

# DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

## DEPARTMENT of TEXAS, HEADQUARTERS

### BULLETIN

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SEPTEMBER 2007

#### **COMMANDER'S COMMENTS**

Another successful National Convention is now history. Texas sends its congratulations to new National Commander, Rob Reynolds. We also have two fellow Texans on the National line, 1st Junior Vice Bobby Barrera and Chaplain Rev. Charles Edwards. One of the major highlights of this year's convention, held in New Orleans, was a presentation made on Tuesday night at during the introduction of the new National officers. The General Electric Foundation presented the DAV with a grant in the amount of \$1.5 million, earmarked for the Transition Service Officer program (TSO). What this program does is assist our military members as they begin their transition from military life to civilian life. We extend a big Texas thank you to G.E.

The National staff set up numerous very informative seminars that were well attended. I hope that all who attended will take the wealth of information they were given back to their chapters and put it to good use.

On August 4 I was honored to attend, along with Eldon Armstrong, Dept. Adj., the dedication of a memorial honoring Vietnam veterans in Ranger, TX. It was emceed by Joel Jiminez, DAV, and Larry Monroe, VFW. The park was surrounded by Vietnam veterans standing at attention with an American flag beside them. A liberty freedom bell was rung at various intervals. The keynote speaker was William McLemore, Deputy Assistant Secretary for the VA (also a good friend and Vietnam veteran). He spoke about the special bond Vietnam (and other) veterans share. He also spoke about the many comparisons being made between the Vietnam War and the one we are currently in and also the major differences. Mr. McLemore made one statement that really stood out in my mind. He said "The biggest lesson learned from the war in Vietnam is this: you can criticize the war, and the reasons for going to war-but you must never, ever

criticize the warriors, who did their duty in answering their country's call!". As he continued (and here I again completely agree with what he said) is that no one deserves our attention, our service, or our care, more than our veterans. This was a very moving ceremony, which was well attended by the citizens of Ranger.

The very next day the Chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, U.S. Rep. Bob Filner of California (along with U.S. Reps. Ciro Rodriguez, Henry Cuellar, and Charlie Gonzalez) held a forum in San Antonio. It was set up as a question and answer session but at times erupted into a shouting match. Chairman Filner first asked how many in the overflow audience were Vietnam Veterans and the majority raised their hands. He went on to say that the House had committed "tens of billions" in the 2008 budget for PTSD. \$13 billion has been added to the 2008 budget. He also said that he was working to change the adversarial relationship between veterans and the VA, especially the Vietnam era veterans. He wants to run the VA like the IRS, where the system would accept a vet's claim on its face rather than forcing the vet to prove "Agent Orange did this". He also told vets the following day in the valley that he was bringing back legislation to bring a hospital to the Rio Grande Valley. He said that you shouldn't have to prove anything; you served us, now we should be serving you. After listening to these politicians all I can say is to continue keeping in touch with your legislators about veteran issues.

Yours in comradeship,  
*Doug Herrle*

Department Commander

Visit <http://www.davmembersportal.org/> and explore the free website available to all chapters. Select Dept of Texas and explore it too.

## Disabled American Veterans

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,  
DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HAD THE  
FOLLOWING POPULATION SUMMARY AS OF,  
**8/17/2007:**

Life Members	60,857
Total Members	77,838

This years GOAL for full paid life members is:

Goal	63,299
Members to make goal	2,442

The Jonathan M. Wainwright Award is presented to the Department that finishes the year with the largest increase in new members, partially paid and fully paid Life Members.

The good news is the Department of Texas received this award at this years' National Convention in New Orleans, thanks to each and every one of you who worked so diligently to make it happen. I commend all of you for that extra special effort in adding 2,817 additional members in the state of Texas.

Unfortunately, there is also a bad news side to this story, of which I know you are already aware that National purged the membership lists at years end of all inactive members who have been inactive for three years. This will have a huge impact on Department in per capita returns, and will certainly affect Chapters as well.

So I am asking, **"Will you do this great organization a huge favor?** Will you commit to reenergizing and diligently recruiting new members and also grooming them for leadership so that we can continue to build better lives for our nations Disabled American Veterans and their families long after the present generations are no longer here???"

