



# Department of Texas

## NEWS BULLETIN

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Vol. 20 Issue 04

Chartered by Act of Congress 1932

October 2011

*from the DAV Department Commander*

Comrades,

Thank you so much for the work you have done for the service connected disabled veterans. I gain so much knowledge and hear so many words of thanks from the veterans I see at the VA Medical Centers. Our standard of medical care as a veteran is a great asset we have that many people have never seen. I hear many words of complaint regarding the attitudes of the caregivers. We need to be aware that we seldom hear a veteran speak of the good things they receive at a VA Medical Center. I am a patient of the Dallas VA Medical Center. I have never received anything but the greatest of care.

There have been times that I have spoken to an employee and they are rude in their manner of talk. But, I still spoke kindly to them and thanked them for their assistance. I also make it a point to tell each caregiver or clerical person who gives me care that day that I appreciate them and the care they give to our country's veterans.

It is amazing how that word of encouragement changes the attitude of those who were rude. It also gives me a chance to tell them I appreciate their caring for me. It is always good to receive a pat on the back and a good word.

I also make it a point to get the names of those who attend to me while at the medical center. Then I make certain in some way that the Director of the medical facility is aware of how well their employees cared for me. I also thank them for their service and care of the veterans.

If every one of us makes it a point to do this, we can, collectively, change the attitude of the rude employees and at the same time give the VA

★ KEN HACKNEY  
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Medical Center employees, nurses, physician attendants and doctors a word of thanksgiving for what they are giving back to us.

We have a special day coming, Veterans Day, in which we honor all veterans. It also gives us a special time for recruiting. Have you ever walked down the line of people waiting to get into Golden Corral, carrying your donation bucket, and spoke with each person in line? Have you ever asked each veteran if they have ever received an injury while in service? Have you asked them if they are receiving SC Disability benefits? Have you asked them to join the DAV? Did you have your membership applications in your pocket? You better! If you don't, some other chapter may sign them up at another time and reap the benefits of their membership.

Each chapter member attending the Golden Corral event should have membership applications with them. If you do not have them contact National DAV for the forms and carry the forms as you visit with the veterans in line. Make certain they know that this event is organized and supported by Golden Corral and the Disabled American Veterans. Make certain they know what the DAV does. Make certain they understand the benefits of membership. Don't just hand them the material sent from National. Talk to each veteran personally. Let them know you appreciate their service and what they gave for their country. After all, your "Thank You" may be the only one they hear.

You are all appreciated by me. You are important to the veterans, your chapter, and most of all, the Department of Texas. **Thank you for a job well done.** Now, continue your mission.

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

from the DAVA State Commander

Ruth and I are gearing up for the State School of Instruction. We both feel that you will not only enjoy the school but will find it educational. **I would like to encourage each of you to submit questions you may want to have addressed by sending them to me at [craigjohniken@yahoo.com](mailto:craigjohniken@yahoo.com) so I can pass them to the appropriate chairperson for discussion.** I think this approach would be helpful to the members as well as allow the presenters the opportunity to address items that are truly a concern.

In September I attended Fall Conference and I came away with a lot of information. It is always a pleasure to attend this meeting. Not only does it give me a chance to see old friends but also to meet new ones. National Adjutant Hezlep and her office did a great job planning this conference. It is hard to believe we are approaching the time of the year where we all become busy with holidays; before we can turn around we will be celebrating Thanksgiving. We must start planning what activities we plan to be a part of on Veterans Day. Perhaps you may want to contact a local school and ask if you can come in and hold a program or join a parade. Whatever your choice I am certain that you will be successful.

Good Luck in all of your endeavors!  
 Until that checkered flag on June 30, 2012 don't forget we are still racing for members!

★ CRAIG JOHNIKEN  
[craigjohniken@yahoo.com](mailto:craigjohniken@yahoo.com)

needed to Goal 1,845



★ MEMBERSHIP GOAL  
 FISCAL YEAR 2011-2012

from the DAV Membership Chairman

Here it is October already and I want to thank you for your efforts to increase membership!

We, the Disabled American Veterans, face challenges ahead of us. If we are to keep our numbers and effectiveness strong, we must strive to GROW our chapters and Department instead of seeing decline. I challenge each of you to surpass this past year's membership.

