

From the AUXILIARY NATIONAL COMMANDER WILLIAM CRAIG JOHNIKEN



You've got a friend in the Auxiliary

As I close my year as your Auxiliary National Commander, I want to thank all of you who have made my journey possible. As the father and husband of disabled veterans, I've understood for decades the value of their service and sacrifices. For much of the time I was familiar with DAV, the Auxiliary was an exclusively female organization.

When it opened membership to men, I was honored to be among the first to join. I had no idea I would go on to help lead the Auxiliary or be the first to assume its highest post. But what I did know from my son and wife, is that there is a world of unmet needs for the Americans who sacrificed the most to protect our freedoms and ensure the prosperity of our country. Those needs extend to their survivors and families.

This year has been eye opening for me. I've learned so much from so many of you. I will cherish the memories and time spent with all of you.

I'm particularly proud to see the VA MISSION Act open up caregiver benefits to veterans wounded before 9/11. I was honored to represent the Auxiliary at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports

Clinic and the TEE (Training Exposure and Experience) Tournament.

I'm proud the Auxiliary will have greater involvement to help caregivers for the profoundly disabled veterans attending the TEE Tournament. That type of support, where DAV and the Auxiliary work hand-in-hand, is important to the health of both organizations. There are other ways we can work together to accomplish more. Auxiliary Junior membership is free and a great way to source help for DAV and Auxiliary events while teaching our youth valuable lessons about what service and sacrifice mean.

Nearly everyone is eligible for membership, and I'd encourage all DAV members to look into joining. That vote of confidence and your collaboration mean so much to those who, while they didn't serve, are passionate about supporting our nation's heroes.

I want to thank National Adjutant Pat Kemper for her support and leadership. I also want to thank my wife and family who have helped me along my journey. May God bless all of you, and may his light shine on all who share our valuable mission. You'll always have a friend in me.



A Mother's Day shower..

The VA New York Harbor Healthcare System hosted its first baby shower, held at the Brooklyn campus just before Mother's Day. The event was part of a Nationwide Baby Shower initiative sponsored by the VA Center for Women Veterans, Women's Health Services, VA Voluntary Service Program and the Office of Strategic Partnerships. DAV National 2nd Junior Vice Commander Donald Day (back row, center) attended to show support for the event on behalf of DAV, alongside Chapter 28 then-Commander Tom Ingram and DAV Auxiliary Unit 28 Adjutant Anita Ingram.