

Department of Alabama

News & Views



March/April
2018

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Volume 21 | Number 6



DANANG VIETNAM

Where the Troops first Landed

The Red Cross had sent teams of women overseas to work with troops since World War II. They served coffee and donuts, which earned them the nickname "Donut Dollies." In 1965, fearing the impact on troop morale of what was already looking to be a long war, Defense Department officials asked the Red Cross to establish an S.R.A.O. program in Vietnam. From 1965 through 1972, nearly 630 women served in Vietnam through the program. Some staffed recreation centers...

[Read more here](#)

DONUT DOLLYS

Vietnam

The first American combat troops to arrive in Vietnam landed in the coastal city of Danang 50 years ago this past March. The 2,000 Marines had the job of protecting the nearby U.S. air base.

It took the members of the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade almost an entire day to bring their men and materiel ashore that day in March 1965. Nguyen Tien knows, because he was there.

Nguyen was 24 at the time, but already had been a Viet Cong guerrilla for five years, and was on the beach that morning to spy on the Americans. He says they were carrying too much gear and sweating like pigs. How, he thought to himself, are they going to be able to fight in the heat?

[Read more here](#)



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED



Disabled American Veterans Mission Statement

We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

- Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service and provided by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other agencies of government;
- Providing outreach concerning its program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically;
- Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live through a network of state-level Departments and local Chapters; and
- Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.



Department Commander

Deborah Walker



for learning. They provided a depth of understanding that was not possible from reading. Thanks "MALT" for sharing! Your conferences have been a catalyst for self-reflection and the integration of all the ideas I've heard but never really thought seriously about.

"Learn everything you can, anytime you can, from anyone you can—there will always come a time when you will be grateful you did"

Commanders let's talk:

- Your Chapter Service Officer (CSO) reports are due not later than the 5th of each month to our Director of Service, Joe Donaldson. These reports serve as a measure of progress achieved; used as a financial assessment tool that is based on how well your CSO implemented the skills they learned; and track CSOs performance and progress. CSO reports will be considered when selecting our Level II CSO students.

- Stop pre-sorting your members! Look instead at how your members are volunteering and performing in your chapters. Get rid of that archaic "military" system of dividing your former officers from your former enlisted members. There is no distinction between enlisted and commissioned DAV members. A combination of aptitude, desire, dedication, training, and experience can turn any "willing" DAV member into a Chapter officer.

- "Our Constitution is a remarkable, beautiful gift. But it's really just a piece of parchment. It has no power on its own. We, the people, give it power—with our participation, and the choices we make." Replace Constitution with Chapter Bylaws.

- Next month, March, starts the new Department "On-the-Road-Again" Commander's Call meetings. In the past our Department Commanders have visited your monthly Membership meetings where everything is set in format by the clock.

Comrades,

I am glad my Adjutant insisted I attend all of the "MALT" (Mississippi, Alabama, Louisiana, and Tennessee) Mid-winter conferences. I did not understand the importance of attending these face-to-face conferences due to the time and expenses involved and the fact that I thought Alabama was ahead of the game when it comes to Mid-winter conferences. To my surprise, I learned the Department of Alabama DAV is not the oldest DAV Department and not the largest. The insights I gained from our "MALT" conferences far exceeded my expectations. They were all insightful, well presented, refreshing, and useful. I met DAV members with "energy of like-minds" who shared their desires and knowledge about their Department and I broke out of my comfort zone (old way of thinking) and shared with them my desires about things I would like to do to make our Department better.

Our "MALT" conferences stimulated my instructional creativity and sparked new approaches

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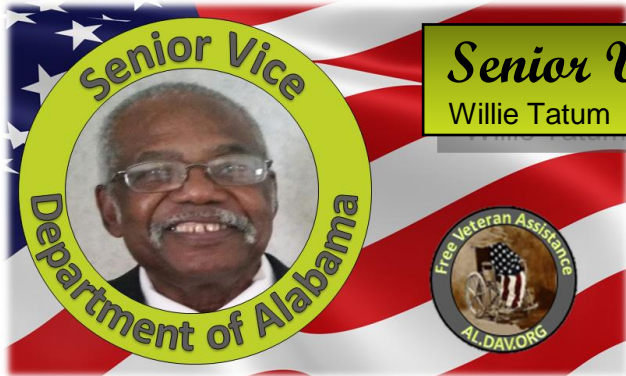
These meetings will be held in a safe environment where chapter members, not restricted to Commanders and Adjutants, can feel safe to speak freely; help build supportive relationships amongst district members; help me learn about members motivations, fears, hopes, troubles, etc.; everybody get the chance to speak, and hear what's said; offer feedback and assistance to one another; learn more about the Department; help your chapter recruit more and function more efficiently; lastly, remind our

members and chapters that we are a team---you're not alone! I am anxiously looking forward to seeing each and every one of you next month.

"If your actions inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more and become more, you are a leader."

Respectfully,

Debb Walker



Senior Vice Commander

Willie Tatum

Comrades,

Greetings to you all. On January 11-14, 2018 I attended the Louisiana Mid-Winter Conference held in Shreveport, LA. On February 2-3, 2018 I attended the Mississippi Mid-Winter Conference in Meridian, MS. The message I took away from these conferences is that we are all working toward the same goal. That is helping veterans and their spouses get the benefits they have earned through military service.

