

Roy B. Hodges, Chapter 128 DAV

(Disabled American Veterans)

Newsletter

Volume 2 Number 2

P. O. Box 670 Converse, TX 78109

Summer (June) 2012

Remembering: We Honor Fallen Comrades

Memorial Day (Traditional May 31)

The River of Life

Standing at the water's edge we remember those who paid the price for our freedom. It was a price calculated in human blood. It was paid that we might freely stand, that we might freely walk, that we might freely run, that we might freely sit, that we might freely join the river's flow as it carries us beyond all that we can imagine to become who we never dreamed that we could be.



Photo of Medina River at Bandera, TX Courtesy Dr. Elizabeth A. Kennedy

Honoring: We Remember Fathers who teach ways of the river
Father's Day June 17, 2012

**Remembering and Honoring: One Flag, "Old Glory" under which
the river flows**

Flag Day June 14, 2012



NATIONAL HONOR

(My Moment of Reflection)

I wonder: Do those that enjoy freedoms and rights afforded to citizens of a free nation truly understand the importance of the flag or even appreciate the terrible costs made to ensure the rights? Have people become callous to the fact that someone put down the earnest investment in blood, sweat and tears for a freedom that is not very free? Throughout the nation's history, men and women have proudly carried the national colors into harm's way. How readily did the bold colors of the red, the white and the blue serve as a rallying point and spurred service members on to greatness. These colors identify the people of a great nation and continue to serve as a brilliant beacon of hope and inspiration to many. Images of the marines planting the flag on foreign soil at Iwo Jima; astronauts placing the flag on the surface of the moon; rescue workers emplacing large flags in a show of defiant unity at various sites following the 9/11 attacks, and the raised flag over Olympic awards ceremonies accompanied by the playing of the National Anthem all attest to the pride of a nation. If these images do not evoke a certain level of patriotism, consider the flags adorning national cemeteries or even the photo of a lone casket, returning the remains of a fallen hero from a foreign land, that is adorned with the national standards "on behalf of a grateful nation." Overwhelming emotions and tears of a flag waving child that now only has memories of a parent to cling to; parents, siblings, families and friends that will never hear the calming voice of a loved one lost, and a nation in mourning define the impact of the national flag.

It then becomes somewhat disturbing to experience situations in which individuals/groups would utilize freedoms won under the shadow of "Old Glory" to desecrate the banner through spitting upon, stepping on, improperly destroying or displaying the "Grand Old Flag." How easily do people symbolically surrender the flag of the "One nation – Under God – Indivisible – With Liberty and Justice for all?" How easy is it to market the flag that secured a nation as just another novelty that seems like an innocent joke when worn on someone's dirty butt!? How can one fault foreign countries for showing disdain towards or burning the U.S. flag when foreign countries see a total disrespect for the flag by "Melting Pot" Americans and within American shores? There is so much that we take for granted?

My moment of reflection on and realization of the importance of the U.S. flag came on the eve of ground attacks during Operation Desert Storm. As the Logistical Officer of a combat battalion with the 101st Air Assault Division, I was prepared for extremely heavy losses. A family member had earlier sent me a cotton flag which I proudly displayed on the antenna of my military Hummer. As I was enroute to my unit's Administrative and Logistical Operations Center (ALOC) for on-going preparations in support of unit participation in support of the operations, I felt a nice wind that facilitated the perfect wave of the flag. The moon was at 100% illumination; therefore, the red, white and blue of the flag were vivid and further drew me into a closer observation. Looking intently at the flag, I could see faces of service members from the various eras in our nation's struggles, men and women of different races that all made sacrifices for the National Honor. As I am the hope of the slave, I saw those that endured injustices that enabled my ability to attend West Point and to proudly serve as an Army Officer in a combat zone. I came to the realization that I had an awesome obligation to ensure that the freedoms secured by others, including: the Buffalo Soldiers, Tuskegee Airmen, Navajo Code Talkers; descendants of interned Japanese Americans and all others, who have migrated to this melting pot, received my deposit on behalf of the future. At this moment, I came to terms with the possibility of my making the ultimate sacrifice and... All Was Well, for I came face to face with National Honor! I swell!

