

# DAV Auxiliary Headquarters News



3725 Alexandria Pike, Cold Spring, KY 41076 | November 2018



## Please Note:

DAV Auxiliary National Headquarters will be closed on Thursday, November 23, and Friday, November 24, in observance of Thanksgiving.

Please remember to keep those who cannot be with their families, including military members and community heroes, in your thoughts and prayers.

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## From the Desk of National Commander Ellen Timmerman



Veterans Day is a day of remembrance and acknowledgement of what our veterans and their families have sacrificed to keep our freedoms.

I had the opportunity to talk with caregivers recently and we spent some time discussing the “Caregivers Initiative Program.” After asking for their input on ways to enhance the program and ideas for the future of the program, those who are unable to leave their veteran offered some ideas that would be of great help to caregivers and would only require the gift of time. They’d like having someone to talk to, or an opportunity to go to lunch and have someone stay with their veteran while they are out. Mostly, they just would like someone to come and visit with them or call.

I know the only way we have of finding out who the caregivers are in our communities is dependent upon someone stepping up and providing the contact information. Did we ever stop and think that maybe one of our members is no longer attending meetings because they need to be at home with their veteran? Maybe we need to take the time to find out. I would like to challenge our members to take the time to form a committee of volunteers to see if there are caregivers in your area in need of a friend to talk to. You could share this with your members and arrange a schedule for regular visits or calls to the caregivers. It’s just an idea to consider, because at some point in our life we may all become caregivers to some extent.

With the holidays coming up, it is a good time to remember not only our families, but also our extended DAV and Auxiliary family. It’s a very busy time for all of us, but it is also time we usually try to give a little more. I would like to wish all of you Happy Thanksgiving.

**Together, we can get it done. Keep up the good work!**  
**God bless each of you for all that you do to help Veterans and their families.**

## Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit by Diane Franz, Natl. Mae Holmes Chairman

The Mae Holmes National Outstanding Unit Report is the easiest report to complete. The information from the report will already be completed on the other program reports. All that has to be done is to have those reports in hand and transfer the figures to the Mae Holmes Outstanding Unit report.

It’s like putting a puzzle together. You have all the pieces to place in the correct positions and viola, you have the picture together! Please make sure you use the updated form for 2018-2019, as there has been a change. And follow the directions carefully. There are so many projects, donations, and legislation that your unit has done during the membership year. Keep accurate records so the Auxiliary can be recognized for all the efforts that benefit veterans, their families, and community.

## National Fall Conference Follow-Up

During the recent National Fall Conference, many members had questions regarding Tricare Dental and DIC. DAV National Adjutant Marc Burgess has provided the following response to those questions:

### **Q: What actions are or should be taking place to extend the time limits for families of disabled veterans to use education benefits?**

Under current law a spouse or surviving spouse has a 10 year eligibility period for Chapter 35 educational benefits. The 10 year period begins the date the veteran is determined to be service connected, total and permanent; or the date the veteran died of a service connected disability. DAV members adopted Resolution No. 162 at the most recent national convention, which seeks enactment of legislation that would eliminate the delimiting date for spouses and surviving spouses to utilize their Chapter 35 benefits.

This issue is ripe for DAV Auxiliary action! While DAV's legislative staff has been trying to gain interest in this matter in Washington DC, it isn't clear to Congress that their constituents have a concern about this issue. Auxiliary members could organize and personally approach their members of Congress in home offices, requesting they champion this particular issue and introduce legislation. This is a perfect issue and legislative goal for the Auxiliary to take ownership of—and advocate for—and DAV's legislative department in Washington is ready to assist in identifying potential Congressional champions in the House and Senate.

### **Q: What actions are or should be taking place to increase DIC rates?**

In November 2017 and October 2018, a DAV CAN call to action was deployed to support S. 1990, the *Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017*. If enacted, this legislation would increase the DIC base rate, as well as allow a surviving spouse to remarry while maintaining their benefits and ease the 10-year rule for DIC eligibility. On August 1, 2018, DAV submitted testimony to the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee conveying our strong support for S. 1990. The bill unfortunately has not advanced out of Committee. Again, this issue is right in the middle of the Auxiliary's lane and an organized advocacy effort could make a real difference in whether or not S. 1990 gains support from necessary members of Congress.

