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**From the Desk of National Commander Linda Stake...**

Thank you so much National Adjutant Pat Kemper, National Assistant Adjutant Bunny Clos, National Officers, National Executive Committee members, National Chairmen, Past National Commanders, guest speakers, attending members and guests for a fantastic National Fall Conference. I hope everyone enjoyed themselves, gained a lot of knowledge and gathered many new ideas to take home to your state departments, units, and membership.

National Adjutant Pat and Assistant Adjutant Bunny, as State Department Adjutants know, it takes a lot of time, hard work and much stress to put a conference together. It is almost miraculous when it all comes together without too many glitches. You did it!

National Executive Committee members, you had many decisions to make and you all did a wonderful job getting business done.

National Chairmen, what wonderful programs we enjoyed. I received comments from many members saying that all programs were great. Thank you for all the hard work, thought, and creativity that went into each of

your programs. They were fun and meaningful. Past National Commanders, thank you so much for attending National Fall Conference. It is always great seeing you.

Attending members, I can't thank you enough for being there. It is members that make our organization successful. Because of you, it was a successful conference.

National Auxiliary Staff Ann Glende, what a great job of synchronizing the music and video effects for me! Thank you so much.

The DAV and DAV Auxiliary is the most wonderful military organization in the country for helping our disabled veterans and their families. We are "Partners Pulling Together." Our organization will continue to be the best as long as we have the necessary membership. I want to remind everyone to sign up at least seven members this year to make the organization one-million strong.

Again, thank you all for making this National Conference a memory I will always treasure.

**American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial**



It began in 1997, when prominent philanthropist Lois Pope contacted Jesse Brown, then Secretary of Veterans Affairs in the Clinton Administration, expressing a need for a memorial in Washington, DC, that would honor disabled veterans. Working together with Art Wilson, Past National Adjutant of the DAV, a memorial was designed to pay tribute to all disabled veterans, past, present, and future, who have served or will serve in our nation's military forces.

On October 5, 2014, the American Disabled for Life Memorial was dedicated to the National Parks Service for management, operation, maintenance, and preservation. Since then, thousands have visited this awe-inspiring and moving tribute. Recently, a virtual tour has become available for those who wish to view the memorial right from their own home. To view this virtual tour, please visit <http://www.avdlm.org/>.

**This memorial takes hours of commitment to clean and preserve the materials used. If an auxiliary in or around the Washington, DC, area would like to commit to establishing a program for juniors and their families to help with a monthly cleaning (summer months only), please contact national headquarters at 877.426.2838, option 5.**

## **Americanism** by Diane Franz, National Americanism Chairman

There was a question submitted during the National Fall Conference concerning the placing of Confederate flags on gravesites. After researching the issue the following information was found: There is a House bill—H.R.3007 - To amend title 38, United States Code, to prohibit the display of the Confederate battle flag in national cemeteries. This bill was introduced on July 9, 2015. No vote has been taken on this bill as of this date.

Also found this information: Under the Veterans Administration's National Cemetery Administration Directive 3220 the flag of the Confederate States of America is permitted to be flown on Memorial Day at national cemeteries administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Confederate flags are not permitted to be flown at national cemeteries administered by the U.S. Park Service, e.g., Gettysburg, nor are they permitted at national cemeteries administered by the Department of the Army, e.g., Arlington. The National Park Services policy (NPS Director's Order #61 and related reference manual) allows the Confederate flag to be displayed in some national cemeteries on two days of the year. If a state observes a Confederate Memorial Day, NPS cemeteries in the state may permit a sponsoring group to decorate the graves of Confederate veterans with small Confederate flags. Additionally, according to the NPS reference manual (p. 33), such flags may also be displayed on the nationally observed Memorial Day, to accompany the U.S. flag on the graves of Confederate veterans. In both cases, a sponsoring group must provide, place, and remove the flags as soon as possible after the end of the observance, all at no cost to the federal government. If your Unit wishes to place flags at a local cemetery, it would be strongly recommended that someone checks with the administration office of that cemetery with their policy.

Veterans Day on November 11<sup>th</sup> is the special day for us to thank our veterans for the sacrifices they have made preserving the freedom we enjoy. There are many businesses that are providing free lunches and/or dinners to our veterans and active military that can drive to those establishments. There may be a homebound veteran in your neighborhood, chapter, or community that might not be able to drive there, but would enjoy an occasion to dine with fellow veterans.

God bless our veterans, God bless America, and God bless all of you!

## **History**, by Joyce Humes, National History Chairman

I've been asked by National Commander Stake to be the 2015-2016 History Chairman. As all chairmen before me have done, I'm asking for you, the members of the DAV Auxiliary, to send pictures that you have taken, or will take, of events during the year that the Commander or her officers have attended.

