



Department of Florida February 2020 Newsletter



DAV Auxiliary National Commander Florida's, own Diane Franz Testimonial Dinner, will be held on Saturday, March 21 at the Florida Hotel & Conference Center at 6:00 pm.

A Meet & Greet will be held on Friday, March 20 from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Cost of both events is \$60.00

Mail checks and RSVP's to Delores Roussey 407 Fletcher Street Port Charlotte, FL 33954

Hotel reservations can be made by calling (407) 859-1500 and ask for DAVA Testimonial room rate of \$140.00.

Top Left Chapter 133 members welcoming returnees from Honor Flight
 Top right Honorable Michael J. Scionti, 13th Florida Judicial District address CSO's at CSO Certification Training regarding Veterans Treatment Courts
 Bottom Left Helicopter display outside Veterans Memorial Park in Merritt Island Chapter 123
 Bottom Right

Department Commander Thomas Ayala



Hello My Fellow Veterans

This was an exciting month for me. I attended the Chapter Service Officers School and Department Midwinter. I visited two chapters, Gerald A Shonk Chapter 70 and Titusville Chapter 109. We had a great visit from our National Senior Vice Commander Donald Day.

I would like to thank our National Senior Vice Commander Donald Day for his visit with us during the Chapter Service Officer School and Midwinter Conference. It was an honor and pleasure having National Senior Vice Commander Donald Day part of our team.

This year, our Chapter Service Officers School was January 7 – 10. We had a great turn out with 186 CSOs, to include 25 new Chapter Service Officers. There were many new presenters this year for our CSOs. Ms. Daphni Tsongranis from Honor Flight; Judge Michael P. Allen, United States Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims, and Ms. Antoinette Rivera from VBA Women Health. These were just a few individuals who gave a great presentation.

My first chapter visit for this month was at Titusville Chapter 109. They have remodeled the chapter with new restrooms, handicapped shower, and new floors. Titusville Chapter 109 provide shelter, food and showers to homeless veterans during the winter months.

They also have Bingo and the Chapter voted to make it smoke free. Congratulations Chapter 109 for the great work you are doing in your community.

Members of Gerald A Shonk Chapter 70 are doing amazing work in their community. They are located in Inverness just southwest from Ocala. Chapter 70 has a transportation network which is in transition moving from Gainesville to James Haley VA in Tampa. Their Chapter Service Officers see about 90 veterans a month. Chapter 70 is in a small community, so seeing 90 veterans a month is awesome. Thank you, Chapter 70 for the great work in your community.

It has been seven months since you elected me as your Department Commander, and I hope I am exceeding your expectations. I want to thank you again for the confidence you bestowed on me to be your Department Commander. I will continue visiting Chapters and if you would like to have me or any of our Department Line Officers visit your chapter, please call our Department Headquarters at (352) 331 0945 or email our Department Adjutant at andy@davfla.com.

Our National Midwinter is fast approaching, kept up to date on all the Legislative Laws DAV is fighting for, join the Commander's Action Network ([CAN](#)). Just click on CAN and it will take you directly to the webpage you need to register. You will get emails from the DAV National Commander and Legislative Team on bills DAV is supporting. It will give you a pre-written letter where all you need to do is input your name and subject, then send it to your representatives in your area. It's that simple.





Department Senior Vice Commander Duane Godfrey

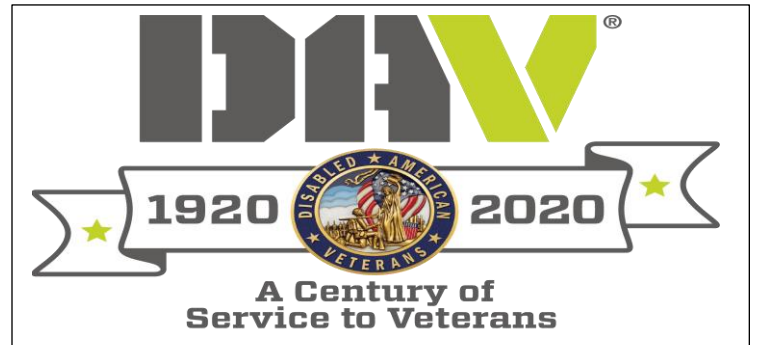
This month we all were busy at Service Officer Training and Mid-Winter conference, even though our service officer attendance was down from last year. There were only about half of the chapters state wide that attended the service officer training school. This is what we do better than any other organization. For those chapters that did not send any of your members to training, I ask you to please consider sending at least (1) member to training next January 2021. There are too many veterans, widows and families that need our assistance with their claims and benefits.