On January 23, 2018, I along with the Commander and the Adjutant, attended a meeting with the leadership of Birmingham VA Medical Center. They laid out a comprehensive plan of where the Birmingham VA is headed, as well as the top priorities for the VA. I will not list them here but, I will say if you are in the Birmingham area you may want to stop by and see what they are doing there. I know we don't like to go to hospitals unless we are sick but, in this case, I think you will be impressed. They are also looking for volunteers. So, if you have the time and would like to volunteer contact the Birmingham VA Medical Center@ 205-933-8101.

We began the year talking about recruiting and how important it is to our existence and we will continue

to do that. Although we are looking for all members, we really need new full life members. To those chapters who have already made their goal, we say thank you. To those who are close stay the course, you can make it. To those who have yet to join us we need you to make our goal. It is not too late, and we need your help and your support. Remember that membership is our life line. We are losing members and if we don't replace them we will cease to exist. I know none of us want to see that happen. Because we do provide a valuable to our veteran brothers and sisters helping them get the benefits they have earned through their military service.

That is why I want to continue to serve our Department as the next commander. We still have work to do and I want to be a part of that. I have been a DAV member for 24 years, a member of the Department of Alabama for 20 years. I have served as Chapter Commander, Treasurer, Department 3rd Jr. Vice Commander and presently serving as Department Sr. Vice Commander. I am a retired Marine Corps GySgt with 22 years of service. I service (2) two tours of duty in South Vietnam and (4) other overseas tours of duty. After my retirement I worked for Greyhound Lines where I managed terminals in Dallas, TX and Kansas City, MO. I also worked at Marion Military Institute for (14) fourteen years. I am a member of several Fraternal organization and a Deacon in my church. I have both an AA & BS degree in Business Administration. It is my hope to continue to move our Department forward in becoming the best that we can be. So, with your help and your support I am seeking to be the next Commander of the State of Alabama. Thank you.

Respectfully,

Willie Tatum





1st Junior Vice Commander

Jerry Morgan

Comrades,

I hope that everyone has had a great new year and are ready to make this the best year for you, your DAV Chapter, the Alabama Department of DAV and National DAV.

If you attended the Mid-Winter Training Conference in January, then you know that the CSO training was excellent with the addition of the level two training along with the basic level training. I have been doing CSO work for six years and found this training to be very helpful. The level two training gave the students an insight on how and why the VA looks at claims along with examples of the section in CFR 38 that the VA uses in determining certain types of claims. This insight has helped me to see what additional information that the Veteran must have to support their claim and how to provide the best support to the Veteran as a CSO.

Following the CSO training for the first time ever at the Mid-Winter Conference, was a training session on subjects that Chapter Commanders and other members had requested to help them understand how the State Department DAV works and relates to how the Chapters work. In the past 10 years

I have attended 9 of the past State Conventions and 10 of the Mid-Winter Conferences. This one made the very best use of time and was most informative of any that I have attended including the 4 out of state Conventions and Mid-Winter Conferences and 2 National Conventions. I am looking forward to the Commander's Call at each of the Districts that was requested by Chapter Commanders and Chapter Members.

As the Chairman of "The Time and Place Committee" I was asked by several people why we don't go somewhere other than Auburn for a change. My answer was "do you want to host the meeting?" Also, I told them that I would be glad to work with them with the planning and the requirements to host the meeting. The June 2018 Annual Convention and the January 2019 Mid-Winter Conference will be in Auburn as it takes a full year to plan and prepare all the requirements for hosting the meetings. Things just don't happen overnight.

I want to encourage any Chapter or Chapters who would like to host the 2019 State Convention to start working on a proposal. Also, Chapters who are located close together can work together to co-host a meeting. Several Chapters who already work together to host the "Golden Corral" fund raiser would be ideal to think about this. If you would like to host the Convention the request and proposal must be into Chad, the State Adjutant, by May 1, 2018. To host the Mid-Winter Conference in January 2020 the request must be into Chad, the State Adjutant, by December 1, 2018.

Information on the requirement to host the Annual Convention or Mid-Winter Conference can be provided by me, Chad, or Commander Walker.

Respectfully,

Jerry Morgan

BATTLE OF DIEN BIEN PHU

March 1954

The Battle of Dien Bien Phu was the decisive engagement in the first Indochina War (1946–54). After French forces occupied the Dien Bien Phu valley in late 1953, Viet Minh commander Vo Nguyen Giap amassed troops and placed heavy artillery in caves of the mountains overlooking the French camp. Boosted by Chinese aid, Giap mounted assaults on the opposition's strong points beginning in March 1954, eliminating use of the French airfield. Viet Minh forces overran the base in early May, prompting the French government to seek an end to the fighting with the signing of the Geneva Accords of 1954.

The battle that settled the fate of French Indochina was initiated in November 1953, when Viet Minh forces at Chinese insistence moved to attack Lai Chau, the capital of the T'ai Federation (in Upper Tonkin), which was loyal to the French. As Peking had hoped, the French commander in chief in Indochina, General Henri Navarre, came out to defend his allies because he believed the T'ai "maquis" formed a significant threat in the Viet Minh "rear" (the T'ai supplied the French with opium that was sold to finance French special operations) and wanted to prevent a Viet Minh sweep into Laos. Because he considered Lai Chau impossible to defend, on November 20, Navarre launched Operation Castor with a paratroop drop on the broad valley...

