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Calendar

MARCH 17th-St. Patrick's Day
APRIL- 3rd Good Friday
APRIL 5th Eater Sunday

We are gearing up for the Department Convention which will be held on June 12-14, 2015 at the Doubletree in Austin.

Each Chapter and Unit has received a letter from Headquarters with information on purchasing Ads in the Convention Book. We look forward to hearing from you in this regard.

We have a great auction item this year! Emmitt Smith was kind enough to autograph a NFL Football as seen in the picture below. A Certificate of Authenticity was also provided.



Teresa Johniken
Adjutant

NEWS BULLETIN

Volume 24 Issue 5 Chartered by act of Congress 1932
March/April 2015

★ *Tim Lindsey Commander*

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Sharing the DAV story to young disabled veterans appears to raise hopes when hope seems to have faded out. Most of us have seen the roadblocks trying to get the care needed to maintain some sort of existence at home. We all know what it is like to be bounded to a disability and unable to sort it out enough to move forward in our lives. It is said "You will not see the light at the end of the tunnel until you walk through darkness". Our young veterans need to know they have the strength of at least sixty (60) divisions, fleets, wings, expeditionary forces including a full command force prepared to serve their needs. That is front line and does not include the fraternities of the DAV. They will quickly recognize what those numbers mean and understand the full force of DAV support.

Operation "KEEP THE PROMISE" DAV 2015 is the lead title into this year's talking points to congress and again as always, DAV needs the support of each member to fire off a letter to their representatives in Washington D.C. to make it advance for the President to sign. You will find more information on www.dav.org including canned messages and full routing addresses to seamlessly send our DAV message to your congressional leader by using your zip code information. Talking Points include Women Veterans, Comprehensive Caregiver Support, Fiscal Year 2016 VA Budget and Fully Developed Appeals. Please take a few moments

and target your political leader to vote in support of our Veterans.

“When evil men plot, good men must plan. When evil men burn and bomb, good men must build and bind. When evil men shout ugly words of hatred, good men must commit themselves to the glories of love. When evil men seek to perpetuate an unjust status quo, good men must seek to bring into being a real order of justice”, Martin Luther King Jr. When our veterans suit up the full responsibility of freedom, these words define what we swear to “Keep the Promise”. God Bless You and may God Bless the DAV.

Tim Lindsey
Commander

★ *Sharon Thornton Auxiliary Cmdr.*

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Hello to all!! Happy 2015 ☺

Spring is just around the corner and so are many opportunities to volunteer. Clean out your clothes closet and donate. Visit the hospital & nursing homes to bring a smile to a veteran's heart - and yours. Assist & help with rides, meals.

Election of officers in units have begun. Please consider taking a position - it is so rewarding. However we can help & work for our veterans is a great reward. To thank them for their service & sacrifice is so satisfying.

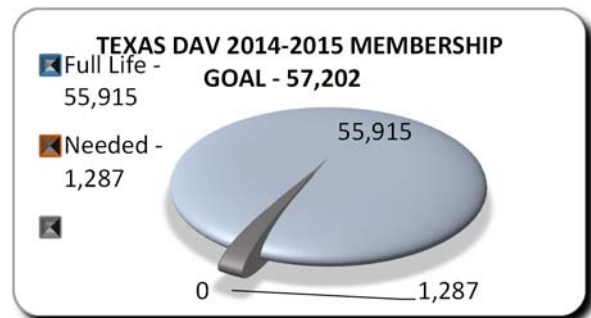
Continue following & addressing our legal system with veterans issues.

Remember....TOGETHER WE CAN!!!

Sharon Thornton
DAVA Commander

★ *Jay Johnson Membership Chairman*

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It was my privilege to meet many of you at the Department's first Mid- Winter Conference. As I listened to your questions and concerns regarding the present approach to recruiting new members, and particular those men and women transitioning back into civilian life from the recent wars.

Your feedback from my (membership) presentation on the program was greatly appreciated and will be useful in developing creative means to locate, recruit and signup new members, thus keeping the untapped wealth of talent involved in and shaping Chapters to carry the Disabled American Veterans, and Department of Texas well into the future.

Our membership numbers are holding but we have work to do. It is an ongoing responsibility of each DAV member to ensure that every deserving veteran is given an opportunity to become a member of a DAV Chapter in the Department of Texas.

