



Empathy – Kindness - Grace It's National Heart Month!

From the Desk of National Commander Melissa Pierce

February - National Heart month... to go along with that I'm going to ask you all to consider doing an EKG. Okay, not that kind of EKG, but an Empathy, Kindness and Grace - EKG. Auxiliary members go above and beyond for veterans and their families, but sometimes we falter when it comes to each other. We allow personal feelings and opinions of others to occasionally get in the way of our mission. When we are working together for the Auxiliary – Unit, State or National... meetings, conferences or conventions... out in the community – we need to put those feelings aside and work together to fulfill our DAV Auxiliary mission. So, before you act, before you say anything – ask yourself – are you treating others with Empathy? Are you showing them Kindness? Are you giving them Grace? If not, step back and take a few moments to reevaluate your thoughts, words and actions... and be Auxiliary nice!

February is also National Salute to Veteran Patients. Each year more than **nine million** veterans receive medical treatment through the VA. Since about 1978, the VA has recognized and celebrated National Salute to Veteran Patients week. This year, the week will be February 8th-14th.

This National event increases community awareness of the VA centers and their patients. It encourages community members to visit, or even better, volunteer at one of VA's more than 170 medical centers and more than 1,000 outpatient clinics. Most importantly, it pays tribute to the more than **100,000** veterans who visit these facilities every day.

So, I'm asking you... What are you doing at your VA's and clinics to celebrate National Salute to Veteran Patients week this year? Are you making cards to hand out? Or maybe your juniors are? Is your unit distributing treat bags to inpatients? Are you handing out gifts to veterans visiting the hospitals and clinics? Are you partnering with your chapter, or even another unit, to sponsor a pizza party, popcorn or ice cream? Or maybe BINGO?

Whatever, however, share what you are doing! Share what you have done! National loves to hear what we are doing to fulfill our auxiliary mission. Our members love to hear what other units and states have done. We inspire others by our actions. So, this February brush off those winter blues and be the inspiration. The inspiration to other members. The inspiration to your juniors. The inspiration to VA patients. No matter who, no matter how, be the inspiration!

I recently heard our DAV National Commander Coleman Nee say something and it has really stuck with me and how it works with my #DAVAImpact250. To paraphrase he said it's not just the impact you see that we are making.... But the impact we don't always see - the tears that are no longer falling, the nights that are no longer sleepless, the decreased stress of the veterans and their families we are assisting. The feeling of hope that we are providing. Impact.... We are making an impact! What we may see as a small thing may be huge to those we are impacting. So, I encourage you all to continue stepping up and continue making a #DAVAImpact250.

And don't forget... to Serve with purpose. Serve with intention. And most of all, Serve with intention in 2026!

Membership

By Terry Grabowski,
Natl. Chairperson

I am excited to report that 16 states have met quota. I am so proud of them. Bravo!

There are many states that are very close to making quota. With a little work they can also make quota.

As for National Quota, we are at 112,617 members (99.81%) with only 214 members needed to achieve the goal. National Adjutant Bunny Clos had said at a meeting with Officers, State Commanders and State Adjutants that she would like to see 115,000 members by the end of our membership year. She is correct; with a little extra work this is attainable. How amazing that would be! Let's get out there and spread the word and recruit new members. I am counting on everyone to help make this come true.

Also don't forget about the incentives out there for recruitment - win a cruise or some cash. Check on the National site for information or contact me. Thank you in advance



“With a little extra work, the goal of 115,000 members by June 30 is attainable! How amazing would that be!” ~Terry Grabowski

Mae Holmes News

From Kathleen Wenthe, National Chairperson

We are now already a month into 2026, and time is moving quickly. It is essential to begin gathering the necessary information for all annual report forms. By this point, you should have received the blank forms from your State Adjutants. If not, they are available for download on the DAVA website under the membership and resources section, where you can either complete them online and print or download them for manual completion.

It is important that every member has the opportunity to contribute to these reports, as the efforts of all volunteers within our organization deserve recognition. The Mae Holmes National Outstanding Unit Award report should be completed last, as it is a consolidation of information from all other reports.

To ensure accuracy when reporting Senior and Junior Membership numbers, please pull a current “Population Summary”. The Senior membership number can be found under “Total Paid Members,” and the “Total Junior” membership should be added to this report as well. The sum of these numbers should match the “Total Members” listed on your population summary.

When transferring totals for VAVS and Community Service, if either total is \$1,000.00 or more, please attach a copy of the relevant report(s). Just the report itself, not the explanation(s).