I admit, it's going to take a lot of hard work in going the extra mile, but I also have a lot of faith in **"Team Texas"** to overcome the hurdles and get the job done. Use wisely all of the tools you have, many of them provided free by National, and remember to keep the personal touch (contact) in the process to reap great and rewarding results.

*Ed Meiser*

Membership Chairman

Visit <http://www.davmembersportal.org/tx> click on NEWS tab to find Department Publications and monthly Bulletins. Bottom right side of home page is where you can link to chapter web pages. Check it out!

## Bulletin SEPTEMBER 2007

### NATIONAL 1<sup>ST</sup> JR VICE CDR

Dear Comrades,

Do you realize that in addition to our National Executive Committeeman/woman, Texans now hold National Office as the National DAV Chaplain, National DAVA 3rd Junior Vice Commander, and National DAV 1st Junior Vice Commander. Do you know who gets credit for this great accomplishment? You! The membership of our Department made this possible.

Whether it was your financial support, your vote for a certain position, a kind word of praise, or a smile as **we** crossed paths, each was equally important to us. Without your support, **we** would not hold the positions to which **we** were elected.

In my acceptance speech in New Orleans, I stated that Texas was known as "The Lone Star State", but that the Department of Texas was made up of many shining stars. To each one of you shining stars, **we** say, "Thank You."

Bobby Barrera  
National 1st Junior Vice Commander

### ADJUTANT'S COMMENTS

September already, where has the year gone? The end of this month is the deadline for the submission of the Annual Financial Report. The form was revised dated 04/07 and it comes with revised instructions for completing the form. I trust the chapter Treasurer will prepare the form in the proper way and explain the new changes to the appointed audit committee.

The 2007 National Convention is now behind us. Total delegates/alternates registered 1190. At the District 20 (Texas) meeting on Friday, prior to the Joint Opening meeting Saturday morning, 21 of the Texas 89 chapters were represented; Chapters 1, 3, 5, 6, 9, 14, 17, 20, 29, 42, 47, 61, 84, 86, 101, 111, 114, 128, 137, 194, and 233. By Monday there were 27 chapters registered for a total of 82 delegates representing Texas chapters.

I would hope that the delegates attending the convention would report back to your chapter on what was accomplished. Anything less is a failure on your part to properly represent your chapter.

*Eldon Armstrong*  
Department Adjutant / Treasurer

## Disabled American Veterans

### DISTRICT I

Washington-The House recently took steps to improve counseling and care for the tens of thousands of military personnel returning from Iraq and Afghanistan with brain injuries and post traumatic stress disorder.

The bill, one of four veterans bills passed by the House, requires the Veterans Affairs Department to provide outreach and mental health services to veterans of the two campaigns. The VA secretary is also directed to contact with community mental health centers in areas not adequately served by the VA.

The bill also allows the VA secretary to make grants to conduct therapeutic workshop programs in such areas as music and the arts.

The bill provides grants for rural veterans services organizations to help transport veterans in remote areas, makes permanent a program to treat participants in Defense Department chemical and biological testing, expands counseling services for veterans emerging from prison who are at risk of homelessness, and provides housing assistance to very low-income veterans.

A second bill waives co-payment for veterans receiving hospice care at home or at acute-care facilities, and another assures that disabled veterans living temporary with a family member are eligible for adaptive housing assistance.

The fourth bill extends pension benefits to World War II veterans of the U.S. Merchant Marine, who were deprived of the benefits given to most veterans after the war.

2008 District Meeting dates are April 11, 12, and 13. Location is Clarion Hotel & Conference Center 4300 West Wall Street Midland, Texas 79103

**Make reservations by March 1, 2008**

**Phone: 1-432-697-3181**

*Jesse Dryer*

Commander, District I

Telephone/Fax (915) 598-1025

### DISTRICT II

#### Greetings from your Sr. Vice Commander:

As we approach the month of September, a lot of you will be celebrating Labor Day weekend on Sept. 3rd with picnics and outings. There will be a lot of traveling so please do not let a tragedy ruin your fun weekend. Be mindful of road rules and safety because we need all of you for DAV membership and keeping your families together.

