



# DAV

## DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans



July - September 2008  
1st Quarter

# The Marshall Patriot

Arab Chapter 18 (soon to be, Frank Bradford Chapter 18)

Volume 2, Issue 1

### Special points of interest:

- **Independence Day**  
July 4th
- **Monthly Meeting**  
July 7th 6:00PM
- **National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day**  
July 27th
- **Monthly Meeting**  
August 4th 6:00PM
- **V-J Day**  
August 15th
- **National Airborne Day**  
August 16th
- **Labor Day**  
September 1st
- **Monthly Meeting Tuesday (only in SEP)**  
September 2nd 6:00PM
- **Grandparents Day**  
September 7th
- **Patriot Day**  
September 11th
- **Citizenship Day**  
September 17th
- **US Air Force B-Day**  
September 18th
- **POW/MIA Recognition Day** September 19th
- **Gold Star Mother's Day**  
September 28th

## From the Commander's Desk

I attended the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Alabama Convention on June 5 to June 8, 2008. It was very gratifying to receive all of the praise given for the progress that our Chapter has accomplished since the last convention. The Department was worried that Chapter 18 was on the verge of dying. Our efforts have not gone unnoticed. I appreciate those efforts very much, and I am very proud to be the Commander of this small, but great bunch of Comrades.

During one of the Executive Meetings the Department gave its approval for the renaming of our Chapter to "Frank Bradford, Chapter 18". They will forward the necessary paperwork to the National Office for their approval of our new name. Hopefully we will receive that approval by the end of the summer. Things are progressing slowly. But, they are progressing.

During one of the Executive Meetings, the Chapters were required to report on what they have accomplished for the 2007-2008 period. I thought that you might be interested in what we have accomplished in the past year. We have:

- Held a two Day Forget-Me- Not Fundraiser at Redstone Arsenal in June 2007
- Held a one day Forget-Me-Not Fundraiser at Arab Community Fair in September 2007
- Initiated the publication of a Chapter 18 Newsletter
- Established two Chapter 18 Websites
- Donated \$1000.00 to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans



Home for providing miscellaneous small items to the residents during the Holiday Season

- Assisted a one of our members and children who were homeless, with in kind, financial and other assistance
- Participated in the Arab Veteran's Day Memorial Ceremony 2007
- Established Unit 18 of the DAVA
- Held a Chapter 2007 Holiday Season Pot Luck Dinner attended by several Department Officials
- DAVA Unit 18 started providing refreshments and snacks for Chapter meetings
- Successfully adopted a new Chapter Constitution and Bylaws
- Started the process to rename the Chapter
- Amended the Chapter By-laws to create a procedure for the Chapter to authorize and provide financial or other assistance to a disabled veteran or family member
- Provided financial assistance for a one of our members to defray transportation expenses to the Huntsville VA Clinic and the Birmingham VA Hospital for cancer treatments.
- Visited with many of our members who were ill or, can no longer attend the monthly meetings
- Researched and started a list of deceased comrade's and widows who have been lost to existing Chapter records, for the purpose



of keeping in contact with them by sending them Chapter newsletters and by other means, providing the widows with certificates of appreciation for their husband's service and providing assistance to them if needed

- Assisted a DAVA member in obtaining support and accommodations for her very ill, elderly and homeless brother in Indiana
- Submitted the paperwork to allow one of our WWII Veterans to participate in the Honor Flight program, he will be going to Washington DC in summer of 2008
- Held a two day Membership Drive at the Arab Poke Salat Festival in May 2008
- Donated \$1000.00 to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home to help purchase a piece of needed medical equipment in May 2008
- Held a one day Membership Drive at the Guntersville 2008 Armed Forces Day Celebration
- Held a two day Forget-Me-Not Fundraiser at Arab in May 2008
- Participated in the 2008 Marshall County Memorial Day Ceremony
- Participated in the 2008 Arab Memorial Day Ceremony
- Held a two day Forget-Me-Not Fundraiser at Guntersville in May 2008
- The Chapter acquired several new members

Again, thank you for the hard work. Let's keep it up and search out disabled veterans, families, or widows that we can help. After all, that is what we are all about.

