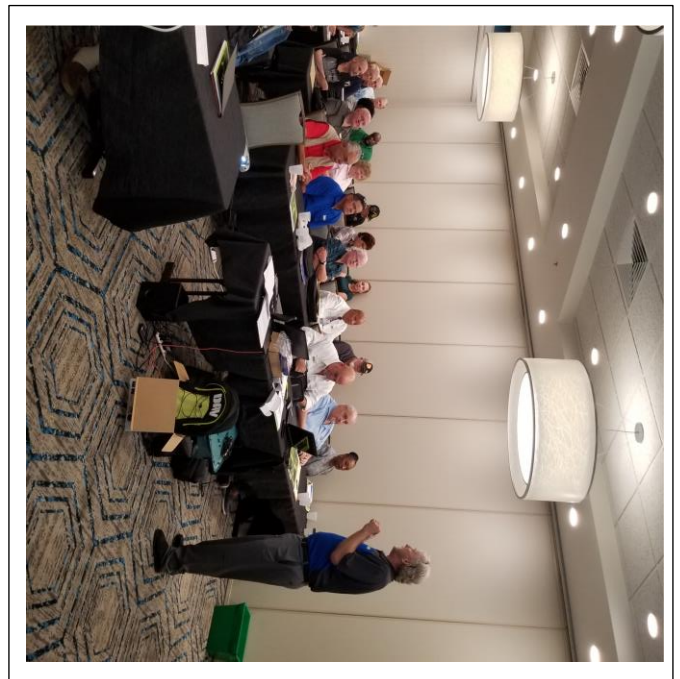




## Department of Florida November 2019 Newsletter



Top Left. DSO's attended Level II Training last month in Gainesville (Over 40 attendees)  
Top right. DSO's attended Level II Training in Gainesville (Over 40 attendees)  
Bottom Left. Picture of Adjutant/ED Andy Marshall with Medal of Honor Recipient Gary Littrell at James Haley VAH  
Bottom Right. The Spartan Pledge

## Department Commander Thomas Ayala



This was a slow month for me. I visited South Palm Beach County #152 – Delray Beach, attended both Department Service Officers Training in Gainesville and DAVA Commander Amie Raber’s Testimonial luncheon hosted by Unit 18. Most chapters are gearing up to begin their Forget-Me-Not Drives at Golden Corral and some have already begun. Veterans Appreciation Day at Golden Corral will be on November 11 (Veteran’s Day). Wishing all of you the best during your fundraising.

My visit with South Palm Beach County #152 – Delray Beach was a great one. Commander Kennedy and the chapter members have an amazing relationship with their community. Some members are also involved with the possibility of renaming the Veteran’s Park. Commander Kennedy has challenged the chapter members. He has asked them to bring one new eligible Veteran to their chapter meeting. Thank you, Chapter 152 for your hospitality and continue the great work in your community.

As most of you begin your Forget-Me-Not Drives at Golden Corral, please remember to call Department Headquarters and report the amount you have collected. All funds collected stays with your chapter and **do not** send in 10% to the Department. This is the only time your Chapter can fundraise and not submit 10%. Good luck to you all on your Golden Corral efforts.

Please see last page of Newsletter----- Publix Veterans Day

On October 6, I had the honor and pleasure to attend our DAVA Department Commander Amie Raber’s Testimonial Dinner at Manatee County #18 located in Bradenton. We had great food, music, and comradery with members from both DAV and DAVA. Thank you Commander Raber and Unit 18 for the invitation.

If you have not yet signed up for the Commander’s Action Network, please do by clicking on the link ([dav.org/can](http://dav.org/can)). This is another way DAV and its members voices can be heard. When you register, you will receive updates on different legislative proposals for our Congress. You can send letters directly to those Representatives who will vote for those proposals. The letters are prefabricated and all you would do is type your name and subject. It’s that simple.

