



May/June
2018

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Volume 22 | Number 6



D-DAY JUNE 6, 1944

Congress recognized the DAVWW's unique and outstanding service on June 17, 1932, issuing a federal charter to the organization. This document recognized the DAVWW as the official voice of the nation's wartime disabled veterans. Gaining this charter represented achievement of a goal cherished by the DAVWW since its first National Convention, 11 years earlier.

DAV CHARTERED!

D-Day, the largest amphibious landing in history, began in the early-morning hours as Allied forces landed in Normandy on the northern coast of France. Operation Overlord took months of planning and involved 1,527,000 soldiers in 47 Allied divisions along with 4,400 ships and landing craft, and 11,000 aircraft. The Germans had about 60 divisions spread along France and the Low Countries. American forces landed on two western beaches, Utah and Omaha, while British and Canadian troops landed farther east on Gold, Juno and Sword beaches. By the end of the day 150,000 Allied soldiers and their accompanying vehicles had landed with 15,000 killed and wounded.

Camp Marks, Washington, DC, June 1932



Down Hall Meeting



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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



Fellow Comrades,
I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my sincere appreciation for the outstanding support you provided during my Town Hall visits in your districts. I have received countless laudatory comments regarding the Town Halls. The purpose of the Town Halls was to hear our members speak unfiltered, about their chapter, the Department and about themselves.

Realizing our chapters are the "beating heart of our Department", I wanted to make sure our chapter members knew that I was not an ornamental commander or a star in my own reality show. I decided to task our four District Executive Committee members to set up Town Halls in their Districts.

These Town Halls forced me to get up and out and stop waiting for something to happen. I had started to question myself about "cheapening the role of Department Commander" by sitting at home with not much to do. The Town Halls made

me "ride the red clay dirt", wade in the flood waters, pull my long drawers back out, and pay for a few speeding tickets but it was well worth it (Exception: Paying the speeding tickets). What made my visits so much more rewarding, I never asked our Department Senior Vice Commander Willie Tatum, Adjutant Chad Richmond, 1st Junior Vice Jerry Morgan, 2nd Junior Vice Eugene Zeigler, Judge Advocate Chris Crauthers, Inspector General Pete Cobb, District 2 Executive Committee Member Gerald Moritz, Past Department Commanders Laird Culver and Charles Waugh, Auxiliary Commander Tamara Kirby and Past State Commander Danny Doss to join me during these visits but they let me know, without saying a word, "we are family" they all rode the "red clay dirt roads", lost shoes in the flooding waters, and got a few speeding tickets right along with me. THANK YOU ALL!

The Town Halls provided an excellent time for members to: identify shortfalls in the Department and their chapters; to strengthen the Department mission effectiveness and efficiency; to motivate and promote DAV discipline; improve chapter, auxiliary, and leadership excellence up and down the chain of command; identify issues interfering with efficiency, discipline, effectiveness, compliance, performance, and leadership excellence; find out what new and innovative ideas our chapter members have to offer that could help make our Department and chapters more efficient; and most importantly, find out the future desires of our chapter members as far as what or where they would like to be with the DAV in the near future. *A lot of good information was gathered at these Town Halls but there's always one that you never forget.*

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A commander came up to me during a break and said, "Commander, younger members are joining our chapters with completed college degrees and vast experience in the real world. They are fueled by a desire to be a part of something and to feel like they are making a difference. We as their leaders/mentors had better prepare ourselves for their "whys?" and I strongly recommend we embrace their "whys?" and not vilify them".

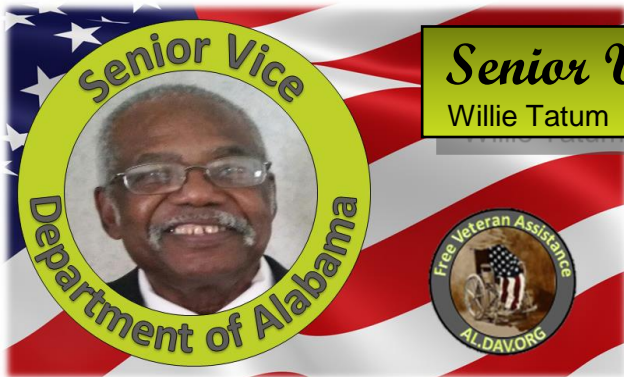
The list of feedback from members of our districts consist s of a lot of "whys" but overall it was very positive. I am not sure if I will post them in our Convention Fundraiser Ad book (\$100) or hand them available as handouts (\$free) to all

Convention attendees. One thing for sure, there were no unanswered questions thanks to our Department officers

Being the Commander of the Department of Alabama DAV has been the privilege of a lifetime. Standing on the shoulders of the giants who paved the way ahead of me, I took on this sacred duty of leading our Alabama Disabled Veterans being absolutely committed to servant leadership. It has truly been my honor and joy to serve as your Commander.