## **VAVS** by Melissa Pierce, National VAVS Chairman

WOW! Fall Conference has come and gone, and I hope a great time was had by all who attended – I know it was for me. Fall Conference this year was full of learning, bonding with members, and new experiences. It was great to see the record-breaking crowd who came together to learn more about how we, the DAV Auxiliary, could work together to serve Veterans and their families!

For those who were unable to attend Fall Conference this year, I wanted to share a little about my program. I admit, I struggled with it this year. Ever since I was asked to be VAVS Representative I knew I wanted to center my program around the VAVS PSA's that came out last October on "What's Your Why?" I put together a skit, trashed it, wrote something else, trashed it, etc. – I didn't know what I was going to do, nothing "felt" right. Not until about two weeks before Fall Conference.

Once again, I had the privilege to play a key role in the National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament. I was touched by so many of the Veterans attending, but one stood out. I have watched this Veteran grow over the last few years from withdrawn and not willing to try new things to really blossoming. He was actively participating in everything he could, social, and helpful to others. This Veteran has a spinal cord injury and doesn't have the use of one arm/ hand and extremely limited use of the other. He was climbing rock walls, riding horses, golfing, and riding the adaptive bikes. He was glowing! We hung out quite a bit with each other, laughing, joking, and sharing stories about each other's lives. On one of the last days, he pulled me aside and told me he had a present for me. He gave me a card with a painting that he had done by holding a paintbrush in his mouth and thanked me for being his friend. Inside the card he welcomed me to his world and explained how his painting helps him to forget his disability. Yes, the one who never cries, teared up at this moment. And then it hit me – that's my why, or at least one of them. It's the hugs, laughter, smiles, tears. It's the Paul's, Jeff's, Kristine's, Pam's, and all the rest of the Veterans that I have the honor of interacting with once a week, once a month, or once a year.

I encourage you all to discover what the purpose, cause, or belief is that inspires you to do what you do. When you think, act and communicate your "why," you can inspire others. Most people live their lives by accident, meaning we live as it happens. Fulfillment comes when we live our lives on purpose. Everyone has a reason why they volunteer? Ask yourself—"What's Your Why?"

## Americanism by Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, National Americanism Chairman

Thanksgiving is a national holiday that dates back to the early history of the Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay colonies. In 1621, the Plymouth colonists and Wampanoag Indians shared an autumn harvest feast that is acknowledged today as one of the first Thanksgiving celebrations in the colonies. For more than two centuries, days of thanksgiving were celebrated by individual colonies and states. It wasn't until 1863, during the Civil War, that President Abraham Lincoln proclaimed a national day of "Thanksgiving and Praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens."

Over time the holiday has lost much of its religious significance. Today, many Americans equate Thanksgiving with family, a good meal, and the beginning of the Holiday shopping season. However, as DAV Auxiliary members, it is important to make our Thanksgiving Day about more than eating turkey and shopping.

Do not simply **say** thank you, **be** thankful. Being thankful requires one to truly acknowledge how your life has been positively impacted by the person, organization, or the event you are recognizing. Allow me to give some personal examples:

- Say thank you to all the men and women who have served, continue to serve, and will serve in our armed forces. Remind them that their strength and courage enables us to live in a country that values freedom, individuality, and equality.
- Say thank you to the veterans who became disabled or injured while in service. Their sacrifice for our country creates opportunities for all of us to give back through volunteerism.
- Say thank you to the caregivers, both paid and unpaid. They enable veterans with disabilities to continue to be contributing members of their communities.
- Say thank you to the members of DAV and DAV Auxiliary. Their enthusiastic support of veterans and their families has created a community that I am proud to be part of.
- Say thank you to the future members of the DAV and DAV Auxiliary. Their membership will ensure that future generations of veterans and their families will continue to receive much needed support.

Now, take a moment and consider what you are thankful for. As you count your blessings on Thanksgiving Day, I hope that the DAV Auxiliary and its ideals are among them.

### Caregiver Support Program Enrollment Timeline

P.L. 115-182, the VA MISSION Act of 2018, authorizes VA to expand its Comprehensive Caregiver Support Program to veterans severely injured before September 11, 2001. However, **before expansion can begin**, VA must certify it has the required Information Technology (IT) system in place to support and efficiently manage the program **and** issue regulations detailing when and how the expansion process will proceed.

The law allows for a two-phase expansion of eligibility to participate in the VA Comprehensive Caregiver Support Program. The first phase would expand the program's eligibility to those caregivers of veterans severely injured on or before May 7, 1975. Subsequently, the second eligibility expansion phase would open participation to caregivers of veterans severely injured between May 8, 1975 and September 10, 2001.