William "Bill" Brennan  
Commander



Senior Vice Commander's Corner

Hello Comrades,  
 Well it's been a really quick six months and our Chapter has been busy. Recently, I attended the DAV Alabama State Convention in Sheffield, AL. There was lots of camaraderie and information about what the Chapters in North Alabama were doing to help our Veterans. We elected new (or reelected current) officers for the Department posts and voted on a couple of Constitution and By-laws changes. The discussion was at times lively and fiercely dedicated to one position or the other. I highly encourage you to attend the Mid-Winter Convention as well as the district meetings. Our Chapter has been busy with fundraisers selling forget-me-nots at Wal-Mart in Arab and Guntersville. We have another fundraiser of the forget-me-nots sale scheduled for June 27<sup>th</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup> at Commissary and Post Exchange at Redstone Arsenal. You may ask why we need to do so much fund-raising. It is because

we use those dollars to help our fellow Veterans. We have assisted (monetarily and other support) a number of veterans who were in need of help. We provided a large donation to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home in Huntsville, AL. This assistance would not be possible without the fundraisers that we hold. We also continually attempt to contact our members when they are sick or distressed to see if we may help them. We have also began a program of contacting all of our past members widows – checking to see if they need any assistance. We are continuing to become more active in our assistance efforts to our veterans this past year and plan to continue this activity during 2008 and into 2009. In order for us to do this, we need to increase the number of members. Any veteran that has filed a claim with VA is eligible for membership. Invite them to our meeting, have them fill out a member application; bring them with you to our meeting. Our

Chapter activities need more active member support -- including our member meetings, fundraisers and district/state meetings. We need to build our Chapter with younger Veterans to assist those of us who have already paid "our dues" and are finding it harder to come to all of our Chapter activities. Let's get them into our Chapter and teach them what we do.

The District and State leadership view our Chapter as a progressive, active veteran supporting chapter. We want to continue to be viewed in that light and to grow ourselves into a Chapter that is used as a model by the rest of the state. We must continue to be proactive and continue to grow in order for our support for area veterans to grow and improve. Thank you for your assistance so far. Now let's do more. God Bless.

Richard E. Robbins  
 Senior Vice Commander



Some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference in the world, but the Marines don't have that problem.  
**--Ronald Reagan--**

Chaplain's Corner

Ps. 84:7

They go from strength to strength, every one of them in Zion appeareth before God.

There are various renderings of these words, but all of them contain the idea of progress. They grow stronger and stronger. Usually, if we are walking, we go from strength to weakness. We start fresh but before long the road becomes rough and the sun becomes hot. We must sit down to rest. But the Christian pilgrim, having obtained fresh supplies of grace, is as vigorous after years of toilsome travel and struggle as when he first set out. He may not be quiet as high spirited and full of physical strength as he once was, but he is much stronger in all that constitutes real power.

DAV Chapter 18 Chaplin  
 William R. Hayes



Junior Vice Commander's Corner

Fellow Comrades,

I would like to say thanks for your support with the fund raisers at Arab and Guntersville Wal-Mart's. Without your support we could not have done it. The funds that were raised will go a long way in helping other disabled veterans.

As Jr. Vice I would like to say that even though we had good turnout at the drives, we still need for more members to become involved. Seems as though the same members turn out for our drives.

I would also like to state that we need more attendance at our monthly meetings. The meetings very often contain important actions that pertain to the chapter and need to be voted on by the membership.

Once again thanks to all the member that have predicated in the functions of the chapter.