Jay Johnson
Sr. Vice Commander

★ *Ruth Gates, DAVA Adjutant*

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Hello Auxiliary Members:

The State School of Instruction which we held with our DAV members on January 17 and 18 in Austin, TX went very well. We had a very good attendance and the presenters provided lots of information to assist each Unit. I anticipate that our partnership with the DAV will continue to be strengthened as we continue to move forward.

Well, it is time for us to all start making plans to attend State Convention June 12, 13 and 14 in

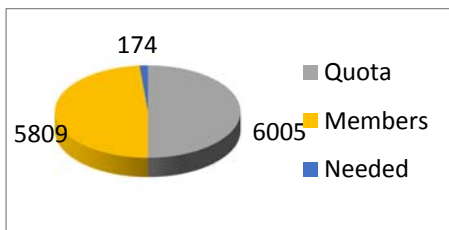
Austin at the Doubletree Hotel Austin. We have some exciting plans and changes in place so I hope every Unit will send at least one member as a delegate to attend. With that being said, Adjutants, please watch you mail boxes as I will be sending out several packets of information for you. This will be your annual reports, the quilt squares for the Auxiliary State Dept and other items. Please take the mail to your meetings and be aware of the deadlines on some of the documents. It will be EXTREMELY important that each Unit return your decorated quilt square to Dept Headquarters by the deadline. Otherwise, your Unit may not be represented on the Quilt. We certainly do not want that to happen because each member and Unit are extremely important to the functioning our State Department and organization as a whole. Reservation information for State Convention is listed at the end of the bulletin.

Remember each member is unique and valuable and is necessary to continuation of our beloved organization.

Ruth Gates
State Adjutant/Treasurer

★ *Darlene Spence, DAVA Membership*

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Your support in recruiting new Auxiliary members is greatly appreciated.

As DAVA members it is our mission to make a difference in the lives of disabled veterans and their families. A part of making a difference will be through legislative changes. We can make this happen with a strong membership. We all know politicians listen when there is a strong membership behind us.

NEWS FLASH!!!

Congratulations to Big D Aux #57 and Victoria County #169, two additional units that have achieved their 2014-2015 quotas!

We have only 4 months to ensure Texas “is on the books for meeting QUOTA.” To accomplish this, 174 new members are needed; therefore your continued assistance and team work are crucial to our success.

Let’s **SCATTER KINDNESS** in the year 2015.

“TOGETHER WE CAN REACH OUR GOALS”

- Start With Enthusiasm*
- Initiate Team Action*
- Go the Texas Way*
- Note the Importance of Time*
- Upward & Onward to A*
- Positive Outcome*

*Sign – Up Sign – Up
Sign – Up*

Darlene Spence
Sr. Vice Commander, DAVA

★ *James Skipworth, District I DEC*

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I hope this letter finds everyone in good health, and we will pray for those that are not.

I do not know where all this time goes but it's time for another newsletter. Each chapter in Dist. 1 must be doing well, I've not had any complaints from any chapter to determine otherwise. Chapter 237 in San Angelo is growing each month. Last month they had 20 members at the monthly meeting. Chapter 237 also got the go ahead from Wal-Mart and the Golden Corral to hold their Forget Me Not drive for the Memorial Day weekend.

This will be the first time in four (4) years this has been accomplished. Soon it will be time to hold elections for each chapter to nominate their officers for this year. I would recommend each chapter member to be thinking ahead about the election.

Again I wish everyone good health and hope to see each of you soon.

James (Skip) Skipworth
DISTRICT I DEC

★ **Tom Archer, District II DEC**

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Membership, Membership, Membership is the call for 2015. Enthusiasm abounds in District II. Getting the word out is essential that we are there to assist veterans with claims, our commitment to assist at every turn. Every disabled veteran deserves to have dignity and to know that we are there to assist them, they do not have tread through the claims alone.

Moving forward is important, January was a great start with the meeting in Austin. Representation came from the entire state. Tools were taught, that will be used through-out the year.

I continue to look for ways to locate and help homeless veterans. Not just a hand out, but a hand up. All efforts should be made to seek them out.

Plans are being made to have a District II, BBQ in Paris on May 16. Letters will be forthcoming to Chapters soon, with details of the event.

Chapter Service Officer training for District II will be on March 31, in Waco. See you there.

Tom Archer
District II DEC

★ **Robert Squyers, District IV DEC**

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When you get this we will be back from Mid-Winter in Washington, DC. Things are moving at a rapid rate, and, not all for the good of veterans. There were meetings, and talks and visits to Capitol Hill. I have discussed these in the Legislative article.

