



Department of Florida October 2019 Newsletter



Top Left Support our Women Veterans
Top right Commander Ayala and 98 year old Chapter Chaplain Chapter 112
Bottom Left Picture of Korean War display at Cape Coral Veteran's Museum
Bottom Right Picture of Vietnam War display at Cape Coral Veteran's Museum

Department Commander Thomas Ayala



This month I visited three chapters, Jackson County #22, Ridge 49, and Crystal River #158. I also installed new Chapter Officers at Crystal River Chapter 158. All three Chapters are doing an amazing job in their communities.

Jackson County #22 is in Marianna, a small community in the panhandle part of Florida. Commander Leon Kelly (Past Area 1 Committeeman) and the members of Chapter 22 are doing a fantastic job in their community. They have a great relationship with local businesses which allows them to do Forget-Me-Not fundraiser event at their store. One of the biggest supporters of Jackson County #22 is the Tractor Supply Company.

Ridge #49 is in Sebring located 97 miles south of Orlando. Commander Walter Evans is the new Chapter Commander and has some great ideas toward membership. This Chapter has 19 volunteer van drivers with two vans, which travel from Sebring to Bay Pines VA and to West Palm VA. This Chapter is having a Golf Tournament on November 9, any DAV Member who love to golf please help support Ridge #49. Contact the Chapter Commander for details. Ridge #49 also has a member who was Past Department Adjutant for the Department of Arizona and with his experience this chapter will grow.

The third chapter I visited was Crystal River #158. Commander Bill Zerbst and his Service Officers are seeing about 50 veterans a month.

They are being recognized by the County Officials and the community for the work they are doing out of their chapter. I also had the honor of installing the new Chapter Officers for 2019-2020. Crystal River #158 is meeting in a County Building and the County assist with the maintenance of the building.

There are 56 Chapters in our Department, but only 24 Chapters report their Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP) hours. Every year, National is required to report volunteer hours to Congress, Watchdog Groups, Members and Donors. Thank you to those chapters who have been reporting your LVAP hours. For those Chapters who haven't, please continue making the effort.

Remember beginning January 1, 2020, Lifetime Membership fees will increase \$300.00 flat fee. Those Veterans 80 and over will continue to be FREE. Great time to have a Membership Drive!!

Happy Birthday to US Air Force!!!

Don't forget to submit your Chapter's Annual Financial Report which is due today, September 30!!!

Registration for Chapter Service Officer Certification Training and Mid-Winter Conference will be mailed within the next week. Ensure you return the registration cards and registration fees for CSO Training ASAP. There is nor registration fee for the Mid-Winter Conference this year as the \$10.00 fee has been waived.





Department Senior Vice Commander Duane Godfrey

This month started out by attending state Dept of Florida Officers Meeting in Gainesville where we received our training for 2019-2020 Dept Officers.

A lot of our chapters were affected by the hurricane and did not have a meeting and I hope all of them can get their new officers report in and start finishing up their financial report that is due by Sept 30,2019, Do not forget to complete your 990,990n or 990 EZ also due in September.

This month I have the task of trying to find ways to grow our membership, besides the challenge for everyone to get (1) new member before mid- winter, so if anyone has any ideas i would be glad to hear them and would very much appreciate the help.

I attended meeting at chapter #87 with Jr. Vice John Raber to give the chapter a 50 year plaque and to say congratulations and hope for another 50 years.

I also attended meeting at chapter 150 in the Villages to say thank you for all that this chapter is doing to grow membership and their fund-raising efforts. I also had the opportunity the talk about the benefits of everyone turning in their LVAP hour so maybe the next year we can get the recognition that the Chapters and State deserves. If you are not registered for LVAP please do so with your Chapter Adjutant and LETS SHOW NATIONAL we are here and doing GREAT.

The next FREE fishing trip is Oct.5 2019 if you want to go you must call and make reservations with Hooked on Heroes 386 364 9589 or email yesu812@windstream.net to be a part of this great event. They leave Sea Hag Marina at Steinhachee fl. Around 900 am and return around 300 pm

If your Chapter has not done its Financial report for 2019-2020 please note that it is due September 30 2019, if you are having trouble with it please contact Dept. Of Florida and ask for assistance.

If your Chapter has not turned in the new Officers Report for 2019-2020 ,this needs to be completed and sent in to keep your Chapter from being SUSPENDED . Please Ask for help if your Chapter has any issue with Officer's or Financial Reports, we are here to assist you.