I thank you and your families for your continued dedication and commitment to the DAV. Looking forward to seeing all of you at our Department Convention in Auburn, Alabama on May31st and please do not forget to **WEAR RED ON FRIDAYS!**

Deborah "Debb" Walker, Commander



Senior Vice Commander

Willie Tatum

Comrades,

Greetings to you all. First let me say that this will be my last News and View s article as your Sr. Vice Commander. I want to thank those who have worked with us so hard to make our recruiting goal. We have tried some new methods that may not have been as successful as we hoped. There are still a couple of months left on this membership year and we have to make the best of it, so don' t give up do your best. Remember that all trial members that have been on your list for three or more years will drop off at the end of this membership year. Do not let them go without contacting them and giving them the opportunity to switch over.

The first ever District Town Hall Meeting got off to a good start. It was an opportunity for all members come out in an informal setting and express what was on their minds. It was also a chance for

them to hear from their department leadership what they were trying to do. If it is one thing I learned it is that we have a lot of talent in this department. My hope is that we see more young members stepping up to become leaders in our department. I know that we all have other things we could be doing. But, remember we are veterans helping veterans and that should be our focus.

The department conventions are fast approaching and I' m hoping for a great turnout. If you are concerned about our department you must get involved, so I hope to see a lot of new faces there. Let your voice be heard. Although preregistration s must be in by May pt you will still be able to register onsite. Also, if you intend to seek a department office your officer candidate sheet must be in by May 1st.

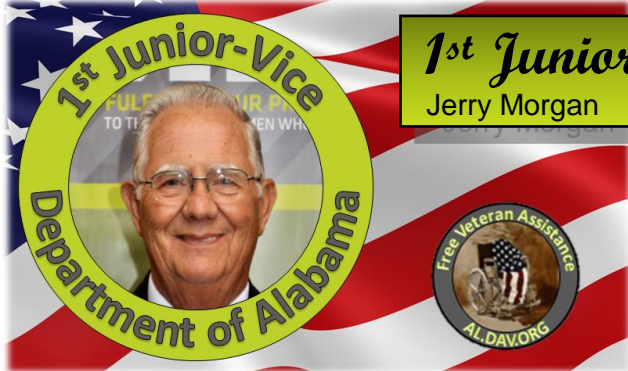
I want to let you all know that it has been my honor to serve as your Department Sr Vice Commander. Although we did not achieve all that we wanted, we did the best we could. I will continue to work toward increasing our membership, and I hope you will join me. I am asking for your support and your vote as the next Department Commander. I promise you that I will give you my very best and together we will continue to move Alabama forward. Thank you and Semper fi!

Respectfully,

Willie Tatum

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1st Junior Vice Commander

Jerry Morgan

Comrades,

I cannot believe that my year as serving you as the 1st JVC for the year 2017 - 2018 is coming to an end. I have learned much more about how the Department DAV works and how the Department fits in working with the local chapters.

I have attended the Commander's Call at the district level and have enjoyed meeting some members for the first time. We all need to give Commander Walker a pat on the back and a big thank you for the format that the meetings have followed. If you have not attended one of the meetings I feel that you have missed a great chance to voice your concern about DAV, the Department DAV or your chapter. This has been a learning experience to see how people have been able to voice concerns and know that they

will be taken in the manner given without a fear of a reprimand. It has been an eye opener for me to hear the members tell about what they do in their chapter and the abilities that they have. However, it has not been a surprise that there are members with hidden or unknown abilities that just have not been asked to use their abilities to help in the DAV nor have they volunteered for positions. It has been a surprise that so many members did not know about the monthly town hall telephone meeting and the monthly computer training that is open to all DAV members and not just for chapter officers. There are so many members with untapped abilities within the Alabama Department of DAV family that need to look at taking on a position at the Department level as well as additional positions within their chapters.

I have been honored to serve as your 1st Junior Vice Commander for this year and ask that you consider allowing me to serve as your next Senior Vice Commander.

