



# DAV

## DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Building Better Lives for America's Disabled Veterans



January - March 2009  
3rd Quarter

# The Marshall Patriot

## Frank L. Bradford Chapter 18 Disabled American Veterans

Volume 2, Issue 3

- **New Year's Day**  
January 1st
- **Monthly Meeting**  
January 5th 6:00PM
- **Dept of AL DAV**  
**Mid-Winter Conference**  
January 8 - 11 HSV
- **MLK Jr. Day**  
January 19th
- **Monthly Meeting**  
February 2nd, 6:00PM
- **Groundhog Day**  
February 2nd
- **Valentine's Day**  
February 14th
- **Presidents' Day**  
February 16th
- **Ash Wednesday**  
February 25th
- **Monthly Meeting**  
March 2nd, 6:00PM
- **Daylight Savings Time**  
**Begins March 8th**
- **St. Patrick's Day**  
March 17th
- **1st Day of Spring**  
March 20th
- **Monthly Meeting**  
April 6th, 6:00PM

### From the Commander's Desk

Another year has ended. It sure has been a busy one for Chapter 18. For a small Chapter we have really accomplished a lot. Many of our members and friends are not really sure what we do, so I'd like to take a moment to review a year's worth of activities.

During our March 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting the membership voted to change Chapter 18's name. The name change served two purposes. The first was to better reflect the regional nature of our membership, and the second and most important, was to honor a founding and dedicated member of our Chapter. The DAV National Headquarters approved the name change in November. So now, our official name is Frank L. Bradford Chapter 18, Department of Alabama, Disabled American Veterans.

A lot of our time is spent raising funds for service to disabled veterans through "Forget-Me-Not" campaigns. These funds by, National Regulations, can only be used for this service and for no other purposes. This year we raised \$6,334.08. We accomplished this with four fund raisers. They were: a Memorial Day campaign at the Arab Wal-Mart on May 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24th, a Memorial Day campaign at the Guntersville Wal-Mart on May 30<sup>th</sup> and 31st, an Independence Day campaign at Redstone Arsenal on June 27th and 28<sup>th</sup> and a Veteran's Day campaign at the Arab Wal-Mart on November 11<sup>th</sup>. Thanks must be given to all the members who worked on these campaigns and to the venues where they were held.

Well, what kind of service projects do we spend these funds on? On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May we donated \$1,000 to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home to help defray the



cost of a piece of medical equipment that they needed. On October 6<sup>th</sup> the membership voted to make three service donations. The first was \$1,000 to Honor Flight, the folks who fly WWII veterans to Washington DC to see the WWII Memorial. The second was \$1,200 to the Marshall County Hospice, in honor of three disabled veterans that they were providing care for. And the fourth was \$1,000 to the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home, again, to provide assistance in preparing for holiday celebrations for the resident veterans. But, we don't just donate money for service; we also provide in kind service. In early February we assisted our Auxiliary in delivering well over a hundred Valentines Day gift packages, as a remembrance for residents at the Floyd E. "Tut" Fann State Veterans Home, during the VA Hospitalized Veterans Week. Late February, saw us assisting one of our Auxiliary members in obtaining medical help and lodging for her brother in Indiana, who was homeless and a very seriously ill disabled veteran. Throughout the year we have been working to locate and make contact with the wives of our Chapter's fallen Comrades. The goal is to let them know that we care for them and to provide them assistance, if needed. On December 1<sup>st</sup> we held our Annual Holiday Potluck Dinner for our members, families, widows and guests. At that dinner we honored Mrs. Kate Bradford, her son Dan



and daughter-in-law Jimmie for her husband's and father's service to the Chapter and also allowing us to name for our Chapter after him.

We also participated in community activities. We set up a display and had a membership drive at the Arab Poke Salat Festival on May 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. At the Guntersville Armed Forces Day Festival on May 17<sup>th</sup> we also set up a display and had a membership drive. We had Chapter representation at both the Arab and Marshall County Memorial Day Ceremonies on May 26<sup>th</sup>. When the Traveling Vietnam Memorial Wall came to Marshall County on July 10<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>, the Chapter and our DAVA Unit participated in the opening ceremonies and provided volunteers to man the wall throughout its' stay. And lastly, the Chapter provided representation for both the Arab and Marshall County Veteran's Day ceremonies.