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For the chapters that Commander Jones and I have visited, we want to say thank you for your warm receptions and southern hospitality. My wife, Juanita also says "Thank you" to the Auxiliaries for making her feel welcome. For those chapters not yet visited, you are on our list and will be contacted soon. **WE ARE ONE**

Yours in service,

*Gene Allen*

Sr. Vice Commander, District II

### DISTRICT III

The conventions are over for this year and I hope that those of you that attended National enjoyed yourself. Now we need to concentrate on regular business, especially our membership. We need to get more young veterans involved. All of us baby boomers are now into our golden years (ha ha) or so I was told that is what they were.

Our District meeting/convention has changed locations. Commander Jerry Shumaker of Chapter 198 Kingsland notified me that they were not going to be able to host the District Meeting in 2008. A great thanks to Mr. Palmer for his efforts in trying to assist Chapter 198.

We wish to thank Commander Ross Richardson, Chapter 63 in Palestine for picking up the ball and running with it. Within a week he called me back and had us a District Meeting set up.

Our District III will be held on April 4-6, 2008 at the Lakeview Methodist Conference in Palestine. All reservations will have to be made through Chapter 63 by March 15, 2008. You may contact Commander Ross at the chapter phone 903-729-3088 cell: 903-724-0023 or home phone 903-723-0624. Chapter 63 also purchased a van to transport veterans to hospitals for appointments. They did this with local help and without any money from the DAV. Good job Ch 63.

You can look up the Site at [www.lakeviewmcc.org](http://www.lakeviewmcc.org) for information. I will advise further on any information that I receive.

Yours in Comradeship,

*Roger Garza*

Commander, District III

### DISTRICT IV

Welcome home from the National Convention. I hope no one brought back the "New Orleans

## Disabled American Veterans

Flu" which is a kind of respiratory problem caused by the air there.

Most Chapters should be completing their Annual Financial Report and preparing to staff the Golden Corral in November. The Annual Financial Report is important because IRS and DAV National require its submission. Failure to submit the report will result in suspension of the Chapter.

The Annual Veterans Day event at the Golden Corral is a real opportunity for Disabled American Veterans Chapters to showcase their Chapters to recruit new members and to raise funds. Manning a table at the Golden Corral gives you the opportunity to meet Veterans who are potential members and to inform the public about the mission and works of the DAV. It is a real pleasure to be able to "brag" up your Chapter.

Please help your District Commander identify the Golden Corral Sites you will staff and keep track of what you collect.

Yours in Comradeship,  
*Wolf Biedenfeld*  
Commander, District IV

## DISTRICT V

Hello Comrades,

The National Convention was a great success. A B-25, Panchito was brought in and placed on the Riverwalk of New Orleans. The dedication of the plane brought out the public and the ones of us attending the Convention. There were many seminars to choose from to gain information. During our time there we also had time to see some of New Orleans. I was fortunate that my niece lives there and was able to take us to see some of the city. We saw some of the places that have not been rebuilt and the destruction that Katrina left behind, and we saw some of the beautiful parts of the city.

It was a great time to see and meet other veterans from across the country and to see others that we have met from previous conventions. On Tuesday afternoon the election of officers took place. Bobby Barrera was elected as the 1st Junior Vice and Rev. Charles Edwards was voted in as the new National Chaplain. These two individuals will represent Texas well in their new roles. I wish that all of you could have been there. It was a time of learning, setting new goals and fun.

*Albert Owens*  
Commander, District V

## Bulletin SEPTEMBER 2007

Contact your House member today to urge him or her to cosponsor and support passage of the "Veterans' Benefits Protection Act," H.R. 1318.

In the final hours of last year's session, the 109th Congress passed its major benefits bill for the year, which became Public Law 109-461. Despite strong objections by the DAV and other veteran organizations, Senator Larry Craig used his position as then Chairman of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee to insert provisions in this bill to remove the bar against attorneys charging veterans a fee for claims representation. Legislators were reluctant to vote against this bill because it otherwise contained provisions beneficial to veterans. The DAV is now working to have these provisions on attorney's fees repealed, and there is support in Congress for repeal of this ill-advised legislation.

Our American system for administering veterans' benefit programs was designed to be informal, non-adversarial, and helpful to veterans seeking special benefits provided for them by a grateful nation. Congress intended that the system operate without lawyer involvement to deliver the entire amount of disability compensation and other benefits to the veteran and his or her family to meet their needs to the full extent possible. These provisions in Public Law 109-461 will allow lawyers to routinely take 20 percent of a claimant's benefits as attorney fees. Veterans' benefits should not be diverted away from disabled veterans and their families and into the pockets of lawyers. Veterans' benefits should not be turned into a source of income for the legal profession.

