



[Department Name / Chapter Name & Number]

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Op-Ed / Letter to the Editor

[Date]

Contact: [Name, DAV Dept/Chapter title (if applicable), Branch of Service, War era, phone number or email]

On Veterans Day, let's remember those who stepped up

When men and women raise their right hand to serve their country, they understand the risks. But they accept them, in many cases, so that others won't have to.

Dennis Nixon took on those risks when he enlisted in the United States Marine Corps as a teenager during the Vietnam War. He trained as a combat engineer and was mobilized shortly thereafter. But on his second combat tour in 1969, life as he knew it changed in the blink of an eye.

During a patrol in Da Nang, Dennis tripped a "booby trap." As a result of injuries to his abdomen and leg, he underwent eight surgeries. After Nixon spent months in the hospital, doctors found the damage to his leg was too severe and were forced to amputate.

A life-changing injury at such a young age could stop some in their tracks. But not Dennis.

After medical retirement from the Marine Corps in 1970, he became a DAV (Disabled American Veterans) advocate and dedicated 36 years to helping his fellow veterans obtain the benefits they earned. DAV is the leader in ensuring veterans get the benefits they earned through service because DAV members, volunteers and staff have dedicated their lives to the men and woman who served for nearly 100 years. In 2017 alone, DAV helped service members, veterans, their families and their survivors access more than \$4.3 billion in retroactive and annual benefits.

Retirement from DAV didn't stop Dennis from giving back. Since then, he has continued to serve as a volunteer, assisting in the certification training of state and local service officers. He has volunteered with his DAV chapter in Fort Worth, Texas, and been an advocate for veterans in the Lone Star State and throughout the country.

And just three months ago, he was elected to the highest office at DAV—national commander.

Dennis is an inspiration to disabled veterans everywhere—myself included. He embodies the spirit of perseverance in the face of adversity, opting instead to overcome obstacles and embrace a new normal. That refusal to step back and instead step up is something I have seen day in and day out in my other fellow veterans and DAV members, including area veteran(s). __Their summary of service__.

That fighting spirit on the battlefield carries over as they embark upon the road to recovery. They recognize that life may be different—but it is certainly not over.

We must always remember our heroes. They never gave up on us, and we can't give up on them.

Vocalizing our gratitude to veterans is a good start, but illustrating our thanks through actions is most impactful. Please visit DAV.org to learn how you can help give back to the men and women who served.

About DAV:

DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. DAV does this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them, fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill, providing employment resources to veterans and their families, and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a nonprofit organization with more than 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at www.dav.org.

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