



Welcome to May!

#DAVAImpact250

From the Desk of National Commander Melissa Pierce

Welcome to May! May - Designated as National Military Appreciation Month in 1999. May - A month full of ways our Auxiliary members can show appreciation and thanks to those who gave their all and the families that served beside them.

Within the month you can pay tribute to those military families. Consider reaching out to see if you can assist them in any way. Offer to cook a meal. Maybe run an errand. Offer to help with childcare. Send them on a spa day. Offer help with housework or yard work. Whatever you do, don't forget the most important thing – let them know they are appreciated with a card, a note or a simple thank you for all their sacrifices.

Armed Forces Day is celebrated on the third Saturday in May, this year on the 16th. This day is a time to thank those currently serving. There are often local events you can attend. Volunteer. Send care packages. Display the American flag. Educate yourself and others about the different branches and their roles. But most of all, say thank you. Let them know they are honored. Let them know they are appreciated. Let them know you care.

And then you have Memorial Day, the last Monday in May. While many consider Memorial Day the unofficial start of summer - a three-day weekend for BBQ's, camping and family gatherings, it's way more than that. Memorial Day is a time to honor and remember all our military personnel who have died while serving, in wartime or peacetime. It's a time for remembrance. A time for reflection. A time for gratitude for those who paid the ultimate sacrifice for our freedoms.

First established in 2017, May is also the Month of the Military Caregiver. It's a time to recognize and thank the spouses, parents, family members and even friends, who are the daily caregivers of our injured and ill military members and veterans. These caregivers have stepped up to serve our veterans, and we need to step up and honor them. Helping to raise awareness of military caregivers is also important. Talk about them at your meetings and brainstorm ways you can assist them. Raise awareness in your communities and encourage them to support military caregivers. Reach out to the caregivers with resources and other tools that could assist them on their caregiving journey. And while we're talking about caregivers, don't forget to let people know about our new DAVA Caring For Caregivers program. Help us spread the word about this great new Auxiliary initiative!

May is full of days to serve. It is full of days to honor. It is full of days to show our gratitude. It is full of days to remember. As DAV Auxiliary members, we all know that every day is a good day to thank and honor our veterans and their families; however, take advantage of all May has to offer. Use it as your reason to educate your members. Educate your juniors. Educate your communities. Educate and create awareness!

As John F Kennedy once said, "As we express our gratitude, we must never forget that the highest appreciation is not to utter the words, but to live by them."

And as always – remember to serve with intention.... serve with awareness... serve with purpose... and keep making a #DAVAImpact250!

Advocating for Veterans – A Never-Ending Mission!

by Carolyn Harris, National Chairperson

Advocating for Legislation that supports and secures benefits for our veterans is a never-ending mission. It is an ongoing process - day to day - month to month – year to year. As Auxiliary members this mission most likely started with our families, who showed us that, to ensure that our voices are heard, this mission of advocating for our veterans must not stop.

Communication with our Legislators in the past was mostly done through phone calls, letters and personal visit when possible. But over the years things have become easier for us to let our voices be heard. Three letters - CAN: Commander's Action Network has made a difference. Since this tool of sharing legislative bills came into existence, it has made our voices more powerful. By going to www.dav.org/learn-more/legislation and signing up for the Commander's Action Network, DAV can send you alerts on the most pressing bills that are going before Congress. This tool of communication has been a game changer that has united thousands of voices in support of our veterans and their families.

Our never-ending mission does not stop at the Federal Level. In this age of computers, everyone can have access to each state's legislative bodies. You can see what bills are going up before each State legislative session in every state, know who your state Representatives are and let them know where you stand concerning any bill involving our veterans. A letter can be written, a phone call can be made, and even simpler, an email can be sent.

The world is changing and is now technology driven. Let technology help and aid us in our mission to make sure our veterans are treated fairly. We have a legacy that was started by our family members who served our country. We should want to pass this legacy on to the next generation of DAV and DAV Auxiliary members who will continue this mission of Advocating for our Veterans. It is truly a never-ending mission.

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Mae Holmes News

From Kathleen Wenthe, National Chairperson

As we move further into 2026, it's hard to believe how quickly the year is going. By now, each State Adjutant should have received the annual reports from all units within their state. These reports truly reflect the dedication, hard work, and service our auxiliary members have provided throughout the year.

State Adjutants were asked to mail the completed unit reports to the appropriate National Chairmen post-marked to the national deadline of **May 1, 2026**. This deadline applies whether a state convention has taken place, helping to keep our national reporting process consistent and on schedule.

The Mae Holmes National Outstanding Unit Award report is always completed last, as it brings together information from all other reports. I have had the opportunity to review each Mae Holmes report that I have received and will gather the necessary information from them to complete my year-end report for National. Having accurate and timely reports makes this process run smoothly, and your attention to detail is greatly appreciated.

Thank you to everyone who took the time to carefully complete and submit your reports on time. If you have received annual reports after you have already sent your main group in, even though it's past the deadline, I would greatly appreciate you dropping them in the mail as soon as you receive any stragglers from your units. Your commitment helps ensure that the outstanding work of our auxiliary members is recognized and documented. I truly appreciate your efforts and look forward to submitting a year-end report to National that reflects the incredible accomplishments achieved this year.

The Missing Man Table

From Kim Stake, National Chairperson

Another way we show Americanism is with ceremonial events by paying respect to fallen veterans. “The Missing Man Table” or know by most the POW/MIA table. This is a symbolic, ceremonial setting honoring Prisoners of War or Missing in Action.

The ceremony represents the emotions of all that didn't come home and their loved ones awaiting answers, symbolizing they are present in spirit. The profound tribute to their selfless sacrifices.

As of early 2026, over 81,000 American service members remain missing from past conflicts. This includes more than 72,000 from World War II; over 7,000 from the Korean War; approximately 1,550 from the Vietnam War, and hundreds more between the Cold War and several other conflicts.

- The table is usually set for one.
- A round table represents everlasting concern for the missing.
- A white tablecloth represents the purity of their motives for serving.
- A single red rose represents the lives of the missing and faith of their loved ones.
- A red or yellow ribbon represents continued determination to account for the missing.
- A saucer with a lemon slice represents the bitter fate of those missing in a foreign land.
- A saucer with a pinch of salt represents the tears of the missing and their families.
- An inverted glass represents their inability to share a toast.
- An empty chair represents the absence of the missing.
- A lit candle represents a light of hope to illuminate the missing's way home
- A Bible represents the strength gained through faith.
- An American flag represents that the missing service members served their country and that the nation honors their sacrifice. It represents the nation's continued devotion and commitment to finding those who never return, ensuring they are not forgotten.

As we head to National Convention, then time comes to rear this presentation, I ask that you REMEMBER our missing Service members, REMEMBER the symbol on the table, REMEMBER their means, REMEMBER their families, and REMEMBER “YOU ARE NOT FORGOTTEN”.

Help us Fill the Membership Map!

We need YOUR help!! We want each state to meet membership quota for 2025-2026. Can you help us by making our map green by June 30, 2026?

Here is the key – if your state makes quota, your color will change to green. And if every unit in your state makes quota, your state will change to blue with a gold star!

It gets even better – we are working on a fun, new incentive to congratulate our state departments and units that have achieved quota. So far, three have made that happen. **Congratulations** to Rhode Island, Vermont, and Wyoming!!

There is still a lot of time left to fill our map, so what are you waiting for? Let's make it happen!