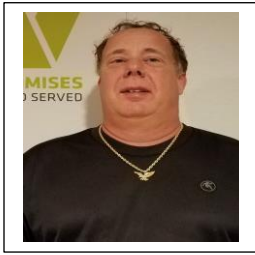
We also need your assistance by sending your officers to Mid-Winter, so your officers learn what their position duties and responsibilities include, so I ask all the chapters to please consider sending as many of you chapter officers as possible to Mid- Winter next January 2021. This will help your chapter run smoother when all of your officers know their duties and create less conflicts. A trained officer makes a better officer.

Our next Department Convention is June 20, 21 and 22. The commander's dinner will held on Saturday, 22, 2020. I hope you have made your reservations to attend. This is the time we elect our new Department Officers and you learn about any proposed changes in the By-laws . If your Chapter does not have a member going to the Department Convention ask them to send someone.

Our next National Convention is in Dallas Texas at the Hilton Anatole 2201 Stemmons Freeway Dallas, Texas 75207 Phone 800 445 8667. Room rates for DAV are \$149.00 per night. The Convention begins on Saturday August 1,2020, thru Tuesday August 4, 2020. Ensure you make your reservations now. If you wait too long there will be no more rooms. Hope to see you in Dallas at DAV's 100th Anniversary.

Check out DAV's website for our Centennial @ www.dav.org/centennial. The website will be updated throughout the year. Log on monthly to check out the Centennial events scheduled at National Convention in Dallas and at National Headquarters in September.





Department Junior Vice Commander John Raber

I want to congratulate and thank all the Service officers that attended this years' recertification class. It's a great service that all of you do for the veterans in your perspective regions. I also want to thank everyone that attended our Mid-Winter Conference. Your attendance helped make the Conference a great success.

For the Chapters that didn't attend you missed out on a lot of information to assist in performing your duties as an Officer and a Leader in this organization. The classes that are given answer all questions that may arrive in Chapter meeting. A few major questions I want to put out to the Officers are as follows. There must be two signatures on all checks written; All checks should be written with Chapter Commander, Adjutant and/or Treasurer. Checks should not be written without a receipt or voucher. Also, a financial report should be available at Chapter meetings.

Also, all Chapter Officer Reports must be turned in 10 days after an election to state and national. This must include all service officers in the Chapter. Since there might not be enough space on the report for attach an addendum to the Officer's Report.

Moving on to fund raisers, all fundraisers must be approved by the Department of Florida DAV. This is an easy step just request it either in mail or fax--they are almost always approved, and the response time is day or two. Per national no use of the DAV logo is permitted without approval of the National Executive Committee. This information plus valuable officer training was conducted at the Mid-Winter Conference,

Also, if you are planning to attend the June Convention please make your reservations now as there are limited rooms available and you don't want to miss out.

If anyone has any great fundraiser ideas, I'd like to hear from you as our Chapter is looking for great ideas and I would like to let the rest of the State know what a great job you are doing. We are here to help better the lives of Disabled American Veterans and their Families.

Thank you again for your support and keep up the Great work. I want to thank the Auxiliary also for the great job they are doing for this Organization



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Working Together





Department Chaplain Chip Hanson

In our society post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) is becoming more and more common, especially among military veterans. According to fact health .com there are ten indicators of PTSD. Please read the following and see if you or anyone you know fits these symptoms. If you or someone you know falls into one of these categories, it is OK to seek help

One of the first symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder is detachment from others. This can happen for a myriad of complicated reasons.

