



# Department of Texas

## NEWS BULLETIN

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**Vol. 20 Issue 07**

**Chartered by Act of Congress 1932**

**January 2012**

*from the DAV Department Commander*

Happy New Year Greetings to each of you as we begin this New Year together. I trust each of you made new memories with your families for this most special time of year. This New Year will also bring blessings for all of us as we continue to march toward the goal.

★ KEN HACKNEY  
dabhackney@yahoo.com

Many of our chapters have not reached their goal for FY 2011-2012. I have noticed some chapters have not added but have lost members. Many of the lost have passed on to the bigger, better, everlasting formation in the sky. We must work hard together to meet the needs of each Chapter, District, Department and National. We can do this as we are strong, dedicated, and desire to see that all veterans receive the benefits to which they are entitled. We want to make certain that all survivors are cared for.

This year will continue to be hard on all of the chapters as the median age continues to rise. Many chapters are finding it to be increasingly hard to obtain and maintain a quorum. Some are struggling just to meet once each quarter. It is my desire to make certain that no chapter in the State of Texas closes their doors. I do not want to see any member transferred to Chapter 2 At-large.

If you find that your chapter is having these problems and are facing this difficult decision I would ask that you contact the Department Office that we might assist you in the alternatives you have to closing your doors. It is important that we maintain our chapters in the chartered location. These "Neighborhood Chapters" are known in their service area. Veterans, even if they are not members, know that we are there.

Let us work together to maintain the membership we have as we also work to increase our population numbers. Remember, we are here to help each other. We are not in competition with each other.

Comrades, thank you all for all of the Christmas Party

Invitations. The months are passing fast. It is hard to believe that my year is at the halfway point. I have had so much fun while serving as your Commander. This has been very educational and I have made many new friends. Thank you again for allowing me to obtain this office.

*from the DAVA State Commander*

Welcome to 2012! It is always exciting to start a new year full of hope as well as promises that we make to ourselves. Each of us has experienced the decline in active participation in our units. With our members aging we have got to take a proactive stand and sign up more members. Not only do we have to sign them up but we have to welcome them, mentor them and encourage them to be actively involved. I have high hopes that in 2012 our membership will soar higher than any of us have ever dreamed. If each of us signs up one member our dream can become a reality. It takes many hands, many ideas and a whole lot of energy for our organization to participate in the opportunities that surround us. We can make this happen if we work together. If each of us signs up one member our dream can become a reality. Lets all work to make DAVA successful!

★ CRAIG JOHNKEN  
craigjohnken@yahoo.com

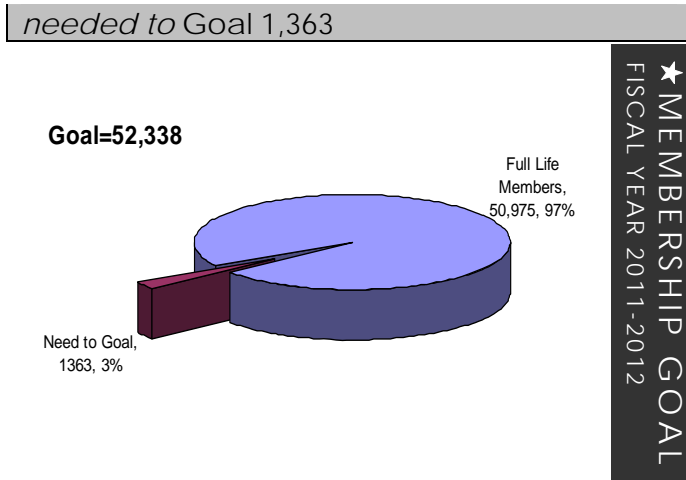
Keep in mind that your Unit Annual Report will be coming due this spring. These report forms are now available online in PDF and Word format. In order to utilize these forms go to [www.davauxiliary.org](http://www.davauxiliary.org) and look under the Membership/Resource tab to find all of the reports. Please remember that once you complete the report you must print it and mail it to DAVA State Department, 900 Rancho Dr, Mesquite, Texas, 75149.

Joyce Humes is working on Patti Rapisand's History book. If you have any information or pictures from events across the state from Commander Rapisand's visits in your area please send to Joyce at 9419 Stone River Drive, San

Visit us online at [www.davmembersportal.org/tx](http://www.davmembersportal.org/tx)

Antonio, Texas 78245. Help make Patti's year one to remember!

Congratulations goes out to Terrie Herrle who won the November Recruiter Award held at DAVA National Headquarters.