John Wilkerson  
 Junior Vice Commander, Chapter 18



## Chapter 18's Veterans' Spotlight

### Comrade Howard A. "Arwin" Whisenant

Arwin Whisenant was a 112 lb. scrawny kid when WWII started. He tried to enlist into the Army twice, but was turned away because he was too small. In 1942 however, the Army decided he was big enough to be drafted and that he was infantry material. He was sent to Camp Wheeler in Georgia for his basic training. Upon completion he was assigned to Company L, 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion, 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment, 4<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, where he would serve throughout WWII.

The 4<sup>th</sup> Division was at Camp Gordon, GA when Arwin arrived. The 4<sup>th</sup> I.D. was selected by the Army as an experimental unit for the development of methods recently demonstrated by the German blitz. In July of 1942 the Division was suddenly withdrawn from the Carolina Maneuvers in which it was taking part, returned to Gordon and alerted for overseas deployment. It did not happen. The 4<sup>th</sup> I.D. experienced several alerts that did not come to be. April 1943 saw the 4<sup>th</sup> I.D. transferred to Ft. Dix, NJ and then in September 1943 Arwin and the Division went to Camp Gordon Johnston in Carrabelle, FL, where the Division practiced amphibious landings. With a stop at Ft. Jackson, SC the Division was transferred to Camp Kilmer, NJ a staging area for overseas embarkation. Arwin and the 4<sup>th</sup> I.D. were deployed to and arrived in Southern England in January 1944, where more training and buildup was accomplished, preparing for the invasion of Europe. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division was designated to be the first troops to make the D-Day landings. They landed at "Utah Beach" near Cherbourg in Normandy, France.

On June 6<sup>th</sup> 1944, Arwin and Company L landed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of amphibious landing craft, landing on Utah Beach. He remembers having to step over and around soldiers on the landing craft, which had been killed during the two previous landings. The Company L made it over the sea wall and off the beach, starting their long and bloody March through France and Belgium and into Germany. Arwin and his comrades continued on a slow and deadly march through the swamps and hedgerows of Southern France. While in the swamps Arwin received a shrapnel wound to his arm and his first Purple Heart. He recuperated in a hospital in France, where he says he learned the true value of a chocolate bar and a pack of cigarettes. The Division cleared the Germans out of Cherbourg. The 4<sup>th</sup>, 82<sup>nd</sup>, and 101<sup>st</sup> Divisions had succeeded in establishing a firm beachhead which was the basis for further operations. Arwin returned to Company L. After many weeks of fighting the 4<sup>th</sup> Division and the 2<sup>nd</sup> French Armored Division took Paris. The 4<sup>th</sup> Division turned eastward in a final sweep across the Meuse River and the Belgian Border. They slogged their way through the Ardennes, across the Seigfreid Line and the border of Germany. Company L fought in the bloody battle of the Hurtgen Forest in November and early December of 1944. Arwin was wounded again by shrapnel to the calf of his leg, earning his second Purple Heart. He was evacuated to a hospital in England for recovery. After recovering he returned to his outfit in Liege, Belgium. In February 1945 the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment entered the Rhineland and fought its way west, crossing the Rhine. Then they attacked to the south into the Bavarian foothills, crossing the Danube River. On May 6, 1945 the 3<sup>rd</sup> Battalion received the news of the German surrender while at its headquarters in Goering's castle at Neuhaus, Germany. On July 3, 1945 the 12<sup>th</sup> Regiment sailed for the United States. Between Utah Beach and their return to the U.S., the 12<sup>th</sup> Infantry Regiment had lost 1,431 officers and men killed in action and 5,123 had been wounded. Arwin left the service after his return to the States, after achieving the rank of Technical Sergeant.

After a few years doing a little farming with his brother, Arwin joined the Army again in 1950. He was assigned to the Engineer Corps at Ft. Bliss, TX. After the Korean War started he was deployed to Korea. He joined the fight when the U.N. Forces were fighting their way back up the Korean peninsula. He spent a good deal of his time in Korea fighting around the Chosan Reservoir. After the War ended he left the Army in 1954, having achieved the rank of Master Sergeant.

