



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Disabled American Veterans. Department of Ohio

October, 2016 Newsletter

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FROM THE DESK OF STATE COMMANDER DAVID BILINOVICH

FIRST QUARTER REVIEW



Time really does fly by. It is hard to believe that I have less than nine months left as your State Commander. It has been a busy quarter of a year for both your Department and also for me. So, like any business, it is important to review our progress over this past three months. Much has been accomplished, but there is much more to be done. Let's review our Finances, our Chapters Review and Future Events.

The Department Finances are sound and as I had previously stated, we have implemented significant cost savings measures. These measures run the gambit from consolidated mailings to various printing reductions to even going with a less expensive printer to produce our Christmas-Holiday cards. Travel expenses have been reduced by limiting and/or combining trips to realize savings. As your Commander, I have made trips to Akron, Parma, Massillon, Cleveland and Columbus and have declined to file for the allowed travel reimbursements. A couple of our Line Officers have done likewise as has at least one Past Department Commander. Also, at the Fall Conference we will review our travel policy for all Officers and Past Department Commanders to look for even more ways of savings. Finally, a major expense of the Fall

Conference and its future will be addressed at the Fall Conference. Your Department Staff and Officers are continually looking for smarter and more cost effective ways to do business. Rest assured, our Department Finances remain sound, but we are constantly looking at ways to be both productive and cost effective in all of our business activities.

As I had mentioned in an earlier newsletter article, I had a committee formed to review all of our Chapters. Some of the goals were to check the viability, finances, compliance with required reports, community activities and meetings attendance. The results of the committee's findings will be presented at the Fall Conference. A preliminary report shows that there is some work required to get all of our Chapters up to the median standard expected. As an example, over 10% of our Chapters were late in submitting their Officers Reports and almost as many had errors or omissions in them. Even more astounding was the fact that only about 10% of our Chapters hold an annual Forget-Me-Not drive. Of even more concern to me is the fact that a large number of our Chapters do not attend their District meetings, the Annual State Convention or the Fall Conference. Therefore, these members are not getting vital information in a timely manner and the cost to hold these events continues to rise yet attendance continues to decline. Yet, on the positive side, many of our Chapters have been and continue to do the right things. I need everyone's help in fixing these problems. As your Commander, I will not be satisfied until all of DAV Team Ohio is functioning as expected.

Future Events are published on the Department webpage and in our Newsletter. Please make every effort to attend your District Meeting and the ranking member, of each Chapter, should present a report of the Chapter's activities since the last District Meeting. The reports submitted by the District Commanders and the attending Department Officers help us all recognize the true standings of our Chapters and their membership. Also, the Fall Conference in November is important and frankly the attendance has been waning for years, yet the hotel and meal costs continue to rise. Vital information is passed and Chapter Officers Training is conducted there. Please make every effort to send at least one member to this function. Finally, Christmas-Holiday parties at the two Ohio Veterans Homes will be held in December. Your Chapter's support of these parties, through donations and/or manpower, is always appreciated. Contact our VAVS at those sites and also please do not forget about the inpatients at our VA Medical Centers, whom will spend the holidays in hospital. This is the right thing to do and any costs can be written off as service expenses by the Chapter. Please be generous.

The first quarter flew by fast. As your Commander, you have my promise that I will continue to work hard through the remaining three quarters, as will your staff and Officers. If you have any suggestions or concerns about anything in this article, please contact Adjutant Kenneth Marcum. He will compile them and then present them to me. I look forward to seeing you all at the Fall Conference. Now let's get started on the Second Quarter.

