

National Commander Diane Franz

Now, for the rewarding part of being your National Commander and having the privilege of attending few of the events during this past membership year.

The membership year started off with the first of many cancellations. I had to cancel because of the hurricane threat in Florida, the trip to Pittsburgh, PA for the Caring and Sharing boat cruise. I was so looking forward to that event.

The next event that was scheduled was the Tee Tournament the next week in September. Luckily, no bad weather that week. I had the opportunity to meet with some of the caregivers while their veterans were enjoying their sports of choice. There were outings and events for the companions that kept everyone busy for the week. The Auxiliary also participated in the Health and Information Fair on Wednesday evening. It was a privilege to meet and talk to the veterans and their caregivers.

The National Fall Conference was fun and very informative. The Chairmen presented so much information to the attendees. The attendance was awesome and shows that we have very interested members in learning way to help our disabled veterans and their families.

The next trip was to Birmingham, Alabama for the Veterans Day celebration and parade in November. It was an experience that was so memorable. Even though the weather was a bit windy and chilly, riding on a cannon with National Senior Vice Donald Day during the parade, the weather did not deter the attendance of spectators, even the little ones waving the US Flag or saluting as we went by them. Another memorable item was the final banquet. I actually was seated next to Miss Alabama. She was in the top 10 in the Miss America Pageant. Carolyn Harris did a remarkable job in hosting the National Commander. Thank you, Carolyn for your hospitality.

The remainder of November and the month of December were quiet weeks leading up to the holidays.

Being the National Commander, I attended the DAV/DAVA Mid-Winter Conference in Lake Mary, Florida as their invited guest. The shortest trip I had to make this past year. This State invites the DAVA National Commander to attend the Conference. What can I say—it was so much fun.

In February, it was off to Washington, DC for the DAV Mid-Winter Conference. Bunny Clos and I had the honor of placing a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns in Arlington Cemetery. It was something that I will hold dear in my heart for a lifetime. The weather was perfect, even for February in the North. Many seminars were held during the week and on Tuesday, February 25th, we meet with our representatives from our home state. Then it was off to the Dirksen Senate Office Building for the presentation of the DAV 2020 Legislative Program. DAV National Commander Stephen Whitehead and National Staff presented concerns of the veterans and their needs.

Then it happened—COVID-19. Everything being cancelled and/or closed. State Conventions, Winter Sports Clinic, VA hospitals, CLC's, Veteran Nursing homes, and Domiciliaries. Our opportunities to volunteer was diminished and other way to help and be safe have to evolve. I was so looking forward to attending the State Conventions. Sharing ideas, learning new ideas, and meeting friends. It has been a unique year, to say the least. Because of the cancellation of the National Convention, I will still have the opportunity to attend the events/conventions in the following membership year. Hopefully this will all be past history and not to happen again.

Your National Commander thanks each and every one of you giving the support and opportunity to meet so many fantastic members and to serve you, the members, of our great organization, the DAV Auxiliary. I must also give a special thank you to Pat, Bunny, Ann, and all the staff I had the good fortune of their wisdom and guidance. Looking forward to seeing you when this virus is over and gone. And so, our mission continues....

Diane Franz, National Commander