Often, those with PTSD are afraid of how they might behave in front of other people. They worry that they might become angry or react strangely to normal occurrences.

Flashbacks are another symptom of PTSD. The symptom causes a person to relive a traumatic event. The emotional response is different for everyone. However, flashbacks often cause feelings of panic, extreme stress, and physical issues like fainting, heart palpitations, and high blood pressure.

Frequent nightmares are also a common symptom of PTSD. These nightmares may focus on the event that created the trauma or they may appear unrelated. Nightmares are different from flashbacks in that they occur on a subconscious level during sleep, while flashbacks take place while the mind is alert and awake.

Someone with PTSD may avoid situations that remind them of the events around the trauma. For example, if the traumatic event happened at work, then the person with PTSD may have difficulty returning to their job. Additionally, they may not want to be around family or friends they associate with the traumatic event. This symptom can interfere with one's livelihood and social life.

Sleeping too much or generally losing interest in day-to-day activities and hobbies about which one used to feel passionate can be an

indicator of PTSD or another condition such as depression. If someone experiences this symptom over the long-term, on a regular basis, it may be advisable to seek professional help or advice.

An individual with PTSD may exhibit irritability and anger in varying degrees and at sometimes unexpected intervals, often to a greater degree than they once did. This can happen for a variety of reasons and can impact interpersonal relationships and job performance.

Memory loss can be associated with PTSD. Often, an individual will mentally block out the traumatic event temporarily or permanently. This presents challenges in the diagnosis, acceptance, and recovery, as many mental health professionals encourage their patients to face and discuss the circumstances that led to the condition. In addition, people with PTSD may have difficulty recalling recent events unrelated to the trauma.

People with PTSD may find that they feel jumpy or are never completely at ease. This often occurs when a traumatic event that caused the condition is particularly frightening and life-endangering.

For example, many soldiers who have spent time in active war zones and other dangerous situations may experience PTSD and, as a result, loud noises and stressful situations reminiscent of the trauma can trigger emotional and physical responses.

Sometimes, people with PTSD turn to self-medication in the form of recreational drugs and excessive alcohol consumption. This is another sign that professional medical care is necessary as soon as possible. The excessive use of drugs and alcohol can exacerbate feelings of depression and other dangerous symptoms that can lead to suicide or otherwise put an individual's life in danger.

Proverbs 1:33. "But whoever listens to me will dwell secure and will be at ease, without dread of disaster."





John Markiewicz Department Judge Advocate

The DAV (National, Departments and Chapters) is an “exempt” organization, meaning that it is usually not required to pay federal income tax on its revenue and must devote substantially all of its resources toward activities that support its “exempt purpose”.

Under its 501(c)(4) exemption as a “social welfare” organization the DAV must devote itself primarily to activities that promote social welfare. Although the term “social welfare” has a very broad reach and many activities may qualify, the DAV cannot pick and choose which of those worthy objectives to pursue but is further limited by (1) its Congressional Charter; (2) representations about its activities that it has made and continues to make to the IRS and State authorities; and (3) constitutions and bylaws at all levels of the DAV. The DAV’s exempt purpose is **to provide service to disabled veterans and their families**. That means that the DAV can devote only an “insubstantial part” of its efforts to activities that do not directly support that purpose.

While the IRS is vague on what constitutes an “insubstantial part”, an organization that devoted less than 10% of its time and money to non-exempt pursuits would be in a safe position, however, as that percentage increases upward above 10% toward 20% or 30%, that organization might find itself in a danger zone where they would run a serious risk of having their tax exemption revoked by the IRS.

For that reason, chapter and financial reports are carefully reviewed to ensure that **service to disabled veterans and their families** remains the focus of the DAV at every level of the organization.

Although there are many ways to run afoul of the rules regarding exempt purpose, two scenarios have on occasion been problematic for our departments and chapters.