Respectfully,

Jerry Morgan

May 1, 1960 - An American U-2 spy plane flying at 60,000 feet was shot down over Sverdlovsk in central Russia on the eve of a summit meeting between President Dwight D. Eisenhower and Soviet Russia's Premier Nikita Khrushchev. The sensational incident caused a cancellation of the meeting and heightened existing Cold War tensions. The pilot, CIA agent Francis Gary Powers, survived the crash, and was tried, convicted and sentenced to 10 years in

prison by a Russian court. Two years later he was released to America in exchange for an imprisoned Soviet spy. On his return to America, Powers encountered a hostile public which apparently believed he should not have allowed himself to be captured alive. He died in a helicopter crash in 1977

FRANCIS GARY POWERS

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2nd Junior Vice Commander Eugene Zeigler



Comrades

I attend the Mid-Winter conference held in Arlington Va. Many issues were discussed, for example. My VA, putting the veterans first.

Appeals Modernization and RAMP.

Current Appeal Process, takes too long. On average veterans are waiting three years for a resolution on their appeals. This process is too complex, veterans do not understand the process, it contains too many steps and it is very challenging to explain it to them in a way that is understandable.

Appeals Modernization Act

On August 23, 2017, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 was signed into law. The new law does not take effect until February 2019.

The law creates a new decision review process, which features three lanes:
Higher-Level Review, an entirely new review of the claim by and experience adjudicator.,

Supplemental Claim, and opportunity to submit additional evidence.

Appeal, review by the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

Choosing one lane over another does not prevent the Veterans/Representative from later choosing a different lane.

VA began a new program known as the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP) on November 1, 2017.

RAMP allows eligible Veterans with pending compensation appeals the option to have their decisions reviewed in the new higher-level review or supplemental claim lanes. Participation is voluntary.

I would like to thank the department for giving me the opportunity to be your very first 2nd Junior vice Commander. I carry out all my assignment and other duties. Now I am seeking the office of 1st Junior Vice Commander for the Department of Alabama.

Respectfully

Eugene Zeigler



Department Adjutant Charles "Chad" D. Richmond



Comrades

I hope this newsletter actually resembles something close to what you have been used to seeing in the past as News and Views. I'm really scratching my head trying to figure out how to do it, because I have no idea where to start. I have a greater respect for Dr. James Martin than I ever had before. Now I know

what he went through six times a year. Anita Perez has volunteered to take over the newsletter responsibility. She knows a lot more than me, so we will be in good hands.

Commander Debb Walker tried something new this year, and it was a great success. The district townhall meetings were very beneficial and were very productive. Sadly, the attendance overall was less than 50% of the chapters being represented. This was an opportunity for everyone to get everything off their chest with free reign to do so. We had a lot of good suggestions and also confirmed that we have a lot of information that is not being utilized or being passed on down to the lowest level. The sharing of information is everyone's responsibility, not just commanders and adjutants. However, that's one of the key elements involved in communications. We all need to do a better job of using our web site and social media.



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Commander Walker also let the cat out of the bag at the very first meeting. She announced that I will be retiring after next year's meeting. She announced that I will be retiring after next year's department convention, which is true. June 1, 2019 will be my last day as Department Adjutant. I will, however, continue as Blount County Chapter 28's Adjutant and Vice Chairman of the State Board of Veterans Affairs. So, what does that mean? Someone needs to step up to the plate and work with me during the next year so there can be a smooth transition at next year's convention. There's another catch, too. Art and Fay Mille will be stepping down as the host and hostess of the hospitality room. They have been fantastic during the nine years we have served together as a team, but they are ready for a rest. This year will be Treasurer Sam MacMaster's last year as Department Treasurer, also. Once again, we need someone to come on board and go before the nominating committee for this important position. He will still function until June 30, since that is the end of the membership year. He will also be available to help with the annual finance report.

During the last year, there have been many complaints about us continuing to come to The Hotel At Auburn University. I understand this completely, because we are always competing with incoming Freshman families, basketball teams from the SEC and other Auburn University events. This has caused many of our members to stay at other hotels. With that being the case, Eugene Benford arranged a meeting for Commander Walker, SVC Tatum and me to meet with the event planner for the Marriott Auburn Opelika Grand National as a possible change for our 2019 Mid-Winter training conference. We were very impressed with the facilities and their offerings to us. There are 186 rooms available to us, as well as access to the Robert Trent Jones Golf Course, walking trails, hotel shuttle, two restaurants, fishing pond, large patio with swimming pool and jacuzzi, grilling area and many more perks. The Department Executive Committee voted unanimously to move the Mid-Winter Conference to that location. I will give you a PowerPoint presentation of the facility at the Department Convention. I think everyone will be impressed with the Marriott and their staff.