All and all this has been a busy and fruitful year. Hopefully the next will even be more so. We invite all of our members who are not presently active, to please become active, attend meetings and assist the Chapter with its' projects. Your presence and help will be most welcome. All family members are also eligible and welcome to join our Auxiliary.

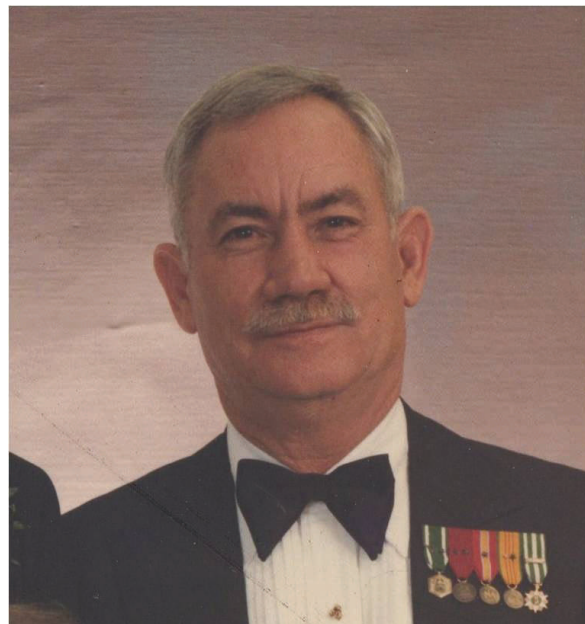
Have a great year to come,

Bill Brennan  
Commander





## Chapter 18 Veteran's Spotlight



Robert "Bob" L. McClendon

U.S. NAVY (Ret)

August 11, 1928 - November 20, 2008

Bob McClendon suddenly died last month (November 20, 2008), before we were able to complete an interview with him for this article. He was a special guy and a good and generous friend to this Chapter and his community. Bob was a very modest man and did not talk much about himself, or his experiences. So, this spotlight will turn out to be a little sketchy, but by no means was his life.

Master Chief Petty Officer Robert L. McClendon (Rtd) was what the Navy called a "Ruptured Duck". He talked his father into giving permission for him to join the Navy when he was seventeen. He went through basic training and then on to further training as a Seabee. Bob told us that his initial specialty was heavy equipment operator. WWII ended before he completed his training. He was deployed on a tour of duty in Okinawa, where he spent a couple of years working on reconstruction projects. After his hitch was up, he returned to the States and embarked on life as a civilian. Then Korea came around. The Navy recalled him and sent him to Korea, again as a Seabee. After a couple of years, his tour of duty in Korea was completed and he left the Navy, again.

He ended up in South Dakota. After a few years, he joined the South Dakota Army National Guard. He eventually rose to the rank of First Sergeant. When the Vietnam Conflict rolled around he rejoined the Navy Seabees, as a Chief Petty Officer. He completed three tours of duty in Vietnam working on and supervising Navy construction projects. After leaving Vietnam, he decided to stay in the Navy. He was assigned to several Navy Bases during the remainder of his career, such as Long Beach, CA; Biloxi, MS; Rota, Spain. Eventually, Bob rose to the rank of Master Chief Petty Officer. Bob's final tour of duty was as a Navy Advisor to a Seabee Battalion located in Huntsville, AL, at the end of which, he retired in the early 80's.

Bob, modest as ever, made his final arrangements deciding to go out quietly and not have a funeral, or memorial service. He is now buried next to his older brother (who died in WWII) in Arlington National Cemetery. He will sorely be missed.

## VETERAN'S AFFAIRS

**SALUTING the FLAG:** The 2009 NDAA clarified actions to be taken during the playing of the National Anthem. It authorizes individuals in uniform to give the military salute at the first note of the anthem and maintain that position until the last note. Members of the Armed Forces and veterans who are present but not in uniform may render the military salute in the manner provided for individuals in uniform.