*from the DAV Membership Chairman*

Here we are in 2012! We have a fresh new year to achieve our goals. Make a resolution to sign up just one new member this year.

As we head into the third quarter of the DAV year, we have six months to complete our goals in membership. I cannot stress enough how important it is for us to reach these membership goals. This organization did not get to where it is today by just sitting back and wait for people to ask to join. It has always been a concentrated effort by the members to seek out individuals who are eligible for membership.

★ TOM PARKER  
tomyparker75@aol.com

It is a two-way street. We need new members to maintain our strength, so that we are able to realize the purpose of our organization as listed in Article II of the National Constitution Bylaws and Regulations. In doing so, we are providing those new members with membership in a strong organization, the assistance needed to obtain their earned benefits and the comradeship of individuals who have been there; members who share their experiences and pain.

Our strength in our organization lies not only in the number of members, but also in the united efforts of those members. It is a TEAM effort and everyone needs to do their part. So get out there and recruit members for the team!

*from the DAV Adjutant*

Most chapters will be holding their elections in the next five months. It is important that each chapter submit an officer's report to Department Headquarters and National Headquarters within 10 days of installation of new officers in order to avoid the possibility of your chapter being suspended.

★ TERESA JOHNIKEN  
davtxadj@consolidated.net

It is also the time we start planning to attend District Meetings and the Department Convention. The Department will hold their Convention on June 22, 2012 through June 24, 2012.

Lastly, I would like to remind the chapters again that your assessment fee as stipulated in the Department Constitution and Bylaws must be received before your delegates will be allowed to vote at the Department Convention.

I hope everyone had a safe Christmas and New Years. May each of you have a prosperous and healthy year!

*from the DAVA Adjutant*

I hope that each and every one of you has had a very good holiday season. We have survived Thanksgiving, Christmas and the New Year. Now we have 2012 to look forward to and make some more progress.

★ RUTH GATES  
ruth.gates@sbcglobal.net

If your unit receives any mail from National Headquarters advising you that they are in need of information or documents from you, remember it is imperative that you respond to them and take the steps they are recommending. The National Headquarters staff is highly trained and most willing to assist each unit when needed. However, they cannot assist you if they do not know that you need help or if you do not respond to them when requested to do so. In fact, as the State Adjutant, I myself work closely with the National Headquarters Staff to ensure the smooth functioning of the Auxiliary State Department and do assist them with unit matters when asked to do so. Adjutants, remember that you are the only person receiving mail regarding the unit from National Headquarters and the State Department. If you are not able to attend a meeting, please make sure that you get the mail to the Commander or someone else who is going to be at the meetings so that the mail can be shared and matters addressed. Unfortunately, for all of us, life happens and we often cannot control the circumstances.

Upcoming Events:

I will be reviewing each unit's status for clearance to vote at the upcoming District Meetings, State Convention and National Convention. If your unit receives a letter from the State Department advising that your unit is not cleared to vote, please provide the information requested as soon as possible. Otherwise, your unit will not be able to cast any votes at the meetings or conventions.

I am also in the process of preparing the Annual Reports for mailing to each unit. The deadline to have them returned completed to the State Department will be May 5, 2012 so that I have time to get them organized and forwarded as necessary. Remember every activity is important to report and no activity too small.

Commander Patti's Testimonial will be coming up this April as well and I will have more information regarding that in future newsletters. It will be held in Ft. Worth, so I hope many of you will be able to attend.

The State Department is preparing a cookbook for sale as our next fundraiser. We are requesting that any member of the unit or chapters that want to share to forward them to either the State Headquarters or to Earlene Cole, State Finance Chairman by early February 2012 so the book can be completed and printed for sale at the State Convention. I have received some very delicious recipes so far. I am excited about trying them and I know each of you will be too. I will be providing updated deadlines as I receive them.

Be safe and productive. Let's make 2012 our best year yet.

*from the DAV District I Sr Vice Commander*

The year 2012 is finally here and I hope everyone enjoyed the holidays with family and friends and find themselves in good health and sprits.

First, I want to send my condolences to Commander Richard Darden of Chapter 36 in Abilene for the loss of his mother on December 23, 2011. I ask all the chapters to keep Commander Darden and his family in your prayers. God Speed, Comrade!