This month has two day we observe with family and friends: Veteran’s Day and Thanksgiving Day. To all my Brothers and Sisters in arms, Thank You for your Service. To the ones who paid the ultimate price and got before us, may you Rest in Peace and NEVER Be Forgotten. Let us remember those who are still serving home and aboard. Hope you all have a great Thanksgiving and eat plenty.

Happy Birthday to the Navy (October 13) and the Marines (November 10).

Don’t forget the theme for the DAV & DAVA Commanders’ Testimonial at the upcoming Mid-Winter Conference is Television Characters. Dress as your favorite TV character. Prize given to best dressed DAV & DAVA member.





## Department Senior Vice Commander Duane Godfrey

This month I transferred to Chapter # 67 in Brooksville and am getting to know a lot of veterans there and had the opportunity to work with their Treasurer and Past State Commander Mary Ann Keckler and Commander Steve Grecco, who has been under the weather for about 3 weeks and so we ask for prayers for him to a speedy recovery.

This month is the month all chapters are required to have their financial reports into the Department and National. If you haven't done so please do it now to keep from being suspended. If you need help with it please call the Department and ask for assistance.

This is also the month you have to file your 990n, 990ez or 990. If you do not get this filed, you will lose your tax-free status and will not be able to do fund raising or take donations without having to pay taxes.

There are no more rooms at the Marriott in Lake Mary so you will have to look at other hotels if you want to go to service officers training or Midwinter. Please try to make your reservations for the Department Convention for next June, as soon as possible as we are almost booked up there also.

If you plan to attend National Convention in Dallas, Texas at the Hilton Anatole please do so soon the rooms are going fast their phone 1-800-445-8667 Group code DAV, dates are Aug 1-4 2020.

I hope everyone is working on the Membership Challenge, the challenge is for all members to get at least 1 new member before Mid-Winter in January 2020. Just a reminder that the dues for membership will go to \$300.00 for all new members January 1, 2020.

Please get a copy of the new By-laws for 2020 there have been some changes that will affect you.

If you would like one of the line officers to visit your Chapter call the Department and schedule a visit at 352-331-0945 or email [andy@davfla.com](mailto:andy@davfla.com).

The Defense Health Agency (DHA) will take the next step this fall in evolving health care across the military health system, which oversees the care and well-being of some 9.5 million people, including service members and families.

Effective October 1, all military treatment facilities in the United States that had previously operated by the Army, Navy or Air Force transitioned to DHA.

Eventually, every military treatment facility will move under DHA, and the agency has opted to manage those facilities by dividing them into a variety of markets.

The large market segment includes about 20 such large markets and about 16 smaller markets.

A move to joint electronic health records is also part of the transformation, making the movement of beneficiary health records between different facilities seamless including the VA.







## Department Junior Vice Commander John Raber

This has been another great month for Florida. It was my pleasure to visit Chapter 16 and attend one of their meetings. If you ever get a chance to attend another Chapters meeting it is a valuable guide in learning proper rituals of a meeting. While visiting we were given a meal prepared by the Auxiliary it was wonderful and a great idea for getting members to attend meetings. One thing I noticed they do better than my own Chapter is informing members of volunteer efforts at hospital and national emails. I also noticed how they have clip-boards with events and fundraisers hanging on walls for sign-up of members to volunteer to work, great idea.

Next, I want to thank Chapter 4 for letting me come and help cook for James Haley Hospital. I enjoyed helping them and the Auxiliary. Three members of Unit 18 were on hand to assist. I also attended DSO training in Gainesville the best training in the DAV. Now coming up is Golden Corral next month. What my Chapter started doing last year was have presentation of colors plus pledge of Allegiance followed by National Anthem. The entire restaurant participated try it and see for yourself you'll do it every year.

The Florida Department of Veterans Affairs operates six skilled nursing facilities and one assisted living facility. Two additional skilled nursing facilities are under development. All facilities are licensed by Florida's Agency for Health Care Administration and inspected annually AHCA and the VA. The homes are supervised around the clock by registered and licensed nurses.