On 29 JAN 08, President Bush signed a law amending federal code to allow a veteran to salute the U.S. flag while not in uniform in certain, but not all, situations. The amended federal code addresses actions for a viewer of the U.S. flag during its hoisting, lowering or passing. In these instances, the law allows a veteran in civilian attire to salute the flag. However, another section of federal code that specifically relates to actions of those reciting the Pledge of Allegiance was not amended. In this case, a veteran in civilian attire is not specifically authorized to render a hand salute during the Pledge.

**GULF WAR SYNDROME:** Gulf War syndrome is real and afflicts about 25% of the 700,000 U.S. troops who served in the 1991 conflict, a U.S. report said 17 NOV. The report broke with most earlier studies acknowledging two chemical exposures consistently associated with the disorder -- one to the drug pyridostigmine bromide given to soldiers to protect against nerve gas and the other used (often overused) to protect against desert pests -- were cited as causes in the congressionally mandated report. "The extensive body of scientific research now available consistently indicates that Gulf War illness is real, that it is a result of neurotoxic exposures during Gulf War deployment, and that few veterans have recovered or substantially improved with time," according to the 450-page report presented to Secretary of Veterans Affairs James Peake. The report bolstered the hopes of thousands of U.S. and allied veterans who have struggled to have their varied neurological symptoms, including memory loss, concentration problems, rashes and widespread pain, recognized by the government.

The new report the product of the Research Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses (RAC-GWVI), which was chartered by Congress because many members thought that veterans were not receiving adequate care. See the following website for information about the report: [http://sph.bu.edu/insider/index.php?option=com\\_content&task=view&id=1579&Itemid=150](http://sph.bu.edu/insider/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=1579&Itemid=150)

**MISSING IN AMERICA:** Eleven veterans from three branches of the military were laid to rest 7 NOV at a state veterans cemetery, thanks to the efforts of a project that matches records of those who served their country with unclaimed remains in funeral homes. In this case, the cremated remains of all 11 came from a single funeral home in north Idaho. The veterans had served in three different wars. One of them, Sgt. James Overton, served in World War I and died Nov. 14, 1939.

Nationwide, the Missing in America Project has coordinators in 45 states who have identified the cremated remains of nearly 500 soldiers. About 350 have been laid to rest in veterans cemeteries. Members of the Missing in America Project crosscheck data on U.S. service members from a national data center with names and birthdates on unclaimed remains at funeral homes. For more info on the Missing in America Project refer to [www.miap.us](http://www.miap.us).

**VA PRESUMPTIVE ATOMIC VET DISEASES UPDATE 01:** The Department of Veterans Affairs presumes that specific disabilities diagnosed in certain veterans were caused by their military service. The following disabilities may be presumed for those who participated in atmospheric nuclear testing; occupied or was a POW in Hiroshima or Nagasaki; service before 1 FEB 92 at a diffusion plant in Paducah, KY, Portsmouth, OH, or Oak Ridge, TN; or service before 1 JAN 74 at Amchitka Island, AK: All forms of leukemia (except for chronic lymphocytic leukemia); Cancer of the thyroid, breast, pharynx, esophagus, stomach, small intestine, pancreas, bile ducts, gall bladder, salivary gland, urinary tract (renal pelvis, ureter, urinary bladder and urethra), brain, bone, lung, colon, ovary; Bronchiolo-alveolar carcinoma; Multiple myeloma; Lymphomas (other than Hodgkin's disease); Primary liver cancer (except if cirrhosis or hepatitis B is indicated).

**VA PRESUMPTIVE VIETNAM VET DISEASES:** If one of these conditions is diagnosed in Vietnam Vet, VA presumes that the circumstances of his/her service (i.e. exposure to Agent Orange) caused the condition, and disability compensation can be awarded. The following disabilities may be presumed for those who served in the Republic of Vietnam between 1/9/62 and 5/7/75: chloracne or other acneform disease similar to chloracne\*, porphyria cutanea tarda\*, soft-tissue sarcoma (other than osteosarcoma, chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma or mesothelioma), Hodgkin's disease, multiple myeloma, respiratory cancers (lung, bronchus, larynx, trachea), non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, prostate cancer, acute and subacute peripheral neuropathy\*, type 2 diabetes, chronic lymphocytic leukemia.