- (1) Excessive social pursuits and purely social activities, especially those primarily directed at members and their guests, must never eclipse service as their primary mission. Moreover, the service activities of the DAV must be available to members and non-members alike. Any preoccupation with self-interest is viewed by the IRS as the antithesis of a commitment to social welfare.
- (2) Business activities conducted to raise funds which go beyond the traditionally approved fund-raising activities (such as bingo, golf tournaments and bake sales) to launching a business venture of some sort to raise funds run a very great risk of incurring taxable income (at best) or losing the status of a tax-exempt organization (at worst). It is important to remember that **just because the proceeds of an activity will be directed toward an exempt purpose does not mean that it is permissible for an exempt organization to engage in that activity**. Thus, a DAV Chapter that ran a restaurant open to the general public, even though all profits are donated to the VA Medical Center, could still be at risk of losing their exemption.





Andy Marshall Department Adjutant

Legislative Report

Urgent Care

VA offers an urgent care benefit that provides eligible Veterans with greater choice and access to timely, high-quality care. Urgent care providers treat injuries and illnesses that require immediate attention, but are not life-threatening. The benefit supplements care Veterans may also have access to at a VA medical facility.

When using the urgent care benefit, Veterans must go to an urgent care provider in VA's network. Upon arriving, Veterans must state they are using their VA urgent care benefit.

The urgent care provider will verify the Veteran's eligibility before providing care. If a Veteran arrives at an urgent care network location and has any difficulty receiving care, they can call 866-620-2071 to receive assistance.

To find an urgent care location in VA's contracted network, Veterans can use the [VA Urgent Care Locator](#).

Veterans may be billed by VA separately for a copayment when using the urgent care benefit, depending on their assigned priority group and the number of times they use the urgent care benefit in a calendar year.

When a Veteran walks into an urgent care location, either the Veteran or the urgent care location can dial into an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system to check the Veteran's eligibility for urgent care.

The TriWest IVR system is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 833-4VETNOW (833-483-8669)
The IVR can also be accessed through the MyVA311 line at 844-MyVA311 (844-698-2311)

When arriving at an in-network urgent care provider, Veterans must:

- Inform the provider they would like to use their VA urgent care benefit to receive care.
Note: *The urgent care provider will confirm the Veteran's eligibility.*
- Ask and verify the urgent care provider is part of VA's contracted network. The urgent care provider may have a sign posted that indicates they are part of VA's contracted network.

Covered Services

The urgent care benefit covers services provided by urgent care centers and walk-in retail health clinics such as:

- Colds
- Ear infections
- Minor injuries
- Pink eye
- Skin infections
- Strep Throat

Chapters visited by Department Line Officers & Adjutant Since Department Convention
1, 6, 12, 13 (2x), 16, 18, 22, 23, 49, 67, 70, 78, 84, 86, 87, 97, 101, 109, 112, 113, 129, 155, 158

Adjutant's Column Continued

Some chapters returned the Chapter Commander's Report Form and listed below is some information gleaned from their reports.

Ridge Chapter 49

Top 3 Accomplishments

- 1st annual golf tournament
- Chapter home moved to new building
- Received award from Highlands County Council

Labelle Chapter 144

Top 3 Accomplishments

- Assisting with completion of Veteran's Wall
- Purchase additional property to expand activities at flea market
- Starting process to honor Medal of Honor recipient

Gator Chapter 90

Top 3 Accomplishments

- Survived another year
- Participated in Alachua County Salute to Veterans and Stand Down
- Active with VAVS, Veterans Court and Veterans Advisory Board

John C. McCarthy II Chapter 4

Top 3 Accomplishments

- Purchased van for James Haley VAH
- Donated \$5, 000.00 to VAVS
- Maintaining Service Office at Legion Post

Jacksonville Chapter 1

Top 3 Accomplishments

- Purchase new AC unit for Chapter Home
- Purchased new van for VA
- Assisted Unit with regaining access to Naval Air Station for fund-raising activities.



National Salute to Veteran Patients



The purpose of the National Salute to Veteran Patients Program is to:

- pay tribute and express appreciation to Veterans;
- increase community awareness of the role of the VA medical center;
- encourage citizens to visit hospitalized Veterans and to become involved as volunteers.

The week of February 14 each year is your opportunity to say thank you to a special group of men and women, the more than 9 million Veterans of the U.S. armed services who are cared for in Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) medical centers, outpatient clinics, domiciliaries, and nursing homes.