Edward Earl Giles
Just Praise

Donitar



From the Office of the Commander

The summer season begins June 20. It is a perfect time to reflect on the past few months and my activities as your Commander. I represented Roy B. Hodges CH 128 at the Mid-Winter Conference as part of the Department of Texas delegation who went to hear our National Commander, Donald Samuels, give testimony before the Congressional Veterans Affairs Committee in Washington D C. In March I attended the District V Meeting. Comrade John Lombrano was elected 2012 District V Commander. National Chaplain Dr. Charles W. Edwards, a member of Roy B. Hodges Chapter 128, was elected to District V Sr. Vice Commander. In April I attended the testimonial dinner for the National DAVA Commander Patrice (Patti) Rappisand which was held in Fort Worth. The affair was a Texas five-star night to remember. National DAV Commander Donald Samuels was among the notable guests.

I attended the Memorial Day Ceremony at Ft. Sam Houston Cemetery. Chapter 128 members, Edward Giles,

William B. Johnson, Lillie Montgomery, Otis Montgomery, and Jerry Roebuck were also in attendance. I extend my deepest appreciation to each of the comrades who represented Chapter 128 and participated in the Memorial Day Ceremony.

The Department of Texas Convention is fast approaching. I am encouraging as many of you as can to attend the convention. This is a worthwhile experience and I am soliciting your participation. Be involved and serve on the Convention Committees. We must all pitch in and do our part to make this Department Convention a success. To all of the delegates who have already signed and are going, thank you.

Thank you to everyone for their flowers, cards and condolences on the passing of my father Laze H. Thomas of Chicago. He was one of my biggest supporters, celebrating with me in each of my accomplishments. I remember how proud he was when I told him I was the new Commander of Roy B. Hodges DAV Ch.128. He is missed. I walk with you my fellow comrades who have witnessed the passing in death of fathers and mothers. Another life event binds us in the strong bonds of experience as we move forward together to accomplish DAV goals.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. Matthew 4:23

Jesus was teaching preaching, and healing. These were the three main aspects of his ministry. Healing shows his concern for wholeness. His miracles of healing authenticated his teaching and preaching, proving that he truly was from God.

Comrades on the Sick and
Shut óIn List

Comrade Harold T. Durham
Comrade Milan W. Tealer
Comrade Albert Smart
Comrade Otis Brown
Comrade Ulyses Lampkin
Comrade Claude J. Boggs
DAVA Commander Gernell Smart

Henry Gallon, Sr., Chaplain
Chapter 128



DAV and Air Force Veteran Win Battle for Benefits

Provided by Adjutant Glenn Ellison

When Marlene Crespo was discharged from the Air Force with severe asthma, she received a ten-percent disability rating and practically no benefits. Then a routine doctor's visit gave her a glowing sense of hope when she discovered San Antonio, National Service Officer Joe Noonan there, visiting the same doctor.

Crespo suffered recurrent bouts of laryngitis while serving as an electronics technician working on the security systems in hardened aircraft shelters along the flight line at Ramstein Air Base in Germany in January 2000. The condition repeatedly plagued her, forcing her to carry medications constantly. Military doctors performed sinus surgery in 2001 that resulted in suffocating asthma and other complications.

"I couldn't perform my duties," she said. "I couldn't go outside, and I worked in a hardened aircraft shelter which had big doors that were always open." It became what she called her "sick hangar."

After a year of continued distress and inability to perform her work, she underwent an Air Force Physical Evaluation Board (PEB) medical evaluation that placed her on temporary retirement for a year. Crespo decided to return home to Lackland Air Force Base near San Antonio, where she continued her fight with asthma.