Comrade Whisenant, like most of "the Greatest Generation" is modest about his service in WWII and Korea. He talks very little about what he did and doesn't believe he did anything special. But, I know better. He is one of America's heroes, as evidenced by the Bronze Star he had picked up somewhere along the way.

Bill Brennan  
Commander



## LEGISLATIVE AFFAIRS

### HOUSE PASSES BILL HONORING DISABLED VETERANS

The House of Representatives has unanimously passed a resolution introduced by Rep. Jason Altmire (D-Pa.) to establish Disabled American Veterans Week. This resolution specifies that one week each year should be established to honor America's heroes and draws attention to the unique challenges faced by disabled veterans. There are currently more than 2.8 million disabled veterans in America and more than 30,000 from combat missions in Iraq and Afghanistan.

H.Con.Res. 336, which passed by a vote of 417-0 is intended to:

- Recognize the great sacrifices made by disabled veterans and their families.
- Call on the people of the United States to honor disabled American Veterans and the freedoms for which they sacrificed.
- Encourage local, State, and national organizations and governmental institutions to participate in the effort to honor the sacrifices of America's disabled veterans. And
- Support the goals and ideals of Disabled American Veterans Week.

### Veterans Disability Claims Modernization Act of 2008, H.R. 5892

Please contact your Representative today and urge him or her to vote in favor of the Veterans Disability Claims Modernization Act of 2008 (H.R. 5892). This important legislation will essentially direct the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to modernize the disability benefits claims processing system of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to ensure the accurate and timely delivery of compensation to veterans and their families and survivors. H.R. 5892 was referred to the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on April 24, 2008. On April 30, 2008, the bill was reported out of Committee to the full House. The bill contains a number of favorable provisions, such as:

- clarifies "combat veterans" for the purpose of service connection for disabilities incurred in combat, as those veterans who served in a "combat theatre of operations;"
- requires improvements in VA's work credit, quality assurance, and management systems in order to improve accuracy and accountability in decisions affecting disability compensation;
- implements enhanced training, including certification, for VA employees responsible for processing claims;
- requires VA to immediately assign temporary, partial ratings for severe disabilities that are indisputably related to military service;
- allows for substitution by surviving spouses as claimants when a veteran spouse dies while a claim is pending; and
- mandates that the Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims must address issues raised by an appellant in court decisions rather than remanding or denying an appeal without addressing such issues.

This issue in the bill concerning the clarification of who qualifies as a combat veteran (section 101) is currently the biggest legislative obstacle presented by H.R. 5892. The Congressional Budget Office has estimated that this program will cost approximately one billion dollars over a 10-year period. This presents a problem with PAYGO, which is a congressional rule mandating that legislation with budgetary expenditures beyond that provided by the current budget be funded by offsets elsewhere in the budget.

The problem with the PAYGO rule is that Congress currently funds the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan outside of PAYGO, thereby not requiring budgetary offsets to fund the war. Therefore, it is DAV's position that legislation containing provisions that will improve VA's system for compensating veterans with disabilities caused by war should also be exempt from the PAYGO rules. However, we need your help to carry this message to Congress so that this landmark legislation is not blocked because of technicalities.

Please contact your Representative immediately to urge him or her to vote in passage of the Veterans Disability Claims Modernization Act of 2008. Please take a moment to send a prepared email to your members of Congress.

### H.R. 3221

The "Economic Stimulus Act of 2008," passed by Congress and signed into law in February, raised loan limits for Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and FHA home loans, but did not include an increase for the VA Home Loan Program. To correct this oversight, Senator Akaka, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs, introduced a bill that proposed to provide the appropriate increase to the VA Home Loan limits; provisions derived from this bill were included in H.R. 3221.