[Read more here](#)

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2nd Junior Vice Commander

Eugene Zeigler



DAV drivers/coordinators must adhere to established procedure for operation, maintenance, control, and accountability in the operation of the DAV donated/VA owned van for transportation of veterans in association with the delivery of medical care at the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA) Medial Centers.

The operation of the van shall be governed by VA regulation and applicable state laws.

The van shall be stored in a secure location agreed upon by both parties, (preferably a local government facility such as a police, fire station, etc). Vehicles will be operated by certified volunteers under the direction of DAV; however, driver must be physically capable of performing the tasks related to vehicle operation. A certified driver who holds a valid state driver's license, vehicle insurance and has received a physical examination.

The Department of Defense (DOD), through a joint initiative with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs (VA), has launched a new web-based tool that will provide customized guidance to Veterans who desire to upgrade or change the conditions of their military discharge. By answering a few short questions, Veterans will receive information on the specific armed services board to contact, the forms/ to fill out special guidance applicable to their case, where to send their application and helpful tips for appealing their discharge. The discharge upgrade tool is available at <https://www.vets.gov/discharge-upgrade-instruction>.

Comrades

The Mid-Winter Conference Training was very informative, with information that will help veterans with their claims. Let us make every effort possible to use this knowledge when assisting veterans with claims.

The DAV is providing the VA with a large number of vans for transportation of disabled veterans. Also drivers and the employees need to coordinate the program.

No individual who has served our country and sacrifices a limb, eyesight or good health should be denied proper medical care just because he or she can't reach a VA facility. Nor should veterans have to neglect their health because they can't afford to pay for transportation.

You too can help, if you like to be a volunteer driver in our Transportation Network, or if you need the services of our volunteer drivers, please call your nearest VA medical facility and ask for the DAV Hospital Services Coordinator.

Respectfully,

Eugene Zigler



Department Adjutant

Charles "Chad" D. Richmond



accolades for his detailed instructional information. Service to our fellow veterans is our backbone, so thank you to all of you who attended.

We had several firsts during this conference. It was our first to be welcomed by both the National Commander and National Adjutant via video. It was our first to have a National guest give us a class via video teleconferencing. National Membership Director Doug Wells brought us up to date on the Membership system. It was the first time we had done away with a lot of redundant reports and conducted six training modules, instead of four. And, it was our first banquet to have a non-DAV guest speaker. We were honored to have Auburn Head Baseball Coach Butch Thompson demonstrate to us just what the value of sound mentorship is and its value to any organization. What a great experience! Al Labelle, Chairman of the Interim National Legislative Committee came down to avoid the Wisconsin winter and joined us for the conference and CSO Certification. Past National Commander Moses McIntosh, a member of Shehan Pake [Chapter 7](#), also joined us for the conference.

Comrades

We had a truly great 2018 Mid-Winter Conference, with more CSO's, DSO's and HSC's getting certified than we ever have before. Our level II class was very large. Mike Michelotti and Michael Smith really earned their pay this time around and did a really great job. NSO Smith received many

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January and February were both busy with 8th District Mid-Winter Conferences. Louisiana was the week following ours with Tennessee being the following weekend. After skipping a week, Mississippi held their Mid-Winter. If you are not making an effort to attend other Department's conferences and conventions, you are missing out on some good camaraderie and the opportunity to share procedures and ideas. Just look at how many people from the 8th District come to our events.

February was also the time for our MSO van in the northern part of the state and Assistant NSO Supervisor Mary Stovall-Moore and NSO Jacqueline Jones did a superb job during that week providing services to Alabama's deserving veterans. They visited [Chapter 63](#), [51](#), [28](#) and [18](#). My chapter, Blount County [Chapter 28](#), was able to recruit, two new members, three Full life members and two transfers on that Saturday. A very rewarding day, all around. Remember, if you want the MSO van to come to your neck of the woods, you need to let Area Supervisor Mike Michelotti know, so he can try to arrange a visit.

By the time this is published, we will have completed the National Mid-Winter Conference. If everyone comes that says they are planning to come, we will have a very good team. The National Mid-Winter Conference is a great opportunity to see the workings of our National Legislative office and is an opportunity to come face-to-face with our law makers. PDC Laird Culver has jumped in and put together a great team and coordinated everything for us for a smooth trip. We also need everyone's help in putting the emphasis on the DAV's primary issues with your Representative and our two Senators. You may not be able to go to Washington with us, but you can sure use the telephone or e-mail to contact their State or Federal office and let your desires be known. We have a lot of

important issues that our legislators need to act upon, and you can help in this effort. Go to the DAV National website or our web site to keep yourself up to date on those issue. The more they hear from us, the more chance they will realize we do really care what they do.

On the 15th of March the VA is holding a Women Veterans Summit at Samford University in Birmingham. Commander Deborah Walker is one of the featured speakers for that event. We'll have an informational table set up for that event so we can provide attendees with information on the DAV's programs. Assistant National Legislative Director Shurhonda Love has been assisting me in providing the latest, most up-to-date materials for the summit. Department Women Veterans Coordinator Tawanna Jones and members of [Chapter 1](#), along with members of [Chapter 4](#) will be there to assist women veterans in attendance at the summit.