I'm going to be taking pictures of all the national officers, the NEC's, and Alternate NEC's, and I would like pictures of all the state commanders if possible, and as many juniors as possible from all of the states.

This is a book for our Commander and her year in office is what will be covered. Help me make it a great one! My address is Joyce E. Humes, 9419 Stones River Dr., San Antonio, TX 78245. I can be reached at 210.673.7923 or by email at [jehumes@hotmail.com](mailto:jehumes@hotmail.com).

## **Hospital** by Theresa Grabowski, National Hospital Chairman

Hospital (non VA) service is activity performed at our general hospitals, nursing homes, rest homes, state hospitals, and soldiers homes to raise morale of the ill and depressed.

The holiday season is quickly approaching. Time to start making plans for activities at your facilities. Please check in advance for a date and what restrictions they might have.

There are so many exciting holidays coming up. Veterans Day (really important), Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Hanukah to name a few. I hope your members, including juniors, dressed up in costume on Halloween and gave the Veterans a treat. Veterans Day is so important because I think people concentrate on VA hospitals instead. Go greet the Veterans with a flag or treat, and thank them for their service. During Thanksgiving, check with the hospital or nursing home if they have any Veterans with no family and have dinner with them. Again for the December holidays, check with the hospital if there are any Veterans with no family and adopt them. Take a few gifts and spend one meal with them. You can't imagine how much this would mean to them. Again before any of these activities check with the Administrator.

In making gift bags for our Veterans, they can always use socks, lap blankets, t-shirts, sweat pants or writing materials.

In closing if anyone has questions or you have an idea for an activity you would like to share please contact me at [Terry.Grabowski@avon.com](mailto:Terry.Grabowski@avon.com). Hope to hear from you.

## Chaplain's Corner by Aura-Lee Nicodemus, National Chaplain

**T**-Take time to reflect on the things you are thankful for. Count your blessings.

**H**-Help others—the joy and experiences will give you special memories that you will be thankful for. Whether at the VA, in your community or driving the DAV van you can make a difference. Our Veterans and their family need you!!

**A**-Ask for help when you need it—others will be thankful they can be there for you. Often when I am helping feed a homeless person, I ask them to help me to eat the excess food I bought. Everyone likes to feel they are helping.

**N**-National leaders need to have your prayers and appreciation for their work. Take time to thank those who represent you at all levels when they respond in a positive manner to what you have asked of them.

**K**-Know the resources in your community to help others—sometimes the needs are greater than your individual or unit resources. Dialing 211 often provides a comprehensive list of resources that can help with a variety of problems.

**S**-Share: whether a meal, your time or clothing you no longer use, you will be thankful you did. Remember socks, hats, gloves and warm clothing are always needed at your local shelters and count towards Community Service.

**G**—"Give to yourself as equally as you give to others." (Quote from Della Wilbers life coach/Fall conference presenter) - an invaluable reminder on the importance of self-care.

**I**-Ingenuity-Share your ideas—everyone has something to share.

**V**-Volunteers are always needed.

**I**-Inspire others to serve—if you have been a long time leader—can you mentor another member to learn your job while you are there to support them. Can you encourage a new member to lead out on a project.

**N**-Needs of others should always be remembered at this time of year. Whether the local food bank, homeless shelter or elderly or young neighbors, you can make a difference. For a young family coming home to a home-made meal that you provided or on Thanksgiving is there a neighbor who doesn't have Thanksgiving dinner? Many people need your thoughtful gestures.

**G**-Grateful—Be grateful for the little things as well as the big ones.

**THANKSGIVING**-A time to be thankful for our blessings, spend time with those we love and share our blessings.

### 2015 Fall Conference Donations

Service Support Fund ~ \$3,385  
Education Scholarship Fund ~ \$3,000  
Camp Corral ~ \$2,084  
Winter Sports Clinic ~ \$400

Freedoms Foundation ~ \$245  
Hospitalized Veterans Writing Project ~ \$175  
Banquet Escort Raffle ~ \$567  
*Thank you for your generosity!*

## Junior Activities by Darlene Spence, National Junior Activities Chairman

Greetings parents and all sponsors. As we approach the holiday season our thoughts usually turn to the significance of family and family activities. Like so, our junior members are an important part of the DAVA family just like they are an important part of our own individual families. They are the next generation and we must find

ways to engage and encourage them to stay active in our units.

**WE MUST REMEMBER IT'S ALL ABOUT OUR JUNIORS.**

Together we have a vast inventory of experience and knowledge related to volunteerism and activities involved in the care of our veterans and their families. We must:

- Share our experience and knowledge with each other and our juniors;
- Be honest with them;
- Lead by example, teaching our junior members how to be compassionate and sensitive towards the needs of others;

- Allow them to participate in planning projects;
- Remember to add cheerful and fun activities in the junior's program; and,
- Stay in-touch with me and the other units so that we can share ideas. Please have the juniors in your unit contact me through national headquarters at [dava@dav.org](mailto:dava@dav.org) or assist them with contacting me.