Note\*: Must become manifest to a degree of 10% or more within a year after the last date on which the veteran was exposed to an herbicide agent during active military, naval, or air service.

**AGENT ORANGE & HEART DISEASE:** Scientists studying dioxin exposure in humans — including Vietnam veterans exposed to Agent Orange — have found a correlation between the chemicals and the death rates of heart disease and cardiovascular disease. The research, presented in Environmental Health Perspectives shows that there are consistent and significant dose-related associations with heart disease and modest associations with cardiovascular disease. Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and the Environmental Protection Agency said they realized that most dioxin studies had centered on cancer rates, but no one had produced a review of research about cardiovascular disease.

**CAMP LEJEUNE TOXIC EXPOSURE:** The Marine Corps is searching for at least 500,000 people who have visited Camp Lejeune, NC, and could be at risk for health problems due to the drinking water on base. More than 80,000 people have registered, which is only a fraction of the veterans and visitors who could be affected. Those who have visited or lived on the base between 1957 and 1987 should register by visiting the Marine Corps' Camp Lejeune Water Study website <https://clnr.hqi.usmc.mil/clsurvey/> or by calling (877) 261-9782.

**VA PRESUMPTIVE GULF WAR VET DISEASES:** The following disabilities may be presumed for those who served in the Southwest Asia Theater of Operations during the Gulf War with condition at least 10% disabling by 12/31/11. Included are medically unexplained chronic multi-symptom illnesses defined by a cluster of signs or symptoms that have existed for six months or more, such as: chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, irritable bowel syndrome, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), any diagnosed or undiagnosed illness that the Secretary of Veterans Affairs determines warrants a presumption of service connection. Signs or symptoms of an undiagnosed illness include: fatigue, skin symptoms, headaches, muscle pain, joint pain, neurological symptoms, respiratory symptoms, sleep disturbance, GI symptoms, cardiovascular symptoms, weight loss, and menstrual disorders.

**VA DIABETES MELLITUS CARE:** For veterans of Vietnam, there is a statistically higher incidence of Type 2 diabetes. Because of this, the Veterans Affairs Department declared a link between Vietnam service and the disease. This means that if you have served in Vietnam and now have Type 2 diabetes, you are eligible for service-connected disability compensation and health care connected with this condition through the VA.



## DAVA Unit #18



DAV Auxiliary

### Our Name

Like the Chapter, our name has changed and the original Charter has been re-issued by the DAVA National office to show the new name. Going forward, we will be known as Frank L. Bradford Auxiliary Unit Number 18. The frame holding the old Charter has been opened and the new Charter has been placed inside the frame on top of the original Charter.

Mrs. Bradford, her son and daughter-in-law attended our December 1st, 2008 dinner meeting for a brief ceremony in memory of Frank Bradford and celebrating the Chapter and Unit name changes. It was an honor to meet the Bradford family and feel their pride in Frank's work to establish and build Chapter 18 so that it survives today. For those of us that met Mrs. Bradford and heard her speak of her late husband Frank, we can easily be proud of our new name and the respect and strength that the name has in our community.

### Our December 1st, Holiday Dinner Meeting

We were disappointed that some of you were not able to attend the holiday meal and brief December 1 meeting. In all honesty, the weather was terrible and it was not a good night to be out driving. However, we had some great food! Thanks go to all the men and women that brought food and beverages. You all out did yourselves this year. Special thanks to Comrades Robbins and Wilkerson for carving the turkeys and hams for each of us at the serving table! How special was that?

Our State Commander Barbara Blankenship braved the bad weather to attend what was also the first anniversary for our Auxiliary! Having her there reminded us that she delivered our Charter, initiated us and installed our officers last December at the 2007 Holiday Dinner meeting. We only exist today because Barbara attended countless Chapter 18 meetings at which she encouraged the members to start an Auxiliary.