Our districts will be reviving their annual meetings again during the month of March. Since the only required "meeting" for the Districts is at the Department Convention, the district meetings are going to be a lot more relaxed and family oriented. PDC Rick Freeman and the members of [Chapter 21](#) are going to host a picnic at the Veterans Memorial Park in Piedmont, so that should be a lot of fun. All the meetings will be in March, so hopefully there will be some good weather associated with them.

This will be the last newsletter that will be edited by Dr. James Martin. His new job is much more demanding of his time and requires much more extensive travel, so he has opted to relinquish this responsibility. I know that many of you have contacted Dr. Martin and asked him for his assistance with your newsletter. I'm glad that he was able to help you. Who will be the new Editor? That, we have not answered yet, but hopefully we will be able to continue to give you an informative bi-monthly update on Alabama's happenings.

8th District Conventions will get started again in May, beginning with Mississippi 2-6 May. If you have someone who missed out on CSO certification, let me know so I can coordinate with Adjutant Leo Windham to secure an open slot. All the dates and locations are in the events calendar.

Lastly, everyone please keep plugging away at your recruitment. We still need over 600 to meet our goal, but it is obtainable. SVC Tatum and all our DEC's are working hard to identify those potential members that we need to recruit. We can do it.

Respectfully,

Chad Richmond



News & Views Article Due Dates:

May Issue – [Due to Chad April 2018](#)

July Issue – [Due to Chad June 2018](#)

All Articles due the 20th of the month prior to the publishing of the newsletter. (January due December 15th, due to the Holiday season)

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DAV Upcoming Events

- March 12, 2018: VAMC Birmingham Town Hall Meeting, Birmingham, AL
- March 15, 2018: VA Women Veterans Summit, [Samford University](#), Birmingham, AL
- March 17, 2018: 3rd District Meeting, [Chapter 12](#), Montgomery, AL
- March 24, 2018: 2nd District Picnic, [Chapter 21](#), Piedmont, AL
- March 29, 2018: East Alabama Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony, Auburn HS, Auburn, AL
- March 31, 2018: 4th District Commanders Call, [Chapter 9](#), Enterprise, AL
- April 6, 2018: SBVA Meeting, RSA Union Building, Montgomery, AL
- April 13, 2018: DAVA National Commander Craig Johniken Testimonial Dinner, San Antonio, TX
- April 13-15, 2018: Troy Baseball Military Appreciation, Troy University, Troy, AL
- April 27-27, 2018: DAV National Commander Delphine Metcalf=Foster Testimonial Dinner, Pullman Hotel, San Francisco, CA
- May 2-6, 2018: Department of Mississippi Convention, [Drury Inn and Suites](#), Meridian, MS
- May 17-20, 2018: Department of Louisiana Annual Convention, [Clarion Shreveport Airport](#), Shreveport, LA
- May 31 – June 3, 2018: Department Convention, The [Hotel at Auburn University](#)
- June 14-17, 2018: Department of Tennessee Convention, [Doubletree Inn](#), Murfreesboro, TN
- June 23-26, 2018: Commanders and Adjutants Orientation, [Embassy Suites](#), Covington, KY
- July 6, 2018: SBVA Meeting, RSA Union Building, Montgomery, AL
- July 14-17, 2018: National Convention, [Grand Sierra Resort and Casino](#), Reno, NV
- September 15, 2018: Annual Black and White POW/MIA Banquet, Shocco Springs, AL
- October 5, 2018: SBVA Meeting, RSA Union Building, Montgomery, AL
- October 13, 2018: Chapter Commander and Adjutant Orientation, Montgomery, AL
- October 20, 2018: Department of Alabama 5K Run, Auburn, AL
- November 12, 2018: Veterans Appreciation Monday, Golden Corral, Statewide
- January 3-6, 2019: Department of Alabama Mid-Winter Conference, [Auburn Marriott Opelika Hotel and Conference Center at Grand National](#), Opelika, AL



Benefits Protection Team Leader

Laird Culver



Yes! I know by the time this newsletter makes it to you, that we will have been to and involved ourselves in the matter of making our collective voices heard in Washington, DC. My anticipation is piquing to see how many of the members of this department will be descending on the Arlington area in the next week.

For those of you who did not make it and would like to be involved, you can read the [2018 Critical Policy Goals](#), also known as Talking Points, which DAV National has deemed as the most important in the coming months. My thanks to Lisa Bogle for getting this information out to us in time to prep. There is nothing more nerve racking than to receive the talking points the night before your visit to see those folks in need of another meeting or two. I did say meeting! Don't get me started James! Folks! If you do decide to talk to your representatives in the DC area sometime, it would be a good idea to keep a record of it using some tool like the [DAV National Lobbying Evaluation Form](#). This will allow you to remember what is said and agreed to during the meeting and is a way you can report it to DAV National Legislative Director, Joy Ilem.

Now there are some of you out there, Benefits Protection Team Leaders/Members, who still are unaware of all the information available to you in the conduct of "wearing your hat." I am more than happy to give

Comrades,

Howdy doodie everyone!

As of this writing I am avoiding calling the SVC back, even after he asked me to call him at the soonest opportunity. Well, let me call him right now...

Alright! I am back and it looks as though there is a new DAV Chapter webmaster in the works over and up there in Selma. It will be good to have her on board and I told our esteemed SVC they can give me a call anytime she needs assistance. Now back to the business at hand!