*Hi Juniors, hope you are enjoying each day, having new adventures and sharing your thoughts with your sponsors and your parents or guardians. I am excited to be working with you and need your input for planning volunteer projects and fun time activities. Also I would love to hear some of the incredible things you are doing. Make sure you email me at [dava@dav.org](mailto:dava@dav.org) and we can share information and some fun ideas. If you would like to speak to me personally, please let the staff at national headquarters know by calling 859.442.2099 and I will contact you. There may even be a surprise waiting for you when you contact me. I look forward to hearing from you.*





Making a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

## DAV and DAV Auxiliary—Partners Pulling Together

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National Headquarters will be closed November 11 in honor of Veterans Day. Please remember to take the opportunity to say thank you to the men and women who served and are serving.



The headquarters office will also be closed November 26-27, for Thanksgiving. From our family to yours, we wish you a joyous and blessed Thanksgiving. Please remember those who cannot be with their families and those serving our country.

### VAVS by Nancy Mooney, National VAVS Representative

Fall in New England is a beautiful season with the leaves turning their warm hues of gold, red, and orange. This is a perfect time to reflect on what has been and to look toward the future and what can be and how to make it happen.

After reviewing many Annual Joint Review forms, there is a common concern that more volunteers are needed at our VA Medical Centers. It is understandable that due to the passage of time some of our volunteers are starting to slow down or just don't have the health to continue to serve as a volunteer in the VA system. Since our VAVS program is an important aspect of DAVA's service to our veterans in the VA Medical Centers, let's explore some avenues of recruitment opportunities to replace those volunteers who can no longer give of their time to hospitalized veterans.

Remember to invite your family, friends, and neighbors to activities at the VA where they will experience firsthand how good it feels to see the pleasure the veterans get by our being there. Surely this will get someone to become a volunteer. Don't forget to go out in the community—anyone in the com-

munity can become a volunteer under our sponsored volunteer program. Chambers of Commerce have monthly meetings where local business and other organizations meet, e.g. Lions Club, Rotary Club, Moose Lodges, Kiwanis Club, Knights of Columbus, Masons, Business Women's clubs, and Legal Associations. Request an opportunity to make a short presentation and ask if anyone is interested in volunteering at the local VA Medical Center. Look at the youth community by attending a meeting at 4-H Clubs, Girl Scouts & Boy Scouts, Recreation Centers, Schools, after school programs, and youth fellowship groups at churches and ask them to become volunteers. Make a flyer that requests volunteers and distribute it to all local churches.

I believe if we pursue these suggestions our VA Medical Centers will have new volunteers falling in like the fall leaves from the trees here in New England!

**REMEMBER DAVA VA VOLUNTEERS ARE: VITAL, GIFTED, CARING, CREATIVE, DEDICATED, AND MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR OUR VETERANS WHENEVER THEY VOLUNTEER AT ANY VA FACILITY.**

### Community Service by Lynn Prosser, National Community Service Chairman

Fall Conference!!! Did it just end... OR... Did it just BEGIN??? If you were there, I hope you got excited about our future plans to build the largest, most productive veterans Auxiliary that has ever existed. Pass that excitement and those great ideas you heard along to your members. Get those DAV Chapter members onboard too. No matter how young or old, YOU can make a difference. Volunteering your time will improve and bless your life. Reach out in your communities and bring love, hope, comfort and peace to others. Just look inside your heart and you will find, "A Hero Lies in You!!!"

Got a nice warm coat that you never wear??? How about those sweaters??? Baking cookies??? Make a few extra for your elderly neighbor or maybe that single parent and his/her children. Going to the grocery store??? Pick up a few extra cans of veggies and drop them off at the local food pantry. How about your homeless shelters!!! Start collecting those hotel comfort items: shampoos, conditioners, lotions, toothpaste, etc. Maybe you could afford to purchase socks, tee shirts, scarves, gloves and even underwear... Visit a nearby nursing home and ask how your unit can help! Volunteer to make decorations; bows, flags and flowers, etc., during a patriotic or holiday celebration. Get some of those members that sing in their church choirs to prepare a sing-along with hymns, folk music or seasonal holiday songs. Be sure to invite your talented DAV Chapter members. There is not an end to the list... All chapters and units should embrace and engage DAV Auxiliary Commander Stake's theme, "Partners Pulling Together!!!"

I asked that all state and unit officers go that extra mile to educate, encourage and help members to begin logging their volunteer hours, miles and monies for annual reports. Annual reports are available on the National Auxiliary website and copies for each member would be a great tool and guide. We are a service organization and your reports can prove that we are "America Strong."