



DAV NEWS SERVICE

National Communications Department, P.O. Box 14301, Cincinnati, Ohio 45250-0301

A monthly selection of news and feature subjects of interest to DAV members and their families.

Provided to include in DAV Department and Chapter newsletters.
Please read "DAV Washington Update" at your next Chapter Meeting.

February 2010

REVISED

The Commander Takes to the Hill

Arthur H. Wilson, National Adjutant

When National Commander Bobby Barrera speaks, people listen. For decades, he's been one of the most sought-after orators in the history of the organization. And it's not because he was part of an historic event when he was saved from a burning vehicle by famed sniper Carlos Hathcock when they were both injured in Vietnam. It's not his Presidential Unsung Hero Award for 1998, his federal career or Department of Defense Outstanding Employee with a Disability Award in 1997.

It's not because of the severity of his disabilities but the size of his heart and the inspiration he shows as a leader.

On March 2, the Commander will make one of the most important presentations of his life as a veterans advocate. He will address a joint session of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs Committees in the Canon House Office Building on Capitol Hill.

The DAV will be there in force as the occasion marks the highlight of our Mid-Winter Conference. Commander Barrera will lay out our legislative agenda and represent all of our nation's disabled veterans and their families before lawmakers.

The DAV Mid-Winter Conference is one of the premiere annual destinations for leaders and veterans who want to know the latest and greatest information about the issues we face. Veterans who attend this important event also have the opportunity to promote veterans issues with their representatives in Washington.

In addition to everything conference attendees learn and do to serve our cause, the event offers the opportunity for us to meet face-to-face and share information. It's a chance to make contacts, meet old friends, mentor and learn from the top minds in the veterans service movement.

Those of us who can't be there in person should be there in spirit, and we should all be cheering for our National Commander when he takes center stage.

The meeting will be held at the Crystal Gateway Marriott in Arlington, Va., Feb. 28 to Mar. 3. Special rates for attendees start at \$189 for single/double occupancy. Identify yourself as a member and make reservations by calling (703) 920-3230.

Visit www.dav.org for more information on the Commander's testimony and event coverage.



DAV WASHINGTON UPDATE

VA to Begin Recovery of Post-9/11 GI Bill Advance Payments

The VA is beginning the process of recovering advance payments of Post-9/11 GI Bill benefits made available during the fall 2009 semester. The VA began sending notification letters explaining the repayment process in late January.

In October VA instituted an advanced payment process for all eligible students enrolled in an institution of higher learning for the fall 2009 term. As part of that process, a web portal was established to allow electronic submission for advance payment. Advance payments were also made on-site at VA offices around the country. At that time student veterans were told that advance payments would be deducted from future benefit payments.

The VA also has released a "Hip Pocket" guide and checklist with tips to assist veterans in the application process. The guide and checklist can be found on college campuses and VA's GI Bill Web site, www.gibill.va.gov.

DoD Seeks Better Data on Burn Pits

A Pentagon health official told doctors that cases of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and undiagnosed respiratory symptoms at Joint Base Balad, the site of Iraq's largest burn pit, may be as much as 30 percent higher than at other bases.

The DAV is maintaining a registry of people who believe they have been sickened by exposure to the burn pits. For information, e-mail legislation@davmail.org.

The U.S. military has not compiled a complete history of its burn pit use; nor does it have a way to account for where many of the 2 million members were exposed to pits while serving at war between 2001 and 2009.

Defense officials also said it is possible that bronchiolitis in some troops that initially was attributed to their exposure to a sulfur fire near Mosul, Iraq, actually may have been caused by the burn pits, or a combination of factors including the burn pits, the sulfur fire, pre-existing health conditions and tobacco use.

Korean Children's Group to Perform for Veterans

Veterans can obtain free tickets to the culture performances of the Little Angels of Korea in Washington, D.C., New York and Atlanta, Ga., in June, with preference given to Korean War veterans and their families. The Little Angels are a performance group of girls from the age of 9 to 15, who sing and dance traditional Korean cultural music.

As many as four complimentary tickets are being made available to veterans and their families by contacting the Korean War 60th Anniversary Memorial Committee by visiting its Web site at www.kw60project.com.

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