During the National Salute, VA invites individuals, Veterans groups, military personnel, civic organizations, businesses, schools, local media, celebrities and sports stars to participate in a variety of activities at the VA medical centers. The activities and events include special ward visits and valentine distributions; photo opportunities; school essay contests; special recreation activities and Veteran recognition programs.

The week also provides an opportunity for the community to become acquainted with the volunteer opportunities within the medical center.

Contact your nearest VA Medical Center and ask for Voluntary Service to discover the wonderful things you, your group or organization can do to salute America's Heroes.

Calendar of Events

February 12
Abraham Lincoln's Birthday



February 14
Valentine's Day



February 17
Presidents Day



February 22
George Washington's Birthday



Adjutant's Column Continued

2020 Mid-Winter Conference

Registration for the Midwinter Conference is facilitated onsite by the Commanders and Adjutants Association and is \$10 per person. Registration is scheduled at the Arlington Registration Desk (located in the Arlington Tower, first floor meeting space, second floor of the hotel) Saturday from 9am-4pm and Sunday from 8am-1pm.

DAV has been making historic strides in protecting the rights and needs of our Veterans for close to 100 years. From the creation of the forerunner to the Department of Veteran's Affairs in the 1920s, to caring for the returning heroes from Afghanistan and Iraq, DAV has responded time and time again to the changing needs of veterans by ensuring that their voices are heard by our Congress.

February 23 – February 26, 2020

Crystal Gateway Marriott
1700 Richmond Highway (**NOTE: Highway has been renamed from Jefferson Davis to Richmond**)
Arlington, VA 22202
(800) 266-9432 or (703) 920-3230
Group Name "Disabled American Veterans"

Please click [here](#) for a list of nearby hotels and rates.



URGENT CARE

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Veterans may be billed by VA separately for a copayment when using the urgent care benefit, depending on their assigned priority group and the number of times they use the urgent care benefit in a calendar year.

To be eligible for urgent care, Veterans must:

- Be enrolled in the VA health care system **AND**
- Have received care through VA from either a VA or community provider within the past 24 months

To check eligibility, Veterans can contact their local VA medical facility by phone or in person. Veterans do not need to get prior authorization from VA to visit an urgent care provider in VA's contracted network.

NSO Supervisor's Column Michael Michelotti

Unfortunately, NSO Supervisor Michelotti was unable to submit an article due to brief health issue.

Training for Department Service Officers will be held beginning at 8:30 am, Monday, April 20 and conclude at noon on Tuesday, April 21, at the Drury Inns and Suites in Gainesville.



DAV Vision for Veterans

1. Protect and strengthen benefits for injured, ill and disabled veterans.
2. Ensure timely and accurate delivery of all earned veterans' benefits.
3. Sustain a comprehensive, high-quality veterans health care system.
4. Improve veterans mental health care and suicide prevention efforts.
5. Provide equitable benefits and services for women and minority veterans.
6. Expand support for families and survivors of disabled veterans.
7. Enhance veterans' transition, employment and economic empowerment

ACTION ITEMS for Congress

1. Provide presumptive service connection for four pending Agent Orange-related conditions recommended by the National Academy of Medicine: bladder cancer, hypothyroidism, parkinsonism and hypertension.
2. Eliminate the prohibition against concurrent receipt of longevity-retired pay and veterans disability compensation for all longevity-retired veterans.
3. Provide presumptive service connection for tinnitus and hearing loss, and provide for a compensable rating for hearing-impaired veterans required to use a hearing aid.
4. Increase the amounts of, and allow multiple or supplementary use of, VA grants and programs supporting disabled veterans who require adaptations of their homes and automobiles.
5. The VA should hire additional women and minority peer counselors to better match changing veteran demographics.
6. Increase DIC rates to 55% of disability compensation and index them for inflation.
7. Expand eligibility for the VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Caregivers to include all seriously injured AND ill veterans from all wars and eras.
8. Veterans must have timely access to family-centered mental health care services, including family therapy and marriage counseling.

