



Serve with Intention!

#DAVAImpact250

From the Desk of National Commander Melissa Pierce

Have you ever been sitting in an airport or a hospital waiting room... maybe shopping at the grocery store or waiting for an auxiliary meeting to start... wherever... when a someone – a stranger or even someone you know - suddenly strikes up a conversation? At first you may think to yourself, “Hey, I don’t want to talk to you. I’m good sitting here quietly, keeping to myself.” Or maybe it’s, “I’m busy (or reading or doing a crossword) I don’t have time for this.” But then, something happens. You stop. You take a moment. And you listen. Really listen. Because you realize they have something they want to say. Something they need to say. They have a story to share.

Maybe it’s that member who talks incessantly, you know that one that you may see as annoying but just misses their veteran who recently passed away. Or maybe it’s that veteran who speaks so quietly we can barely hear them, so we don’t really pay attention to them, but they learned early in Vietnam that sound carries in the jungle so it’s best to speak in low tones. Or maybe it’s that member who always questions the unit finances and how much money the unit is spending because they grew up in the depression. Maybe it’s that caregiver who spends all day caring for their veteran and is just looking for someone different to talk to.

March is National Storytelling month. Our veterans have a story they need to share. Our caregivers have stories they want to share. Their families have a story to share. We need to slow down and take a moment. **We need to start listening... really listening.** We need to hear their stories. We need to understand what they went through. We need to hear what they are still going through. We need to hear... really hear.

Our veterans. Their families. Our members. Each other. **We all have a story.** I think Michelle Obama said it best, “When we share our stories, we are reminded of the humanity in each other. And when we take the time to understand each other’s stories, we become more forgiving, more empathetic, and more inclusive.”

So, ask yourself, what’s your story. And then ask the person next to you what’s your story. We need to hear the stories of those around us. We are missing out on important parts of their lives. We are missing what makes them who they are. We are missing out on what they are going through by not hearing them. Not really hearing them. A veteran telling their story may be exactly what they need to survive another day. A caregiver sharing their story may be what they need to make it through today. And hearing someone’s story may be exactly what you needed today.

Saturday April 4th will be the 3rd annual DAV Community Impact Day. This is your reminder... get signed up, get out there and **SERVE WITH INTENTION** the veterans in your communities and neighborhoods. Not only will you become a part of the story with your impact, but who knows, you might get to hear a story or two yourself.

And while we’re talking about stories, annual reports.... They tell a story too. They tell the story of your unit. They tell the story of your Americanism. They tell the story of your volunteering. They tell the story of your juniors. They tell the story of your community service. They tell the story of your legislative advocacy. They tell **your unit’s story.** Make sure YOU are sharing that story with National so they can share the Auxiliary impact with DAV and others.

So again, I ask you, what is your story? What is their story? Make listening to a story or sharing your story part of your **#DAVAImpact250!**

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT!

As many of you have seen if you've attended DAV Auxiliary National Fall Conference the last few years, I **LOVE** when we all work together! Whether it's a CANNed food drive for a veteran's food pantry or most recently, a deodorant and underwear drive for the Stand Down at National Headquarters, when we ask, our members step up!

If you were at Mid-Winter, you may have heard me issue a challenge... I want to challenge every state department to organize a **joint DAV and Auxiliary** service project—whether it's a food drive or toiletry collection. Maybe it's puzzle books for VA inpatients or Veterans Home residents. Or maybe working with a VA HUD-VASH social worker to provide a simple welcome gift of a blanket or towel set for newly housed veterans. Whatever you decide!

We've seen time and again that when our members bring just a few items each, those small acts snowball into a massive impact. Will you join us in being part of a coast-to-coast impact? It's a simple, powerful way for DAV and the Auxiliary to work side-by-side, proving that when we coordinate our efforts at the state level, we don't just talk about service—we deliver it directly to the veterans in our own backyards.

And please, please share your ideas with us - you never know who it might inspire. And please, please share with us the pictures of your state's impact - the donations collected, members donating, group photos - we want to share your impact with others! Please join us as we continue to make a **#DAVAImpact250!**



“As Auxiliary Members, your role in gathering information for **all Annual Report Forms** is essential to ensuring every volunteer hour is properly documented.” ~Kathy Wenthe

Mae Holmes News

From Kathleen Wenthe, National Chairperson

As we move through the early months of 2026, time continues to pass quickly. Having recently returned from Washington, D.C., where I attended the DAV Midwinter Conference, I was once again reminded of the dedication and hard work of the behind-the-scenes staff at the DAV office. Their efforts in preparing resolutions for consideration on Capitol Hill are vital to our mission. The seminars offered were both informative and timely, reinforcing important knowledge and providing valuable refreshers.