"After a year of retirement, a PEB ruled that because I had gotten better [with steroid medication], I should be medically discharged with ten-percent disability," she said. "I received very few military benefits, but the VA awarded me 40 percent, thanks to the DAV and Joe Noonan."

VA, Labor Joint Program Aids Unemployed Veterans

The VA's Education Service has yet another program to help unemployed veterans get back into the work force. The Veterans Retraining Assistance Program (VRAP) is jointly administered by the Department of Veterans Affairs and the Department of Labor (DOL).

Through the program's website, an individual will be prompted to provide us his or her first name, last name, and email address. Once submitted that person can expect to receive six to seven emails about VRAP, including notification on when applications open.

The VRAP offers 12 months of training assistance to veterans who are at least 35 years old but no older than 60. Eligible participants will receive up to 12 months of training assistance at the full-time payment rate under the Montgomery GI Bill-Active Duty program (currently \$1,473 per month). DOL will offer employment assistance to every veteran who participates or applies to the VRAP program.

The program is limited to 45,000 participants during fiscal year 2012, and to 54,000 participants from Oct. 1, 2012, through March 31, 2014. And participants must be enrolled in a VA approved program of education offered by a community college or technical school. The program must lead to an associate degree, non-college degree, or a certificate, and train the veteran for a high demand occupation.

You can learn more about VRAP at <http://benefits.va.gov/vow/education.htm>.

DAV Stands With Bataan Death March Survivors

WASHINGTON—The Disabled American Veterans (DAV) was honored to stand with five former World War II prisoners of war who survived the 1942 Bataan Death March or the siege of Corregidor to call for apologies from Japanese companies that abused these POWs as slave laborers.

The DAV has joined these heroes in asking Japanese companies that used American POW slave labor, which include Mitsui, Hitachi, Mitsubishi, Sumitomo and Kawasaki, to follow the example of their government and apologize to the American POWs and establish a meaningful program of remembrance. An estimated 27,000 American troops were prisoners of Japan during the war. Some 40 percent died in captivity. The majority of those Americans were forced to work on military projects or for private Japanese companies producing war materiel. No Japanese company has acknowledged or apologized for the use of POW forced labor.

VA Scraps Co-pays for Telehealth

The Department of Veterans Affairs plans to exempt in-home video telehealth care from having any required copayment. This regulatory change, slated to become effective May 7, removes a barrier that may have previously discouraged veterans from choosing to use in-home video telehealth as a viable medical care option. In turn, VA hopes to make the home a preferred place of care, whenever medically appropriate and possible.

Establishing telehealth services has been part of the VA's continuing efforts to improve veterans' access to medical care. Telehealth allows the VA to provide certain medical care without requiring the veteran to be physically present with the examining or treating medical professional.

"Telehealth helps ensure that veterans are able to get their care in a timely and convenient manner by reducing burdens on the patient as well as appropriately reducing the utilization of VA resources without sacrificing the quality of care provided," according to the VA. "The benefits of using this technology include increased access to specialist consultations, improved access to primary and ambulatory care, reduced waiting times, and decreased veteran travel."

Vietnam Veterans Children Sought for Birth Defect Registry

Did you serve in Vietnam?

Do you have children with birth defects or other conditions like learning and/or attention disorders; childhood cancers; autistic spectrum disorders; immune and/or endocrine problems?

Birth Defect Research for Children is collecting data to examine the effects of service in Vietnam and potential exposure to Agent Orange on the children of Vietnam veterans.

To Participation in this project Complete an online questionnaire which can be found at this link:

<http://www.birthdefects.org/registry/>

ISO: Disabled Veterans Returning Home — WWI to Today

Author and producer Gail Prensky is looking for personal stories to include in developing a book and film project about disabled veterans after they return home from war and how our country has responded to them.

She is looking for personal accounts—copies of letters, diaries, written essays, and visual material—by disabled veterans and their family and friends. She would like to share their experiences in dealing with the effects of war and their disability after returning from World War I, World War II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan.

