dose of morphine pumping through his system—Mayer made the



Army Pfc. Jim Mayer in Vietnam in 1969. Roughly two months after his deployment began, Mayer sustained life-altering wounds from a land mine that resulted in the amputation of both of his legs below the knee. He went on to serve his fellow veterans for more than 30 years through the Department of Veterans Affairs.

decision to mark the life-changing event with a “Thank God I’m Alive” party every April 25.

Mayer made good on his promise after spending most of the following year recuperating at a military hospital in Texas. He spent his first Alive Day in his parents’ backyard with people from his small hometown in Missouri who had reached out to him while he was recovering.

In 1972, the DAV life member moved to Washington, D.C., as a veterans lobbyist and took a position with the Department of Veterans Affairs, where he served his fellow veterans in various capacities from 1974 until his retirement in 2007.

In 1991, Mayer began volunteering at Walter Reed Army Medical Center as an amputee peer visitor. He

eventually became known as “The Milkshake Man” for bringing trays full of milkshakes to wounded patients who had just returned from the first Gulf War. His efforts there were even noted in a 2004 Doonesbury comic strip.

Through it all, Mayer’s own Alive Day parties grew in size and eventually became an event attended by dozens of family members, friends, co-workers and wounded veterans he had met and mentored—

all of whom are

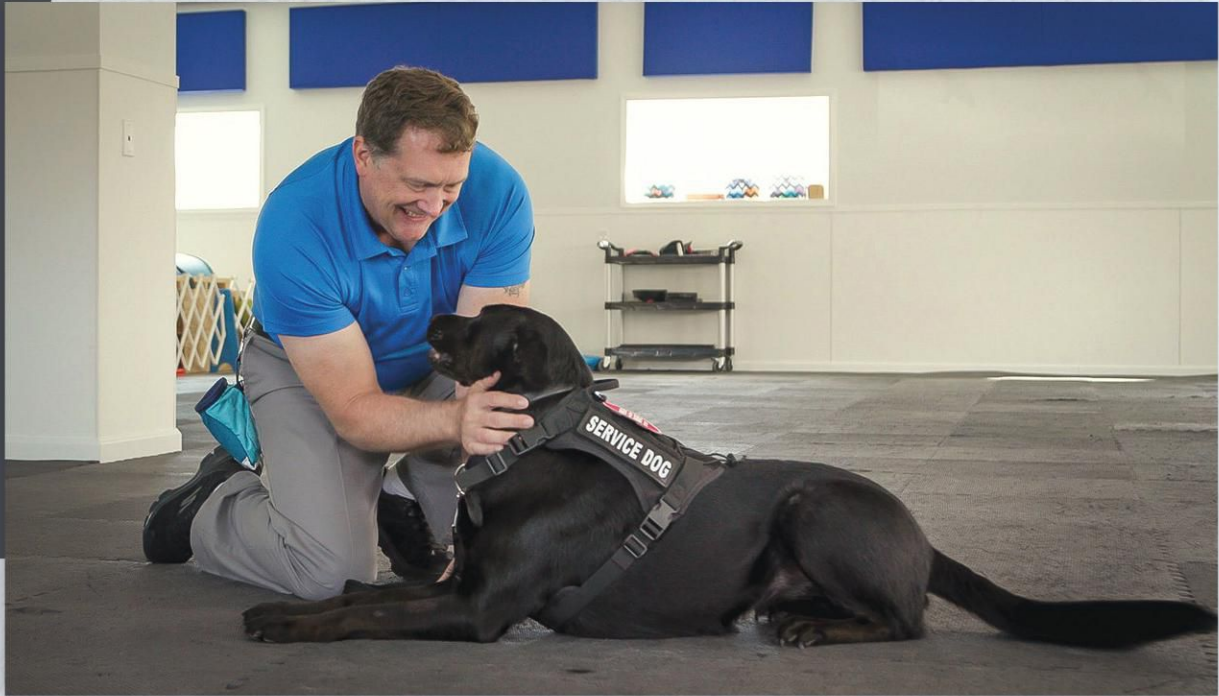
undoubtedly happy Mayer was able to summon the will to face down life-altering injuries a half-century ago, choosing to live and use his experience to inspire his fellow veterans. ■

“The first thing I said to my friend that reached me was **‘I’m going to live,’** which was really bizarre because I had really thought if I was blown up that bad that **I would just end it. But it was just a 180.** It was just will. I don’t even know where it came from.”

—Jim Mayer, Vietnam veteran

Perfect pairings

DAV Charitable Service Trust grant program gives veterans—and shelter dogs—new purpose.



DAV member and Army veteran Mark Mills credits his service dog, Georgi—a rescue trained through American Humane’s Pups4Patriots program—with bringing back a sense of normalcy. (Courtesy photo)

By Ashleigh Byrnes

Mark Mills spends a good portion of his week volunteering to help veterans in the Baltimore area. He serves breakfast at the Loch Haven VA Hospice Clinic; plays bingo with the residents of the clinic’s assisted living facility; and organizes fundraisers so they can maintain their greenhouse, buy toiletries and maybe enjoy dinner and a movie out. He’s also an active veterans advocate, sits on the board of representatives for mental health for the Vet Centers in the state of Maryland and is the commander of DAV Chapter 18 in Baltimore.

Despite his own disabilities, he’s able to do all this, and more, thanks to a four-legged, wet-nosed friend named Georgi.

Mills, an Army veteran, sustained a traumatic brain injury after being injured by a Hellfire missile in Afghanistan in 2003. Several years later, while deployed in Iraq, enemy insurgents attacked a weapons depot and set off an explosion that caused a second brain injury.

After years trying to manage the symptoms of those injuries and post-traumatic stress disorder—memory loss, headaches, tremors, balance issues, anxiety and hypervigilance—Mills’ therapist recommended a service dog.

“At first I resisted, because a dog would bring attention to my disabilities, which I tried to hide,” said Mills.

Eventually, Mills sought help through American Humane’s Pups4Patriots program, whose mission of pairing veterans with rescued service dogs is supported

by a grant through the DAV Charitable Service Trust.

“We take dogs who are in need of a forever home and train them to become lifesaving service dogs for veterans coping with post-traumatic stress and traumatic brain injury,” said Marjorie Tharp, spokesperson for American Humane. “It is a program that truly is saving lives on both ends of the leash.”

Georgi, a black lab from a Colorado shelter, turned out to be exactly what Mills needed—and in return, she got a new lease on life. Most importantly, Mills said, Georgi helps him pay it forward to other veterans after he received claims assistance from DAV.

“[Without Georgi] it would be much more difficult, because I would not leave the house as much as I do and be as active with the DAV and the veteran community,” he said. “DAV and Georgi have given me purpose.”

Since Pups4Patriots began in 2017, through grants and hands-on training, it has paired more than 100 veterans with lifesaving service dogs—which in turn means the program has also saved as many rescue animals from unknown fates in shelters.

“With DAV’s grant, for which we are tremendously grateful, and other grants and donations, we will continue to help as many veterans and dogs as possible,” said Tharp.

But programs like this don’t run cheap, she noted. Waiting lists are long, and training is both time-consuming and expensive—upward of \$30,000 per dog.

“There’s clearly a great need here, and we’re extremely proud to help provide support for meaningful programs like these,” said Richard E. Marbes, president of the Trust. “We are fortunate that so many have given so generously to the Trust, allowing us to provide resources to groups that are fulfilling unmet needs in the veteran community.”

And in this case, meeting those unmet needs means giving hope and second chances to veterans—and animals—who need it most.

“I am amazed with her ability to help me,” said Mills. “She brought me back to who I was before.” ■

Learn More Online

Veterans wanting to submit a service dog request application can visit dav.la/si.



“[Pups4Patriots] is a program that truly is **saving lives** on both ends of the leash.”