Additionally, the Senate agreed to an amendment that would authorize VA to provide increased adapted housing grants to disabled veterans. Previous increases to the adapted housing grant program have been infrequent and insufficient given the rising costs of housing and construction. Other veteran related provisions in the Housing Bill include:

- An increase in the length of time a lender must wait before starting foreclosure involving a returning service member, from three to nine months;
- One year of relief from increases in mortgage interest rates for returning service members;
- Eligibility for VA provided home improvement and structural alteration payments to totally disabled members of the Armed Forces before their discharge or release from the Armed Forces; and
- Extension of specially adapted housing benefits to certain veterans and service members with severe burns.

The bill now moves to the House of Representatives.



## Auxiliary Unit 18

### Auxiliary Activities

May was a busy month for Arab Chapter and Unit 18 since it included Veteran's celebrations and fundraising events in Arab and Guntersville. Unit 18 Auxiliary members assisted the Chapter at the following events:

- May 17 Armed Forces Day Celebration at the Guntersville Senior Center
- May 23-24 Arab Wal-Mart Forget Me Not Fundraiser
- May 26 Memorial Day Observances in Arab and in Guntersville, AL
- May 30-31 Guntersville Wal-Mart Forget Me Not Fundraiser

Arab Unit 18 Commander Nancy Brennan volunteered on May 25 at the Guntersville Museum and Cultural Center (located in the old Armory Building) to decorate the "parade hall" for Memorial Day and serve refreshments during a Museum reception honoring veterans. The Museum has a temporary exhibit featuring items from the Civil War through the Iraq War. This exhibit contains uniforms, ammunition and other war memorabilia loaned to the Museum by veterans and families that live in our area. This exhibit will be on display for several months and admission to the Museum is free.

On June 5-8 Commander Nancy Brennan served as Unit 18's delegate to the DAVA Department of Alabama State Convention in Sheffield, AL to cast Unit 18's votes for DAVA officers; participate in judging DAVA Annual Reports and observe the conduct of other business matters on the agenda. On behalf of Unit 18, Commander Brennan accepted two Certificates of Appreciation awarded for the quality of Unit 18's Legislative and Mae Holmes reports. The quality of Unit 18's VAVS report received verbal recognition, but no certificate was awarded during the meeting. On the final morning of the conference, incoming DAVA State Commander Margaret Powell selected Commander Nancy Brennan to serve as Legislation Chairman for the DAVA Department of Alabama during the 2008/2009 period.

Adjutant Rhemy Wilkerson also represented Arab Unit 18 at the Installation, Awards Ceremony and Dinner held June 8 at the Department of Alabama State Convention in Sheffield, AL. That was a long drive, and your participation is appreciated. Thank you!

#### How Does Our Auxiliary Grow?

Unit 18 welcomes new member Issie Collins. Issie moved to our area from Louisiana. She is an outgoing, take charge person and is enthusiastic about assisting Disabled Veterans and their families.

Our Auxiliary is experiencing slow growth. During the last six months our bank balance has grown nicely due to generous loyal supporters and dedicated members, but our ranks are not doing the same. That makes every existing member a critical spoke in the wheel. Without full active participation of every member, we are less effective than we could be in assisting Disabled American Veterans and their families.

The Disabled American Veteran's Auxiliary is founded on the principles of comradeship, loyalty, devotion and service. Our handbook states that "all good things are possible" through comradeship. It is the comradeship experienced at meetings and working together in service that brings full value to Auxiliary membership. If you are an inactive member or a past member that has time to attend our meetings, we need your comradeship and service.

#### What About Service?

Aside from aiding other Disabled American Veteran's families, the most important service we can offer is to improve and protect Disabled Veteran's benefits. Auxiliary members can be the voices that remind government leaders that our Disabled Veteran's should not be forgotten or left behind in the mainstream of American life.

The Auxiliary has a history of writing letters and making phone calls to convince elected officials in Washington and in local communities that Disabled Veterans deserve to be remembered and taken care by their country. Technology has made communicating ideas to elected officials much easier today. Now, anyone with access to the Internet can use the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) new website <http://www.standup4vets.org> to sign petitions or send prepared email messages directly to their Senator, Congressman or the President, in a matter of minutes. It is also possible to email a link to the website to friends and family so they can voice their vote for improvements in veteran's benefits.