Basic admission requirements for all state veterans' homes include an honorable discharge, Florida residency, and certification of need of assisted living or skilled nursing care

As determined by a VA physician. For more information call (727) 518 3202 extension 5562.

The Robert H. Jenkins Jr. Veterans Domiciliary Home is located in Lake City. It is a 150-bed ALF.

The Emory L Bennett State Veterans' Nursing Home is located in Daytona Beach. It is a 120-bed facility.

The Baldomero Lopez State Veterans' Nursing is a 120-bed facility located in Land O' Lakes. This facility can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Alexander "Sandy" Nininger State Veterans Nursing Home is a 120-bed facility located in Pembroke Pines. This facility can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Clifford C. Sims State Veterans Nursing Home is a 120-bed facility located in Panama City. This facility can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Douglas T. Jacobson State Veterans Nursing Home is a 120-bed facility located in Port Charlotte. This facility can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Clyde E. Lessen State Veterans' Nursing Home is a 120-bed facility located in St. Augustine that can accommodate 60 residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.

The Ardie R. Copas State Veterans' Nursing Home is scheduled to open in early 2020 in Port St. Lucie and also will be able to accommodate residents with dementia/Alzheimer's.





## Department Chaplain Chip Hanson

While most people find joy, happiness, and good times this time of year, many are going through depression, anxiety, fear and confusion because of service-related memories brought on by PTSD/MST. This can result in suicide. Here are some facts about this terrible tragedy.

More than 800,000 people worldwide commit suicide each year—more than 39,000 each year in the United States. That translates into someone taking their own life every 40 seconds somewhere in the World. Suicide is the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in the United States. The true number of suicides is possibly higher because some deaths that were actually thought to be due to an accident, overdose or shooting are not recognized as suicide. The brave men and women who have suffered losses not only on the battlefield, but from suicide in recent years are in a higher risk of suicide than other groups. According to the United States Department of Veterans Affairs, each day there are between 20-22 veterans who commit suicide. What's more, they report that veteran's suicides account for 18% of the suicide deaths in the United States, while they only make up 8.5% of the adult population. The suicide rates for our veterans and active duty military is around 50% higher than for their civilian counterparts, showing what a serious issue we have on our hands. This group of people have a tremendous amount of stress and they need to know that it's not a sign of weakness to seek help. There are programs in place that have been successful at helping to reduce the suicide rates, and we need to expand those to help others around our Nation.

If you or someone you know is having thoughts of suicide, contact the Veterans Crisis Line to receive free confidential support and crisis intervention available 24 hours a day—seven days a week—365 days a year. Call 1-800-273 8255 and press 1. Text to 838255, or chat online at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/Chat).

VA's Veterans Crisis Line has answered over 1, 625, 000 calls.



<http://www.va.org/resources/programs/veterans-crisis-line.html>.

The Lord is near to the brokenhearted and saves the crushed in spirit. Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the Lord delivers him out of them all.

*Psalm 34:18-19.*





## John Markiewicz Department Judge Advocate

November 5<sup>th</sup> of 2019 is Election Day and, as we all know, our National Elections will take place next year in 2020. Whether it be Local or National Elections, it is appropriate that we all should refresh our memories of what participation is acceptable for a DAV member. DAV National has provided a few Dos and Don'ts as well as a summary of the applicable DAV National policies regarding political activities of DAV members.

DAV encourages you, as an individual, to register to vote, to vote in elections and to actively support the candidates of your choice. However, as a member of DAV, you have the responsibility to ensure your activities as a private citizen do not give the appearance that DAV supports or opposes any political candidate. To do so would violate our congressional charter, national Constitution and Bylaws and the law and regulations governing DAV's tax-exempt status.

### Dos and Don'ts

**DO** get involved in political campaigns, rallies, forums and town hall meetings, as an individual. It's your right as an American citizen—and a disabled veteran—to support the candidate of your choice.