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you a primer on what you can do to educate yourselves on the job.

First go to the [DAV National](#) website! Next check out the [DAV Benefits Protection Team](#) website! Click on the links to learn about [The Legislative Process and You](#), [Building a Network of Networks for DAV](#), [Sample Meeting Request Letters](#), [Guidelines for a Successful Congressional Meeting](#), [After the Meeting Letter Suggestions](#), [Sample Email to House Member or Senator](#), [Thank You Letters](#), [Fix the VA for the Long Run](#), [Invitations](#), [Grasstops Survey](#), [Grasstops](#), [Sample Op-eds](#), etc.,...

Need more proof there is more than enough information out there to get you up and running as a quality BPTL or BPTM? Check out the [video](#) put out by the DAV! If you want to look information up on your own on YouTube or some other site, type in Disabled American Veterans and click search.

See! There is plenty of information for you to read to do the job of Benefits Protection in your chapter or department and it is made available from all of those wonderful folks at DAV National Legislative Headquarters! It is that easy to school yourselves up on what is going on in the DAV and what might help you promote our organization and the issues which should be as important to you and me as the flag, baseball and apple pie!

I have to go now as I believe I am receiving a call from another DAV Department of Alabama officer in need of assistance. I was nearly done anyhow. Now, get out there and protect **YOUR** benefits by being involved!

With a big salute and greeting of the day!

Respectfully,

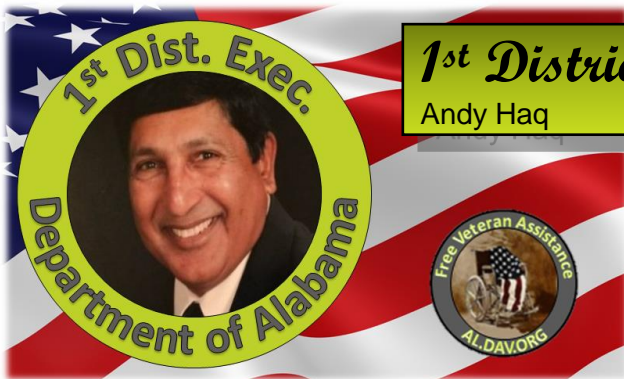
Laird Culver



[Contact your House Representative](#)



[Contact your Senate Representative](#)



1st District Executive Committeeman

Andy Haq

veterans and put a smile on their faces and sometime just listening to them. They are the ones who decorate the floats during the Veterans day parade. They are the ones that bake a cake and take it to the Veterans homes (Tut Fann), and brightens the day of the sick veteran. They are the ones that write get well cards to sick veterans. I can go on and on.

I urge all chapters to stop and take a look at what these folks are doing for you and just thank them.

Comrades,

I would like to dedicate this news letter to all the DAV- Auxiliaries Units. They are really helping the Chapters to be successful

The Auxiliaries Units are the ones that are making coffee and cookies at the Veterans clinics. From time to time they are there welcoming the

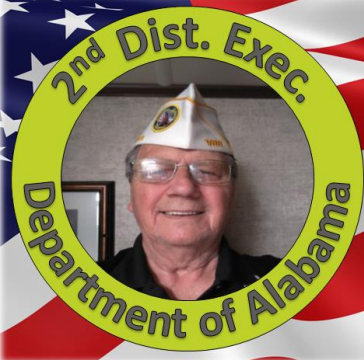
THANK YOU DAV- AUXILIARIES Units together we make the DAV great

Respectfully,

Andy Haq

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2nd District Executive Committeeman

Gerald Mortz



Comrades,

I am proud to announce that [Chapter 21](#) is hosting its first District Picnic at Piedmont Al. on the 24th of March 2018. It will be held at the VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK ON HWY 21 in Piedmont they will start at 11:00am and food will be served at noon. This is the first one in District two, and we are inviting everyone to come and bring the family. There will be games, music, and a WONDERFUL time. Please contact Commander Freeman email rf46df15@aol.com or State DAVA Commander Kirby at tamara.kirby@aol.com by March 10th so they know how much food to order. THANK YOU. Now we are doing good on recruiting, but we can do better [Chapter 28](#) has 3 transfers, and 4 new members. DECM Gerald Mortz has managed to get a box trailer donated to [Chapter 28](#) which they needed to put everything into when they go to events and set up. This will be an immense help for him.

Other chapters that recruited new members are Chapter 21 they signed up 3, [Chapter 98](#) signed up 3, [Chapter 78](#) signed up 1 lifetime, they also help a Veteran with his power bill, and they wanted to remind us about the BLACK and WHITE that is coming up on September 15, 2018. I'm proud of all the work that our District is doing to help our Veterans, because without your help it would be twice as hard for them to deal with the ever day problems that they each face. The Veterans home in Pell City was closed to the public due to the flu. They would only allow Staff in to work there shifts and I was told that they residents were being fed in their rooms the home was on lock down for about 1 ½ months, and they opened the home again to the public on the 9th of February 2018. It's getting about that time again to help at the Golden Coral for Camp Coral, and I hope that our District again does a great showing of support, so the children of our Veterans can go and be children and enjoy the experience of going to camp. [Chapter 27](#), is still helping our Veteran's when called upon to do so, and they have signed up a

couple of new members. Chapter 98 is still attempting to contact the delinquent members by Email or phone and encourage them to pay some or all of what is due. Hopefully they can lower their membership quota do getting some to pay on their dues. Congratulations to 9 of [Chapter 98](#) members for applying and being selected to go on the Anniston Elks lodge # 189 Alabama Freedom Flight to Washington D.C.to see the Arlington National Cemetery and War Memorials on April 18,2018. They are Comrades Derrel Newman, Terry French, David Keil, Randy Boyer, David Guemmer, Mike Clark, Phillip Pancake, Carl Hayes, and Francis Doyle. 98 will also be assisting Golden Coral with the Camp Coral fund raiser.