David Bilinovich
State Commander



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

| | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| National Headquarters | (877) 426-2838 |
| NSO Office, Cleveland | (216) 522-3507 |
| NSO Office, Cincinnati | (513) 684-2676 |
| Washington Office, DAV | (202) 554-3501 |
| Cincinnati DSO, Tom Kirstein | (513) 475-6443 |
| <i>Tuesday, Thursday</i> | |
| Lisa Wilson (513) 475-6443 | |
| <i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i> | |
| Chillicothe DSO, Charles Knipp | (740) 773-1141 |
| <i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i> | |
| Ext. 7916 | |
| Dayton DSO, TBA | (937) 268-6511 |
| Ext. 2962 | |
| Wade Park DSO, Walter Dryja | (216) 791-3800 |
| <i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i> | |
| Ext. 3395 | |
| Columbus DSO, Henry Snodgrass | (614) 257-5487 |
| <i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i> | |
| Parma DSO, Richard Healy | (216) 739-7000 |
| <i>Monday-Thursday</i> | |
| Ext. 2405 | |

STATE OFFICERS 2016-2017

State Commander
David Bilinovich

Sr. Vice Commander
James Bailey

1st Jr. Vice Commander
John Parker

2nd Jr. Vice Commander
John Plahovinsak

Executive Committee
David Weeks
Timothy Dibble

PDC (2015-2016)
Phillip Alexander

DATES TO REMEMBER

| | |
|----------------------|--|
| October 1, 2016 | Forget-Me-Not, Trumbull County Ch. #11, Walmart, Liberty, Ohio. |
| October 8, 2016 | District 1 Meeting, Ch. #1, 9000 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, OH at 12 Noon. |
| October 15, 2016 | Forget-Me-Not, Trumbull County Ch. #11, Elm Road Walmart, Cortland, Ohio. |
| October 15, 2016 | District 8 Meeting, Ch. #52, 835 DAV Rd., Whipple, OH Lunch at 11 a.m. and Meeting at 12 Noon. |
| October 16, 2016 | District 4 Meeting, Ch. #43, 606 Fishlock Ave., Findlay, OH, Meeting at 1 p.m. and Lunch at 2 p.m. |
| October 16, 2016 | District 6 Meeting, Willie Marcum Ch. #72, 620 N. Broadway, Medina, OH, Lunch at 1 p.m. and Meeting to follow. |
| October 22, 2016 | District 9 Meeting, Jackson County Ch. #45, 170 Pearl St., Jackson, OH, Lunch at 12 p.m. and Meeting at 1 p.m. |
| October 22, 2016 | District 10 Meeting, Capital City Ch. #3, 280 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH at 11 a.m. |
| October 22, 2016 | Forget-Me-Not, Putnam County Ch. #77, Walmart, Ottawa, OH. |
| October 23, 2016 | District 3 Meeting, Van Wert Ch. #54, 111 N. Shannon St., Van Wert, OH at 1:00 p.m. |
| November 4-6, 2016 | Fall Conference, Crowne Plaza, Dublin, Ohio. |
| November 19, 2016 | Forget-Me-Not, Wayne County Ch. #44, Buehlers, Orrville, OH. |
| Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2017 | Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA. |
| April 30, 2016 | District 7 Meeting, Alliance Ch. #50, 9540 McCallum Ave., Alliance, OH at 1 p.m. |
| June 22-25, 2017 | 96 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio. |
| July 29-Aug. 1, 2017 | National Convention, New Orleans, LA. |
| Nov. 3-5, 2017 | Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH. |
| February 25-28, 2018 | Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA. |
| June 7-10, 2018 | 97 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio. |
| Nov. 2-4, 2018 | Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH. |

NOTES FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT KENNETH MARCUM



VA REVOKES SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS OF OVER 250,000 VETERANS

Veterans looking to secure their Second Amendment rights may want to think twice before getting help from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to manage their finances.

The Hill reports that 257,000 former members of the military have lost their right to keep and bear arms after receiving financial management help from the VA. According to two senators fighting the gun ban, the VA reports to the "mental defective" category of the FBI's background check system any veteran to whom they assign a fiduciary.

