

DAV Auxiliary Headquarters News



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



Quota Achieved!

Congratulations to the following State Departments for making 2018-2019 Quota!

Alabama
Nevada

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From the Desk of National Commander Ellen Timmerman

We are an organization of people who volunteer. At this time of year, our personal time can be very limited with the expectations not only that others put on us but also those we put on ourselves. The holidays can be very difficult for so many reasons, but especially if you are alone. I want to encourage everyone to take a moment to say hello or just smile at another person. This friendly acknowledgment can go a long way to make someone's day just a little better, even if only for a moment, and it doesn't cost you anything.

Please pray for all who put themselves in harm's way keeping us safe, and for those who have suffered and are still suffering through all of the tragedies that have occurred.

Take a moment for yourself and reflect on what you have done this past year. If you have made even one person's life a little better, whether they are a veteran, a caregiver, or just someone you passed on the street, you have accomplished something very special.

From my family to yours, we want to wish everyone a wonderful holiday season.

**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.**

VAVS by Melissa Pierce, National VAVS Chairman

Season's Greetings! I got my Christmas present early this year! One of the best things about being the VAVS Representative is getting to see, and read, the AJR's (Annual Joint Reviews.) It is inspiring and encouraging to see what our members are doing for Veterans at their local VA's. The activities are endless – from hosting bingo and movie nights, to donations of clothing and hygiene items, providing coffee and snacks to patients, and more! I encourage all to keep up the great work!

Amid all the positive, there seems to be one recurring issue – the decline in volunteers and volunteer hours. It is a universal problem for many of us. We need to find new ways to draw members into the VA system and get them involved in volunteering. Times have changed, and we need to explore new ways of volunteering. This doesn't necessarily mean committing to a certain number of hours every week or month; it can be as simple as getting members involved in special events. I challenge you to brainstorm ideas at your next unit meeting and see what you can come up with. If your unit is having success, please share your ideas to help others.

Another positive is the quarterly minutes I receive. The VAVS committees are doing marvelous things at their local VA's. Not everyone is doing exactly the same thing and not every VA needs exactly the same thing, but have the opportunity to see the variety of activities is awesome. With these quarterly minutes, I also receive attendance records. While I know that not everyone can always attend every meeting, it is important for the organization to have someone there. Our Representatives and their Deputies are vital not only to have representation at the facility, but in the sharing of information with our units. If these reps and depts are not there, how are we, as an organization, to know how best we can assist our VA's? As the Representative, please make sure you are attending these meetings or asking your Deputy to go if you are unable. If there is an issue, please let your state department know so they can work to find a solution, or, if necessary, appoint a new Representative or Deputy.

Legislative by Darlene Spence, National Legislative Chairman

Why so much emphasis on legislative activities? I heard this question asked several times at the DAV and DAVA National Convention in Reno, NV, and at the National Fall Conference in Lexington, KY. After returning home from Fall Conference I began to think about how I would respond to the question. Consequently, two things came to mind: the quote, "Legislation is one of the most important instruments of government in organizing society and protecting citizens," and the saying, "Educate, Agitate, Legislate."

Beginning with education, I encourage reviewing and sharing with each unit resources that may be beneficial in helping ascertain the importance of legislative action as it relates to the welfare of Veterans and their families. Additionally, it may be helpful to state reasons why voicing supportive opinions by communicating with our legislature plays an important role in the legislative process. To this end, the following information is shared.

The DAV Publication, "The Legislative Process and You," found on the DAV website, provides an understanding of how an item of legislation is created from beginning to end. The "Help DAV Advocate" section at www.dav.org outlines important bills supported by DAV and DAV Auxiliary and for which our individual support is solicited. Reviewing the bills at this site gives information that is beneficial when preparing to communicate with our elected officials.

The website www.congress.gov provides an overview of the legislative process that includes videos as well as a transcript of the overview. As we educate, we prepare our members to educate and encourage the public to become more involved in the support of legislative activities that promote the health, welfare and well-being of veterans and their families. In conjunction with the education process, please don't forget to encourage participation in the Commanders Action Network by going to www.dav.org/can.

Although we continue the education process, we are now prepared, as the saying goes to "Practice Positive Agitation" of our elective officials through communications that include but are not limited to, one-on-one communications, participation in town hall meetings, writing, calling, sending e-mails, and/or contact via selective social media. Last, but not of the least importance, communications are a reminder that we vote! These communications are to encourage our elected officials to support or even sponsor bills that are in the best interest of Veterans and their families.