—Marjorie Tharp,
American Humane spokesperson

WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

Making history today

As military opens opportunities, veterans community needs to be ready

By Mary Dever

At the beginning of 2013, then-Department of Defense Secretary Leon Panetta lifted the ban on women in combat roles and gave the military two years to complete integration. In 2015, two women successfully completed Army Ranger School, leading to a Pentagon decision calling for combat specialties to be opened to women. The following year, one of those women—Army Capt. Kristen Griest—became the first female infantry officer in American history.

As the role of women in the military expands, during Women's History Month, the veterans community recognizes former and current trailblazers who have made and are making history. Since the Revolutionary War, countless military women have served and sacrificed. While thousands

of groundbreaking women have come before, those serving today are breaking barriers and making their mark on modern military history.

By late 2018, the infantry had 51 female officers and 253 women in the enlisted ranks, according to the Army.

As more and more women fill roles previously unavailable to them, the number of women in the armed services—and subsequently the veteran

population—is rapidly increasing. According to DOD, women now make up 20 percent of the Air Force, 19 percent of the Navy, 15 percent of the Army and almost 9 percent of the Marine Corps.

According to the Department of Veterans Affairs, 10 percent of the current veteran population is now women, the fastest-growing demographic. The number of women veterans

“There’s a culture shift happening in today’s military, led by women trailblazers. These women need the VA to be prepared for them not just today, but for future generations of women veterans.”

Joy Ilem, National Legislative Director



Capt. Kristen Griest (center left) made history when she successfully completed Army Ranger School in 2015. Griest made history again the following year when she became the first female infantry officer. (Spc. Nikayla Shodeen/U.S. Army)

treated at the VA almost tripled between 2000 and 2015. As a result of this rapid growth, the VA experienced difficulty meeting the clinical needs of women veterans at all sites of care.

“As we learn more through VA research about the impact of military service on the physical and mental health of women veterans and their specific needs, continued adjustments in federal programs and policies and new legislation will be needed to address the programmatic gaps,” said National Legislative Director Joy Ilem. “There’s a culture shift happening in today’s military, led by women trailblazers. These women need the VA to be prepared for them not just today, but for future generations of women veterans.”

In 2018, DAV released a comprehensive new report, *Women Veterans: The Journey Ahead*, which evaluates the quality of programs and services currently available to women veterans, and makes recommendations for shaping VA culture and the system to better serve this population.

“It’s critical to remember that women aren’t just small men,” said Ilem. “Women’s body proportions and hormonal makeup are different.”

Across the entire scope of mental and physical health

care, the VA has had to implement new policies to address the barriers faced by women veterans using their services, and created the Center for Women Veterans as a resource to help them navigate the system. However, Ilem said, the VA needs to look at what’s happening in today’s military and the long-term impact of that service on their health so it is prepared to meet the future needs of women veterans.

“When women raise their right hands and swear to support and defend the Constitution of the United States, they understand it could mean sacrificing their lives,” said National Commander Dennis Nixon. “Military service requires placing this duty above their personal well-being. Unfortunately, the sacrifices they make are not always recognized or acknowledged, and women work hard to reconcile their societal roles as caregivers, mothers and wives with the warriors they are.”

“Women experience military service differently than men and have different post-deployment challenges and distinct health care needs,” added Ilem. “They also rightly expect VA health providers and benefit representatives to have expertise in women’s health and to be knowledgeable about their military service.” ■

DRIVEN TO SERVE

DAV volunteers help ensure veterans' medical needs are met

By Janice M. Hagar

It's a chilly, sunny morning as Jeff Paul heads out on a special mission in a DAV Ford Flex. He is volunteering his time to help veterans in his Missouri community. The mission: Drive veterans to and from their health care appointments to ensure their needs are taken care of.

He may be picking up a Silver Star recipient who served during the Vietnam War. He may be picking up an amputee who served in Iraq. Whomever Paul is picking up, they are veterans who need help getting the health care they have earned and deserve.

One of those veterans is World War II and Korean War veteran Ted Powell. Today, he'll make it to his appointment thanks to Paul and the DAV Transportation Network. Powell is unable to drive now, so he depends on volunteers like Paul to help him take care of his medical needs.

As Powell is stepping out his front door, Paul is there to greet him. Somewhat frail, he walks slowly toward the vehicle as Paul walks with him. The program is a lifeline for veterans like Powell. But the need for more drivers is critical.

Nationwide, volunteerism for veterans is on a gradual, unfortunate decline. As baby boomers work longer and lead busier lives, the mantle left behind by members of the Greatest Generation has not fully been inherited.



Jeff Paul, a retired Missouri State Police officer, is one of thousands of volunteers dedicated to helping veterans who are unable to drive get to their VA medical appointments.

“We’re still doing great things—still providing hundreds of thousands of rides every year—but while the need is as prevalent as ever, it’s difficult to get the volunteers we need to provide a lifeline to these deserving veterans who otherwise might not get the care they deserve,” said National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst. “Fortunately, the people who are involved see the value and seem to get as much out of helping as do the heroes they assist.”

“I really appreciate what Jeff does for us,” said Powell. “When I found out I was going to have a lot of medical appointments, I didn’t know what I was going to do. I found out about this program from the VA, and now Jeff is here to help.”

Paul is one of more than 13,000 patriotic Americans who give their time in the Transportation Network. In 2018, volunteers across the county gave more than 1.4 million hours of their time, logging in over 17 million miles transporting veterans to VA medical centers and facilities. But not all of the needs are met, and volunteers like Paul who consistently contribute to the program are more important than ever.

He began volunteering in 2013, several months after he retired from nearly three decades with the Missouri State Police. Paul was still getting used to not working, and though he and his wife were enjoying the free time, he was beginning to feel a need to fill his days. On the interstate one day, he saw the distinctive DAV logo on a van and got involved. After completing a physical and training, he hit the road.

His passengers have served in all eras, from World War II to the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. One time, he even transported a Battle of the Bulge veteran who’d earned a Bronze Star.

“Talking with the veterans, especially ones I transport often, makes every drive memorable,” said Paul. “We talk about everything, and I love to hear their stories about their days in the military.

“I love helping veterans and giving back,” he added.

“This gives me a sense of purpose again since I retired. As a state trooper and a criminal investigator, I was always on a mission. There was a great feeling of accomplishment after solving a case. Now, when I help veterans and get them to and from their appointments, it feels like accomplishing a mission.”

His enthusiasm for volunteering even inspired



Ted Powell (right), a World War II and Korean War veteran, arrives at this VA medical appointment thanks to Jeff Paul (left), a volunteer driver for the DAV Transportation Network. Drivers like Paul help transport veterans to and from appointments to ensure they get the health care they earned and deserve.

three fellow state trooper retirees to become DAV Transportation Network drivers.

“Veterans depend on generous people like Jeff who give their time and even push others to get involved,” said National Headquarters Executive Director Barry Jesinoski. “You don’t have to volunteer three times a week to get involved—even though we appreciate those who do. Every ride we provide meets an important need. We just need the folks who are willing to step forward.” ■



Learn More Online

For more information on becoming a Transportation Network volunteer, email vavs@dav.org. Also visit VolunteerForVeterans.org to find opportunities to help veterans with everyday tasks.



From the NATIONAL VOLUNTARY SERVICES DIRECTOR JOHN KLEINDIENST

Help Volunteer for Veterans grow in 2019

Anyone reading this likely knows a veteran in need of some type of assistance. Many of us could personally use help. Even beyond that, we know our nation is full of grateful people who want to help veterans, but unfortunately, most don't know how.

Connecting veterans with assistance is the reason DAV developed VolunteerForVeterans.org. The online resource can connect volunteers with those who've served.

As we look to the second year of this exciting program, we're just scratching the surface in terms of the impact it can have in communities nationwide when our membership embraces it. We need to continually populate this site to ensure every city, every town and every state have enough volunteers and veterans to connect locally. We need you to help grow the network of opportunities.