Can this be accomplished? Yes! To reach it, chapters must focus their energy on finding and recruiting new members; retaining those we have; and reinstating those whose membership has lapsed. Every member is a valuable member, and we must seek out and retain each one.

Remember, a strong organization is one in which the members are actively working together and encouraging each other. Just like our bodies, as we age, we must continue to work or we grow weak. If we sit idle and do nothing, we wither and die. The strong chapters are involved in fund raising, membership drives, community affairs and assisting veterans. I encourage each and every chapter to get busy and grow, stay strong and prosper.

Recruiting is important, but it serves little purpose to increase membership without getting everyone involved in serving our veterans and attaining our goals.

★ TOM PARKER  
[tommparker75@aol.com](mailto:tommparker75@aol.com)

from the DAV Adjutant

This is a reminder to the chapters that have been assigned a Golden Corral in their area to contact the manager if you have not done so. All chapters that are participating in this fundraiser have received a phone call from Department Headquarters. We also included a reminder letter with your new directory which was mailed to you.

If you would like additional copies of the directory we will provide them to you at a cost of \$ 2.00 each.

If I can be of any assistance please do not hesitate to contact me.

★ TERESA JOHNIKEN  
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*from the DAVA Adjutant*

★ RUTH GATES  
ruth.gates@sbcglobal.net

Our incredible journey continues. This month I want to discuss some fundamentals. As each you are aware, the National Constitution and Bylaws covers most all aspects of our organization and our procedures. For those items/issues that are specific to the State of Texas, we have the State Standing Rules. I would highly recommend that each of you obtain a copy of the National Constitution and Bylaws and the State Standing Rules for yourself. These books are for all the members. Also you have access the Auxiliary manual which can be purchased through National Headquarters which provides more in-depth details about our programs and activities. So as you can all see you have the resources to have a productive unit at your fingertips.

On to Membership. With the recent changes in our eligibility, we have an extraordinary opportunity to expand our ranks considerably. I would challenge each of you to attempt to find at least 1 new member for your unit since we can now include more people. I think it would be excellent if we were able to meet our State Quota this year since Commander Patti is from our Great State.

Finally for this month, let's talk a moment about visibility. I have stated previously that everyone is unique and valuable. There is no question in that regard. I would request that each of you remember that you are the voice and face of this organization. It is not only the officers at any level, chairpersons, VAVS reps or others that represent us but each of you as a unit member as well represents the organization. Be aware of your environment and remember that people do watch and listen closely at times. Our goal is to have a positive impact on our communities and aid the veterans and their families. So if potential members/volunteers or contributors outside of the organization see us fighting amongst ourselves, we are only hurting ourselves and limiting our own future.

Remember the State School is November 5, 2011 in Lufkin and I am looking forward to seeing many of you there. Don't forget that the raffle tickets can be sold to anyone not just DAV or DAVA members. Remember any concerns/questions or issues need

to be in written form and mailed to State Headquarters

Thought for the month: What do we live for if not to make life less difficult for each other?

*from the DAV District I Adjutant*

★ Ed Meiser  
edgar\_meiser@msn.com

"Grandfather Time" is still ripping right along at a high rate of speed. The first day of Autumn has already passed. The Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard have already had their birthdays for this year. The Navy is celebrating theirs this month, and the Marines will have theirs in November. And then Thanksgiving, and then Christmas. Why it seems like only last week that I dug my speedo swimwear out of the closet for the summer season. Ok, so we won't go there.

Is your Chapter or Unit doing anything for Halloween? Why not host a ghost & goblin party? Just a thought! But that would be an interesting way to gain more awareness in the community and have gobs of fun doing it.

And of course it's not that far away now to be thinking and gearing up for Veterans Day and the Golden Corral Military Appreciation Day. Your Chapters and Units have many, many opportunities for recognition and the gaining of new members during that time.

District I Chapters, if you have anything you would like to share in this space, please feel free to contact the Commander or Adjutant. I know we have some new officers in the chapters, so please don't hesitate to call me on any questionable situation, or just to chat about any ideas you may have to share.