Take a deep breath or maybe more than one because our activities are just beginning. As Bills are passed and become law, we must be attentive to assure that the rights of Veterans are upheld. In addition, we must identify and work in areas of support such as volunteering, providing transportation, visiting and listening, finding ways to fight homelessness, donating to the veterans' hotlines and even just offering a kind word like "thank you."

We must continue to be consistently involved in our country's legislative activities in order to assure availability of safety, appropriate health care, jobs, child care, housing, financial support and other means that support the welfare of veterans and their families. If we do not continue to voice the needs of our veterans through communications with the legislature, as is a right given to us by the first legislative process, our constitution, the past work of the Auxiliary will have been in vain.

As I have been given the honor and privilege, by which I am deeply humbled, to serve as DAV Auxiliary 2nd Junior Vice Commander and Legislative Chairman, I pledge to work to assure support of legislative activities that protect the welfare of Veterans and their families. Please remember that legislative success depends on our unified voices. **Legislation is a lasting change!**

Caregiver Initiative Program by Melissa Pierce, National Caregiver Initiative Program Chairman

The Auxiliary Caregiver Initiative program is more than just our unique opportunity to support the National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament Caregiver program – it is our need and desire to start at home and reach out to the caregivers in our own backyards. As members of the DAV Auxiliary, I think we are in a special position when it comes to caregivers. I believe most of us are, have been, or personally know someone who is a Veteran caregiver. My mother was one of those caregivers for my father. She had it easier than most caregivers – even with him being a double amputee – he was for the most part self-sufficient. She also had a strong family and friend network, including myself, who could give her breaks, drive him around, etc. Not all caregivers have this luxury. Look around your units, your contacts, your friends – find those caregivers and offer to sit with their Veteran while they run errands, go shopping or maybe get a manicure. Offer to run small errands for them, bring them a meal, or offer to take them out for coffee and socializing. It doesn't have to be anything major; it's the little things that will mean the most.

As the days grow shorter and the darkness seems to fall earlier, let yourself be the light in someone else's world.

Membership by Lynn Helms Prosser, National Membership Chairman

Christmas holidays are near and what better gift to give than a membership in the DAV Auxiliary. Do you know this is a gift that will keep giving for a lifetime? Whether it's a Senior Life Membership or Junior Life Membership, the gift will be PRICELESS!

EDUCATE, EDUCATE, EDUCATE YOURSELVES! As a current member, it all starts with YOU. The DAV Auxiliary provides multiple areas of support for veterans and their families and this includes you. Do you know about our VA Voluntary Services that assists our hospitalized injured or ill veterans and offers support for their families? Also, the National DAV Transportation Program, community services for our needy veterans and their families, DAV National Service Officers (provides free assistances to all veterans, widows and orphans needing to apply for benefits), and our Americanism programs to show our true Patriotic Pride and teach our children about America's true heroes? Do you know about our various business partners that provide huge discounts to our DAV and DAV Auxiliary members like Ford Motor Company, T-Mobile, USAA, Walgreens, Mobility Roadside Assistance, and Identity Guard? This is just the tip of your membership benefits. I hope by now you get it, so please share it.

GIVE A GIFT OF ENDLESS LOVE AND SUPPORT—A DAV AUXILIARY LIFE MEMBERSHIP! WELCOME TO OUR FAMILY!!!

We will be having the drawings in a few weeks for our membership incentive program. I hope your name as a sponsor will be eligible for a chance to win! Please contact National DAV Auxiliary Headquarters if you need membership applications (remember code 441), DAV Auxiliary brochures or have questions.

As we enjoy the Christmas and New Year celebrations, please remember those less fortunate. Volunteering your time and talents will be greatly appreciated by those in need. I hope and pray that you and your family will have a safe and blessed holiday. May love, joy, and peace fill your hearts and homes, and may God bless and keep us "America Strong!"

Community Service by AnnMarie Hurley, National Community Service Chairman

Having returned a while back from our National Fall Conference in Kentucky, and seen the positive response to our skit on Community Service, I am more excited than ever to be the chairman for this program that, I believe, we all participate in whether we are aware of it or not. Every time one of us helps a neighbor, becomes involved in a community, school, church or local event, or any worthwhile purpose, we are participating in Community Service.