National has established a firm deadline of May 1, 2026, for submission of all reports to the National Chairman. Please allow sufficient time to collect reports from each unit so that, as a State Adjutant, you can submit them by the deadline. This requirement stands even if your state convention has not yet occurred. Finally, don’t forget to sign ALL of the reports.

The annual report forms are more than administrative documents—they are a testament to the countless volunteer hours contributed by auxiliary members nationwide. Each form speaks volumes about our shared commitment and the meaningful difference we make in the lives of Veterans and their families. These reports showcase our achievements, inspire others to join our mission, and help build a lasting legacy of service.

Thank you for your dedication and impact this year. I look forward to reviewing all Mae Holmes National Outstanding Unit reports.

2025-2026 Quota!



Congratulations to the following State Departments for achieving their quota!

Alabama
Arkansas
Florida
Illinois
Louisiana
Maryland
Michigan
Mississippi
New Jersey
New Mexico
Oklahoma
Rhode Island
South Carolina
South Dakota
Vermont
Wisconsin

Many other states are within a few members – we know you can do it! Utilize your recruitment tools, work together, and let’s continue to grow our organization and fulfill our mission of service to veterans and their families.

Legislative Updates

From Carolyn Harris, National Chairperson

One vote, One voice. Many times, we have heard people state I am only one vote and my vote won't make a difference. Historically, we know of many times where one vote was the major factor in deciding elections and passing amendments.

- In the election of 1800, Thomas Jefferson was elected President of the United States over Aaron Burr by one vote.
- In the election of 1876, Rutherford B. Hayes was also elected President by one vote.
- The amendment granting women the right to vote was ratified in the Tennessee Legislative by a single vote.

These events highlight how a single vote can be the determining factors in elections and the passing of amendments. So, let's apply the same significance to our voice in supporting legislation supporting our veterans and their families. It may seem as if our single contact with our legislators is small, but added with all the other voices across the country, our voices together have great impact in bringing attention to legislation that will aid our veterans.

In my previous article we looked at the Federal contacts that we have made in Washington D.C. concerning legislation that supported and aided veterans. Now, let's look at our State and Local level contacts

Every State has a State Legislation made up of Senators and House Representatives. Every state is divided into districts. We all should know who our representatives are on the state level. Go to your State legislative website to see what bills or resolution may be coming up concerning veterans. Use your voice to reach out to your State Legislators to show your desire concerning those bills and/or resolutions.

This also applies to the local level. In cities and towns across America we have districts representatives. Use your voice to inform your representatives on how you feel about item concerning our veterans.

By advocating for Legislation on the Federal, State and Local levels our voices can become the determining factors in passing legislation supporting our veterans. **I can Advocate, you can Advocate and together we all can Advocate for our veterans.** Together we can uphold our mission statement, which is, **“Making a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families.”**

Junior Membership Ideas From Kimberly Knowlton, Natl. Chair

For Junior DAV Auxiliary members (ages 17 and under), it's not too late to make a meaningful difference for veterans and their families. These four **quick, low-prep ideas** can be pulled off in days—or even hours—with minimal planning. Focus on what's doable *now*, using what you already have or can grab locally. Every act of kindness counts, no matter the size.

Drop Off “Instant Cheer” Bags at Your Local VA Clinic: Grab a few friends and a box of gallon zip bags. Fill each with 3–5 small items you likely have at home or can buy today: Individually wrapped cookies or candy, a pocket pack of tissues, a festive sticky note with “Thank You for Your Service!”, a new pair of warm socks (\$1–2 at dollar stores). Drop them at the VA clinic’s volunteer desk or nursing station—call ahead to confirm. Takes **one afternoon**, zero meetings.

Text-a-Vet Thank-You Campaign: Ask your Unit Commander for 5–10 phone numbers of homebound veterans (many chapters keep lists). Juniors text a short Valentine’s message: *“Hi Mr. Smith! This is Sarah from DAV Auxiliary. Just wanted to say Happy Valentine’s Day and thank you for your service!”* Takes **15 minutes** from your couch.

“Adopt” a VA Common Room for One Evening: Call your nearest VA community living center and ask: *“Can 3–4 juniors bring hot cocoa and play music for 30 minutes this week?”* Bring a Bluetooth speaker, instant cocoa packets, and paper cups. Sing a few songs, chat with the veterans there.

No time to organize? Do one thing today. Even a single card slipped under a veteran’s door at the clinic brightens a day. Tag your quick wins with #DAVAImpact250 and #DAVAJuniorsCheer on social media—let’s show veterans they’re remembered, right up to Valentine’s Day!