We've seen success where our members have embraced the platform. Veterans and nonveterans alike have signed up to help veterans in their neighborhoods, whether by raking leaves, mowing grass or helping with home repairs. But we know that we need to do more.

We have many areas across the country where volunteers have signed

up but not a lot of veterans in their area are in the Volunteer for Veterans system—and vice versa. We need your help to populate the site so plenty of

volunteers are ready to answer the call for assistance while veterans and caregivers can let people know their needs.

In addition to expanding our pool of volunteers and veterans across the country, chapters can use Volunteer for Veterans to help support community events as well as chapter events.

Also, don't forget about our high school

students whose volunteer hours can help earn a Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship, which could cover up to \$20,000 toward their education.

Get the word out to your communities about visiting our site and signing up. The application process is easy, and once enrolled, volunteers will receive information on opportunities in their areas.

If you know of veterans in need who are not comfortable with technology, register as a person who knows a veteran in need, to help them sign up.

You never know the difference you can make in the lives of others until you try. Visit VolunteerForVeterans.org and sign up to help or get help today.

We're just scratching the surface in terms of the **impact it can have in communities nationwide** when our membership embraces it.

Getting it right

Top veterans groups focus on implementation of VA MISSION Act

Each year, DAV, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans of Foreign Wars make joint policy recommendations to strengthen federal veterans programs and services through the *Independent Budget*. This year, however, the recently released *Independent Budget Veterans Agenda for the 116th Congress* lists a single priority item as the pre-eminent need: implementation of the VA MISSION Act.

“If VA and Congress implement this law fully, faithfully and effectively, veterans health care will enter a new era marked by expanded, timely access to high-quality care for all enrolled veterans,” the organizations wrote. “However, if implementation deviates from the clear and widespread consensus reached by all key stakeholders, the VA health care system could enter a period of decline with devastating consequences for veterans who rely on VA for their care.”



The bipartisan VA MISSION Act—which was supported by the budget authors and more than 30 additional veterans groups—reforms the way in which veterans access care in the community, invests in the VA’s capacity to provide care at its health care facilities, calls for assessment and modernization of VA infrastructure, and expands eligibility of the VA caregiver support program.

“We can’t overstate how important it is to get this right,” said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese.

“There remain significant challenges in meeting the VA MISSION Act’s goals and deadlines, and we will continue to advocate for improved care for our nation’s veterans—not just by expanding access to outside care, but also by focusing on long overdue modernization of the VA health care system, filling employee vacancies and rebuilding infrastructure.”

On Capitol Hill in late January, the organizations



DAV Assistant National Legislative Director Shane Liermann (left) presented the IB's policy goals to press and congressional staffers at an event at the U.S. Capitol in January. Differentiating from previous years, the IB partners determined there was only one "critical" goal for the 116th Congress: ensuring the VA fully and faithfully implements the VA MISSION Act.

behind the document presented their concerns to congressional policymakers and introduced dozens of additional policy recommendations to improve veterans benefits, health care, education and employment opportunities, including:

Health Care

- Improve timely access to quality mental health services.
- Ensure women veterans have equitable access to health care, including gender-specific services.
- Modernize the VA's Electronic Health Record system.
- Accommodate unique health needs of minority veteran populations.

Benefits

- Reform and modernize claims and appeals processing.
- Fully recognize toxic exposures, including burn pits and Agent Orange, for affected veterans from all eras.
- Safeguard veterans' earned benefits from erosion or elimination.
- Strengthen federal support for veterans' families and surviving spouses.

Employment and Education

- Create an Economic Opportunity Administration within the VA.
- Enhance Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Services.
- Strengthen Veteran-Owned Small Business programs.

Aligned closely with DAV's own legislative priorities, the *Independent Budget's* policy agenda calling for legislative action to focus on recognition of toxic exposure among veterans is expected to be an early priority of the 116th Congress.

"DAV and our partners share a number of key legislative concerns; one in particular is ensuring that veterans who were exposed to dangerous toxic chemicals and other environment hazards during their service receive full compensation and other earned benefits," said National Commander Dennis R. Nixon. "It adds insult to serious injury to deny the long-term, adverse health effects that result from these exposures—including Agent Orange and burn pits—while veterans continue to suffer and die."

For 30 years, the budget partners have offered a comprehensive breakdown of critical veterans issues and a policy road map for Congress and the administration. They have also released a detailed set of budget recommendations annually each February. ■



Learn More Online

To view the full text of the *Independent Budget Veterans Agenda for the 116th Congress* and the organizations' budget recommendations, visit www.independentbudget.org.



VETERANS IN CONGRESS

New generation
elected to lead
at critical time

By Mary Dever

Serving our country, then and now



ANTHONY BROWN



CHRISSY HOULAHAN



On Jan. 3, 2019, the 116th Congress was sworn into office. The most diverse Congress in U.S. history includes 96 veterans, among them 19 first-term lawmakers, 48 post-9/11 veterans and seven women, a historic record. While the overall count of veteran representation in Congress is declining—as it has for the last four decades—a new wave is bringing fresh perspectives. At a time when American politics seem polarizing and the population in uniform is disproportionately low, veterans in Congress have the opportunity to bridge the divide.

“As a veteran, we have experience in working in these stressful environments, working with people who have different backgrounds and different perspectives. That’s what we do in the military and that’s what we ought to be doing in Congress,” said Rep. Anthony Brown of Maryland, who served in the Army. “That’s where the veteran, I believe, can add and contribute to the work in Congress. It’s not just on national security issues or veterans issues; it’s on all the challenges we face when we’re in Congress, because veterans are problem-solvers.”

“When I was in Iraq, identifying as a Republican or a Democrat didn’t matter,” said Rep. Guy Reschenthaler

of Pennsylvania, a Navy veteran. “We just needed to get the mission done. Different branches have their jokes and friendly rivalries too, but whether you’re in the Navy or the Army, a Republican or a Democrat, everyone understands that working together to accomplish the mission is the only priority.”

“The way that you’re conditioned in the military is to work as a team to get things done and to leave your differences at the door,” added fellow Pennsylvania Rep. Chrissy Houlahan, an Air Force veteran.

Transitioning from military service can be extremely challenging for veterans, sometimes because of the policies—or lack of policies—in place to support them and their families. Volunteering for office is another way veterans can continue their public service, bringing their experiences into the decision-making process.

“Being in the military is a career of public service, and serving in an elected office is a way of serving your community as well,” said Rep. Elaine Luria of Virginia, a Navy veteran who also serves on the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee. “I think a lot of veterans who ran this year and are now part of the new Congress on both sides of the aisle felt that this was a way to continue their service. They had served in uniform in the past,



GUY RESCHENTHALER



ELAINE LURIA



GREG STEUBE



and that experience and that dedication to serving their country, they found a new forum to continue to be able to do that.”

“We need more veterans in Congress so we can get past the partisan bickering to come up with solutions that take on the problems facing our nation,” said Reschenthaler. “Veterans know how to reach across the aisle and remember that our country is our first priority. We have the tenacity to work hard and stay the course to accomplish our goals.”

“I strongly encourage veterans to get involved in the political process,” said Rep. Greg Steube of Florida, another member of the House Veterans’ Affairs Committee and an Army veteran. “You’re going to have guys and gals with experience who have served in a battle environment, a combat environment, that have a wide array of experiences in multiple different branches. They’ll typically be able to give good advice on the direction of our country.”

No matter their backgrounds, veterans in the 116th Congress share the same message to all veterans: You are not alone.

“I would encourage people to seek assistance, to seek camaraderie and friendship. I’ve been surprised at how

remarkably caring people are when you reach out to them,” said Houlahan.

“I think it’s important for veterans to know that they’re not alone and that our nation supports them,” Reschenthaler said. “For me, it was important to realize that you don’t have to stop serving after returning home. There are so many other ways to continue serving in our communities across the nation.”