[Chapter 98](#) is also getting a much-needed van so they can continue to transport our Veterans to the VA hospital in Birmingham as well as their doctor's appointments. There will be a key exchange in the Spring date will be announced later.

Respectfully,

Gerald Mortz

MEDAL OF HONOR

James McCloughan – July 31, 2017

President Trump presented the Medal of Honor to an Army veteran who 48 years ago repeatedly risked his life to save 10 fellow soldiers during a deadly, days-long fight along Vietnam's central coast.

In recognizing James McCloughan, now a 71-year-old retired teacher from Michigan, Trump recounted a gripping tale of selflessness and bravery, sliding off script occasionally to emphasize just how hellish the battle was and to marvel that McCloughan and the other Americans who survived managed to overcome such extraordinary odds.

"He was one of 32 who fought until the end," the president said, glancing at McCloughan, who stood stoically a few steps to Trump's right, "and they held their ground against more than 2,000 enemy troops. Jim, I know I speak for everyone here when I say we are in awe of your actions and your bravery."

The brief but poignant White House ceremony marked the first time that Trump has presented the nation's highest combat award. Among the attendees were 10 men who fought alongside McCloughan at Tam Ky in May 1969, including five whose lives the former combat medic is credited with saving.

[Read more here](#)

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3rd District Executive Committeeman

Reuben Redd

Congratulation to the newly Certified Chapter Service Officers (CSO) let's get to work helping Veterans.

Recruitment is all our business so let's tell Veterans about DAV.

The 3rd. District Picnic will be held on Saturday March 17, 2018, at 9:00 am, [Chapter 12](#), 903 Maxwell Boulevard, Montgomery, Alabama 36104. I am excited about greeting 3rd. District Chapter members and other comraded at the Picnic. All DAV, Department of Alabama Officers are invited to our Picnic. Please come and let's have a great fellowship.

Respectfully,

Reuben Redd

Comrades,

I will recognize Comrade Hugo A. Perez, Bill Nichols [Chapter 13](#), Alexander City, Alabama for being selected as Veteran of the year for 2017 from 3rd. District. Comrade Perez is a very hard worker in his Chapter and the DAV, Department of Alabama where he serves as Officer of the Day.



4th District Executive Committeeman

Kerry Edwards

DAV March Membership Madness. This tournament will run from March 8thru March 28 and will organize our Departments in a bracket style format to encourage comradery and friendly competition. The onus is on individual Departments to coordinate and inspire members of their Chapters to assist with this effort.

March 29th East Alabama Viet Nam Veterans Welcome Home Ceremony, Auburn HS, Auburn AL.

March 31 4th DEC Gettogether Doug Tew Rec Center, Dothan AL.10:00-12:00

May 1st Pre Registration Forms are due for the DAV Department of Alabama 2018 State Convention.

May31-June 3,2018 Department Convention, The Hotel at Auburn University.

July 14-17,2018 National Convention, Grand Sierra Resort and Casino, Reno NV.

Jan.3-6,2019 Department of Alabama Mid-Winter Conference, [The Hotel at Auburn University, Auburn AL.](#)

Respectfully,

Kerry Edwards

Comrades,

Greetings Comrades, Mid-Winter Training was outstanding. The CSO/DSO and the level II Training by the NSO's was the best. Along with the other training made the conference a success. If there are any suggestions for any training you would like presented at the next Mid-Winter Conference, be sure to notify me.

Congratulation to [Chapter's 87, 7. 35](#) for their challenging work during the Annual Military Appreciation Day that was held at Colden Coral. The three Chapters raised a combined total of \$13,902.02. Keep up the magnificent work.

There will be a 4th DEC get together March 31,2018 10:00-12:00 at the Doug Tew Rec Center Dothan AL 36301. There will be Danishes, Donuts, Fruit, Coffee, Juice, and Fellowship. Everyone is cordially invited this event.





Women's Veterans of Alabama

Tawanna Jones



recognize Women Veterans (instead of "What's your spouse's last four?"); and Fitness Centers will be considered VA Physical Therapy.
Next month, March 15, 2018, the Birmingham VA Medical Center AlaVetNet Health Committee will host the first ever for Alabama, "Inaugural Women Veterans Health Expo" at the Samford University.

Women Veteran Health Expo
March 15, 2018
8:00am-4:30pm
Samford University School of Business
800 Lakeshore Drive Birmingham AL 35229

Comrades,

First, I give Honor and Glory to my LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, for all that I am.

To my DAV Comrades and families, something you probably didn't know, "Women Veterans are the fastest growing subgroup of veterans, with more than 2.2 million women veterans in the United States of which, 37,775 reside right here in Alabama".