**DON'T** support a candidate, or attend political events in support of a candidate, in the name of DAV, nor should you give the appearance that DAV is supporting a particular candidate.

**Wearing DAV caps and shirts can give the appearance of support by the organization.**

**DO** hold open candidate forums or town hall meetings so the candidates can discuss their positions on issues affecting disabled veterans, their families and survivors.

**DON'T** forget to invite all candidates to the open forum/ town hall meeting and make reasonable attempts to accommodate their schedules. It is not necessary that all candidates accept the invitation or attend for you to hold the event or that the candidates appear on the same day or at the same time.

**DO** make candidates aware of the issues facing wounded, injured and ill veterans, their families and survivors, either as an individual or as a member/leader of DAV or its subdivision.

**DON'T** forget to review DAV's national resolutions to ensure your position is in line with—and not contrary to or unsupported by—DAV's adopted resolutions when speaking on behalf of the organization.

**DON'T** forget that, while DAV provides services to all veterans, our legislative goals focus on the betterment of wartime disabled veterans their families and survivors.

### DAV National Policies

“The corporation [DAV] shall be nonpolitical and nonsectarian and may not promote the candidacy of an individual seeking public office.” Title 36 U.S.C. § 50306. Under the law and regulations governing the Internal Revenue Service (Title 26 U.S.C.), the federal tax-exempt status of certain charitable, nonprofit organizations, including DAV, shall be withheld or removed if they: “Participate or intervene, directly or indirectly in any political campaign on behalf or in opposition to any candidate for public office.”





## Andy Marshall Department Adjutant

### Legislative Report

For the fourth year in a row, DAV is partnering with ABC for the national media campaign. This year, the partnership has expanded to include ESPN and UFC. Many exciting partnership elements are leading up to and on Veterans Day, including DAV's PSA airing across ABC and ESPN networks; digital banner ad placements on ABC News.com, GMA.com, ESPN.com and the ABC app; custom radio spots airing across ESPN radio; and live-read UFC (Ultimate Fighting Championship) fight decision announcements throughout the months of October and November on ESPN platforms.

Additionally, UFC will be recognizing veterans and DAV will be a special guest at its 500th fight card event, being held Nov. 2 at Madison Square Garden. Look for special DAV callouts and recognition throughout the event on pay-per-view and UFC social media channels leading up to and around the Veterans Day timeframe.

DAV will be a special guest and panelist at ESPN's Veterans Day Salute, hosted at "The View." This event is part of an ongoing speaker series and will be held Nov. 7 in New York City for ABC employees.

If you haven't encouraged friends, family and fellow veterans to log on to [VolunteerForVeterans.org](http://VolunteerForVeterans.org) yet, Veterans Day serves as the perfect time to promote this cutting-edge resource. One of the driving forces behind DAV's mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality and fulfilled lives is volunteerism. With this online resource, it is even easier to connect veterans in need with volunteers. Encourage those in your community to create an account to volunteer, get assistance or identify a veteran or caregiver who needs help. It is an easy way to give back to veterans in your area, and anyone can sign up.

The **I Help Veterans** campaign is back, dedicated to donors and individuals interested in supporting DAV's mission to empower veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. The campaign's microsite, [iHelpVeterans.org](http://iHelpVeterans.org), will allow visitors to "take the pledge" to support veterans by creating a special photo to share on social networks. Be sure to visit the site to take the pledge yourself and see all of the exciting activity.

You can also participate in the **DAV Thank A Vet** program anytime through Veterans Day by visiting [DAVThankAVet.org](http://DAVThankAVet.org) and adding to the social and interactive DAV Thank A Vet mosaic experience to thank a veteran in your life.