"The National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS) is effectively a national gun ban list and placement on the list precludes the ownership and possession of firearms," Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee Chairman Johnny Isakson and Sen. Chuck Grassley wrote in a recent letter to VA Secretary Robert McDonald.

"Under the current practice, a VA finding that concludes a veteran requires a fiduciary to administer benefit payments effectively voids his Second Amendment rights," the senators explained. "At no time in the process does the VA determine a veteran to be a danger to themselves or others, a key determinant for whether someone is a 'mental defective,' precluding the right to own firearms."

According to The Hill, Senator Grassley has requested that lawmakers "block the VA from continuing this practice in the upcoming budget negotiations." He also complained about the practice in another letter sent last year to the Justice Department. If this song and dance sounds familiar, there's a reason. The current administration was harshly criticized earlier this year for using the same tactic to revoke the Second Amendment rights of Social Security beneficiaries who need help with their finances. It is now clear that this administration has been using the fiduciary excuse to ban veterans from owning firearms for much longer.

In an article outlining the practice, the Los Angeles Times quoted Dr. Marc Rosen, a Yale psychiatrist who has studied how

veterans with health problems manage their money: "Someone can be incapable of managing their funds but not be dangerous, violent or unsafe," he said. "They are very different determinations."

The article points to 30-year-old Marine veteran Steven Overman, who says his case demonstrates the flaws of judging gun safety through financial competence.

Overman's Humvee hit a roadside bomb in Iraq in 2007. The VA deemed Overman incompetent and made his wife his fiduciary after he was diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder and a brain injury that weakened his memory and cognitive ability.

When he found out he was being reported to the background check system, "he gave his guns to his mother and began working with a lawyer to get them back."

"[Target shooting is] relaxing to me," Overman said. "It's a break from day-to-day life. It calms me down."

"Though his wife had managed their financial affairs since his deployment," the LA Times reports, "Overman said he has never felt like he was a danger to himself or others."

"I didn't know the VA could take away your guns," he said. "The very Department that thanks me for my service is stripping my right to bear arms."

VETS ACTIVISTS GEARING UP FOR 2016 FIGHT

Battle lines have already been drawn on veterans issues for the 2016 election and both sides are preparing for the long campaign ahead.

On one side sits Concerned Veterans for America, a favorite of conservative lawmakers who have been pushing for expanded private care options for veterans and an overhaul of the Veterans Affairs Department bureaucracy.

On the other is VoteVets.org, the left-leaning political activist group that has accused Republicans of working to privatize veterans' health care regardless of the dire consequences.

Both groups already are lobbying veterans' organizations on the issue. Officials with both groups see VA reform as a key issue in that race as well as in a number of local congressional contests, especially given the lingering scandals surrounding the department.

"This is a real opportunity to see where the veterans groups are, and whether they're willing to stand up and tell the public what they stand for," said Jon Soltz, co-founder and chairman of VoteVets.

That's the only point the two groups agree on.

VoteVets recently launched an effort to expose CVA as an advocacy arm of the far right, funded largely by the Koch brothers, well-known conservative activists.

CVA officials have declined to respond publicly about where their group's funding comes from, other than to say "private donors," similar to other organizations working on veterans issues.

"VoteVets is honest about being America's largest progressive veterans group, and supporting progressive policies," group officials said in a release. "CVA should be honest about representing the people who support dismantling programs that care for our elderly, our poverty-stricken, our children, and even our veterans."

CVA officials say those attacks are off-base attempts to distract from real reform efforts. While they blast VoteVets officials as partisan hacks, they bill themselves as nonpartisan advocates with a history of reaching out to both parties.

They've been critical of the President and the current VA administration, and are often cited by Republicans on Capitol Hill in arguments against department positions. But they also say they've been meeting with Democrats interested in reform efforts in recent months, in hopes of building a broader coalition to take action.

In February, CVA officials released a four-month task force report on improving VA health care, including splitting off insurance functions from other veterans health services and making VA hospitals compete with private care providers for patients.