I would like to take this opportunity to give "kudos" to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA). The leaps they have taking to insure our women veterans receive comprehensive, equitable care has been amazing! We can now receive: Primary Care provided by specially trained and experienced designated women's health providers; Non-VA Care and Coordination; Inpatient and Residential Services; Gynecology Care; Maternity Care; Specialty Care and Mental Health Services; Breast and Cervical Cancer Screening; and Sexual Trauma Counseling, to name a few. The VA has come a long way and it's just a matter of time before the VA becomes a national leader in health care for women.

My future predictions of VA health care for Women Veterans: Women Veterans will be able to choose the gender of their health care provider; Childcare will be provided; VA employees will soon

For more information, please email Amy Southern at Amy.Southern@va.gov.

I welcome all comments/suggestions that will aid our Veterans Affairs Medical Centers in making our healthcare system better for our Women Veterans. My email address: jonestawanna_DAV@aol.com.

Respectfully,

Tawanna Jones



**1.855.VA.WOMEN
WOMEN VETERANS
CALL CENTER**

The Women Veterans Call Center is your guide to VA.

Hours of Operation
Monday - Friday: 8:00 am - 10:00 pm ET
Saturday: 8:00 am - 6:30 pm ET
Phone: 1-855-829-6636

VA U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs





Department Chaplain
Debra Varner



Greetings to all DAV members and my fellow Comrades!

I yield honor and glory to God for this wonderful opportunity to serve the DAV department in the 'great State of Alabama. Thanks to all of you for allowing me to serve you, as your Department Chaplain. To those that attended the Mid-Winter Conference and shared with us a very moving and inspiring Memorial Service, Thank You. Thank you for sharing your hearts and thought of reflections of leaving "No Soldiers left behind" in our heart.

Our prayer is that the Lord will continue to lead and guide us, as we continue to follow the Great leaders that He has allowed to give us directions and instructions; and to be successful in all we endeavor to accomplish in 2Q18. We've served our country- we now seek continual service to the Lord- 'always winning" never being defeated.

As your Department Chaplain, I look forward to hearing your thoughts, ideas and

concerns. To the various chapters within the Alabama Department, if there are any special names to be mention at the next Memorial Services please forward them to me as soon as possible. Thank you for your cooperation in advance It is with great expectation in 2018 that I am looking forward to what in instore for DAV Alabama. Let's Push forward, let's pray forward and meet our goals together.

I can be reached@ (mail) 404 Lorain Street-Birmingham, Alabama 35224-email-godisone@bellsouth.net (phone) 205-586-2419-should any needs, prayer request or concerns arises.

Isaiah 40:31-But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint. This is the confidence that we have: John 5: 14- And this is the confidence that we have in him, that, if we ask any thing according to his will, he hears us: And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

Respectfully,

Debra Varner



Chaplain's Corner

MY FATHER ...

- Loves me [John 3:16](#)
- Cares for Me [Psalm 103](#)
- Renews Me [Isaiah 40:31](#)
- Protects Me [Psalm 23:4](#)
- Redeems Me [Job 19:25](#)
- Is Preparing a Place for Me [Psalm 139](#)
- Understands & Accepts Me [Psalm 139](#)
- Guides & Teaches Me [Psalm 25:9](#)



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DAVA Commander

Tamara Kirby

Greetings from the DAVA,

The DAV Auxiliary Unit is the Chapters biggest advocate. We support the Chapter in whatever way necessary to make "IT" successful.

How?

We spread the word to VETERANS as well as their family members. DAVA Units help increase the membership of DAV as well as DAVA Unit when signing up (NEW) members.

When DAV needs help at a fundraiser, DAVA Unit members can make themselves available to help in any way necessary.

During military-service related holidays such as Veterans Day, Memorial Day, Military Appreciation Day and Independence Day, DAVA Units (including Junior members) can assist.

DAVA respond to a national issue or trend affecting veterans by aiding in being proactive and active in contacting government (local, State and Federal) on bills relational to veterans and their families.

DAVA goes out in the community to your VA hospitals, nursing homes to see about those

veterans who may have needs family cannot help with. Letting them know "they are not forgotten." I would hope you all would want someone to do the same for you or family member. Question: How many of you have visited nursing homes or hospitals and presented gifts to veterans' or just visited a fellow veteran?

We, the DAV Unit, does the meticulous work you all don't have the time to do because you are writing claims, helping to meet the financial needs of a veterans, etc. The DAV Auxiliary Department also has funds to help veterans and their family members in need. The Service Support Fund. Just need to get the word out. We can pick up that slack for the Chapter also! Just ask your Unit about it.

A DAVA Unit can only be successful with the SUPPORT of its counterpart, the Chapter!

The Chapters represent veterans who served by helping veterans because, as veterans, your moto is "we don't leave a fellow service member behind. No one should have to go it alone."

Don't forget, while you were serving our country, your family was serving also, alongside you by supporting you in what area necessary so YOU could do your job!

FAMILY MEMBERS SERVED TOO! We family members represent the UNITS!

With this in mind, "not leaving anyone behind" or "going it alone", the Chapter is basically doing this --- you are leaving your biggest supporter or advocate BEHIND --- your Unit ---better yet, your family members!!!!

I urge you to get a Unit or get your Unit running again.