*from the DAV District II Commander*

★ BOBBY HARRIS  
veteranb0b48@yahoo.com

Dear Comrades:

Once again I hope to find everyone doing fine! The Dist. II meeting will be held in Tyler in 2012. I have already made a contract with the hotel. The hotel will be the same one we had our 2007 meeting at which will be the Quality Inn Conference Center 2843 N.W. Loop 323, Tyler 75702. The phone #is 903-597-1301 to make reservations. You MUST tell them you are

with the Disabled American Veterans. The CSO School will be held on Friday March the 30<sup>th</sup>. Sat. March 31 will be the Opening Session. Chapter 6 Tyler was unable to host the 2012 meeting so I took it upon myself to be the host. Please send donations for the District Meeting to Chapter 70, P.O. Box 917, Decatur Tx. 76234. Be sure you mark them for Dist. II meeting. The rooms for 2012 will be \$69.00 per night. I will be sending letters to all Chapter Commanders and Adjutants later this month or by early October. If any chapter in the Tyler area who would like to take on this project, it would be greatly appreciated. I have also spoken with Ken Braggs in Athens and he said their chapter would be able to help at the meeting but they would not be able to host the meeting. For me in Decatur it's around 150 or so miles to Tyler. So it's kinda hard to get some things set up. Debra Christian Commander of Unit 6 has been very helpful to me. THANKS Debra. But it gets harder and harder to get a Chapter to commit to holding the District Meetings. So what I would like to do in Dist. II is have two or three chapters unite and work together. I know Dist. II has the most chapters but we also have the smallest chapters in the whole state. But I sure would like to see us UNITE.

For United We Stand, Divided We FALL  
 GOD Bless Each and everyone.

*from the DAV District III Commander*

We just finished Labor Day, and the entire state of Texas appeared to be burning. The weather was quite nice, with highs in the 80's but with no rain and high wind. Oh, well....we can't have everything.

It appears that the high temperature is over for the year; at least the 100 degree temperatures. However, we caution you about getting out in the middle of the day. If you do get out, please be sure to hydrate adequately.

We just finalized the hotel for next years District III Meeting. We will be at the Shilo Inn in Killeen. The meeting will be Friday, April 27<sup>th</sup> for Service Officer training, with the meeting on Saturday, April 28<sup>th</sup> and Sunday, April 29<sup>th</sup>. Please mark your calendar for this event. We will forward more information to you as it becomes available. I will be in Killeen on Wednesday, Sept. 7<sup>th</sup> to finish up

★ GORDON BRETT  
 Gdavidb182@ouldrs.net

on paperwork for the meeting. I really think you all will like the Shilo Inn. The guest rooms are great, and all the meeting rooms are quite adequate.

The next big holiday coming up is Veterans Day, which is November 11<sup>th</sup>. We at Chapter 63 are getting prepared for a parade here in Palestine. If you are having a fund raiser for that day, be sure to get Department approval at least 30 days ahead of time.

You should be getting visits from various District III Officers in the near future. The month of September was my busiest time, with visits scheduled for Chapter 40, Mexia; Chapter 198, Kingsland; and Chapter 234, Stephenville.

*from the DAV District IV Commander*

Now that fall has arrived, we look back on the exciting events of this year and say where did the time go. Now we are preparing for the last quarter of the year, we're looking forward to participating with all of our veterans on Veterans Day, and participating in the annual Golden Corral event. I encourage all of you to get out and get involved in events that are in support of our service men and women, that's what the Disabled American Veterans are all about service. Let's continue to support veteran's membership because that is the life's blood of the DAV. Also, I encourage you to follow what is going on in our Nation's Capitol in Congress, and with state of our nation. There is so much going on with our economy and the issues that concern our military and all veterans alike. Be involved with your congressmen and congresswomen, your State Senators too. Let them know that you have a voice when it comes to veteran's issues and maintaining veteran's rights, healthcare, and veterans benefits, and that they were elected to office to support the needs of the people most of whom are veterans and their families.

Remember our host Chapter for the 2012 District Meeting, let's support them and encourage other chapter members and chapters to do the same. I believe 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.

