

# DAV celebrates 100-year existence

An organization that has done so much to help those who nearly paid the ultimate price in protecting the nation's freedom has just celebrated its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday.

Disabled American Veterans was founded by World War I veterans on Sept. 25, 1920, and Gov. Bill Lee proclaimed the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary last week as Disabled American Veterans Day.

Lee's proclamation paid tribute to veterans who sacrificed their physical wellbeing on behalf of their country and its freedom and liberties.

Randy G. Lancaster, commander of Winchester's DAV Chapter 71, said the recognition is extremely meaningful.

"Our organization does a lot of good for disabled veterans and their families," he said, adding that DAV recently helped U.S. Navy Vietnam War veterans secure benefits they previously hadn't received.

Lancaster explained that DAV partners with businesses, such as Home Depot, to build wheelchair ramps for disabled veterans and takes on other projects that benefit those who have given so much to their country.

He said the organization's strong lobbying efforts have continued to make a difference to improve condi-



The local chapter of Disabled American Veterans recently swore in chapter officers for 2020-21. Standing, from left, are Doug Freund, chapter senior vice commander and Army veteran; Randy Lancaster, chapter commander and USMC veteran; Fr. Charlie Watkins, chapter chaplain and Army veteran; Sgt. Maj. Larry Williams, chapter adjutant, treasurer and Army veteran; Donald Langston, chapter benefits protection team leader and Army veteran; John Matthews, chapter junior vice commander and Air Force veteran; and Cmdr. Sgt. Maj. Clarence Hopson, chapter membership chairman and Army veteran. Ron Smith, chapter judge advocate, chapter service officer and Army veteran, is not pictured. All military veterans, active duty personnel and spouses are welcome to attend meetings held on the third Tuesday of each month at 5 p.m. at the American Legion Building, 104 Vine St., Winchester. For reservations, call Doug Freund at 931-967-0605.

—Photo provided

tions for disabled veterans.

Lee's proclamation says that "in 2020, DAV celebrates 100 years of serving veterans of the armed forces, their families and survivors, and communities."

He said the organization is dedicated to a single pur-

pose — empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

He added that DAV accomplishes its objective by ensuring veterans and their families have access to the full range of benefits available to them, "by fighting

for the interests of America's injured heroes, and by educating the public about the needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life."

He said that DAV provides free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services provided by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies.

He said the organization also provides outreach concerning its programs and services to the American population, specifically to disabled veterans and their families.

Lee said DAV represents the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before the federal government, as well as state and local governments, and the organization "has fought tirelessly for equal access to critical VA caregiver benefits and services for severely disabled veterans of all generations."

He said the effort has resulted in legislation being approved to expand eligibility to those injured prior to Sept. 11, 2001, as part of the VA MISSION Act.

DAV also co-presents the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament and has organized the nationwide DAV Transportation Network to provide free

transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments.

Lee said the organization operates an active charitable service trust that funds the needs of local providers assisting at-risk local veterans and has built an active volunteer corps that offers thousands of hours of service to veterans and communities.

He said DAV offers veterans, transitioning military members and spouses access to employers through its nationwide job fair program.

Lee said the organization provides emergency assistance to veterans in need through the DAV Disaster Relief Program and operates the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program to contribute to the lives of young Americans.

Lee said DAV has 43 chapters in Tennessee, and they demonstrate their unending commitment to ill and injured veterans of all generations and conflicts.

"The state of Tennessee is proud to honor the members of the Disabled American Veterans," he said.

DAV was founded in the aftermath of World War I when disabled veterans in the United States found themselves seriously disadvantaged with little governmental support, according to historical accounts.

Many of the veterans were blind, deaf or mentally ill when they returned from the frontlines.

More than 200,000 U.S. soldiers were wounded during the war, and the idea to form the Disabled American Veterans organization arose at a Christmas party in 1919, hosted by Cincinnati Superior Court Judge Robert Marx, a U.S. Army captain and WWI veteran who had been injured in the Meuse-Argonne Offensive in November 1918.

Although it had been functional for some months by that time, the Disabled American Veterans of the World War was officially created on Sept. 25, 1920, at its first national caucus in Hamilton County Memorial Hall in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Lancaster said that DAV could not have served the nation's veterans and their families over the last century without the support of local communities.

"This is why DAV Chapter 71 wants to celebrate alongside our gracious and supportive community here in Winchester," he said.

For further information, contact Lancaster at sneadh@yahoo.com.

"We invite all of our community members to join us as we have a lot to celebrate as we prepare for another century of service to our veterans and their families," he said.



STATE OF TENNESSEE  
**PROCLAMATION**  
BY THE GOVERNOR

**WHEREAS**, Disabled American Veterans (DAV) was founded by World War I veterans on September 25, 1920, and was chartered by an Act of Congress on June 17, 1932; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2020, DAV celebrates 100 years of serving veterans of the Armed Forces, their families and survivors, and communities; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV is dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV accomplishes this by ensuring veterans and their families have access to the full range of benefits available to them, by fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes, and by educating the public about the needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV provides free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services provided by the United States Department of Veterans Affairs and other agencies; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV also provides outreach concerning its programs and services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV represents the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before the federal government, as well as state and local governments; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV has fought tirelessly for equal access to critical VA caregiver benefits and services for severely disabled veterans of all generations, resulting in legislation to expand eligibility to those injured prior to September 11, 2001, as part of the VA MISSION Act; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV co-presents the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and National Disabled Veterans TEE Tournament; has organized the nationwide DAV Transportation Network to provide free transportation for veterans to VA medical appointments; operates an active Charitable Service Trust funding the needs of local providers assisting at-risk local veterans; has built an active volunteer corps offering thousands of hours of service to our veterans and communities; offers veterans, transitioning military members and spouses access to employers through its nationwide job fair program; provides emergency assistance to veterans in need through the DAV Disaster Relief Program; and operates the Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship program to contribute to the lives of young Americans; and

**WHEREAS**, DAV Department of Tennessee and the 43 chapters across our state demonstrate their unending commitment to ill and injured veterans of all generations and conflicts; and

**WHEREAS**, the State of Tennessee is proud to honor the members of the Disabled American Veterans;

**NOW, THEREFORE**, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim September 25, 2020 as

*Disabled American Veterans Day*

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.



**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this fifth day of August, 2020.

*Bill Lee*

Governor

*Lee Wargitt*

Secretary of State