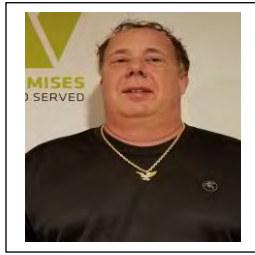
I hope everyone has been working on the Membership Challenge and that is every member get at least one(1) new member before Mid-Winter in January.

Department LVAP Hours since January to August

January	13397	Submitted 3/5/19
February	10803	Submitted 3/31/19
March	10976	Submitted 4/24/19
April	6762	Submitted 5/16/19
May	8782	Submitted 6/3/19
June	10067	Submitted 7/9/19
July	11841	Submitted 8/12/19
August	11850	Submitted 9/24/19

Did you remember to include your LVAP hours for department and National Conventions?





Department Junior Vice Commander John Raber

This month I attended two chapters chapter 87 in Leesburg and Chapter 13 in St Petersburg. It was a pleasure meeting with the officers but I found that one of the biggest problems in chapters is membership attendance. This bothers me for several reasons one is the members may feel that it doesn't matter if they come because no one listens to them anyway or what good will it do if I go anyway. I learned that a lot of Officers are not proficient with their By-Laws and Roberts Rules of Order. Why is this? Lack of training. This is why we have our Mid-Winter Conference. No reason why a Commander and Adjutant shouldn't attend. **The registration is free that's right free.**

I would like to congratulate Chapter 87 on 50 years of being chartered and still fulfilling the mission of the DAV. Great job Chapter 87! Also I would like to bring up the easiest way to raise money, the forget-me-not drive. All a chapter has to do is go to a Wal-Mart in their Area with a Tax Exempt Sheet and a letter stating the day(s) in which they wish to conduct the drive. It's an easy 1400 in a weekend with little out of pocket expense and requires few volunteers. **Of course, permission from the Department is needed.**

Again, since Service Office is my Passion in the DAV I would like to bring up the Blue Water Navy. I am hearing people say that they are not taking claims for the Blue Water presumptive exposure to Herbicides. This is incorrect---file the claim now and in January VA will start processing them.

I am proud to say that Chapter 18, my Chapter has finally finished building our pavilion and will soon be able to utilize it for more family oriented functions, i.e., cookouts, picnics and gatherings. It will be a great way for us to utilize our outdoor space.

Once again, I want to remind everyone that the dues for membership will be a flat \$300.00 life time membership rate starting January 1st. Utilize this a membership drive until then for some people as it will be less than half the cost. We cannot survive without new members.

Again, it's a pleasure working for all of you and let's have a great year.

Attached is the 2020 DAV Transportation Network & Columbia Trust Grant Application.



Memo-application 2020 DAV Transporta
Memo-application 2020 DAV Transporta

If your chapter wishes to purchase a DAV Transportation Van please follow instructions in attached links above. Please ensure you have sufficient funding to purchase the Transportation Van as we usually do not receive any additional funding from Columbia Trust to purchase these vans because of the Department's assets.





Department Chaplain Chip Hanson

Yom Kippur begins at sun down on October 8. The name "Yom Kippur" means "Day of Atonement," and that pretty much explains what the holiday is. It is a day set aside to "afflict the soul," to atone for the sins of the past year. In Days of Awe, I mentioned the "books" in which G-d inscribes all of our names. On Yom Kippur, the judgment entered in these books is sealed. This day is, essentially, your last appeal, your last chance to change the judgment, to demonstrate your repentance and make amends.

Halloween is Oct 31. And is the unofficial beginning of the holiday season ending with New Year day.

Halloween began as the festival of Samhain in 1745. It was part of the ancient Celtic religion in Britain and other parts of Europe. At the end of summer, the Celts thought the barrier between our world and the world of ghosts and spirits got really thin. This meant weird creatures with strange powers could wander about on Earth.

The Celts had a big party. It was all about scaring away the ghosts and spirits. Later, with the Christian religion, the day became known as All Hallows' Eve - the day before All Saints' Day on 1 November.

Irish immigrants to the United States raised the popularity of Halloween during the 19th century.

God bless America

The Departments of Defense and Veterans Affairs are gearing up for what will be the largest expansion of patrons to the military commissary system and exchanges in 65 years, making sure that shoppers will be able to get on base and find the shelves fully stocked. Starting Jan. 1, Purple Heart recipients, former prisoners of war and all service-connected disabled veterans, regardless of rating, as well as caregivers enrolled in the VA's Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers program, will be able to shop at Defense Commissary Agency stores and military exchanges. They also will have access to revenue-generating Morale, Recreation and Welfare amenities, such as golf courses, recreation areas, theaters, bowling alleys, campgrounds and lodging facilities that are operated by MWR. At commissaries, however, there will be an added cost for new patrons who use a credit or debit card to pay for their groceries, in addition to the 5% surcharge commissary patrons already pay.