★ DAVE GARCIA  
mgarcia35@elp.r.com

The DAV Department of Texas VAVS Chairman, Ed Meiser, sent each chapter a letter with a registration and monthly report form for the Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP). This program is a great opportunity for all chapter members and non-members that volunteer their

time in assisting veterans and family members with-in your community and get credit for those hours as well as receive recognition they deserve. I encourage the commanders to pass this information to all volunteers including the Unit Auxilliary at your next monthly meeting, newsletter and/or outreach to promote this valuable program. This is the veterans assisting veterans part of our mission. I need your support on this and sign up as many as you can. If you have any questions or need our assistance, please contact Ed Meiser or myself. Together, we can accomplish this mission and prevail.

The National DAV News Service has encouraged chapters to read the DAV Washington update at your monthly meeting. It has very important information concerning what is going on in Congress. We know what mandatory cuts could mean for the VA. The Veterans' Affairs and Armed Service Committee have proposed spending cuts on military quality of life and veterans' benefit program. This could hurt every disabled veteran. This time is now to be advocates and reach out by contacting your legislators by e-mail, letters or phone call and let your voices be heard. Let them know to safe guard our military and retirement pay and stand against any changes to our health care and benefit programs. This is a very important issue at hand. Let's put pressure on our legislators. Your support is need on this matter.

I would like to thank all the chapters for your dedication and hard work in supporting me in these past months. Let us never forget our fallen comrades and family members and soldiers in harm's way. Keep them in your prayers. God Bless.



to Chapter 58 Tall City for raising \$11,000 at the Golden Corral Military Appreciation. This is their second year in a row to raise the most money in Texas.

*from the DAV District II Commander*

Happy New Year to all of you. I hope everyone is going to have a great year! I know I am really looking forward to this year. I see a lot of good things happening this year coming for the Disabled American Veterans. Last year was great being your District Commander, but you need to be looking for your next Commander. Some of the other line officers and I will be going to Tyler on the 10<sup>th</sup> to finalize things for the District Meeting. I am really looking forward to seeing some of you again. Don't forget to call the hotel to book your rooms and be sure to let them know you are with the Disabled American Veterans to get the set room rate. Also, if you have not called Kent in Waco to enroll your chapter service officers for the Friday class, please do so. I know for me I get busy sometimes and things have a way of falling through the cracks. One again Happy New Year. I look forward to seeing all my friends again in the Disabled American Veterans organization.

★ BOBBY HARRIS  
veteranbob48@yahoo.com

God bless. United we stand. Divided we fall.

*from the DAV District III Commander*

I hope each of you had a great Christmas and a Happy New Year. I know I did. It now is time to get started on the New Year, and I know each of you will do that. It is time to roll up our sleeves and get ready for a year of great programs, a return to recruiting with a vengeance, and fruitful fund raisers.

★ GORDON BRETT  
Gdavidb182@ouldr.net

Don't forget the District III Meeting in Killeen on April 27, 28 and 29<sup>th</sup>. You all should get a Call To Convention letter this month which will contain information about room rates, delegates, and other programs that will make this years meeting a memorable one. If you have questions about the meeting let your commander know and he will let me know. I may not be able to answer all your questions but I can get the answers for you. I look forward to seeing each of you at the District III meeting.

*from the DAV District IV Commander*

We have come to the last month of 2011. As I look back on this past year, I remember a year filled with promise and many challenges. A year that we as Chapters, Districts, a Department, and National organization have met each challenge with excitement, dedication, and motivation and surpassed our own expectations. We have laughed together, cried together and shared lasting memories. We have lost some precious friends; one of them being our own World War II veteran and VA volunteer comrade Aristidis Eric Solomos. They will all be missed.

★ ISAAC BAZILE  
isaac.bazile@usdoj.gov

I look forward to 2012 with even more excitement, anticipation, dedication, and motivation. In the coming year I want to encourage you all to renew your membership recruiting goals, to serve our veterans and their families with a spirit of excellence, to become more involved with your support to your Chapter and Commanders. I myself will do the same.

Remember our host Chapter 194 for the District Meeting, April of 2012. Let us support them and encourage other chapters and commanders to submit a list of your line officers with photos to our host chapter. I will encourage the District IV staff to do the same. Letters have already gone out to different chapter asking for support in this event. I believe it will be a meeting to remember and that it will be a meeting to remember and that it will be enjoyed by all who attend. Let's help to make it a success.

I wish each veteran and their families a very Merry Christmas with a Happy and prosperous New Year. Remember the true meaning of Christmas is a time of giving and spreading love to our fellow man.

*from the DAV District V Commander*

Merry Christmas: I do hope all District V members had a very Merry Christmas holiday. And may your Christmas were filled with joy and special moments. And of course many special toys were in your Christmas stockings.