“Rely upon that network of people that you have in your community that are veterans that can give you that advice and support that you need to be successful,” said Steube.

“DAV uses the phrase ‘keep the promise,’ and part of our job as representatives is to keep that promise to veterans to help connect them with critical services that they need,” Luria added.

“Thanks in part to their military training and service, veterans are loyal, team-orientated employees with job-ready skills; tested leadership abilities; and a strong, mission-focused work ethic,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “These attributes are encouraging to see in members of Congress, and I think the veterans now serving on Capitol Hill have the potential to create a more stable political climate.” ■



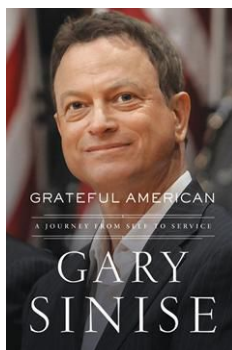
COURTESY OF THE GARY SINISE FOUNDATION

Award-winning actor and veteran advocate Gary Sinise releases memoir detailing his journey from self to service

By Mary Dever

In summer 1994, recently released blockbuster “Forrest Gump” dominated the American box office. One of the movie’s main characters, Lieutenant Dan Taylor, is an Army officer who loses both of his legs in Vietnam. The role resonated with veterans and the actor who portrayed Lt. Dan—Gary Sinise—was invited to the 1994 DAV National Convention and presented with the National Commander’s Award. This moment, the actor writes in his new memoir, was more substantial to his life trajectory than he could have even imagined.

The Oscar-nominated actor—who also starred in hit movies like “Apollo 13,” “Ransom” and “Truman” as well as TV drama “CSI:NY”—released



“Grateful American” is a memoir by veterans advocate and DAV supporter Gary Sinise. (Courtesy of the Gary Sinise Foundation)

his first book, “Grateful American: A Journey from Self to Service,” in February. The book chronicles his life’s journey, “from aimless teen to an actor/director with a purpose: a mission to support and raise awareness for the men and women who selflessly put themselves in harm’s way in service to our country.”

“I am a grateful American for so many reasons,” said Sinise. “A big reason is because I value my freedom, and I know it has to be provided and protected. I’ve met great people in my life who have devoted their lives to service, and they have inspired me.”

Sinise writes in the book’s prologue about attending DAV’s national convention in 1994 and being stunned and humbled by the reaction he received for playing the role of Lt. Dan. He hadn’t



“I would never have guessed then, nearly a quarter of a century ago, that the young man we recognized onstage would go on to **do so much good for veterans.**”

*Dick Marbes, Past National Commander
and DAV Charitable Service Trust President*

realized the character would become a symbol to injured veterans.

“Little do I know how significant this moment at the convention will become in my life,” he wrote. “Seeds are being planted that will grow into a tree with many branches.”

Past National Commander Dick Marbes, who presented the award to Sinise at the convention, recalls the young actor being extremely humble about the honor.

“I remember that day well. But I would never have guessed then, nearly a quarter of a century ago, that the young man we recognized onstage would go on to do so much good for veterans,” said Marbes, who chairs the DAV Charitable Service Trust. “I remember he seemed a little concerned at the time. I don’t know if he was afraid his ‘warts and glory’ approach to the role would offend anyone. But as an amputee myself, I was amazed by his performance, and the Vietnam veterans seemed to identify very closely with his redemptive portrayal of Lt. Dan.”

Since the early ’80s, Sinise has been an advocate for the military community. At the Steppenwolf Theatre in Chicago—co-founded by Sinise—veterans are offered free dinners and performances on Vets Night, a program founded more than 30 years ago. However, Sinise said the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks inspired him to do more than just help out “here and there.”

“I just started raising my hand where I could,” he said. “One of the first things I did was volunteer for the USO. Here I am, an actor, an entertainer, and I wanted to go visit the troops in Iraq. I wanted to go around the world and let them know they were appreciated.”

In 2004, he took his love of music and formed his band, Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band, who have performed for the military and veteran communities around the world.

By 2011, it made sense to Sinise to funnel the energy of his personal mission to do all he could to support wounded heroes and their families, consolidate his volunteer work and become more effective. This led to the creation of the Gary Sinise Foundation.

“It just became clear that this was a game that I was in to play for a long time, and starting a foundation, an organization, a military charity, a nonprofit, would be the next logical step for me,” he said.

In the book, he details the experiences he’s had with countless wounded veterans over the years, many of whom are DAV members.

“I try to tell the inspirational stories of the people I’ve met, who’ve been injured in battle, and who have overcome those injuries,” Sinise said.

The DAV Charitable Service Trust has supported The Gary Sinise Foundation over the years, donating funds to help them as they build technologically advanced “smart” homes for disabled veterans, foster mentorship opportunities between older and younger wounded veterans through programs like Boulder Crest, and much more. Sinise said his relationship with DAV is something he holds near and dear, and the work the organizations can do together has unlimited potential.

“I count [my] association [with DAV] as very significant in my journey to help our veterans,” he said. “I’ve always been honored and privileged to support DAV and to meet so many extraordinary heroes who have sacrificed so much for us. I never take it for granted for one second. I want them to always know that their sacrifices do not go unnoticed, or unremembered. I thank God every day for the men and women who serve our country. And I’ll always try to do a little more to make sure they know that they have a grateful American supporting them here.” ■

Protect yourself—and your benefits—from fraud



By Bryan G. Lett

More than 7 million veterans currently have open accounts with the Departments of Veterans Affairs and Defense eBenefits website, so it's as important as ever for veterans to know how to best protect their earned benefits from fraudulent activity.

Although the website has not been hacked, the VA has on occasion reported that individual accounts have been illegally accessed.

"VA takes fraud allegations and the security of veterans' information seriously. Since 2015, just .06181 percent of VA's active eBenefits accounts have been accessed fraudulently," said Susan Carter, VA director of media relations. "VA relies on a Department of Defense authentication service called DS Logon to secure online access to eBenefits. VA has been collaborating with DOD on enhancements to strengthen DS Logon's security further, including through multifactor authentication. For additional questions regarding DS Logon security, we refer you to DOD."

DAV turned to its partner Identity Guard and their vice president of creative and brand, John Clarkson, for tips on how to further protect your benefits. Here are five ways to help protect yourself:

1. Don't give out your Social Security number. We're accustomed to filling out forms for practically everything, from gym memberships to rental agreements, and it's important to not become too comfortable with giving out your personal information. Start training yourself to question the necessity of the information before committing to paper or electronic file.
2. Don't hang onto unnecessary financial documents.

Shredding is an essential part of your identity protection, especially for all those pre-filled credit card applications you have no intention of completing. Keeping these documents filed in your house can leave you vulnerable in the event of a break-in. Be proactive and shred any outdated financial documents, tax records, insurance forms and mailed pre-filled forms.

3. Don't ignore suspicious activity. If your credit card is declined unexpectedly, or if you start receiving calls from debt collectors for payments you didn't make, then it's time to take action. Ignoring the critical signs of identity theft could only make your problem worse.
4. Don't use public Wi-Fi to access private information. Unsecured public Wi-Fi networks could make it extremely easy for hackers to see sensitive information you're entering online or in any of your bank apps.
5. Don't use one password for all accounts. Using only one password makes hacking into your accounts that much easier for cyber criminals, so create a unique password for each account, even social media profiles that you might not think are as important. Protect your passwords carefully; use special characters, numbers and case-sensitive letters to make it that much harder for identity thieves. ■



[Learn More Online](#)

Veterans who suspect they have been the victim of fraud should call the VA at 800-827-1000 as quickly as possible or contact the VA's Office of the Inspector General via telephone at 800-488-8244 or email at vaoighotline@va.gov.

Agencies fight ‘robocalls’ targeting veterans

■ The VA and Federal Communications Commission are combating illegal robocalls targeting veterans and their families.