Since most new patrons lack the credentials needed to get on military bases, installations will accept the Veteran Health Identification card, or VHID, from disabled and other eligible veterans. For caregivers, the VA plans to issue a memo to eligible shoppers in the coming months, which will be used in conjunction with any picture identification that meets REAL ID Act security requirements, such as a compliant state driver's license or passport.





John Markiewicz Department Judge Advocate

Judging by the Chapter constitutions, bylaws and changes that I have received since our last Department Convention in June, it is time once again to remind everyone of the requirements for submitting these documents.

In one case they were improperly submitted directly to the National Judge Advocate, completely bypassing the Department of Florida Executive Director and the Department Judge Advocate, needless, to say they were returned unprocessed. In two other cases they were sent directly to the Department Judge Advocate, again bypassing the Department of Florida Executive Director and with only the original document submitted.

Article 10, Section 10.2, Para 4 (as revised in June of 2019) of the Department of Florida Bylaws states the following:

“Chapter constitution, bylaws and changes (including the change and the revised document incorporating the proposed change) thereto will be submitted to Department Headquarters in triplicate, signed by both the Chapter Commander and the Chapter Adjutant. The Department Executive Director will review, transmit and maintain a copy of the submissions to the Department Judge Advocate. The Department Judge Advocate will review the submissions, approve or remand submissions and forward the documents in accordance with Article 9, Section 9.1 of the National Bylaws.”

Pertinent excerpts of Article 9, Section 9.1, Para 1 and Para 2 of the National Bylaws are as follows:

“Each chapter must adopt its own constitution, bylaw and regulations, provided that such constitution, bylaws and regulations do not conflict with those of the National Organization or with those of the state department with which the chapter is affiliated and provided they are approved first by the state judge advocate, then by the National Judge Advocate.”

“Amendments must also be submitted to the state judge advocate and National Judge Advocate for approval.”

“Each chapter shall include the following provision in its Bylaws, unless prohibited by the charitable trust laws of its particular state:

“This Chapter recognizes the National Organization known as Disabled American Veterans, incorporated by Act of Congress, and affirms its allegiance and subordination, to the National Organization, its Constitution, Bylaws and all Rules, Mandates and Regulations promulgated pursuant thereto. Upon dissolution of the Chapter, the assets remaining after the payment of its debts shall be distributed as provided in Article 6, Section 6.4, Para. 5 and 6 of the National Bylaws”

Failure to follow the provisions of the above quoted articles in your submission can result in significant delays in processing the submission including having the document remanded to you for proper resubmission.





Andy Marshall Department Adjutant

Legislative Report

The National Mid-Winter Conference is coming up February 23-26 in Arlington, VA. You can now register for the hotel and print a copy of the proposed agenda for the conference. It can be found at <https://www.dav.org/events/2020-mid-winter-conference/>. I would encourage anyone interested in the DAV's legislative process to attend this event.

Hotel reservations can be made by contacting the hotel:
Crystal Gateway Marriott
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway
Arlington, VA 22202
(800) 266 9432 or (703) 920 3230
Group Name: Disabled American Veterans
\$199.00 single/double

If the above link does not allow access, simply copy and paste in your browser.

Upcoming National Conventions

July 31-August 4, 2020 Dallas, Texas
Hilton Anatole (600) 445 8667 Group Code DAV
\$149.00 Single/Double

July 24-27, 2021 Reno, NV
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino
Grand Sierra Resort Room Rate \$105.00 Single/Double
Summitt Room Rate \$125.00 Single/Double

August 5-9, 2022 Orlando, FL
Hyatt Regency Orlando \$149.00 Single/Double

August 5-8, 2023 Atlantic City, NJ
Harrah's Atlantic City \$149.00 Single/Double

August 3-6, 2024 Phoenix, AZ
Hyatt Regency Phoenix \$154.99 Single/Double
Sheraton Grand Phoenix \$145.00 Single Double
Phoenix Convention Center

National Commander's Testimonial for DAVA National Commander Diane Franz has been scheduled for March 19-22. Blocked 60 rooms. Rate is \$140 with the resort fee of \$19 waived. It will be at the Florida Hotel at the Florida Mall.

floridahotelorlando.com

Copy and paste website in your browser.