I asked the conference attendees to be more aware of their service than I was. For four years, I volunteered one day a week at the Brockton Small Claims Court as a mediator. In this instance, I was performing Community Service. Yet, the DAV Auxiliary never received any credit for the many hours I volunteered because I never reported them. Be smarter than I was and keep a record of your service for the end-of-year reports which asks for numbers in *miles, hours, donations by unit checks, value of all other donations, and cash donations from members*.

Recently, an officer in the Department of Ohio told me they submit monthly reports at their unit meetings on service. That makes preparing the end-of-year reports a simple, not a daunting, task for units. Massachusetts has always done well with their annual end-of-year reports, but not every unit participates. If every unit in the country kept good records and submitted their numbers, the Auxiliary's hours of service would probably increase dramatically.

There are six categories of Community Service: *Family Services, Facility Visits, Professional and Trade Services, General Services to the Community, Recreation and Entertainment, and Special Projects and Programs*.

As we head into the holidays, there are even more opportunities for Community Service: Church and Community programs to provide gifts for children and families in need and donations to food banks, among others. A few years back, a neighbor put up a notice in our condo lobby asking neighbors to buy a gift for a child, wrap it, and she'd deliver the gifts to the local fire department for their program. She loaded her SUV two times with presents.

See what you can do. Working on Community Service will make you feel good. I loved buying toys for the first time in years. Both you and the recipient will feel good about yourselves, and there will be smiles around.

Please note— DAV Auxiliary National Headquarters will be closed on Monday, December 24, through Wednesday, December 26, in observance of Christmas.

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

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, or contact them at 1-800-468-4332.

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

Americanism by Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, National Americanism Chairman

Most people know the religious meaning behind Christmas Day. But, did you know that the reason it was designated a Federal Holiday has little to do with religious traditions?

It turns out that Ulysses S. Grant declared Christmas a legal holiday in 1870. The legislation also included holidays like the Fourth of July and New Year's Day. According to congressional records, the law was instigated by bankers and business men who wanted certain holidays to be formalized. The language of the bill makes it clear that Congress chose dates commonly celebrated as holidays by the American people, not for religious reasons, but because of a history of recognition and celebration on those dates.

They did not deny religious association with the date December 25. But the religious association with this day was not the reason behind proposing it is as a holiday. The law simply recognized that certain days in the year are commonly celebrated. Federal employees, overall, would greatly benefit from having these days built in as holidays. (*Rienzi, Mark L, "Secular Reasons to Mark Religious Days", New York Times, February 17, 2013*)

It is quite astonishing that a government can recognize a holiday that has religious significance to some, without mandating any one particular observance. Veterans have sacrificed to protect Americans and our way of life. During this holiday season, let's also pay tribute to the radical thinkers and leaders who created the foundations of our freedoms.

National Commander Timmerman's Testimonial Dinner



The testimonial weekend for National Commander Ellen Timmerman will be held at the Ramada Plaza by Wyndham Albuquerque Midtown located at 2020 Menaul Blvd. NE, Albuquerque, New Mexico. There will be a reception on Friday, April 26, with hoer devours and a cash bar beginning at 6:00 p.m. The testimonial dinner will be held on Saturday, April 27, with a cash bar and doors opening at 6:00 p.m. Dinner reservations are due no later than April 1. Checks should be made payable to Timothy Timmerman and mailed to 5508 Foothills Dr., Farmington, NM 87402. Please earmark checks

"Testimonial Dinner," and **include** your meal selection of chicken marsala or flank steak. Dress for both events is casual.

Hotel reservations are due no later than April 5, 2019, and rates are \$84.00 per night, plus applicable taxes. Complimentary airport shuttle, as well as shuttles for excursions around Albuquerque, are available through the hotel front desk. Hotel rates include complimentary hot breakfast, two drinks per guest per evening in the hotel lounge, complimentary Wi-Fi and parking.

DAV and DAV Auxiliary Legislative Engagement

We recently learned that because of the efforts of DAV and DAV Auxiliary members, the recent DIC alert was fifth among alerts in 2018 generating emails to congress. We are the key to making these important changes for veterans and their families, and your efforts are appreciated.

Title	Activities
S. 3089, DAV-Supported COLA Increase Bill	8,492
Veterans Fair Debt Notice Act of 2017 (S. 2341)	7,542
DAV Supported COLA Increase Bill (HR 4958)	6,415
H.R. 4556, Opening VA Dental Care to All Veterans	6,110
S. 1990, The Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act	6,089