DAV will continue to engage VA and Congress working towards the timely expansion of this program and ensure members are informed of pertinent progress being made. Until such expansion occurs, find out about existing VA caregiver supports [here](#).

### TRICARE Dental & Vision Plan Changes

Military retirees and their families will have access to dental and vision benefits under the Federal Employees Dental and Vision Insurance Program (FEDVIP), as the TRICARE Retiree Dental Program (TRDP) will end on December 31, 2018.

Eligible beneficiaries **must take action to enroll** during the 2018 Federal Benefits Open Season in order to secure dental and/or vision coverage beginning on January 1, 2019. Enrollment in FEDVIP is not automatic for those previously enrolled in TRDP.

Open Season for enrollment runs from Nov. 12 to Dec. 10 for 2019 coverage.

There are 15 dental plan choices available across the program with at least 10 dental plan choices available to each potential enrollee. There are 8 vision plan choices available to all potential enrollees.

Click [here for more information](#) or click [here to enroll](#).

Follow us on Social Media for news and information on the DAV Auxiliary.



## **Newly Revised Bylaw Books**



The newly revised DAV Auxiliary Constitution and Bylaw books are now available!

Please remember the bylaw books change from year to year, and members are encouraged to always have the most recent copy available for questions or concerns.

The books are \$2.00 each, plus shipping and handling, and will be available through Halo. To place an order, visit [www.davstore.org](http://www.davstore.org), or contact them at 1-800-468-4332.

A digital version is available [online](#).

## **Membership** by Lynn Helms Prosser, National Membership Chairman

DAV Auxiliary National Fall Conference in Lexington, KY, was amazing!!! There was a record-breaking number of attendees and first timers, and all the Chairman presented educational and entertaining skits. I want to thank all my volunteers that helped at the membership table and everyone that participated in signing up new life and junior life members. Congratulations to the winners of the membership drive incentive during the conference. Members recruited over 120 new members. Also, a BIG thank you to National Adjutant Pat Kemper and her staff for their hard work and creativity. They continue to raise the bar of excellence in all areas for an enjoyable, successful conference!!!

Membership is the backbone of our organization and I challenge you to get on board for our 2018-2019 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE!!! It is important to know and discuss our incentives at your unit and state meetings. Members are encouraged to always carry a membership application with them and be able to explain our purpose and benefits offered through membership. Many of you will be assisting during the Golden Corral Military Appreciation Days and taking part in Veterans Day events. Embrace this time to let veterans and their families know that the DAV and Auxiliary offers endless ways to improve their lives.

Please make sure you have the updated applications that includes Junior Life Membership and use care filling out all lines, especially the date of birth!

Remember, there are a variety of incentives for recruitment. Start a junior life membership with \$20 down, and be entered to win \$50. Recruit one new paid senior member with \$20 down, and be entered to win one of two \$300 cash prizes. Every 15 new paid senior life members recruited through June 30, 2019, will receive one entry to win one of two \$300 cash prizes. All applications must have the incentive code **441** to qualify.

“Together, we can get it done!” Thank you for your dedication. May God bless and always keep us “America Strong!”

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### **S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Act of 2017**

Last year Senator Jon Tester, Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017, which would:

- Correct the disparity between Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) rates for veterans' survivors and the rates provided to federal civilian employees' survivors, by increasing the base rate equal to 55 percent of the rate of compensation paid to a totally disabled veteran.
- Replace, with a graduated scale, the current rule that states certain survivors are only eligible for DIC when the veteran's service-connected disability had been rated as totally disabling for at least 10 years immediately before death. This bill would change that rule so that if a veteran is rated as totally disabled for five years and dies, a survivor would be eligible for 50 percent of the total DIC benefits increasing the 10-year threshold and the maximum DIC amount is awarded.
- Make the DIC program consistent with other federal survivor benefit programs by reducing the age allowed for a surviving spouse to remarry and maintain their benefits from 57 to 55.

If enacted, this bill would fulfill one of DAV's legislative goals in accordance with Resolution No. 036, approved by our members during our most recent National Convention.

As the end of the 115th Congress rapidly approaches, we urge you to take part in this final push to pass this legislation using the prepared e-mail to request that your Senators support S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act of 2017.

Thank you for all you do for ill and injured veterans, their families and survivors. [Take action now!](#)