And, we are rapidly approaching that convention. It will be upon us in a little over a month. Any Convention bids, fundraiser requests, nomination packets, veteran of the year nominations and convention book ads are all due to me NLT May 1. Proposed changes to the Department C&BL should be forwarded to JAG Chris Crauthers. Our National Guests will be Past National Commanders Sandy and Mike Dobmeier.

They are a great team and we have been honored to have them visit us before. We also will have as special guest speaker for our banquet, Auburn Head Basketball Coach Bruce Pearl. There will also be a couple of surprises during the convention. Looking forward to seeing you there.

There's a lot more to come after our convention, too. I know many of you will not go to the National Convention since it is in Reno, but for those of you who can, you need to let 8th NEC Johnnie Carver know if you would like to serve on one of the committees that meet at the National Convention. He will be at our convention, so please let him know. You also need to get your name on your chapter's delegate list that has to be mailed into National membership. Chapter should be receiving those soon, if not already in hand. If you do plan to go, the 8th District meeting is on Friday, July 13 at 1:00 PM.

Respectfully,

Chad Richmond

News & Views Article Due Dates:

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

September Issue – [Due to Anita August 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)



DAV Upcoming Events

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:	Auburn Run For Vets 2018 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
February 24-27, 2019:	National Mid-Winter Conference, Crystal Gateway Marriott, Alexandria, VA
August 3-7, 2019	National Convention, Orlando
July 31-August 4, 2020:	National Convention, Dallas, TX
July 24-27, 2021:	National Convention, Reno, NV
August 5-9, 2022:	National Convention, Orlando, FL
August 5-8, 2023:	National Convention, Atlantic City, NJ



Benefits Protection Team Leader

Laird Culver



Good day to you! I hope all of you are well and satisfied in your level of commitment to our organization. Benefits protection is a program which only works with you! If you are not a member of the [DAV Commanders Action Network](#), you are riding the bench. This obviously means you are satisfied with the direction your representatives in Washington, DC are going in regards to your benefits. You apparently don't mind there are those who are trying to close down your access to the VA health care provided by the VA medical centers and clinics. You must be that veteran who doesn't mind the prospect of losing all

the benefits or research and treatment provided exclusively to veterans by these centers. Perhaps it is because you got yours and you don't care if it is there for the veterans in the future. I would hope none of this is true, but if you do not get set up on the [DAV Commanders Action Network](#), contact your [representatives](#), get involved in your state and community and get your politicians at all levels involved, you may as well pick up the remote, eat your chips and vegetate in front of your television.

Well, if you are tired of watching YouTube and the cute cats, laughing babies or crazy drivers you can log into the DAV website and get some information and make an impact through a little thing called email. It is easy as putting your email out there to get updates or get online and just send emails from the advocacy page where you can see all the CAN issues which need your push to the representatives.

Sitting in a conference at Fort Eustis this past month, the presenters gave us an acronym, WOOP, and I think it applies. It all comes down to this:

- WISHING** - for the VA and your benefits to be there in years to come;
- OUTCOME** - hopes need to be identified so you can act on them;
- OBSTACLES** - need to be identified concerning bills in process and the representatives supporting and not supporting;

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PLAN - to get involved so that your voice is heard.

With the writing of this communication, I am reminded of a line from a [Grateful Dead](#) tune, "...What a long strange trip its been..." I joined the DAV and got involved in the [DAV Department of Alabama](#) as a result of seeing all the good the DAV does for our service connected disabled veterans. I was drawn to how the focus of the DAV has always been to help the men and women who had given the country their best and, in some cases, came out of the military with some serious wear and tear. The DAV in my humble opinion is the premier veterans service organization helping new, old and future veterans in obtaining their earned and well-deserved benefits. Strangely, I had no intentions to do anything other than work at the chapter service officer level in the organization.

I do appreciate all of you who I have the honor Calling comrade and the support you have given me as a chapter executive chair and later Commander, I had some outstanding support from those who had the same vision for the chapter. As a department JVC, SVC and commander I had a great time and my command staff was first rate. Before all of this though, I took the positions of director of employment, director of training, webmaster, social media I held on to those positions during the past 8 years with the exception of a year away from director of employment during my year as your department commander. This wasn't because I wanted to do all of those jobs, but no one was stepping up to volunteer and I am proud of what this department had/has accomplished. It was rough sometimes, but with everyone's help we got through it.