Please visit the Department website at: <http://fl.dav.org>

Please visit the Department Facebook page by pasting this address in your browser.

<https://www.facebook.com/FLVETS/?ref=bookmarks>

The Department of Florida Midwinter Conference will be held at the Lake Mary Marriott beginning Friday morning January 10, 2020 and Conclude with Commander's Ball on Saturday night. It is hoped more chapters will attend our conference. Training for Adjutants, Treasurers, Chaplains is conducted during the Conference as well as Legislative updates.

Veteran Suicide for 2017 according to VA

	Florida
Total	512
Male	482
Female	30

To read more about the most recent Veteran suicide data from 2017, as well as current VA initiatives to prevent Veteran suicide, please see the 2019 National Veteran Suicide Prevention Annual Report, available at:

https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov/mentalhealth/suicide_prevention/data.asp

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

Proposed legislation would provide TSA Pre-Check for disabled veterans

DAV strongly supports bipartisan legislation that would provide severely disabled veterans free TSA PreCheck. The Veterans Expedited TSA Screening (VETS) Safe Travel Act would help make air travel easier and less stressful for those who were eligible.

Today, TSA PreCheck is available to active duty, reserve, and National Guard service members at no cost, and the VETS Safe Travel Act would expand the program to include certain veterans who are amputees, paralyzed or blind.

“Having to navigate through airport security can be an extraordinary challenge for veterans using prosthetics or mobility devices, as many of our members have attested to over the years,” said Deputy National Legislative Director Adrian Atizado. “America’s disabled veterans deserve to be treated with dignity and respect.”

Veterans with physical disabilities can potentially have a difficult experience getting through security lines at airports worldwide. According to Atizado, some veterans have been asked to remove prosthetics, transfer from wheelchairs or give up canes that help them safely navigate their surroundings.

“These devices are more than just equipment, they serve as extensions enabling our disabled veterans to live and function more independently,” said Atizado. “TSA PreCheck allows beneficiaries to avoid the significant challenges they face by modern airport security. Because of that, DAV enthusiastically supports this bill.”

Follow along with updates on these issues and other veterans legislation by signing up for DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network) at DAVCAN.org.

DAV calls for changes to “10-year” rule for survivor’s compensation

DAV is fighting for changes to the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) benefit for veterans’ eligible survivors, encouraging lawmakers to update the current “10-year” rule. The current DIC benefit arbitrarily requires the veteran to have had a totally disabling service connected condition for 10 years before their death, if their death isn’t deemed service-connected by the VA.

“The financial status of surviving spouses, many of whom act as primary caregivers, can be limited for those who put their own potential earnings on hold to care for the veteran,” said Assistant National Legislative Director Jeremy Villanueva. “The requirement of 10 years seems illogical given the severity of many disabilities and the impact on veterans and their families.”

DAV is calling for the “10-year” rule to be reduced and updated to account for the length and severity of the veteran’s disabilities.

“The DIC program would be more equitable if survivors were eligible for a partial DIC benefit based on the number of years the veteran was rated 100 percent disabled by the VA,” said Villanueva.

DAV supports a graduated scale that would apply to veterans rated totally disabled for five years or more. For example, if a veteran is rated as totally disabled for five years and dies, a survivor would be eligible for 50 percent of the total DIC benefits, increasing until the 10-year threshold and the maximum DIC amount is awarded.

Legislation was introduced in both the Senate (S. 1990, the Dependency and Indemnity Compensation Improvement Act) and the House (H.R. 4106, the Surviving Spouses Income Security Act) last year during the 115th Congress; however, neither made progress before they adjourned last December. So far, no legislation has been introduced in the 116th Congress that would rectify the inequity of the “10-year” rule.

“Many survivors were caregivers who sacrificed their own careers to take care of their veteran and could potentially be left destitute,” Villanueva said. “It’s time we ensure they have adequate support.”



Calendar of Events

October 8 Yom Kipper Begins



October 9 Yom Kipper Ends



October 13 Navy Birthday



October 14 Columbus Day



Adjutant's Column Continued

New DOD Website makes travelling cheaper for military retirees, active duty

The Department of Defense has teamed up with popular travel platform Priceline to create an online vacation website just for active duty and military retirees.

American Forces Travel is a new Morale, Welfare, and Recreating program (MWR) that supports all five service branches. The website offers deals on everything from cruises to flights and hotel reservations.

While travel agents on military bases have long been a resource for military families, this website offers a one-stop shop experience. Along with singular reservations like flights, American Forces Travel also offers travel packages with the flight, hotel and rental car included. The site boasts more than a million hotel deals in more than 71,000 destinations around the world.