Contact your House member by personal visit, telephone, regular mail, or email to urge him or her to cosponsor and support H.R. 1318.

*Jim Roos*  
BPT/Legislative Chairman

## VAVS REPORT

Welcome back to all the members who were able to go to National. Hope you all had a great time!

I would like to invite any VAVS Representative who has something going on at their hospital to send that information to me so I can get it published in the Bulletin. It is important that we share with each other the many wonderful things going on within the great state of TEXAS to benefit our veterans!

HOUSTON VAMC – August 27 – 31

## BPT / LEGISLATIVE REPORT

## Disabled American Veterans

This is the first year the National Veterans Golden Age Games has ever been held in Texas and the Houston VA was proud to have been the National Host. There were well over 600 veterans over the age of 55 participating in more than 15 events. These veterans came from all over the U.S: Alaska, California and all along the East Coast. This endeavor was an extraordinary feat for the small staff in the Volunteer Services Department. Bryan Dyke; Voluntary Service Program Manager, Nikki Verbeck; Voluntary Service Specialist, Mary Ware; Voluntary Service Assistant and Cassandra Apodaca; Voluntary Service Specialist Intern, worked hard to assure all participant's needs were taken care of. They picked participants up at airports and even helped get them settled in their rooms. It was said by the athletes that their needs were met before they even realized they had one! The Volunteer Services Department arranged for over 1000 volunteers to work these events, with a minimum of 200 volunteers per day present and ready to make the games a success. Opening and closing ceremonies were fantastic, everything went as planned. For the Athletes added enjoyment, activities were held all over Houston...the George R. Brown Convention Center, Space Center Houston, Battle Ship Texas, Moody Gardens and Kemah Boardwalk, to name a few. All visitors were treated like royalty. I am sure they went home well pleased with what they saw, the things they accomplished and the wonderful people they met.

You may reach me at 979-244-8141 or [ecram@davisp.com](mailto:ecram@davisp.com) with any questions concerning Volunteerism. I would appreciate the opportunity to serve you.

Always, a **Special Thank You** to all volunteers who make it happen.

*Marce Hill*

Department VAVS Chairman

## Women Veteran's Representative

Daughters, wives and mothers are vying for adventure and the chance to serve their country at increasing rates.

In October 1994 "The Risk Rule," which was used to determine which assignments should be closed to women was rescinded, and that made 91 percent of the career fields gender neutral, according to officials from the Office of the Chief of Personnel, G1. That amendment to assignments policy and others like it allowed women like Capt. Kimberly Hampton to get closer to the action,

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Hampton was killed when her OH-58 Kiowa Warrior observation helicopter was attacked near the Iraqi town of Fallujah, west of Baghdad. She was a company commander with 1st Battalion, 82nd Aviation Battalion, 82nd Airborne Division, Fort Bragg, N.C.

Hampton supported infantry Soldiers by providing fire support and observing ground action. She was the division's first company commander to die in the war on terror.

"She loved being a Soldier. She didn't consider herself a female Soldier, but a pilot serving her country, who just happened to be a female," said Ann Hampton, Kimberly's mother. "She was an only child, and as a parent you just want your child to be happy."

"I miss her though, it's a physical pain going on without her. Knowing that there won't be a wedding or grandchildren. Our lives revolved around Kimberly," Ann said as she took a break from packing up Kimberly's Fayetteville home. "I'm terribly sad and empty, but there are 550-some other families who are going through the same grief.



Yours in service

*Teresa Johniken*

Women's Veteran Department Appointee

## DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER



### HELLO AUXILIARY MEMBERS!

First off, thanks to everyone from Texas who made such a great showing at National Con-

**DAV AUXILIARY ADJUTANT**

**The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary had the following Population Summary as of 8/17/2007:**

Life Members	5,984
Total Members	6,461

**THIS YEARS GOAL is:**

Goal	6,970
Members to make goal	435

**ITEMS OF INTEREST**

## WASHINGTON, D.C.

The passage by unanimous consent of Senate Bill 1877 on 7/26/2007 was referred to the House committee on the Judiciary, clarifying U.S. law **to allow veterans and servicemen not in uniform to salute the flag.**

Current law (US Code Title 4, Chapter 1) states that veterans and servicemen not in uniform should place their hand over their heart without clarifying whether they can or should salute the flag.