★ JAVIER PATRON  
javierpatron@sbcglobal.net

Christmas Parties: Thank you to both DAV and DAVA Commanders of Chapter 61 and 5 and chapter members for their kind invitation to their Christmas party. It is always good to be able to participate not only at parties but also attend any of the chapter's events.

**Chapter Visit:** Thank you to Chapter 94 – Pearl Harbor members in Yoakum for receiving both the Jr. Vice Commander Shand and myself to their monthly meeting. Congratulations to Sr. Vice Commander James Nolte for his Chapter’s Award in contributing much of his time and efforts in upholding the Chapter meetings in the absence of the Chapter Commander.

**Chapter 150 DAV & DAVA:** Again BZ to members of Chapter 150 for not only taking care of their chapter members but to the community they support. It’s always good to hear that many chapter members are attending the chapter meetings but also to support in all activities that the chapter undertakes throughout the year. It is also heartwarming to know that chapter members continue to donate electrical and manual wheelchairs, scooters and whatever else is needed to those less fortunate. May you continue to support veterans by way of providing transportation to the VA Hospital and Clinics.

My condolences to the family of Comrade Florentino Ramirez, a Korea War combat wounded veteran (USMC). May he rest in peace at the new Coastal Bend State Veterans Cemetery in Corpus Christi, Texas.

**District V Meeting:** A reminder to all District V Line Officers, Chapter Commanders and Chapter Adjutants of the upcoming 2<sup>nd</sup> Pre-Planning Meeting on January 24, 2012 at Chapter 61 – Seguin at 11:00 am, 425 Vaughn St. Happy New Year to everyone and may you have a peaceful and joyous year.

STAND UP FOR VETERANS, and may God Bless America

**BPT/Legislative Report**

I hope that all of you that read this have had happy holidays. I hope you all will also have a fortunate and safe New Year.

Here are some suggested New Year’s resolutions for all DAV members. These are for your benefit just like diets and spending less.

1. Plan to have at least one member of your chapter go to the Mid-Winter Conference.
2. Contact your Congressional Representative and Senators and make an appointment to see them, or one of their staff while at the Mid-Winter conference.
3. Review your Representative’s and Senator’s voting record on veterans’ issues.
4. Plan to discuss the DAV issues, as presented during the Legislative Training conducted by DAV Congressional Liaison staff.

★ WOLF BIEDENFELD  
Wolf.biedenfeld@va.gov

5. Watch the Presidential Debates. Listen for the word veterans in the plank for the total party platform.
6. Talk to your current Representative and your Senators, or their staff, while they are on vacation. Ask them where they stand on “Earned Benefits.” Veterans’ Benefits are NOT entitlements, they are earned benefits and so they should be part of any discussion on entitlement cuts.
7. Ask them how they feel about reduction in Congressional pay and benefits as part of the Deficit Reduction Proposals floating in Congress. As you may have noted, Congressional Pay and Retirement Benefits have continued to rise while Veteran’s Benefits have stagnated (lost buying power).

This may sound like a long list of resolutions but it is your future that rests on doing these. You have until February for the Mid-Winter Conference and until the fall elections for the other efforts. Please do not fall for “pretty” talk and speeches. Look at the candidate’s record.

Please continue to recruit. All Disabled American Veterans should be heard and their concerns represented by the DAV. All disabled veterans should be shown that their present and future benefits depend on a strong DAV voice.

Enjoy the New Year, but remember its promise depends on your efforts to present the effectiveness of the DAV as a strong and informed voice for disabled veterans.

*from the DAV VAVS Chairperson*

Let us begin the new calendar year with a fresh start on the optimistic side of each and every day by putting our best food forward. I realize that for some of us this may come as a challenge, but let’s make it a resolution to give it our best shot in the New Year. It just might work, and then you will be glad you made the extra effort to go the extra mile.

Referring to my November article, I remind you all of the importance of the Jesse Brown Scholarship established by the DAV in memory of his devotion to the cause of building better lives for America’s disabled veterans, and the many accomplishment he had in service to veterans. This prestigious award is designed to encourage youth volunteers to become active in the Department of Veterans Affairs Voluntary Service programs. Nominations for this award are encouraged from all VA facilities across the state. Selected nominees win scholarships towards higher education. As I stated before, there are many youth volunteers who are deserving of this award. Please

★ ED MEISER  
Edgar\_meiser@msn.com

recognize them for their dedication in service to veterans by helping to build better lives for them and their families. Full instructions and forms can be obtained online at the following address.