#### Have Our Veterans Been Forgotten?

In 1962, John F. Kennedy said: "This country does not forget God or the soldier. Upon both we now depend." I wonder what John F. Kennedy's reaction would have been if he had seen how few people set aside holiday activities for an hour or two to participate in the Memorial Day ceremonies remembering and honoring soldiers no longer with us. Now, 46 years after Kennedy's proclamation, American citizens appear to be so busy they did "forget" the soldier this past Memorial Day at Ceremonies held in Guntersville, and Arab. Every member of Arab Chapter and Unit 18 that turned out for those Ceremonies was a visible testament to our organization. Our goal next year should be to have more of our members attend the Memorial Day Ceremonies as part of our "service".

Nancy Brennan  
Commander Arab Unit 18





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**SOME VET BENEFITS ELIGIBLE TOWARD  
 STIMULUS PAYMENT INCOME REQUIREMENTS**

Normally, certain veterans' payments are not subject to income tax. However, the economic stimulus law passed in February contains a special provision allowing recipients of certain veterans' benefits to count those benefits toward the qualifying income requirement of \$3,000 and thereby qualify for the stimulus payment.

For eligible veterans who do not normally file a tax return, the IRS has prepared a 10-page informational package that includes instructions, a sample Form 1040A and a blank Form 1040A — everything needed to file a tax form today.

**THE MOVING WALL**

"The Moving Wall" is a half-size replica of the Washington, DC Vietnam Veterans Memorial that has been touring the country for more than twenty years. This replica will be in Guntersville, Alabama July 10 – 14, 2008 and will be set up at the City Harbor on Highway 431 on the southern side of Veteran's bridge (which is north of downtown). The Moving Wall will be open to the public without charge and will be staffed with volunteers 24 hours each day to assist visitors in locating names. An opening ceremony is scheduled for July 10 at 5:00 PM. For more information about the Moving Wall visit: <http://www.themovingwall.org/>

Volunteers are needed to man the wall throughout the period that the wall is open to viewers. They need volunteers at a table helping visitors to look up what panel that the person they are looking for is, and a volunteer to lead them to it. To help call Ernie Brantly (he and his wife are the people who do the POW/MIA Ceremony at Veteran's Organizations) at 738-4401. He would like to hear from you.

**DAV members are invited to participate in the opening ceremony for "The Wall" at 5:00 PM July 10th. Wear your uniform cap and whatever medals you would like.**

**STAND UP FOR VETERANS. THEY STOOD UP FOR US.**

<http://www.standup4vets.org>

"Stand Up for Veterans" is a new initiative of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) goal of building better lives for disabled veterans and their families. This new initiative targets changes to public policy for all veterans who have incurred devastating injuries and disabilities, including traumatic brain injury, post-traumatic stress disorder and other psychological wounds of war.

If you have a computer and access to the internet, look at this website and sign up to participate in this campaign for better benefits and experience how easy the DAV has made it for all of us to communicate with our nation's leaders. Add this website to your "Favorites" list, and email the link to your friends and family. This initiative is available for everyone's use to motivate and encourage Congress to act upon and pass pending legislation that provides speedier access to medical care, improved education benefits for GIs, more job protection when they are called to active duty, and better benefits for their survivors.

Please take the few minutes required to type in our name, address and phone number and use the website features to send a letter or email to our President, Senator, Congressman, or add our signature to DAV petitions. The email messages and letters are already written and contain the DAV position; the user can edit the pre-written messages or write their own message/letter. Through these features and functions, each of us can demonstrate our support for improvements in veteran's benefits to our elected representatives. When you use this website, look for the button that gives the DAV the opportunity to send you an email whenever there are new issues that need your attention and support.

**<http://www.davmembersportal.org/chapters/al/18>**