Respectfully,

Tamara Kirby



NSO Office Supervisor

Michael Michelotti

If the claimant is denied a benefit and the one year deadline for filing a Notice of Disagreement* (NOD) has expired or the appeals process has been exhausted (i.e. denied by the Board of Veteran Appeals), it is considered a finally adjudicated claim. In order for a claimant to SUCCESSFULLY reopen a finally adjudicated claim, he or she must submit New and Material evidence.

- 1.) New, in order for the evidence to be considered "new" it must not be duplicative or cumulative of evidence previously considered.
- 2.) Material, in order for the evidence to be "material" it must relate to an unestablished fact necessary to substantiate the claim for eligibility

If the claim is for service connection, keep in mind, there are three elements to establishing entitlement to service connection for disabilities incurred in or caused by active military service.

Comrades,

How to successfully reopen a "Finally Adjudicated Claim".

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- 1.) There must be evidence of a current clinical diagnosis of the disability you're claiming.
- 2.) There must be evidence of an in-service diagnosis, injury, or event which has resulted in the disability you're claiming, i.e. x-ray of a broken bone, noise exposure, Agent Orange exposure, etc.
- 3.) There must be evidence of how 1 and 2 above are related to each other, e.g. did your in-service tibia fracture result in knee arthritis... did your in-service noise exposure result in your current hearing loss. This is normally done in the form of a nexus medical opinion describing the relationship/link between 1 and 2.

Example: If the VA denies your claim for service connection as there is "no current diagnosis for the claimed condition", the only thing you can submit that will be both new and material to the claim is documentation of a current diagnosis.

Example: If the VA denies your claim for service connection as "there was no documentation of an in-service injury or event in your service treatment record", the only thing you can submit that will be both new and material to the claim is documentation of the in-service event or injury.

Example: If the VA denies your claim for service connection as "although there is evidence of a current diagnosis and evidence an in-service event, our examiner found connection between your current diagnosis and the in-service event", the only thing you can submit that will be both new and material to the claim is a medical nexus opinion or medical treatises providing the link.

* If you're in disagreement with a recent VA decision do you self a favor and consider asking the VA to "Reconsider" the decision. Here's why...an NOD takes approximately 24 months for the Regional Office to review and address; quite

possibly continuing the denial if no new and material evidence is submitted to change the decision. Reconsiderations, on the other hand, if accompanied by new and material evidence can be reviewed and addressed in 3 to 6 months. Did you catch the part about the NOD "quite possibly continuing the denial if no new and material evidence is submitted to change the decision"? Discuss with your National Service Officer and see if reconsideration is best for your claim...probably is.

STRAIGHT FROM THE VA: M21-1 Adjudication Procedure Manual Reopened Claims: The Importance of New and Material Evidence III.ii.2.D.1.a. Definition: Reopened Claim

A claim to reopen is a request to review a previously finally decided claim or other determination. A successfully **reopened claim** is a claim to reopen that is accompanied by new and material evidence.

III.ii.2.D.1.c. Difference Between a Claim to Reopen and a Claim for Reconsideration

A claim for reconsideration differs from a claim to reopen in that the decision at issue in a claim to reopen has become final.

III.ii.2.D.1.d. Definition: New and Material Evidence New evidence

- is evidence not previously of record, and
- is neither cumulative nor redundant.

Material evidence

- is relevant evidence that, when considered by itself or considered with previous evidence of record, relates to an unestablished fact necessary to substantiate the claim,
- has a legitimate influence or bearing on the decision in the case, and
- is neither cumulative nor redundant.

III.ii.2.D.1.f. Requirement for New and Material Evidence for Reopening a Claim

New and material evidence is required before VA will reopen a finally denied claim or other eligibility determination.

III.ii.2.D.2.b. Form Requirements for Claims to Reopen

The claim must be submitted on a prescribed form. VA encourages the use of VA Form 21-526EZ, Application for Disability Compensation, which provides the claimant with the requirements to successfully reopen a claim.

Respectfully, *Mike Michelotti*

NSO Office Information

eBenefits Information

Once a decision is rendered in either a claim or an appeal, we will have the opportunity to review the decision prior to your notification. If the decision is in accordance with the law, we will release the decision to the VA and provide you with an unofficial notification by mail. You can track the status of your claim through e-Benefits by signing up at:

[Click here for eBenefits.](#)



VA Regional Office
[345 Perry Hill Road](#)
[Montgomery, AL 36109](#)

Office: 334-213-3365
 Fax: 334-213-5661

NSO Office hours for NSO contact/Interview:

By Appointment: Call office phone

Office hours for telephone calls:
 Monday – Friday: 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM

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Department Meetings

For an invite, email culverla1@yahoo.com



TOWNHALL TELECONFERENCE

When: Monthly on the 2nd Saturday

How: Call (641) 715-3273
Access Code: 991969#

- This is a FREE call!!!



Tired of feeling in the dark?

Want to know what is going on in the Department?

Would you like a little more help in conducting DAV business?

ONLINE / OVER THE PHONE TRAINING

When: Monthly on the 4th Saturday

How: Call (323) 920-0091
Access Code: 3727660#

- This call is FREE too!!!

Department Contacts

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Auxiliary Commander

Tamara Kirby
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tamara.kirby@aol.com



Contact your local [DAV Chapter](#) to volunteer your assistance with transporting Veterans to their appointments.

[Find your Chapter Contact HERE](#)

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