According to the FCC, unwanted calls—including illegal and spoofed robocalls—are their top consumer complaint and top consumer protection priority. In an effort to combat the flood of robocalls, government agencies have sued and won judgments totaling more than \$1.5 billion since the Do Not Call Registry was established in 2003. They have held technology contests to spur the development of call-blocking apps and made it easier for members of the public to file lawsuits, including class-action litigation.

However, scammers continue to find new ways to get around the protections in place. Aside from the annoyance, scam calls frequently solicit money for fake charities, including ones claiming to support America’s veterans—some even claiming to be VA representatives. Fraudulent groups with legitimate-sounding names like Help the Vets and Veterans of America placed more

than 1 million robocalls in 2017 that resulted in people donating more than \$435,000 in cash and property.

The FCC and the VA published the following list of tips to help veterans and their families avoid unwanted calls and scams:

- Don’t answer calls from unknown numbers. Scammers may spoof their caller ID to display a fake number that appears to be local. If you answer such a call, hang up immediately.
- Never give out personal information such as account numbers, Social Security numbers, mother’s maiden name or passwords in response to unexpected or suspicious calls.
- Be sure to set a password for all voicemail accounts to avoid being hacked.
- Register your number on the federal Do Not Call List, donotcall.gov, to block calls from legitimate telemarketers.
- Ask your phone company about call-blocking tools and services for your landline phone, and check for helpful apps that you can download to your mobile phone.



For more information, visit fcc.gov/robocalls.

Virtual communication programs expand to include vocational rehab, employment

■ The VA is taking its virtual communication tool—VA Video Connect—past VA health care and into its Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment Program (VR&E).

VA Video Connect has enabled veterans to connect with their health care team from anywhere, using encryption to ensure a secure and private session. It has made VA health care more convenient, reduced travel times, and allowed quick and easy health care access from any mobile or web-based device. And now it will connect veterans with more than 1,000 VR&E counselors.

Similar to VA Telehealth Services, veterans obtain access to a scheduled VR&E counseling session through a unique link—valid for that counseling session only—sent directly to them.

VR&E also recently tested telecounseling at six



regional benefits offices in order to identify how it can reduce time veterans wait for an appointment.



For more information about VR&E, visit benefits.va.gov/vocrehab.



From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER ELLEN L. TIMMERMAN

Change is inevitable

As members of the Auxiliary, one of our primary roles is to help move the organization forward and provide the foundation necessary for future generations to have success.

This requires accepting change—even if there are growing pains at first. We need to be open to suggestions and new ideas instead of stating, “We’ve always done it this way.”

For the Auxiliary to continue to live up to and maximize our core values of comradeship, loyalty, devotion and service, we must willingly take this challenge on. This will also help us reach our full potential as advocates for the well-being of disabled veterans and their families.

For the Auxiliary to get the most out of our membership, legislative goals, youth involvement and voluntary service, we must remain ahead of the curve and display a willingness to adapt to an ever-changing veteran community.

Last year, DAV’s caregiver initiative proved to be a positive change for the Auxiliary. It has brought more attention to the needs of caregivers and given us the opportunity to be more involved with them.

Also this past year, our strategic plan was revisited and minor changes were made for the betterment of the Auxiliary

and the patriots we serve. I strongly urge all of you to review our strategic plan, currently posted under Publications in the Membership portion of auxiliary.dav.org. We deal with changes in our personal lives, and our organization is no different.

Creating change can also come down to us, as individuals, getting outside our comfort zones. It could be embracing new technology and communication techniques to reach Auxiliary members or help recruit new members. Maybe it’s being more vocal on social media about your Auxiliary unit’s activities or eligibility criteria. Perhaps it’s going to your local media outlets to promote our mission, a unit event or even a volunteer opportunity.

I want to encourage all of you to be ready for changes and prepared for challenges that may come our way. Also, don’t be afraid to ask questions, because everyone needs to understand why the changes are necessary.

Auxiliary members need to be proactive and keep the states and units moving forward. I challenge all of us to eagerly seek out new ideas and initiatives to further our cause. Do not be afraid to bring these thoughts to the attention of your local leaders, as they will listen.

ORLANDO

to host 2019 DAV National Convention

August 3-6, 2019 | Rosen Shingle Creek

This year, the DAV National Convention returns to sunny Orlando, Fla. Known for its attractions and entertainment, the City Beautiful ensures visitors of all ages have an experience they'll never forget.

Orlando offers something for everyone: family-friendly attractions, world-class dining and entertainment, top-notch golf courses and other recreational activities, and of course, beautiful weather.

After spending time working alongside fellow veterans to help shape DAV's future, an array of one-of-a-kind experiences await you. Convention-goers can experience the magic of Walt Disney World, the sights and sounds of Universal Orlando, the wonders of marine life at SeaWorld Orlando, world-class shopping at Pointe Orlando or breathtaking views atop the 400-foot ICON Orlando 360, just to name a few. Florida's world-famous beaches and Kennedy Space Center are also only an hour away.

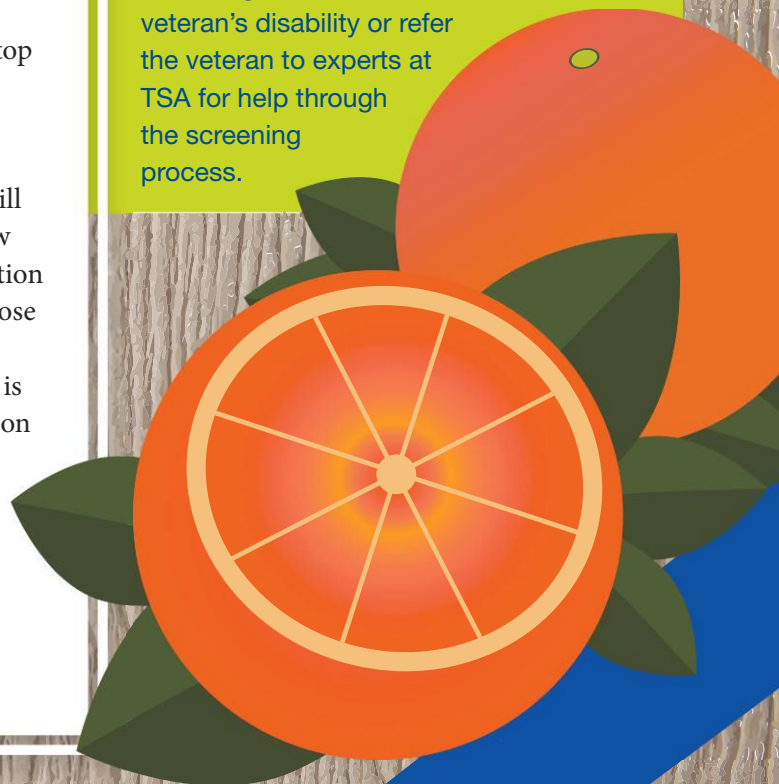
The convention is an opportunity to advocate for ill and injured veterans, enjoy the camaraderie of fellow DAV members, and take ownership of this organization and its yearly agenda—while allowing for a hearty dose of fun in this premier vacation destination.

Our special room rate at the Rosen Shingle Creek is \$137 per single or double. Additional hotel reservation information is available at rosenshinglecreek.com using special code GRPDAV2019. For reservations by phone, call 407-996-9939 and tell them you are reserving under the Disabled American Veterans room block.

 For more information, visit www.dav.org/events/2019-national-convention.

TRAVEL ASSISTANCE

The Transportation Security Administration 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 refer the veteran to experts at TSA for help through the screening process.





Help America's heroes

Leave a legacy gift to DAV

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

By naming DAV in your will or estate plans, you will become a member of the DAV Guardian Society and have the satisfaction of knowing you are standing beside special men and women like Linda Austin, helping to ensure 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.
- Return the attached **postcard**.