During our last visit to Montgomery for our department convention, then LT Governor Kay Ivey presented the department with good news concerning our award of a line item in the budget for our HSCs and in support of our van transportation network. I had a front row seat to all the effort made in compiling information, working with the HSC coordinator and NSO supervisor to have the numbers to get to the representatives. I heard the phone calls, both made and returned, in getting this information this information to the legislators and their staffs. My support person, Becky knew it took contacting more than one person to change anything in the state budget. She knew it was not one conversation which would have the desired effect. She created the letters to be posted for members to see and fill in to send to their representatives.

She has continued to do this for the past five years, and it all started with a little conversation she overheard between [Chad Richmond](#), [Charles Waugh](#) and me at a convention in 2013. She knew it was important for the DAV to have the funds and I thank her for her perseverance on this issue for the past five years. With a network of support from all chapters, this became a great victory in getting HSC funding. That is just one example of what can be accomplished when we work as a team. It takes me back to my original point of contacting your representatives, both national and state on issues concerning veteran benefits. One person conversing with a politician is just a conversation, but it takes a number of people contacting a number of politicians to affect change and this is what this department did.

I had the honor of serving in a DAV National appointment as one on the Interim Legislation Committee as Jim Procnier, Al Labelle and Richard DiGloria, Joe Violante and I made the Benefits Protection Team a reality with the help of Joy Ilem and Leroy Acosta in the DAV National Legislative Office. It was not long after this that I took on the yoke of being the department benefits protection team leader.

Let there be no mistake, I could not have accomplished what I have and done what I have without the support of my wife, Becky. I would never have been able to accomplish any of this without your support as a department and the membership of this organization. All of that being typed, I would like to remind you that it is important for you to be involved at the chapter level, department level and national level if you are so inclined. Each of us have talents and those talents you all have can be used at this time in your department. The director of employment, director of training, webmaster, social media director and benefits protection team leader will be vacant as of our convention if no one contacts [Chad Richmond](#) or [Willie Tatum](#), who is most likely to take the next department command. I have to leave these positions as I have assumed increased responsibilities at work, yes, I still work for a living, and for time I feel I must set aside for my family. At a point in the future, I will once again be as active as I am right now, but for the time being I will be what I had intended in the beginning, a chapter service officer. I will be participating in my fourth [DAV 5K in Atlanta](#) this November to continue to help raise money for DAV National in the ways I can!

God bless each and everyone of you in all of your endeavors and challenges!

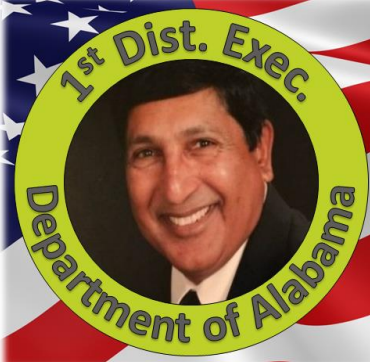
Laird Culver



[Contact your Senate Representative](#)



[Contact your House Representative](#)



1st District Executive Committeeman

Andy Haq



State Senior vice Commander Willie Tatum also addressed District One and touched upon the important fact that Huntsville and North Alabama is a very rich and fertile ground for Veterans and we should be doing more to recruit members as there are lot of veterans residing here. We also need to ensure the existing members to come back and be busy with the work we do for the Veterans.

State Auxiliary Commander Tamara Kirby also address the meeting and shared how the Auxiliary units are helping the Chapters and the need of the veterans to include the very sick and aging Veterans at the State Nursing homes and Hospitals. She emphasized that the Auxiliary units cannot exist without the chapters, Hence the chapters need to include the Auxiliary in as many activities as possible so we can help our veterans.

After the meeting district one enjoyed very delicious lunch which include Hamburgers, Hot dogs, rotisserie Chicken, Red Beans, Salad, cookies, cake, Corn, Philippine Egg Rolls, Philippine noodles etc. Chapters in District one continue to improve and help their chapters to be a better place. However, a lot more needs to be done to increase our membership and to convince and ensure the exiting membership that there is a lot they can do for their fellow comrades. Also ensure that the chapter reports such as the financial, chapter Service reports etc. are on time and accurate. So that the Chapters can run smoothly.

Respectfully,

Andy Haq

Comrades,

District one had its Town Hall meeting with the State commander on 7 April 2018. This meeting was held at the brand new, beautiful and spacious Raytheon Facility. Thanks a lot to Raytheon for letting the DAV use their facility. Present at the meeting were Chapter 11, 18 , 26 along with their Auxiliary units, also the Alabama State Commander Deborah Walker, Senior Vice Commander Willie Tatum, 1st Jr. Vice Commander Jerry Morgan, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander Eugene Zeigler and Auxiliary Commander Tamara Kirby.