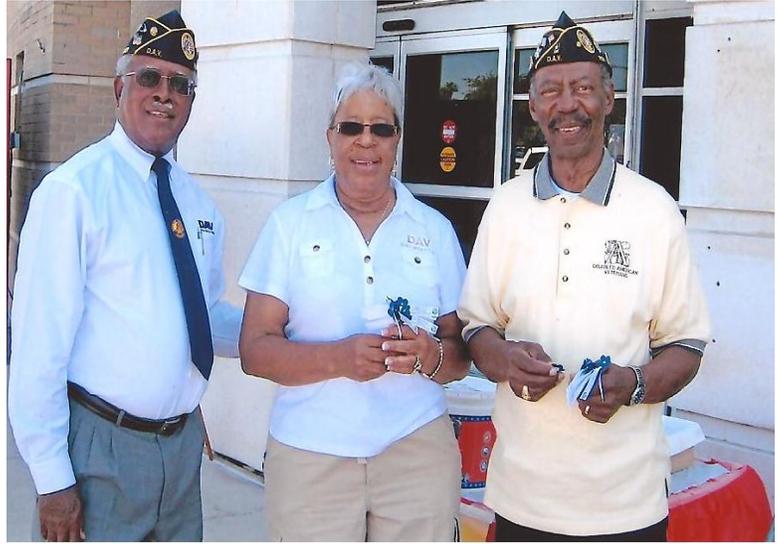
If interested, please send your material along with your contact information to: Gail Prensky, 4000 Cathedral Avenue, NW #505B, Washington, DC 20016; gprenskv@sprintmail.com



DAV and DAVA Working Together

Photos courtesy Comrade Jerry Roebuck

2011 Forget-Me-Not Fundraiser



DAV and DAVA Celebrating Together

Photos courtesy Comrade Jerry Roebuck

2011 Thanksgiving Dinner and Awards Ceremony



DAVA

Contributed by DAVA Vice Commander Joanne Johnson

Unit members are actively preparing to attend the Texas Department Convention to be held in Austin, TX, June 22-24, 2012. The Unit won first place for their numerous Community Service acts and contributions at the 2011 Convention. Their Community Service Report was also submitted to the National convention for consideration.

“SHEROES”

In this and other ongoing articles, members of the DAVA #128 will be noted and identified as “SHEROES”. This edition will highlight the officers and appointed positions.

Commander ó Gernell Smart was born in Charleston, South Carolina, and is serving her second term of office. She is sponsored by her husband Albert Smart.

Vice Commander ó Joanne Johnson, past Commander, was born in Wichita, Kansas, and is sponsored by her husband Jay Johnson.

Second Vice Commander ó Barbara Marshall, was born in Lafayette, Louisiana, and is sponsored by her husband Clarence Marshall.

Treasurer ó Martha Fairbanks, was born in Covington, Kentucky, and is sponsored by her husband Stacy Fairbanks.

Adjutant ó Betty Lamkin, was born in San Antonio, Texas and is sponsored by her husband Ulyses Lamkin.

2012 Texas Department Convention

The Department Convention will be held June 22 ó 24 at the Doubletree Hotel, Austin, Texas. Contact Adjutant Ellison at the convention for necessary forms.

2012 National Convention

Delegate names for the National Convention must be submitted to Adjutant Ellison no later than June 18, 2012 . If you plan to attend National as a delegate Comrade Ellison must have your name no later than June 18 so that the Executive Committee may approve delegates. We will not have a chapter meeting before the July 8, 2012 deadline for submission to National.

Contact Comrade Ellison Cell: 210 884-5788 or e-mail:gellison@satx.rr.com

DAV& DAVA Picnic

Make plans to attend the DAV & DAVA picnic September 8, 2012, Noon to 5:00 p m.
Location VFW Post 76, 10th and Avenue B, San Antonio, TX
More information will be available at the July chapter and unit meetings.