Critics, including a number of prominent veterans groups, labeled that privatization a "third rail" in veteran's politics; Pete Hegseth, CVA's chief executive officer, calls it choice.

"The era of choice is coming," Hegseth said. "Veterans groups used to be able to say 'privatization' whenever that was discussed in the past. But that panic button doesn't exist anymore. This election is going to be a referendum on whether you're pro-reform or status quo."

An April Rasmussen Poll found that about two-thirds of likely voters say they're following VA issues closely, but only about one-third have a favorable view of the department's operations. Hegseth said internal CVA polling has shown the issue rising in importance, and officials hope to use that momentum to advance their reform plans.

He expects legislation related to the changes to be introduced this fall, and the group has been meeting privately with other influencers on veterans issues to fight what they see as misperceptions of the plan.

"This is not about vouchers or privatizing the system," he said. "This is about empowering veterans to get the best care they can, without dismantling the VA."

Soltz calls it indicative of a larger conservative effort to water down and outsource any government health care offerings. He promises to take that case to the veterans groups in coming months, and challenge them to push back against the effort.

Even though veterans' issues have been largely relegated to minor campaign talking points in recent presidential elections, major party candidates have been loath to upset the big veteran service organizations for fear of negative publicity.

In the 2012 campaign, Republican candidate had to quickly back off a suggestion to offer vouchers to veterans in lieu of pulsing up VA operations, after backlash from several prominent veterans' advocates.

But that was before the 2014 wait times scandals that forced the resignation of former VA Secretary and a subsequent year of sparring over new outside care options between department officials and congressional lawmakers from both parties. "We're seeing a maturity on discussions of these issues," Hegseth said. "There are new pressures and new realities in 2016. And there's an expectation now that candidates will be able to speak on a deeper level on this. We dare someone to take a position against choice for veterans." Meanwhile, VoteVets already has endorsed 13 candidates for the 2016 cycle, and promises to highlight their positions on responsible VA reform for months to come.

MEMBERSHIP AFFECTS ALL OF US!

Our most recent membership numbers show that 62 percent of our nearly 1.3 million members nationally are 60 or older, while just 11 percent of our members are 39 or younger. However, we're going to see a large influx of service members making the transition out of military service as the armed forces continue to face a reduction in active-duty numbers. We must stay vigilant and on guard to engage and communicate with these potential new members.

Membership is the lifeblood of DAV, and our community of heroes stands together to ensure our nation keeps its promises to the men and women who served. This steadfast dedication to our cause has made DAV what it is today—a premier organization made up of veterans serving veterans.

Our armed forces have changed along with our society, and DAV has evolved to embrace those changes through the years. This enables us to help ensure all veterans are able to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity.

Now, with more than 800,000 members over the age of 60, it is absolutely paramount we remain enthusiastically engaged with this large base of our membership. It is their knowledge and experience that will not only serve us well in leadership roles today, but will usher our organization into the years to come. They are key to mentoring, volunteering and welcoming our new members.

These members are truly our foundation, but like all organizations, we need to keep one eye on the future in order to continue to best serve our veterans.

As our military continues to make us proud in various conflicts around the world, we must be ready to engage these younger veterans upon their exit from military service. It is essential we educate them about what DAV can do for them and their families. This includes what DAV can do for them from their initial transition from service and throughout the rest of their lives.

We are in great health as an organization, but we also have a fantastic opportunity to grow our membership numbers among younger veterans.

Today, DAV continues to evolve on social media, and technology is being leveraged by DAV members to continue speaking out about the unique requirements of veterans and their loved ones. Another way DAV has evolved is the online membership application. Nearly everyone has a smartphone, so nearly everyone has a membership application on them now.

DAV has more than 3,200 members dedicated to recruiting new members so that our base remains strong and vibrant into the future. With 52 state-level Departments and 1,280 active Chapters nationwide, our nearly 1.3 million members are well-positioned to continue fighting for America's disabled veterans and their families well into the 21st century.