<http://www.dav.org/volunteers/scholarship.aspx>

**Nominations must be received no later than Monday, February 27, 2012.**

The George H. Seal Memorial Trophy is another prestigious award given in recognition of extraordinary volunteer dedication to the needs of disabled veterans through the VAVS program. This award honors the memory and accomplishments of George H. Seal who made many significant contributions during his career as DAV National VAVS Representative and member of the VAVS National Advisory Committee. Only the DAV and DAV Auxiliary members enrolled as accredited VAVS volunteers are eligible, and must be nominated by Voluntary Service Program Managers or Department Commanders. However, if you know of someone you feel should be nominated for this award, I'm sure the VAVS Program Manager or Department Commander would be receptive to your suggestions. This would also serve as a kindly reminder that a nominee is welcomed from each VA medical facility. **The deadline for this nomination is also February 27, 2012.**

I thank each and every one for your unconditional dedication in service to our nation's veterans. I appreciate you and all you do. Speaking with optimism, I leave you with a quote from jazz legend, Duke Ellington – *"A problem is your chance to do your best."*

Items of Interest

★Pasadena Memorial Chapter 194 honors Pearl Harbor Survivor, Robert K. Youngman.

Mr. Youngman was born on September 17, 1924 in Mt. Carmel, Illinois. He lost his parents at age 12. In 1924 at the age 17 he enlisted in the United States Navy. Mr. Youngman was on board the USS California on December 7, 1941. His ship was hit by two Japanese torpedoes in the early minutes of the Pearl Harbor raid. The ship was later hit by a bomb and near miss by another. He watched the A-bomb dropped on Japan from his ship.

Mr. Youngman is past Commander of the American Legion, past Commander of the VFW, and soon will be a member of the DAV Chapter 194. He lives in Deer Park, Texas with his wife and has been married for 66 years.

ACROSS THE STATE

Photo below – front row L to R: Robert Matthews Jr., Robert K. Youngman, Commander Cortez Jr., Charles W. Graham; enter row L to R: James Teer, Jose G. Cordero, Benny Cervante; back row L to R: Tom Barbee, Dan Garcia



★1st Junior Vice Tim Lindsey is pictured below with William Jones who was awarded the National Commanders Nomination Certificate as a DVOP representative.



*from the DAV Chaplain*

It is my prayer that you all had a blessed Christmas and remembered that Jesus is the reason for the season. Somehow as we get older our priorities change. I hope you all embrace the joy of giving instead of receiving. We want to keep in prayer the veterans who might be homeless and not realizing there is help available. If you happen to know a veteran that is suffering from PTSD please direct him/her to the nearest VA facility. We pray Heavenly Father; a new year stretches out ahead of us. We can move into this New Year with confidence, looking ahead with new goals, new resolutions, and new dreams. We will sing your praise because I know you have a positive future for us, and it begins today! A plan to prosper us and give us hope. Therefore, we will think bigger than ever before. AMEN

★ MEIZIE LOFTON  
meizie2050@aol.com

Jeremiah 29:11 "For I Know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future."

**Deepest Sympathies**

Department and the membership extend deepest sympathies to the family members, friends, and comrades of these fallen heroes. May each one rest in honor.

- |                    |          |
|--------------------|----------|
| Florentino Ramirez | Chap 150 |
| Magil Espinoza     | Chap 14  |
| Carl Newland       | Chap 14  |
| Reagan Perkins     | Chap 14  |
| Henry Valdespino   | Chap 14  |
| Robert Yates       | Chap 14  |
| Richard Ramirez    | Chap 14  |
| Leonard Riley      | Chap 14  |
| Charles Maldonado  | Chap 14  |

★ FALLEN HEROES  
may each one rest in honor

Please feel free to call, write, or email the Adjutant's office if you have a loss in your family, chapter, or unit that should be included in this column.



## NATIONAL DAV MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

February 26 - 29, 2012  
Crystal Gateway Marriott  
1700 Jefferson Davis Highway  
Arlington, VA 22202  
Telephone: 703.920.3230  
\$190.00 Single/Double Occupancy

### Application Window Extended for Gulf War Illness Claims

Veterans from the Gulf War suffering undiagnosed illnesses now have an additional five years to qualify for benefits from the Department of Veterans Affairs. The change in VA regulations extends the application deadline to Dec. 31, 2016.

Congress set the original deadline of Dec. 31, 2011 in 1994 in response to cases of Gulf War illness which still lack a clearly defined diagnosis. This extension allows veterans of the Gulf War and the Iraq War to remain eligible for disability payments and VA programs while more research is done to investigate the cause of the symptoms.

Veterans or survivors who believe they qualify for these benefits are urged to contact the nearest National Service Officer for assistance with a claim.