The salute is a form of honor and respect, representing pride in one's military service. Veterans and service members continue representing the military services even when not in uniform. We'll await final passage on this matter.

**CHAPLAIN'S CORNER****My Fellow Disabled American Veterans & Auxiliary Members of the Great State of Texas.**

Let us never abandon the time-honored principle – **"Commitment to Service."**

**Disabled American Veterans** will never stop serving:

**Service**, to make America strong.

**Service**, to keep America free.

**Service**, to preserve America, the home of the brave.

America is a place where free men and women can hold their heads high, proud of their country and the **Disabled American Veterans** who served in the past, those who are serving at present, and those who will indeed serve in the future.

As a new member of this **Veteran Service Organization** 15 years ago, I asked myself, why should I join the DAV? After some in-depth and careful consideration, I came to the conclusion: the DAV requires my **service**. I threw myself totally

**Disabled American Veterans**

vention in New Orleans, Louisiana. We had 26 people in attendance from the great state of Texas. We were unofficially known as the "rowdy bunch" because there were so many of us to cheer on the people from our great state. If you weren't there, you missed some great fun, great food, great entertainment, and great fellowship. We even had a good laugh at each other and ourselves as National Adjutant Maria Tedrow collected \$80 from members whose cell phones rang during meetings and those who failed to bring their Bylaw books to the meetings (even though a new one was provided to everyone in their convention bag).

In addition to having a great time and learning much, Texas managed to garner 6 awards. **Let's all join together and congratulate the winners:**

AMERICANISM - 201+ - Unit 5 Alamo (San Antonio)

SPECIAL AMERICANISM - Unit 5 Alamo (San Antonio) tied with a Unit in Colorado

MAE HOLMES - 101-200 - Unit 84 Lufkin

MEMBERSHIP - 101-200 - Unit 84 Lufkin (Most Increase with 28 new members)

Unit 233 Tri-County (Rosenberg) (Greatest % of increase with 18 New Members)

VAVS – 101-200 – Unit 32 Oak Cliff (Dallas)

Let's also congratulate our State Adjutant Patrice Rapisand for being elected as our new National 3<sup>rd</sup> Jr. Vice Commander. Way to go Patti!

I hope that many of you are planning to attend the Annual Fall Conference to be held October 11/13, 2007 at the Galt House in Louisville, KY.

I also hope you are planning to attend the Annual School of Instruction which will be held in Brenham, Texas on November 3, 2007. Each Unit will be receiving the information soon. Please make your arrangements to attend as soon as possible. We are looking forward to a good turn out and a good ole Texas time will be had by all.

Remember to get out and contact new people and sign up new members. There were only a few Units that made their membership quota last year, let's change that around this year. I challenge each unit to meet their quota. Get in touch with those new members; get in touch with those Juniors. Sign them up and get them active. Let's see our Auxiliary strengthen in numbers, and make our presence known.

**JUST REMEMBER**

**SNAG'EM HOOK'EM KEEP'EM**

**State Auxiliary Commander**

*Clarice Konieczny*

## Disabled American Veterans

into the idea – “how best can I be of **service** or how best can I serve our organization?” The greatest thing in the entire world is the opportunity to be of **service** to others, especially **Disabled American Veterans** and their families. And so, my personal commitment as a DAV member is centered around the motto: “Learning to Do, Doing to Earn, Earning to Live, and Living to Serve”.

**Service** is the key.

I was privileged to serve as chaplain for:

- \*Chapter 4, Columbia, South Carolina
- \*Chapter 8, Kerrville, Texas
- \*Chapter 5, San Antonio, Texas
- \*District 5, Department of Texas
- \*Department of Texas State Chaplain, serving now for twelve (12) years.

I must say, sometimes life gets so busy that I don't always thank you for the things you do. So for every time it has gone unspoken, this is just to let you know that what you do never goes unnoticed and it's greatly appreciated. Therefore, I thank all of you for assisting me in being elected at our 86<sup>th</sup> National DAV Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana to this wonderful, marvelous office and to have the opportunity to serve as your National Chaplain.