★ ISAAC BAZILE  
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*from the DAV District V Commander*

★ JAVIER PATRON  
 javierpatron@sbcglobal.net

**Chapter Visit August 27th:** BRAVO ZULU to Chapter 128 (San Antonio) for a great General Membership Meeting. I had the opportunity to observe the obligation of three new chapter members. My sincere apologies to the Chapter Commander and members for leaving off their attendance at the DAV National Convention; the members of Chapter 128 earnestly attend the DAV National Convention with their sincere purpose and efforts for the DAV National Convention programs year after year.

**BRAVO ZULU:** To Chapter Commanders and comrades of Chapters 94, 121, and 174 for their participation at the Regional Academic Health Center (RAHC) in Harlingen during a Congressional Listening Session with questions and answers conducted by Congressman Rubén Hinojosa, concerning the expansion of the VA Health Care Center at Harlingen. Special thanks to Commander Pete Garza from Chapter 121 for the visit invitation. I had the opportunity to discuss with Director Jeff Milligan and Chief of Staff Dr. Raúl Aguilar MD concerning mileage and lodging cost. I also spoke with Buddy Szulewski, Supervisor, Eligibility/Enroll & Travel and Zuck Selover, Acting Assistant Chief for Medical Administration Service (MAS) at Audie L. Murphy VA Medical Center concerning travel and lodging cost for veterans from the Texas Valley Coastal Bend Health Care System when entitled. This vital travel and lodging cost issue will be presented at our DAV District V Pre-Planning meeting on October 1, 2011.

**BRAVO ZULU:** To Chapter 95 DAVA for their accomplishments throughout the year. The Auxiliary members took First Place in the V1 Hoffman VAVS Awards and First Place for the National Hospital Award; they were presented with Certificates and recognized for their accomplishments at the DAV National Convention. Special thanks to Chapter 95 DAVA for providing coffee and sweets for veterans and their families at the McAllen VA Outpatient Clinic on Tuesday mornings.

**Visit:** Thank you to Chapter 61's DAVA and DAV invitation to attend the 10-Year Anniversary of September 11, 2001 at the Seguin Activity Center, Seguin, TX. Special thanks to Chapter 61 DAVA for

providing cookies and water to the veterans and public attendees.

**District V:** Pre-Planning Meeting on October 1<sup>st</sup> at American Legion, Alamo Post #2, 3518 Fredericksburg Rd., San Antonio from 9:00am – 4:00pm.

**STAND UP FOR VETERANS**, and may God Bless America.

Items of Interest

Congratulations to Department Service Officer Harry Carroll and his wife on the birth of their twins on September 20<sup>th</sup>. Cecilia Isabelle made her appearance at 11:24 am weighing in at 5lb 10 oz and Jay Edward came next at 11:25 am weighing 5lbs and 7oz. If all goes as expected they will be home with their parents on October 2<sup>nd</sup>.

Van Zandt County Veterans Memorial Annual Labor Day Balloon Release. Sept. 5, 2011 Ken Hackney was the master of ceremonies for this event.

Ken was live on air on the radio after the program speaking about the Balloon Release and DAV.

★ ACROSS THE STATE



If you have any news to share please contact headquarters.

from the DAV VAVS Chairperson

As they say in Australia (Aussie-Land), "G-day Mate!" I did send out an LVAP packet to all Chapters & Units, although be it a bit later than I planned on, and also with a mistake on the Report Form. I apologize for both. By the time you are reading this, the Chapters & Units will have received another letter with the corrections in time to submit your hours for the month of Sept.

The newly revised LVAP Volunteer Personal Data Form & the Monthly Report Form are replacing the forms currently on the Dept. web site. Brad Adams, our Dept. Admin. Assistant has graciously volunteered his time and talents to upload the forms in printable PDF format for your convenience in reporting to Dept. This is taking place right now and available for immediate use.

Thank y'all for bearing with me on this; I truly believe it will make your individual reporting accountability much easier to accomplish.

The good news is, it looks like my objective of gaining a renewed interest and participation in the LVAP program is working. I, along with Dept. Admin., am beginning to receive numerous inquiries about the program.

A frequently asked question that has been on the record for some time now is: **"How far can I go back in time to report and get credit for my volunteer hours for the LVAP Program?"** After conferring with both National & Department offices, the answer is: **"You can only go back twelve months from the current reporting month."**

The LVAP reporting system was designed by National and is maintained by Department with a twelve month limitation on going back and getting credit for your volunteer hours prior to registering with the program.