A special note of appreciation goes to our guests Ernie Brantly and his wife J.B. for attending our dinner meeting and performing the Prisoner of War/Missing in Action (POW/MIA) ceremony for us. Mr. and Mrs. Brantly always conduct the POW/MIA ceremony with deep respect, eloquence and grace. Through their ceremony we were reminded of those who have not returned from battles fought and are still be missing.

### Our Members

Mary Benefield has gone to her brother's house to continue her recuperation from a nasty fall that put her in the hospital and nursing home for therapy. Our best wishes go out to Mary for a complete and speedy recovery. Get well soon Mary!

Our most recent Sergeant-at-Arms relocated to Memphis in hopes of finding employment. We miss you Matt and wish you success in landing a dream job and giant salary! However, your position at our meetings is open and waiting for you should you find a job in our area!

### Our Activities

Aside from helping the Chapter at their 2008 fund raising events, our Unit has been slacking off since our Valentines for Veteran's in February; a "No Bake" Bake Sale in March; and a letter writing campaign in August. A new year is upon us and we need to demonstrate our purpose, and make ourselves visible through service projects benefitting Disabled Veteran's and their families.

Please explore your church, neighborhoods, and community for service project opportunities that we can adopt. Find the veterans, their families, widows and orphans that we might help!

Wishing you a healthy, safe and happy 2009,  
Nancy Brennan  
Commander  
Frank L. Bradford Auxiliary Unit 18



**Frank L. Bradford Chapter 18**  
**Disabled American Veterans**  
**P.O. Box 512**  
**Arab, Alabama 35016**  
**Phone: no phone currently**  
**E-mail: [davch18arab@gmail.com](mailto:davch18arab@gmail.com)**



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**Online Filing of VA Claims:** VA is now accepting online applications from veterans, survivors, and other claimants filing initial applications for disabilities, education, and vocational rehabilitation / employment benefits without signature. Submission may be made at the [Veterans Online Applications \(VONAPP\) Web site](http://www.va.gov). Normal rules of evidence still apply. More information is available at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov) or call (800) 827-1000.

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



## OFFICER & COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN CONTACTS

### OFFICERS:

**Commander** – William J. “Bill” Brennan,  
**Sr. Vice Commander** – Richard E. Robbins,  
**Jr. Vice Commander** – John R. Wilkerson,  
**Treasurer/Adjutant** – Bruce E. Niemeyer  
**Chaplain** – William R. Hayes,  
**Officer of the Day** – Jimmy D. Edwards,  
**Sergeant of Arms** – William G. “Jerry” West,  
**Service Officer** – Everett R. “Bob” Bouly,  
**Legislative Officer** – William J. “Bill” Brennan,

### COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN:

**Bylaw Committee** - Wayne C. Allen,  
**Fund Raising Committee** - Bruce E. Niemeyer,  
**Hospital Visitation and Distress Committee** -  
**Legislation Committee** - William J. “Bill” Brennan,  
**Membership Committee** - Richard E. Robbins,  
**Relief Committee** - John R. Wilkerson,  
**Widow Support Committee** - Thomas B. Bodine,

If you have an e-mail address, PLEASE, PLEASE send an e-mail to [davch18arab@gmail.com](mailto:davch18arab@gmail.com) this will help save the Chapter money in mailing this newsletter out using the United States Postal Service. With postage continually increasing, PLEASE help us save money by giving us your e-mail address. Just send an e-mail to the above mentioned address with your name in the subject line. Thanks for your help!! Adjutant Niemeyer

## The Alabama Department of Veterans Affairs

Has an office in Marshall County located on the ground floor of the Marshall County Courthouse in Guntersville. The Veterans Service Officer is Rhonda Tidmore, U.S. Navy Retired. The Administrative Support Assistant is Kathy Floyd who has provided over 30 years of service to veterans of Marshall County.

Drop in anytime for counseling on your VA benefits, or call them at (256) 571-7761. Office hours are 7:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Monday – Friday.