### Parking for Disabled Veterans

Parking spaces for persons with disabilities are for the exclusive use of individuals who have permanent or temporary impairments. (F.S. 553.5041(3)). Disabled veterans who have been issued a "DV" plate may only park in designated handicapped parking spaces if they also have a mobility impairment. Disabled veterans with a mobility impairment may apply for a disabled parking plate with wheelchair emblem to avoid possible fines and penalties. No state agency, county, municipality or agency thereof may charge the driver of a vehicle displaying a "DV" license plate any fee for parking on public, streets or highways or in any metered parking space. There are exemptions to this benefit which may be found in Florida Statute 316.1964. Recently passed legislation also prohibits the governing body of each publicly owned or publicly operated airport from charging parking fees to vehicles displaying certain disabled veteran license plates.

**A DV plate alone will not allow a veteran to park in handicapped parking spaces!**

**Chapters visited by Department Line Officers & Adjutant Since Department Convention  
1, 13, 18, 22, 23, 49, 84, 87, 97, 101, 112, 155, 158**



## Adjutant's Column Continued

### Centennial Events

**Join DAV for its 100 Years of Empowering Veterans to Lead High Quality Lives with Respect and Dignity.**

**DAV National Convention  
Dallas, Texas**

**Saturday, August 1 – Tuesday, August 4, 2020**

Hilton Anatole, 2201 Stemmons Freeway

### Centennial Celebration

Greater Cincinnati Area

**Wednesday, September 23, 2020**

- Centennial Celebration: Reception and Concert
  - Cincinnati Music Hall
  - Performance by Cincinnati Pops Orchestra

**Thursday, September 24, 2020**

- Benefit Golf Tournament and other activities

**Friday, September 25, 2020**

- DAV Transportation Network and Ford Vehicle Drive Away
- Outdoor Concert and celebration



In 1862, President Abraham Lincoln signs the bill creating the U.S. Army Medal of Honor which was given to non-commissioned officers and privates for distinguished actions of gallantry in action. The previous December Lincoln had signed a provision creating the U.S. Navy Medal of Valor which formed the basis for the Army medal.

In 1863, the Medal of Honor became a permanent military decoration available to all members of the U.S. military including commissioned officers in all branches. It distinguishes those who have demonstrated valor and risk of life beyond the call of duty in combat.

To date over 3500 Americans have received the Medal of Honor. The Medal of Honor is the oldest continuously issued combat decoration of the United States armed forces. In 1990, Congress designated March 25<sup>th</sup> as the National Medal of Honor Day. The first American soldiers to be awarded the Medal of Honor were 6 Union volunteers who received the medal in 1862.

Nineteen individuals, all now deceased, were double Medal of Honor recipients.

Army	Navy	Marine Corps	Air Force	Coast Guard	Total
2,456	748	300	19	1	3,524



Calendar of Events

November 10  
United States Marine Corps  
Birthday



November 11 Veteran's Day



Golden Corral Military  
Appreciation Night



November 28  
Thanksgiving



## Adjutant's Column Continued

### White House responsible for delayed decision on new Agent Orange diseases.

Two years ago, then VA Secretary David Shulkin decided to add three health conditions to the list of diseases eligible for Agent Orange benefits, but White House officials challenged his authority and impeded enactment, according to internal documents obtained by a veteran through the Freedom of Information Act.

Now tens of thousands of veterans are still waiting.

Secretary Shulkin decided to add three health conditions—bladder cancer, Parkinson's like symptoms and hypothyroidism to the list of diseases eligible for Agent Orange benefits. Heavily redacted emails and briefings released recently to the veteran shows Shulkin made the decision sometime before October 3, 2017—a move that would have given ailing veterans faster access to disability compensation and health benefits.

But the Office of Management and Budget including Director Mick Mulvaney, and other White House officials objected, according to the documents.

While the specifics of the OMB's opposition were redacted, legible portions show that the scientific evidence supporting the proposed additions was limited and it had concerns about budgetary impact of the expansion, as well as any adverse effects on the existing disability benefits program.