As Auxiliary Members, your role in gathering information for **all Annual Report Forms** is essential to ensuring every volunteer hour is properly documented. While recognition may not be your motivation, the meaningful impact of your service—whether through a simple greeting, a cup of coffee, or providing needed support—makes a lasting difference for our veterans and their families.

In my role as **Mae Holmes National Outstanding Unit Award Chairperson**, I want to emphasize the importance of completing this annual report accurately. This report should be finalized after completing the Americanism, Special Americanism, Community Service, Junior Activities, Legislation, and VAVS reports, as it requires transferring information directly from those forms. Accuracy during this process is critical.

All State Adjutants should have received the updated forms, and Unit Adjutants should have access to them. If you have not received the forms, please contact your State Adjutant or download the fillable versions from the DAV Auxiliary website.

When reporting senior and junior membership totals, please use a current population summary. Unit Adjutants should be registered with mydav.org to access this information. Assistance is available through your State Adjutant or the membership resources section of the DAV Auxiliary website if needed.

Deadlines will be noted on the forms provided by your State Adjutant. If no deadline is listed, completed reports should be submitted by **April 15**, allowing time for review. All reports must be received at the national level **no later than May 1, 2026**.

If you have not yet begun collecting information, now is the time to contact your members and document their activities. Before submission, please ensure all sections are complete, required documentation is attached (particularly for amounts exceeding \$1,000), and the form is properly signed. Submit all materials to your State Adjutant prior to the deadline.

I sincerely appreciate your continued dedication and look forward to reviewing your reports.

Community Service News

From Ann Wilner, National Chairperson

March will be an exciting month as we transition away from the time change, allowing us to enjoy more daylight hours. This provides a wonderful opportunity for everyone to get out into the community and engage in meaningful activities with our Veterans and their families.

We can organize picnics to introduce ourselves to neighbors who may not realize we are active in the area. Additionally, we can visit local fairs as the approaching spring brings warmer weather to many parts of the country.

Community service is not merely defined by the number of people or families you connect with; it is truly about making a difference in the lives of those you meet—including those who may be facing housing or food insecurity. A picnic is not solely focused on how many individuals you can feed; it is about how many lives you can change simply by being present. You may not realize that the Veteran you are speaking with feels unsure of their surroundings or their future, but your presence alone can make a significant difference in their world.

Ultimately, community service is about serving your local Veterans and their families. You may not know how many reside in your community until you host an event. While free advertising is always ideal, you can also place flyers in the windows of local businesses that support the cause. Be sure to provide enough notice so that community members and your fellow organization members have time to prepare.

Aim to make each gathering a great event with fun and games for the entire family. You never truly know the impact you can have until you try. Another worthwhile idea is hosting a "Coffee Social" at a local shop. If you can find a Veteran-owned business, it makes for an even better environment for a monthly adventure. Even meeting for just a few hours once a month can help you engage more Veterans and their families in a relaxed setting.

Engaging Juniors in the Spring

From Kim Knowlton, National Chairperson

With spring on the horizon, now is the ideal time to welcome Junior members into our DAV Auxiliary Units. Juniors, ages 17 and under, bring fresh energy, creative ideas, and enthusiasm that can brighten meetings, events, and service projects. They represent the future of our organization, and involving them helps ensure our legacy of supporting veterans continues for generations.

Start by inviting children and grandchildren of current members to attend a meeting as guests so they can experience the camaraderie and purpose firsthand. Offer them simple, meaningful ways to contribute, such as helping plan a spring fundraiser, decorating for events, assembling care packages for veterans, or assisting with DAV transportation rides. Family-oriented activities like a spring picnic, a park cleanup, or a veteran appreciation day provide perfect opportunities for juniors to work alongside adults. They can also take on small leadership roles, such as leading the Pledge of Allegiance, reading minutes, or leading a project.

The key is to emphasize both the fun and the real impact of their efforts—showing how their help directly benefits veterans and their families. Encourage every member to reach out to families this season. A single invitation can inspire a lifelong commitment to service and grow our next generation of Auxiliary leaders.