"American Forces Travel was developed for a simple reason. The people who support the United States of America through military service have earned access to the world's most exclusive travel deals," said Brett Keller, Priceline's CEO.

Currently, active duty, Reserve and Guard service members and sponsored family members are eligible to use this site, as well as Medal of Honor recipients, 100 percent disabled benefits and retirees. In the future, American Forces Travel plans to extend this resource to Coast Guard members, Department of Homeland Security and Department of Defense civilians.

While veterans who didn't retire aren't eligible to use the site now, DoD intends to make all who served eligible in the future.

Guests will need their last four, birthdate and last name to log in. Upon the site verifying that information, veterans and service members can unlock tons of benefits like no booking fees and 24-hour flight cancellation windows. The website also offers 24/7 military travel support and details on flight delays and travel advisories.

Each booking on the site generates a commission for service branch MWR programs, which support the military community year-round. This venture, the first of its kind is the only joint service owned leisure travel program.

AMTRAK Offering Military Discount

Amtrak is now offering a 10 percent discount for military veterans.

The new discount is valid for travel across Amtrak's entire national network, including the Northeast Regional from Washington, D.C. to Boston; on all state-supported trains; and on the California Zephyr, Southwest Chief, City of New Orleans, Cardinal, Auto Train, Coast Meteor, Palmetto, Empire Builder and Texas Eagle, according to a company release.

"Amtrak is grateful to our nation's military veterans for their commitment and sacrifices," Amtrak President and CEO Richard Anderson said in the release. "Traveling by train is an adventure, and we have sweetened the deal to offer this discount as a benefit to our veterans."

Amtrak's military discount is valid for coach and Acela business class seats only but is not available on weekday Acela service. It is also not valid with saver fares, non-Acela business class, first-class or sleeping accommodations and 7000-8999 Thruways. Upgrades are available upon payment of the full accommodation charges. Fares are one way and no additional discounts apply.



NSO Supervisor's Column Michael Michelotti

Did you know your spouse may be entitled to monthly benefits based on your service? Surviving spouses may be entitled to several benefits upon the death of the veteran, these include: month of death benefit, service connected death benefits, non-service connected death benefits, burial benefits and plot allowance.

VA defines a spouse as a person whose marriage to the veteran was valid under the law of the place where the parties resided at the time of marriage, or the law of the place where the parties resided when the right to benefits accrued.

Month of death benefit: Where a veteran receiving compensation or pension dies, the surviving spouse, if not entitled to death compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, or death pension for the month of death, shall be entitled to a benefit for that month in an amount equal to the amount of compensation or pension the veteran would have received for that month but for his or her death.

Service Connected Death Benefits: Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) is a monthly payment made to a surviving spouse because of a service connected death * or to a surviving spouse because the veteran was rated as totally disabled due to SC disabilities prior to his or her death. **

The death of a veteran will be considered as having been due to a service-connected disability when the evidence establishes that such disability was either the principal or a contributory cause of death.

** At the time of death, the veteran was receiving, or was entitled to receive, compensation for service-connected disability that was:

- (i) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of at least 10 years immediately preceding death;
- (ii) Rated by VA as totally disabling continuously since the veteran's release from active duty and for at least 5 years immediately preceding death; or
- (iii) Rated by VA as totally disabling for a continuous period of not less than one year immediately preceding death, if the veteran was a former prisoner of war.

Non-service Connected Death Benefits: A benefit payable by the Department of Veterans Affairs to a veteran's surviving spouse or child because of the veteran's nonservice-connected death.

) The veteran must have served an aggregate of 90 days or more during a period of war and who was discharged or released under conditions other than dishonorable, or the veteran was, at time of death, receiving or entitled to receive compensation or retired pay for a service-connected disability based on service during a period of war.

(ii) The surviving spouse meets the net worth requirements and has an annual income not in excess of the applicable maximum annual pension rate.

Burial Benefits and Plot Allowance: VA provides the following types of burial benefits.

- (1) Burial allowance based on service-connected death;
- (2) Burial allowance based on non-service-connected death;
- (3) Burial allowance for a veteran who died while hospitalized by VA;
- (4) Burial plot or interment allowance; and
- (5) Reimbursement for transportation of remains

Monetary benefits include:

Service Connected Death:

Service Connected Burial Allowance: **\$2,000**

Nonservice Connected Death Benefit:

Nonservice Connected Burial Allowance: **\$300.00**

Nonservice Burial allowance if hospitalized
At VA: **\$760.00**