The meeting although very relaxed and informal, it did have some traditional things such as the opening with a very powerful prayer by Chaplin George Baker. Also the traditional DAV Mission Statement was read by Senior vice Commander Gary Carpenter (Ch 26), and finally the DECM District One Andy Haq lead the pledge of Allegiance. The traditional things such as the Commanders gavel, wearing of DAV caps (Optional), and call of roll of officers, quorum and any Officers or committee's reports were missing.

Commander Walker in her opening remarks stated that she was very excited to be in Huntsville Alabama. She thanked the comrades and the Auxiliary units for showing up and she was very eager to listen to them all, and to all she did listen. Every comrade in the hall had an opportunity to speak their mind. Although the commander patiently listened to all she did ask some folk if they were willing to do a little more and volunteer to serve in the State offices such as the adjutant, Treasurer, Training and help with the day to day needs of the Website. She said that she was very impressed with the talent here in the First District and will be contacting those folks she identified for help. So Comrades open your hearts and let's help the Commander for what she needs.

8TH DISTRICT CONVENTIONS

Mississippi: May 3-6, Drury Inn, Meridian, MS

Louisiana: May 17-20, Clarion Airport Shreveport, LA

Alabama: May 31--June 3: The Hotel At Auburn Univ., Auburn, AL

Tennessee: June 14-17, Doubletree, Murfreesboro, TN

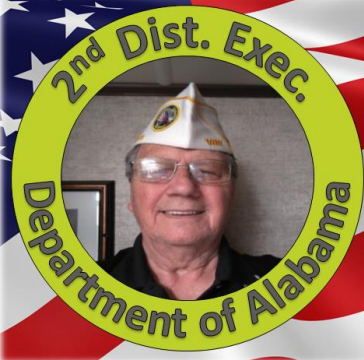
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2nd District Executive Committeeman

Gerald Mortz



Good Morning everyone. I hope you all had a wonderful Easter. I know I did. Well, I have been to two District functions and I have to say they were very enlightening. I will be attending the other two District functions and hope to see some of you there. I know we need to work on recruiting so we can get new members into our wonderful organization and find some new leadership throughout the state. We are all getting up in years so we need to start mentoring new or older members to be able to take our place and continue the work that we and others before us have started by helping our Veterans wherever they are. As members of the D A V it's our responsibility to try and help our chapters with recruiting and whatever else the Chapter needs to remain functional. We have Camp Corral coming up and I hope that every chapter that is helping Golden Corral to achieve their goal has the help and support of all its members by them stepping up and taking turns at their Golden Corral and making this year a better year for all the children that will attend Camp Corral.

Here's some input from Anniston-Oxford Chapter 98.

The past months have been busy for our Chapter for some of our members with recruiting efforts, Camp Corral fund raising and assisting veterans that needed assistance due to the tornados that hit our area.

We have also been involved with the Alabama Freedom Flight that is taking 100 plus veterans to Washington DC to visit the War Memorials and Changing of the Guard Ceremony at Arlington National Cemetery. If my count is right 12 of our Chapter 98 members will be on that flight as veterans or guardians.

Elections were held at our April meeting and we will have a few new faces as Chapter officers. For the first time since our charter in 2011 we had two females elected. Lisbeth Emerson was elected as Senior Vice Commander and Wilma Green was elected as an Executive Committee member. Congratulations to those two and to all elected officers for stepping up and getting more involved.

Our Chapter has been nominated for the "Non-Profit of the Year Award" to be presented by the Calhoun County Chamber of Commerce at an Awards Ceremony on May 1, 2018. If it had not been for the many hours of volunteer work by the CSO's, Van Drivers and other volunteers that are visible within the community assisting veterans, we probably would not have been considered. Thanks to all our volunteers involved in order for the Chapter to be recognized and considered for this award.

According to records with the Calhoun County Emergency Management Agency, during the tornado that struck on March 19, DAV chapters 21 and 98 were the **only** Veterans Service Organizations with in the tornado-stricken area that were registered with them to provide assistance.

Sincerely,

Gerald Mortz

VICTORY IN EUROPE

May 7, 1945 - In a small red brick schoolhouse in Reims, Germany, General Alfred Jodl signed the unconditional surrender of all German fighting forces thus ending World War II in Europe. Russian, American, British and French ranking officers observed the signing of the document which became effective at one minute past midnight on May 9th. Jodl was then ushered in to see Supreme Allied Commander, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, who curtly asked Jodl if he fully understood the document. Eisenhower then informed Jodl that he would be held personally responsible for any deviation from the terms of the surrender. Jodl was then ushered away.