Now, this 86<sup>th</sup> National Convention marks a new beginning, a new dedication, and a new spirit of **service** among all of us. From this new beginning, let us move forward together, maintaining a proper dedication in keeping the spirit of **service** alive.

Let us build courage, when many times courage seems to fail.

Let us regain faith, when there seems to be little cause for faith.

Let us create hope, when it seems that we are involved in an extremely difficult struggle or endeavor where there is so little hope.

May it be said of us all in the words of Tennyson: “I am a part of all that I have met, thought much is taken, much abides. That which we are, we are; one equal temper of heroic hearts, strong in will...to strive, to seek, to find, and never to yield.” Let us therefore, renew our determination, our courage, our strength, our faith and our hope – to strive, to seek, to find, and never to yield. Let us be “First to Serve,” in our unique communities, our great state and our beloved nation.

For all of us who care and who have a special concern for **service**, I must say – the work goes on, the cause shall endure, the hope still lives, and the dream will never die. With the help of God

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and your encouragement, my **service** to the **Disabled American Veterans** of this state and of this nation will continue. God bless America, and God bless the DAV.

*Dr. Charles E. Edwards, Jr.*

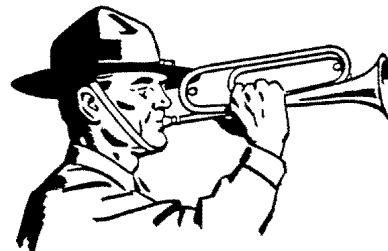
Department Chaplain



## PRAYER LIST

**Prayers are needed for the following:**

**Norma Jean Cobb**, Unit 21 recovering from total knee replacement.



## TAPS

Department has been notified that the following comrades have been called into final formation above:

**George Cason**, Ch 31 passed July 07

**Robert Strain**, Ch 31

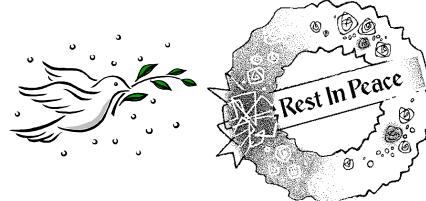
**Bill Stacey**, Ch 215 passed July 07

**Ramona Sue Trunk**, Unit 21 passed August 07

**Charles Galey**, Ch 21 passed August 07

**Robert "Bob" Hill**, Ch 42 passed August 07

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



## Disabled American Veterans



U.S. Marine jazz band playing at the B-25 event



Barged up river and off-loaded next to the hotel. What a sight that Panchito is! The engines were fired up so the crowd could enjoy the roar.



Celebrities: left to right; Minnie Pearl, Elvis Presley, Dolly Parton! Those auxiliary members really rated to get this group.

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Clarice says, "it's a tough job but someone has to do it"



Happy to be elected! Patti Rapisand, Bobby Barrera, Ray Dempsey. Way to go! NSO Larry Geddie hiding in the background, but happy.



Jim Hall, who works so hard getting photos, gets a hug from Immediate Past DAVA Commander Alice Armstrong.

**Disabled American Veterans  
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**To:**

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Aug. 15, 1945 marks the official end of World War II, when Japan surrendered to the Allies. Now, 62 years later, the state of Texas received a special gift honoring those who fought and died during the war. Some 830,000 Texans who served in World War II now have a memorial to them in Austin. Records show about 22,000 Texans died in World War II. The 17 foot tall granite memorial weighs 22 tons. It's a replica of Texas pillar at World War II memorial in Washington. Ceremonies were held Aug 15 for the new World War II monument on the grounds of the Texas Capitol.



Sr. Vice Commander Ed Meiser was able to attend the dedication ceremonies. 'Twas something worth attending and hopefully many DAV members will be able to visit the site on their next visit to Austin.

Congratulations to all newly elected National Officers!  
**Our National officers from Texas:**

**1<sup>st</sup> Jr. Vice Commander Roberto "Bobby" Barrera (Get hooked on Bobby)**  
**Chaplain Charles Edwards**  
**DAVA 3<sup>rd</sup> Jr. Vice Commander Patrice "Patti" Rapisand**