According to the documents, roughly 83, 000 veterans are afflicted with one of the three proposed presumptive conditions. The estimated cost for providing disability compensation to these former service members was also redacted.

In 2016, scientists with the Institute of Medicine, now known as the National Academies of Science and Engineering and Medicine, found there was "limited or suggestive evidence" linking bladder cancer and hypothyroidism to AO exposure. That represented an upgrade from a previous recommendation that there was

inadequate or insufficient evidence to link the diseases to the toxic herbicides used as defoliants in Vietnam. The 2016 IOM report also recommended that veterans with "Parkinson's like symptoms" not just those diagnosed with Parkinson's be granted service-connected presumption.

The IOM report was released five-months after a provision in the AO Act of 1991 expired—one that allowed the VA Secretary to prescribe regulations for presumption of service connection for diseases, provided the medical and scientific evidence existed.

In January 2018, Shulkin received an email from OMB, which Shulkin said had the support of Mulvaney that spelled out OMB's objections and made new requests for additional evidence. Shulkin responded to Mulvaney on March 6, 2018, urging him to support the decision.

Nothing as happened except more studies that have been completed but not released including VHA's Vietnam Veteran Morbidity Study and the Vietnam Mortality Study.

Both studies were scheduled to be completed this year, but the results have not been released. In a proposed statement drafted by VA but never released, officials said VA and the administration determined in "late March (2018) that there was insufficient data and information to overcome the limitations in the scientific support for the rulemaking.

These two additional studies could produce additional scientific insights into an association between exposure to AO and stroke, hypertension, hypothyroidism, Parkinson's Disease and bladder cancer the statement noted.



**NSO Supervisor's Column Michael Michelotti**

**No column from National Service Office this month.**

**H. R. 1092**

To amend title 38, United States Code, to expand health care and benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs for military sexual trauma, and for other purposes.

This Act may be cited as the "Servicemembers and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2019".

**SEC. 2. TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE DEFINED.**

Section 101 of title 38, United States Code, is amended by adding at the end the following new paragraph:

"(37) The term 'technological abuse' means behavior intended to harm, threaten, intimidate, control, stalk, harass, impersonate, or monitor another person, except as otherwise permitted by law, that occurs via the Internet, social networking sites, computers, mobile devices, cellular telephones, apps, location tracking devices, instant messages, text messages, or other forms of technology. Technological abuse may include—

"(A) unwanted, repeated telephone calls, text messages, instant messages, or social media posts;

"(B) non-consensual access of e-mail accounts, texts or instant messaging accounts, social networking accounts, or cellular telephone logs;

"(C) attempting to control or restrict a person's ability to access technology with the intent to isolate them from support and social connection;

"(D) using tracking devices or location tracking software for the purpose of monitoring or stalking another person's location;

"(E) impersonation of a person with the intent to deceive or cause harm through the use of spoofing technology or the creation of fake email or social media accounts; or

"(F) pressuring for or sharing of another person's private information, photographs, or videos without their consent."

**SEC. 3. EXPANSION OF COVERAGE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS OF COUNSELING AND TREATMENT FOR SEXUAL TRAUMA TO INCLUDE TECHNOLOGICAL ABUSE OF A SEXUAL NATURE.**

Section 1720D(a)(1) of title 38, United States Code, is amended by inserting "technological abuse of a sexual nature," after "battery of a sexual nature,".

**PUBLIX Veterans Day Discount**

As a small way to show our gratitude, veterans, active military personnel, and their families are invited to save 10% on groceries on Monday, November 11, 2019.

This offer excludes prescriptions, alcohol, tobacco, gift cards, lottery tickets, postage stamps, and money services. Customer is responsible for all applicable taxes. Valid for in-store purchases only.

Please present one of the following at purchase: veteran ID card, military ID card, discharge document, or a driver's license with veteran designation.

It is our privilege to honor you for serving our country. We hope to see you at your neighborhood Publix on Veterans Day.