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3rd District Executive Committeeman

Reuben Redd



Chapter Commanders we are approaching the Department Convention which will be held at the Conference Center at Auburn University. I hope to see you there.

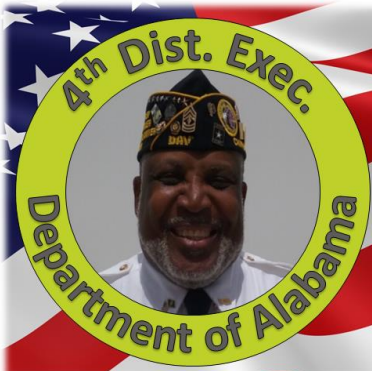
Greeting: From the 3rd. District Department of Alabama.

Thank you Chapter Commanders who have made a contribution to assist with the cost of the District Picnic. If you have not made a contribution contact me, Reuben E. Redd at 334-467-8036. Thank you.

Thank everyone who attended our District Picnic held at Chapter #12 Montgomery, Alabama during March 2018. Department Commander Walker gave all attendees an opportunity to speak regarding what they have to offer the Department of Alabama.

Submitted by;

Reuben E. Redd



4th District Executive Committeeman

Kerry Edwards



No Article This Issue

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Women's Veterans of Alabama

Tawanna Jones

Greetings to my DAV Family,

First, I give Honor and Glory to my LORD and SAVIOR JESUS CHRIST, for all that I am. In honor of Mother's Day, Veterans Affairs Medical Centers are to host a nationwide 'baby shower' in celebration of Mother's Day. Women make up approximately 10 percent of the Veteran population in the United States, and nearly half of the nation's 2 million women Veterans are of reproductive age. However, many women Veterans are unaware of their VA medical services when it comes to prenatal care, such as comprehensive primary care, prenatal and pre-conception (pre-pregnancy) care, infertility services, maternity care services, and the first 7 days of newborn care. "The Nationwide Baby Shower will ensure Veterans have what they need to focus on the joy of growing their families in those stressful first weeks," said acting VA Secretary Robert Wilkie. "With this effort, our goal is to celebrate Veteran parents — especially moms — while also increasing awareness of VA's comprehensive maternity care services and to encourage women Veterans to Choose VA to support their health and wellness goals."

Veterans to Choose VA to support their health and wellness goals." This is first ever Nationwide Baby Shower for Veterans, it is a week-long event that will take place in the month of May 2018. The schedule for the state of Alabama are:

May 8, 2018	May 9, 2018	May 11, 2018
Birmingham VAMC 700 South 19th Street Birmingham, AL 35233	Tuscaloosa VAMC 3701 Loop Rd. East Tuscaloosa, AL 35404	Montgomery CAVHCS- West Campus 215 Perry Hill Road Montgomery, AL 36109

VA honor and support Veterans welcoming new children into their families in 2018, Please spread the word.

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

"Every day we live is a priceless gift of God, Loaded with Possibilities to learn Something new, to gain Fresh insights"

Respectfully,

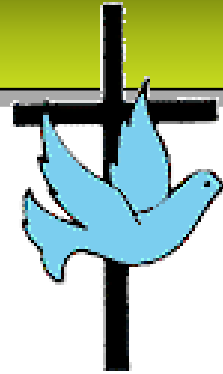
Tawanna





Department Chaplain

Debra Varner



From the Chaplain Corner:

Serving as the chaplain, I consider it a true honor and privilege to be given the opportunity to serve those who serve

What a blessing it is to see when a person in need connects to another person, and especially being connected to the DAV organization of Alabama, a service and a resource that is there to help.

Sometimes we may not realize that everything that you have done as a veteran to serve your country not only affected you but has touched others as well. It only takes a little touch of thoughtfulness that shows that someone really cares, the giving of yourself and the sacrifices that you made created a bit of happiness for us all. Your expressions of lending a helping hand, words of encouragement, a warm smile, helps someone to continue to find beauty and a life worth living for. - Thank You

The Bible verse found in Philippians 1 :3, "Every time I think of you, I give thanks to my God." I give thanks to God for the blessing to live and work on such a supportive base. In the end, all of us are here to help one another and to help foster a positive working and living environment. If ever you find yourself in a tough situation, please reach out and let someone know.