Kenneth Marcum
State Adjutant

VETERANS MEMORIAL DEDICATION CEREMONY

I attended the John W. Covert Chapter #47 in East Liverpool, Ohio for the dedication of their Veterans Memorial. I would very much like to thank State Commander David Bilinovich for the honor of representing him at this important event. I would also like to thank Chapter #47 Commander James Jenkins, Adjutant David P. Risnear, and PDC/NEC Robert Bertschy for extending the invitation to attend.

DAV Chapter member and Ride Captain, District 6 Ohio Patriot Guard Riders, Wendell Keyser was in charge of the event. He should be commended for the outstanding job that he did.

Also in attendance at the dedication were Representative of the 6th Congressional District Bill Johnson, East Liverpool Mayor Ryan Stovall, PDC/NEC Bob Bertschy, Department 1st Jr. Vice Commander John Parker, DAVA Commander Carol Parker-Park, District 7 Commander Leo Connelly, and Jack Ernest of the Jefferson County Veterans Service Commission.

PDC/NEC Bob Bertschy introduced all of the speakers. I was humbled and honored when I was introduced to speak before the large crowd. I was very impressed with the Patriot Guard Riders and the Legion Riders who lined both sides of the Memorial. They stood with the American Flags for the entire event and didn't move. It was a very hot day and they stood for well over an hour. This was an awesome display of dedication.



In closing, I would like to again thank State Commander Dave Bilinovich for allowing me to represent him at this dedication. I would also like to thank the DAV Department of Ohio and especially DAV Chapter #47, Commander James Jenkins and all of his officer and members of his Chapter for making this dedication possible. A special thanks to Wendell Keyser for a job well done. Thank you to everyone who attended, for caring and showing support to our veterans. May God Bless.

James Bailey
Senior Vice Commander

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR AUXILIARY

- The Department of Ohio DAV Auxiliary won a membership award at National Convention for having the highest numerical increase of any state department. Thank you to everyone who worked so hard on membership.
- Congratulations to Clark County Unit #13 for winning the membership award at National Convention and to Unit #13 Adjutant Kimberly Taylor who won the award for signing up the most new members.

HOUSE OK'S BENEFITS FOR "BLUE WATER" NAVY VETERANS

The House approved a bill in May, 2016 that offers "Blue Water" Navy Veterans of the Vietnam War VA healthcare and benefits for Agent Orange-related conditions. An amendment to the Military Construction and VA Appropriations Act of 2017-H.R. 4974-directs VA to presume that these sailors were exposed to the herbicide.

Blue Water Navy vets are those who served aboard ships in ports and off shore of Vietnam during the War. While U.S. troops who served on land and "Brown Water" sailors who served on inland waterways are presumed to have been exposed to Agent Orange- and therefore eligible for VA compensation and benefits if they have one of the 14 conditions associated with exposure- Blue Water sailors are not. The 14 diseases associated with Agent Orange exposure are listed at www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange/conditions/index.asp.

The Congressional Budget Office estimates that it would cost about \$90 million annually to provide Agent Orange Benefits for the estimated 90,000 Blue Water sailors who were exposed. Access VA's list of ships exposed to Agent Orange at www.publichealth.va.gov?exposures/agentorange/shiplist/list.asp.

Henry Snodgrass
Department Service Officer
Columbus VA Clinic

MEMO FROM NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS: RECRUITMENT POINTS

As I announced at DAV National Convention in Atlanta, Georgia, beginning October 1st our recruiters who utilize the online membership application can earn up to three points, versus the potential two points that can be awarded when they sponsor a new member using a paper application. These points can then be used to purchase merchandise from the DAV Store, either online or at National Convention.