Giving back what she can

Bequest donor's unique experience with Vietnam veterans prompts legacy gift

Linda Austin was a 20-something flight attendant during the Vietnam War. She had a unique, firsthand view of the immediate effects it had on soldiers heading home. She still has a vivid image of the young men on her flights, bravely headed toward combat and ready for anything the war asked of them. Through tears, she recalls, "Some of those boys even lied about their age to fight for our country. They flew over as young, impassioned boys, and by the time they came home, they were practically old men. They willingly sacrificed everything short of their lives for our country when they still had their whole lives ahead of them."

The sacrifices of those young soldiers have never been lost on her. Since then, Linda has always had it in her heart that, when the time was right, she wanted to do something meaningful for those who have served to protect her freedoms and the freedoms of her loved ones. Over the years, her career path changed, but the impact of those flights and her desire to say thank you never has. That was why Linda chose to leave a legacy gift to our country's disabled veterans by naming DAV in her estate plans. She knows that for years to come, her gift will help those who've served receive the care and help that they earned.

By notifying DAV of her plans, her future contribution was promptly recognized through the DAV Guardian Society. By naming DAV in her estate plans, she's made the charity and those who served a part of her family, and we are happy for the chance to thank and know her personally. It's the least we can do for her sacrifice and support.

Naming DAV in your estate plans can be as easy as meeting with your attorney and naming us in your will or trust. Or, if a will is not needed to do your estate planning, you can name DAV as the beneficiary of your insurance policy or financial accounts. A legacy gift can be as grand or small as you wish or can afford.

If you would like more information about how you can make a bequest gift to DAV or would like to notify us that you have named DAV in your estate plans, please return the attached postcard or call our office at 800-216-9802, ext. 1. A member of our Gift Planning team would love to hear from you. ■



As a flight attendant, Linda Austin assisted soldiers on their way to Vietnam. She never forgot their sacrifices and found a way instead to create a legacy of assistance for them and future generations.

From the NATIONAL CHAPLAIN MICHAEL P. DOVER



Facing our losses with faith and hope

When we lose someone close to us, in the beginning it isn't so much a matter of moving on as simply getting through day by day.

To be alive and to grow inevitably involves pain. How do you say yes to growth? How can you be open to new life? When you take time to look at this universe, it is driven by the cycle of life. It builds up and then breaks, repeatedly. Every seed planted originates from a dead plant. It then pushes its way up through the ground, reaches maturity as a new one, then decays and eventually becomes part of new growth.

Relating to how the universe works can help you identify your loss or pain specifically. It's common to be overwhelmed by a sense of depression or anxiety in these difficult times, but grieving over a loved one's death is a natural part of life.

Express the emotion that accompanies your loss. Guilt can be troubling, and we have all played the "what if" game before. What if I'd done things differently? What if I were a better person? What if I had prayed more? We question our power to influence things beyond our control.

The sadness that overtakes us can seem unbearable. Well-meaning people feeling helpless at relieving your distress may tell you not to cry or feel bad, or

that you should pull yourself together. But these suggestions ignore our need as human beings to express our grief. When ignored or denied, grief can harm us in a variety of ways.

Facing our loss is part of how we find our freedom again.

Consider your choices. You may not have a choice about the circumstances you're in, but you do have a choice as to how you'll cope with any given situation. Ask yourself some questions: What's my attitude about this? Do I feel like everything always happens to me? Do I see myself as a victim? Is life unfair? The attitude we have will help or hinder how we cope.

We don't have to like hardship. We only have to figure out a way to deal with it so that we use it as a challenge to grow. Every person's life holds painful and challenging losses. Who we are today is the result of not only what has happened in our lives but also what we've done with what's happened. We are only victims if we choose to be. Life hurts, and death is a part of it, but it need not be the center of your life.

We are fortunate when we begin to recognize the great power we have to cope healthily with life's many losses and its beginnings. Then pain and loss can become the seeds for growth and new life.

Continuing the fight for Blue Water Navy veterans

■ As the 115th Congress came to a close during the last days of 2018, veteran advocates were still hoping the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2017 could be signed by the president in time for the new year. Unfortunately, it was blocked in the Senate, requiring nearly 90,000 Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange to continue to wait for the benefits and resources they earned.

However, House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees for the 116th Congress, alongside DAV and other veterans groups, vowed to pick up the fight right away.

"Although our united efforts fell just short this year, we did make historic progress to right this wrong," said Washington Headquarters Executive Director Randy Reese (second from right) at a press conference on Capitol Hill. "We will be calling on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell to make these forgotten heroes a priority by scheduling floor time to debate and vote on the Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act right away. The time to take action is now, before the Vietnam generation is gone."



Did you know that DAV members have access to great discounts on products and services?

When you take advantage of these offers, you are helping to keep the promise to more ill and injured veterans.



These are some of our valued Member Advantages partners:



T-Mobile offers DAV members and their families a limited time offer of a \$125 Visa Card and \$25 in additional benefits per line activated with new service. This is in addition to T-Mobile's Military ONE discounted program. Call 833-236-1769 and use Promo Code **DAV1**. Not available in stores. Offer only valid through June 30, 2019.



AirVan NorthAmerican, agent for NorthAmerican Van Lines, offers DAV members and their families special discounts on professional interstate moving services, storage in-transit, personal property protection coverage plans and moving supplies. To get a free estimate, call 1-800-532-9644.



To take advantage of these special offers and more, visit:
dav.org/membership/member-advantages

DAV receives \$10 for every new service line activated with Business Mobility Partners. This agreement between DAV and Business Mobility Partners runs through November 8, 2019.
DAV receives a royalty payment from NorthAmerican of 1% of the net line-haul of a DAV member's household goods move. The agreement between NorthAmerican and DAV runs through December 31, 2019.

Team America...

Pro Football Hall-of-Famer and DAV Ambassador LaDainian Tomlinson speaks with students from the Castleberry Independent School District at the Fort Worth VA Outpatient Clinic as part of his Team America Character & Leadership Initiative, which develops character and trains student leaders from grades 6–12, incorporating DAV community engagement at VA centers. “Serving others lays a cornerstone for future success because it helps instill sacrifice and empathy—both of which make a tremendous difference in the lives of those who are touched by your selflessness,” Tomlinson said. The students engaged with veterans throughout the facility, providing escort assistance and serving coffee and cookies to patients and their families. They also helped assemble care packages, worked on a clinic mural and posters, and assisted with preparations for National Salute to Veterans Month in February. The VA North Texas Health Care System was instrumental in putting on the event.



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

**Golf for a cause...**

From left: Frisch's Big Boy CEO Jason Vaughn and VP Bob Ritter presented Inspector General Ed Hartman with \$42,000 raised by Frisch's annual charity golf outing in Fairfield, Ohio. Frisch's has been supporting DAV for the past two years, providing funding to support DAV's mission to fulfill the promises to the men and women who served.

**Georgia members raise money for Camp Corral...**

DAV members from Chapters 10 and 18 in Augusta, Ga., banded together to raise funds for Camp Corral, a summer camp for the children of wounded, injured, ill or fallen military members. The team surpassed their goal of \$6,000, raising more than \$7,500 for the cause. Front row (from left): Chapter 18 Commander Patrick Walker, manager of the Augusta Golden Corral Mark Ogletree, Benjamin Ray, Linda Boudy and Earnest Dubose. Back row (from left): Ronald L. Holiday, Eddie L. Thomas, Alvin Floyd and Arthur Smith.

Virginia chapter recognized for volunteerism... DAV Chapter 10 in Fairfax, Va., received a Group Volunteer Award from the National Mall and Memorial Parks, a division of the National Park Service. In 2018, Chapter 10 cleaned the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial seven times with more than 80 volunteers and nearly 90 volunteer hours. **Below (from left):** Chapter 10 members Donald Judd, Gary Salpini, Tanya Culbert and Shane Liermann.