While I am sorry about that, although unless you kept a diary, I don't see many people remembering that far back anyway.

The real reason I decided to reintroduce the program was to get a renewed interest in it, as well as getting the correct information out once again so the program can operate more efficiently, and to its" fullest extent--- so we can **move forward from here** with your help, **"Building better lives for our nations' disabled veterans and their families"** throughout our entire communities and getting credit for those volunteer hours.

★ ED MEISER  
Edgar\_meiser@msn.com

Aside from all of that, this program does give our Organization a better scope of just how much volunteerism is being performed out there aside from the VAVS Volunteer Services program, and also the Auxiliary Volunteer program.

Please continue to remember: Do not "double-dip" on your hours. The "same" hours may not be used in more than one program. Thank you for your integrity.

Oh yes, one other issue popped up recently, if you are receiving any kind of **compensation** for your work--- it **does not count as volunteering**. (The word "volunteer" is defined as "somebody who works without being paid.")

Again, "I thank you for your time & service in providing a better way of life for our disabled veterans and their families." As always, please feel free to call or send me your questions, comments, and ideas that I may continue to share with the rest of TX.

**"There is no medicine like hope, no incentive so great, and no tonic so powerful as expectation of something tomorrow."**----O. S. Marden

Thank you for giving our disabled veterans and their families hope for tomorrow through your thoughtful deeds of today!

from the WOMEN VETERAN COORDINATOR

***First Female Recipient of the Purple Heart***

Annie G. Fox served in the Army Nurse Corps during World War II. 1st Lt. Fox worked at Hickam Field, Oahu, Hawaii, and was on duty the morning of December 7, 1941, when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor. She served her country that day by tending to the soldiers and sailors who were hurt in the bombings. For her service at Pearl Harbor, she received the Purple Heart, the first woman awarded this honor. While the Purple Heart is usually given to soldiers injured in battle, this custom did not begin until later in World War II. Initially, when it was established by George Washington, the Purple Heart awarded any "singularly meritorious act of extraordinary fidelity or essential service." Lt. Fox's service during Pearl Harbor, met this criteria, and thus she was awarded this great honor. The fact that she was a woman illustrates the changes in women's roles that occurred during World War II.

★ JENNIFER KELLOGG  
jennifer.kellogg@va.gov

That war forever changed how women were viewed and valued in society and the military.

Source: [http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/a\\_people\\_at\\_war/women\\_who\\_served/annie\\_g\\_fox.html](http://www.archives.gov/exhibits/a_people_at_war/women_who_served/annie_g_fox.html)

**Special Monthly Compensation**

Did you know you may be eligible for a special monthly compensation? VA broadened its coverage of special monthly compensation for women Veterans who suffered loss of breast tissue related to their military service. The benefit covers those losing 25 percent or more tissue from a single breast or from both breasts in combination. It includes loss by mastectomy or partial mastectomy, or following radiation treatment. In addition to breast tissue loss, special monthly compensation rates also apply when a Veteran experiences loss of a reproductive organ or its use. Women Veterans with service-connected breast tissue loss who are not receiving the special monthly compensation should contact VA (1-800-827-1000) to find out if they are eligible.

Source: <http://www.va.gov/womenvet/>

*from the DAV Chaplain*

My fellow comrades: I am offering comfort to whatever may be bothering you at this time. Psalm 118 verse 24 says *This is the day that the Lord has made!* Let us rejoice and be glad in it. The ten year anniversary of 9/11 has brought our country together. Let us keep in mind that freedom comes at a price. Count your blessings that you live in America. Psalm 91 verse 1 states *He that dwelleth in the secret Place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.* May I again remind you that I am here for you. If I can be of any help, I am available at [meizie2050@aol.com](mailto:meizie2050@aol.com) or by phone (956) 230-0653. God bless you all and God bless America.

★ MEIZIE LOFTON  
[meizie2050@aol.com](mailto:meizie2050@aol.com)

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.

Fred Thomas Chapter #150

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.

★ FALLEN HEROES  
may each one rest in honor

**Disabled American Veterans  
Bulletin**  
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