Currently, sponsors are awarded one point when a new part-life member is recruited, and they are subsequently awarded an additional point should that member convert to a full-life member, regardless of the medium they use for recruitment. If a new member is sponsored as a full-life member from the beginning two points are immediately awarded.

Moving forward, new part-life members recruited using our online application shall still be worth one point, however, once they convert to full-life members the sponsor will be awarded an additional two points, for a total of three points. Should a new member be initially signed up as a full-life member the entire three points will be immediately awarded.

Members who are recruited via our online application, which requires the use of a credit card, have a much greater proclivity toward purchasing a full-life membership. And for those who are recruited as part-life members, the data shows the conversion rate to full-life membership is much higher.

For recruiters who are able to use Chapter or Department resources to incentivize recruitment, please understand the online application is not a deterrent to this practice. Please recruit the new member as you normally would, but explain that you or your entity will contact the Membership Department and provide whatever payment is required to make that member's payments whole. All I require is a spreadsheet or list of those members along with the appropriate corresponding remuneration, and we will adjust the balance accordingly.

Please join me in leveraging technology for the efficiency and improved success of DAV's recruiting practices. And don't forget the DAV recruitment icon, which can be installed on your smartphones or tablets and provides a direct link to the online application. Just type dav.org/memberapp into your mobile device's internet browser and follow the instructions provided. Thank you in advance for all of your recruitment efforts. Please contact the Membership Department if you have questions or need additional guidance.

Douglas K. Wells
National Membership Director

GOLDEN CORRAL MILITARY APPRECIATION MONDAY

The DAV and Golden Corral will be teaming up again this year for Military Appreciation Night on Monday, November 14, 2016. To date, Golden Corral restaurants have served over 4.7 million free meals and contributed over \$11.5 million to the Disabled American Veterans organization.

FAQ's:

Q: Who is eligible for the free "thank you" dinner?

A: Any person who has served in the US Military (retirees, veterans, active duty, National Guard or Reserves).

Q: Why does Golden Corral provide this dinner?

A: Our Corporation is very proud of the men and women who are serving and who have served, and we are honored to offer this special night to congratulate them in person.

Q: Can I bring my family?

A: We know that spouses, children, mothers and fathers deserve a heart-felt thank you, too, for their own personal sacrifices here at home. Family and friends are welcome to come join the celebration for our military heroes; however, the free 'thank you' dinner is for the person who served. Other guests will pay the regular dinner menu pricing.

Q: Can I have a rain check for another night?

A: There are no rain checks for November 14. We hope you can arrange your schedule to join us.

Q: Can I have my free "thank you" meal as a take-out meal?

A: There are no take-out meals associated with this dinner as most veterans feel that this is a great opportunity to renew old friendships, make new friends, and simply enjoy the evening as Golden Corral's special guest.

Q: How many meals has Golden Corral served over the past 15 years?

A: Golden Corral restaurants have served over 4.7 million free 'thank you' meals to our heroes in the military over the past 15 years.

Q: How much has Golden Corral donated to the Disabled American Veterans over the past 15 years?

A: Golden Corral restaurants and their guests have donated over \$11.5 million dollars to the Disabled American Veterans organization in the past 15 years.

REMINDER TO CHAPTERS

The Department is still accepting donations for the Cleveland Fisher House Van Program. You can bring your check for donation to the Parade of Checks on Saturday, November 5th, 2016 at the Fall Conference being held at the Crowne Plaza, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, Ohio or you can mail your check to DAV Department Headquarters at PO Box 15099, Columbus, Ohio 43215. Checks should be made out to the DAV Dept. of Ohio.

ATTENTION TRENCH RATS

Trench Rats will be having a meeting Friday, November 4, 2016 at 4:00 p.m. at the Crowne Plaza, 600 Metro Place North, Dublin, Ohio.



SAVE THE DATE!

**Military Appreciation Night
Thank You Meal**

**Monday, November 14th 2016
5pm - 9pm**