Above (from left): National Park Service Ranger and DAV member James Pierce, Chapter 10 Adjutant Shane Liermann, National Park Service Ranger Jason Cangelosi, National Park Service Ranger Patricia Trap and Projects Coordinator for the Trust for the National Mall John Whilden.

MOVE VETERANS FORWARD WITH A VEHICLE DONATION

Easy process. Free pick-up. Tax-deductible.



For more information, call or visit
dav.org/cars | 833-227-4328



Spirit of Minnesota...

National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst (right) contributed coins on behalf of DAV and National Commander Dennis Nixon to be melted down as part of The Spirit of Minnesota Tribute Bell. Sponsored by Wells Fargo, the Verdin Co. in Cincinnati cast the 255-pound bronze bell as part of a special tribute to past, present and future veterans. Metal veterans memorabilia were melted down to create the bell. The Spirit of Minnesota Tribute Bell will mount on a small trailer so it can travel across its namesake state, creating outreach and awareness opportunities for veterans and their families. The Minnesota Assistance Council for Veterans partnered to create and dedicate the monument.

Kids get to ‘Just B Kids’ at Camp Corral



Summer is around the corner, so it's time to register for Camp Corral through DAV's Just B Kids Scholarship program. DAV and Golden Corral are again teaming up to help provide a free, one-of-a-kind summer camp for children of wounded, ill, injured or fallen military service members or veterans.

Camp Corral, which has been helping kids be kids since 2011, provides fun-filled summer camp activities like swimming, horseback riding, canoeing and crafts that give kids a chance to relax, have fun and make new friends. Many campsites offer special resources to help children who share in their loved ones' sacrifices on behalf of our nation.

“DAV is proud to be a part of the Camp Corral experience and serving the children of those who have served,” said National Adjutant Marc Burgess. “Many military children have big responsibilities at home due to their loved ones' injuries, and Camp Corral gives them the opportunity to have a week of fun and sharing their experiences with other military children with the same background. Many of these children are away from military bases, so Camp Corral gives them the chance to meet others who share the same challenges of being in a military family.”

To sign up or to get more information, visit justbkids.org. Applications close once a camp is full or one month before the first day of each camp. ■

APPLY TODAY!

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

2019 **CAMP CORRAL** Schedule

DATES	LOCATION	CITY	STATE
June 9–14	Camp Twin Lakes at Will-a-Way	Winder	GA
June 9–15	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
June 16–21	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC
June 16–22	YMCA Camp Flaming Arrow	Hunt	TX
June 23–28	YMCA Camp Hanes	King	NC
	Triangle Y Ranch Camp	Oracle	AZ
June 30–July 5	Eastern 4-H Center	Columbia	NC
	YMCA Camp Gorham	Eagle Bay	NY
	YMCA Camp Carson	Princeton	IN
June 30–July 6	Camp Wood YMCA	Elmdale	KS
	YMCA Camp Manitou-Lin	Middleville	MI
July 7–12	4-H Memorial Camp	Monticello	IL
July 14–20	Camp Lakotah	Wautoma	WI
July 21–26	YMCA Camp Classen	Davis	OK
July 28–Aug. 2	YMCA Camp Wewa	Apopka	FL
	YMCA Camp Shady Brook	Deckers	CO
July 28–Aug. 3	Camp Fitch YMCA	North Springfield	PA
	YMCA Camp Loma Mar	Loma Mar	CA
Aug. 4–9	YMCA Camp Seymour	Gig Harbor	WA
	YMCA Camp Weaver	Greensboro	NC
Aug. 4–10	YMCA Camp Ernst	Burlington	KY



justbkids.org

REUNIONS

ARMY

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

June 6-9, St. Louis, MO, Contact: Tony Sparaco, Ph: 516-293-6219, Email: tony_sparaco@yahoo.com

1ST BATTALION, 40TH FIELD ARTILLERY July 28-

Aug. 2, Nashville, TN, Contact: James Bishop, Ph: 209-952-0535, Email: james@jabishop.com

1ST MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BATTALION (ARS),

U.S. ARMY VIETNAM May 9-11, Reno, NV,

Contact: Don Skinner, Ph: 503-648-6059, Email: dons@frontier.com

7TH SQUADRON, 17TH AIR CAVALRY RUTHLESS

RIDERS, PALEHORSE (VIETNAM & AFGHANISTAN)

Aug. 21-25, Fort Bragg, NC, Contact: Joe Wirth, Ph: 201-390-5350, Email: joseph.wirth@yahoo.com

205TH MP COMPANY May 1, Fort Leavenworth, KS,

Contact: Larry Grebe, Ph: 574-209-0273, Email: ldgrebe@gmail.com

542ND SIGNAL COMPANY, VIETNAM, ALL YEARS

March 19-21, Daytona Beach, FL, Contact: H. Harvey, Ph: 304-574-0417, Email: herbrv@yahoo.com

ARMY OCS REUNION AND HALL OF FAME

CELEBRATION, ALL BRANCH CLASSES SINCE 1941

April 28-May 1, Columbus, GA, Contact: Nancy Ionoff, Ph: 813-917-4309, Email: ocsalumni@ionoff.com, Web: ocsalumni.org

FIREBASE AIRBORNE 101ST AIRBORNE 2/501

INFANTRY, 2/319 & 2/11 ARTILLERY May 12-14,

Clarksville, TN, Contact: Gregory Bucknor, Ph: 773-731-0137, Email: ashaucoolbreeze@hotmail.com

RAKKASANS 3/187 REGIMENT, 101ST AIRBORNE

DIVISION May 13-18, Clarksville, TN, Contact: Tom

Martin, Ph: 856-332-7030, Email: tomsmail96@yahoo.com

TIGER FORCE 1/327 INFANTRY, 101ST AIRBORNE

DIVISION July 14-17, Puyallup, WA, Contact:

Kristin Evans, Ph: 253-312-7009, Email: kristinevans21032@comcast.net

VIETNAM VETERANS LINEHAUL REUNION April 30-

May 5, Pigeon Forge, TN, Contact: Hoss or Monica Taylor, Ph: 904-335-7402, Email: vietnam566th@yahoo.com

MARINES

ANGELICO MARINES (ALL YEARS) Oct. 3-6, Denver,

CO, Contact: Joe L. Luque, Ph: 661-725-3415, Email: jlluque@sbcglobal.net

NAVY

SWIFT BOAT SAILORS (CTF-115) VIETNAM 1965-1970

May 1-6, San Antonio, TX, Contact: Bob Barnett, Ph: 505-340-8715, Email: MCOPO.Barnett@gmail.com, Web: SwiftBoats.org

US NAVY MINESWEEPER MSO June 28-29, Kingsland,

GA, Contact: Tom Cenate, Ph: 904-860-4576

US NAVY SEABEES NMCB 3, VETERANS REUNION

ASSOCIATION Oct. 3-7, Tucson, AZ, Contact: Victor

Horvath SW 3, President, Ph: 832-722-9434, Email:

bigbuzzard@outlook.com

USS CONSERVER ARS-39 April 24-28, Branson, MO,

Contact: Kevin Weaver, Ph: 610-780-5484, Email:

kcvrdc@yahoo.com, Web: ussconserver.org

USS LITCHFIELD COUNTY (LST-901) Oct. 10-13,

Branson, MO, Contact: Don Lerche, Ph: 309-530-8710,

Email: donlerche@yahoo.com

USS MIDWAY CV-41, USS FRANKLIN ROOSEVELT

CV-42 AND USS CORAL SEA CV-43 (VETERANS AND/

OR CREW MEMBERS OF THE THREE SISTER

SHIPS) May 6-10, San Diego, CA, Contact: Tim Miller,

Ph: 619-942-2554, Web: ussmidway.net/home.html

USS NIMITZ (CVN-68) ASSOCIATION 22ND ANNUAL

REUNION May 5-10, Biloxi, MS, Contact: Bill Paschal,

Ph: 910-622-0518, Email: bpldousnret@gmail.com,

Web: ussnimitzassociation.org

USS PARK COUNTY (LST-1077) Oct. 10-13, Branson,

MO, Contact: Mike Kempf, Ph: 317-490-4229, Email:

m.w.kempf@sbcglobal.net

USS STEINAKER DD-863 April 25-28, Savannah, GA,

Contact: Ken Kohnen, Green Cove Springs, FL,

Ph: 904-654-7321, Email: ken.kohnen@yahoo.com,

Web: usssteinaker.org

USS SUTTER COUNTY (LST 1150) Oct. 10-13, Branson,

MO, Contact: Guy Simmons, Ph: 978-476-3895, Email:

guyosimmons@aol.com

AIR FORCE

43RD & 305TH BOMB WINGS (BUNKER HILL/GRISSOM

AIR RESERVE BASE-PERU, INDIANA) May 17-19,

Contact: Tom Jennings, Ph: 765-689-8011, Email:

director@grissomairmuseum.com

435TH OMS ENROUTE MX REUNION (RHEIN MAIN AB,

GERMANY) Oct. 9-13, Gatlinburg, TN, Contact:

Stan Miller, Email: flymiller@mindspring.com, Web:

classcreator.com/435thOMSENROUTE/435thOMSENROUTE/class_index.cfm

A TROOP, 2ND SQUADRON, 17TH CAVALRY, 101ST

AIRBORNE DIVISION ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

May 29-June 2, San Antonio, TX, discounted reservation

rate if you mention "Alpha Troop." Contact: Glen Veno,

Ph: 810-599-9999, Email: gveno36@comcast.net,

Web: alphatroopalumni.com

INQUIRIES

• Searching for anyone in Vietnam, 1963-1974, who has

Myasthenia Gravis. Trying to get Myasthenia Gravis on

the presumptive list for the VA. Contact Bob Cornell,

Ph: 865-228-0109, Email: bobcornell@msn.com.

• Searching for anyone assigned to the 6922nd security

wing (USAFSS), Building 850, Clark Air Base, Republic

of the Philippines, 1969-1970, who has knowledge

of Agent Orange (AO) being used on the inner and

outer perimeter of the compound. Contact Mike

Moore, P.O. Box 4672, Biloxi, MS 39535, Email:

mikesonba@gmail.com.

• Searching for anyone who was a patient with me at

Bethesda Hospital, Dec. 1969-Nov. 1970, and knew

Marine Sgt. Timothy Faust, Sgt. Steven Lowery or

Sgt. Daniel Cantrell. Contact George Full at

gefull1@windstream.net.

• Searching for anyone who served with Atkron VA 165

Skyraiders on the USS Oriskany, 1963-1964. Need

information regarding Humphrey, who flew during this

time. Contact Donald Grindstaff, Ph: 417-257-9967,

Email: dmbgrindstaff@centurylink.net.

• Searching for anyone who served aboard USS

Constellation CV-64 A-Division: Airplane, elevators,

machinery spaces, between 1966 and 1968. Contact

Raul Sanchez at 405-857-2476.

• Searching for Jim Parker who was in basic training at Fort

Knox, Ky., in the spring of 1966. At the time, Jim Parker

lived in Morgantown, Ind. We were both out of the 38th

Combat Aviation Brigade, Indiana National Guard

Cyclone Division out of Stout Field Indianapolis. Contact

David D. Hammond, Ph: 765-868-9187, Email:

hamm63@comcast.net.

• Searching for Beale AFB Crew Chief 1985-1987,

Sergeant Thomas E. Brokenshire. Contact Sgt. Lori

Sheres at lorie5115@gmail.com.

• Searching for anyone who was in boot camp with me for

a reunion of Parris Island, S.C., MCRD, Platoon 3013 in

July 1967. Contact Harry Hopwood, Ph: 352-543-6879,

Email: usmarineck@att.net.

• Searching for SHC Shirley Atkins who worked at the

Long Beach Naval Station Commissary in the early 1990s.

Contact Michael Quello at mydogdaffy@yahoo.com.

• Searching for any original members of the 633rd

Collection Classification and Salvage Company that

trained at Fort Hood, TX, and sailed from Oakland Army

Terminal to Vietnam on the General John S. Pope in

Sept. 1967. Contact James L. Crow, Ph: 405-596-8235,

Email: jlcrow@me.com.

• Searching for anyone who served with my brother Gene

Crawford while assigned to Fire Support Base Trooper,

"C" Troop, 2/1 Cav, in Vietnam Sept. 1969-Sept. 1970.

Contact Glenner Crawford at gmcwac73@gmail.com.

• Searching for classmates who attended Navy C-school,

"Air Conditioning & Refrigeration school" in San Diego,

CA on or about February through May 1995. Contact

Linda Roanhorse, Ph: 505-879-1512, Email:

lonesalt@hotmail.com.

• Searching for anyone who served with me in the 43CES

Andersen AFB Guam electrical shop, 1969-1971.

Contact Terry Bauer at trbauer2008@comcast.net.

• Searching for anyone who served with me in 47th Trans

Co., Long Bien, Vietnam, Aug. 1968-Sept. 1969, petro

main. Contact Auberay Smith at asmith@netzero.net.

• Searching for Barbara Roach who was stationed with

me at 3414th School Squadron, Kessler AFB, MS,

1979-1981. Contact Mike Moore, P.O. Box 4672, Biloxi,

MS 39535, Email: mikesonba@gmail.com.

• Searching for John Murphy who served with the

1st/321st F.A. at Fort Campbell, Ky., (101st Airborne

Division) in the fall of 1975. If anyone can help with

contacting John Murphy, contact John or Sandy

Murphy, Ph: 724-865-9085, Email: wika015@yahoo.com.

• Searching for family or anyone who knew Specialist 4 Ed

Smith, Recon (11 D 40) in D Troop, 1/9 Cavalry, 1st Cav

Division. Contact Bob Marshall, Ph: 248-328-6066,

Email: rcm3573@gmail.com.

REUNION NEWS

We welcome submissions from our readers for reunions and inquiries. Please mail them to DAV Magazine, 3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076, or submit them via email to feedback@dav.org. Please send reunions at least six months prior to the event.



A "sweet" partnership for veterans...

Chapter 23 members from Virginia, Minn., represented DAV on National Root Beer Float Day at the St. Louis County Fair. National Root Beer Float Day is the one day every year when A&W Restaurants offers free root beer floats across the country, with donations from the event benefiting DAV.

DAV 5K

RUN TO HONOR VETERANS



SANCHEZ, JOSE L.
USMC RETIRED

BECAUSE OF YOU,
we ran, walked and rolled
in 6 cities and raised
more than **\$850,000**
to assist veterans
nationwide.

THANK YOU!

National Sponsors



Local Sponsors



FOR THE MANY REASONS
YOU SERVED, *thank you.*

There are many reasons why you served, and our reason to serve is you. That's why USAA is dedicated to helping support DAV members and their families.



USAA is
Honored to Serve
Disabled American Veterans

USAA means United Services Automobile Association and its affiliates. The DAV receives financial support from USAA for this sponsorship. The agreement between USAA and DAV runs through June 20, 2020. © 2018 USAA. 247143-1018



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED



Veteran 1/4-Zip | \$38

Size: S-3XL



Front:
DAV logo
embroidered
on left chest



Stand Up for Women Veterans Shirt | \$20

Colors: Red, Gray

Unisex Size: S-2XL



Distressed Land of the Free Home of the Brave Shirt | \$18

Color: Silver | Size: S-3XL



Front: DAV logo
on left chest



Black Military Hat \$15

Lapel Pins | \$8 each

Made in the USA

DAV: Silver

Women Veterans: Silver or gold

*Pins are not actual size.



Place your order now at DAVSTORE.org