If there is a need for prayer or service as your chaplain, contact me at:

Godisone@bellsouth.net or Cell-205-586-2419

Humbly submitted

Debra H. Varner, Chaplain



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 to all. I had the honor of attending the Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans program at Auburn High School. I was overwhelmed by the nearly 300 veterans that attended. David Moore the co-author of "We Were Soldiers" was a guest speaker and gave an outstanding account of his life in the military. Finally, after 50 years, the Vietnam Veterans are getting the recognition they deserve. Thank you for your service!

I am attending the District get-togethers around the state and would like to have seen a bigger turnout for the Auxiliary. We have not reached our quota for this year with membership, however the goal is in site, so please get out and RECRUIT!

The Convention will be May 31-June 3 at Auburn University. Please make plans to attend. We desperately need new faces and ideas!

Let me end with something to think about. A church member came to his pastor after service and said he would not be attending church there anymore. He stated there were hypocrites in the church, people were texting on their phones during service, people stared at him and thought they were better than him. The pastor asked him to do one thing before he left. He said carry this coffee around the building and not spill a drop. When he returned he hadn't spilled a drop. The pastor asked if he had seen any hypocrites. No. Did he see anyone staring? No. Did he see anyone texting? No. How was that? the pastor asked. Because I was so focused on the cup! FOCUS! Shouldn't we as members of this great organization stay focused on what is important? Our Veterans and their families deserve our undivided attention!

Sincerely,

Tamara Kirby



NSO Office Supervisor

Michael Michelotti



On August 23, 2017, the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act of 2017 was signed into law. The new law does not take effect until February 2019. The new law completely rewrites how the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and Board of Veterans Appeals (BVA) process appeals. The law creates a completely new decision review process, which features three lanes.

Under the new regulations when a claimant receives a decision they will have three options, the first two options are reviews by the VA regional

Office. Once a Notice of disagreement is filed, the claimant will have 3 different options at the BVA; 3 separate and distinct docket lanes have been created*.

Higher-Level Review – An entirely new review of the claim by an experienced adjudicator based on the evidence of record (no new evidence is allowed to be added)

Supplemental Claim – An opportunity to submit additional “new and relevant” evidence.

Appeal – Review by the Board of Veterans’ Appeals (NOD)

- * Evidence Docket- Allows 90 days for additional evidence to be submitted, then a decision is made off of the evidence of record.
- * Direct Docket- Does not allow additional evidence to be submitted, a decision is made off of the evidence of record at the time the NOD is filed.
- * Hearing Docket - Board hearing and allows additional evidence to be submitted within 90 days following hearing





In the interim, on November 1, 2017, the VA began a new "Pilot Program" known as the Rapid Appeals Modernization Program (RAMP). Initial participation was by invitation only i.e. you had to receive a letter from the VA. On April 1, 2018, the VA opened the program up to all veterans with a pending appeal, as long as the appeal has not been activated at the BVA, which basically means moved into a work queue to schedule hearings or otherwise work the appeal by a Veterans Law Judge.

I've been asked many times if the RAMP program is right for me, and my answer has always been a resounding yes, as long as your appeal is eligible (i.e. appeal not activated), I believe it is a win win for you, and here is why:

- 1) There are currently more than 450,000 appeals pending before the BVA in the old "legacy appeals system".
- 2) Veterans currently wait at up to 7 years from filing their NOD until the BVA renders a decision. If the BVA remands the case, you can add another 2 years to complete the Remand Process.
- 3) Opting into the RAMP Program will get you a quicker answer; decisions in the RAMP Program are taking less than 125 days.
 - a) If you have an appeal pending concerning the evaluation of a

disability, it will get you another examination to determine if your condition worsened during the appeal period and most likely avoid a remand by the BVA.

b) If the VA committed an error by failing in the "Duty To Assist" regulations, we can identify those now and avoid a possible remand.

c) If the VA committed a clear and unmistakable error in the denial of your claim we can identify the error now and possibly resolve the appeal.

4) Even if the RAMP Process results in a continued denial, you will be eligible for, and at the front of the line, for participation in the "Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act" No Later Than February 2019; I also want to point out the VA is currently working on implementing the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act as soon as October 2018, which would result in an even faster path to the BVA.

If you would like to opt-in to the RAMP Program contact your National Service Office and we will discuss the particulars of your claim and assist you in completing the required forms.

Again I believe this program will result in a faster answer and path to the BVA, making it a WIN WIN situation.

Respectfully,

Mike Michelatti

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.](#)



NSO Office Information

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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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!!!

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

[Find your Chapter Contact HERE](#)