No one has volunteered to host a Spring Meeting so I have scheduled a District IV Service Officer Training session, May 23, 2015 in Brenham, Texas. The training will be at the VFW Hall in Brenham located at 1200 E Tom Green. The training will be held May 23, 2015, from 8:00 am – 3:00 pm with lunch from about 12:00 – 1:00.

After training there will be a short District meeting to elect District Officers and conduct such business as may be presented.

As members of DAV we are obligated to help our fellow veterans. Service is what we are dedicated to. If you have a veteran who needs help with paper work, forms, medical assistance, financial assistance and it is more than you can help with, please let me know. We have Chapter Service officers, Department Service Officers, and National Service officers whose job is to assist veterans.

The Four major “Talking Points” for the DAV in 2015 are:

1. Women Veterans
2. Comprehensive Caregiver Support
3. Fiscal Year 2016 VA Budget
4. Fully Developed Appeals.

Remember we must act individually, respect all veterans, and if we cannot help, it is our responsibility to refer them to someone who can and to make sure that they get the help they need. We don't want a single veteran to go without the help they deserve.

You can use Department and National for any questions you have.

Remember our veterans and their families. Offer help, guidance, and camaraderie.

Robert Squyers
District IV DEC

★ **Marlin Howze, District V DEC**

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Lately, we have been facing some pretty wild weather. Of course that is nothing new for those of us that have lived in this state for a while. While there isn't much to do about the weather, we have learned to work around and through it to continue our daily activities. The work of our Chapters are kind of like that.

We have bright sunny days where everything goes our way, and we have those days we have to just work through and endure what comes to us. This is the way of how things go with our goals like membership, fundraising, and committing service to our comrades and

their families. We have an excellent organization with a reputation for helping veterans and their families. That reputation is something we have to protect, and we protect it by working through slow recruiting times, going ahead with our fundraising activities regardless of how many show or how much we make, and we never give up helping our fellow veterans and their families that are in need.

One sure way of accomplishing this is to keep those around us educated on important matters regarding legislation, benefits, and opportunities. Of course that means that we have to be subject matter experts in these areas ourselves. Call it a beacon of light for those that search in darkness. Becoming a beacon of light to our comrades in these areas brings them to you, from there all of your other goals become achievable.

Thank you all for the services you render to our brothers and sisters at arms. Continue to help them and become that beacon of light.

Marlin Howze
DISTRICT V DEC



★ **Christy Sloane Women Vet Coord.**

Christylanesloane@yahoo.com

There are a lot of great events going on for us women Veteran's this month! A Women Veteran Employer Symposium is being held by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese Galveston-Houston & Grace After Fire on Wednesday, March 25th at The Junior League of Houston – Ballroom. The goal of this event is to spotlight the advantages of hiring women veterans. HR professionals from local, regional and national corporations will be invited to attend and network with female veteran job seekers. Veterans looking for jobs should also check out the Veterans Advantage Jobs & Career Network. They have now made it free for employers to post their job openings, and have given free access to all

Veterans. Learn more at <http://jobs.veteransadvantage.com/>.

A Women Veterans Empowerment Expo will also be held on Saturday, March 7, 2015 from 9 am to 3 pm (check-in will begin at 8 am). The event will be at the Tellepsen Family Downtown YMCA at 808 Pease St., Houston, TX 77002, and another Women Veterans' Empowerment Expo will be held the same day at the United Way of Greater Houston, 50 Waugh Dr. Houston Texas. This free event will include both breakfast and lunch for all those that attend. There will be so many great activities to aid and inform us women of things going on and ways improve our life.

Christy Sloane
Women Vet Coordinator

★ **Robert Squyres, Legislative/BPT Chrmn**

Rws1945@gmail.com

When you get this we will be back from Mid-Winter. I believe we all learned and I know we are heading in the right direction if we don't let our Legislators ignore what the American people continue to say "Treat our veterans right, do what is in the best interest of our veterans" or as we say in Texas "Don't mess with our VETS"

I have been honored to serve as your Legislative Director this year and was honored to be elected to serve on the National Legislative Committee during the National Convention in Las Vegas. In the fall I received a letter from our National Commander stating that he had appointed me to serve on the Interim Legislative Committee for National.

I was called into the Mid-Winter Conference for a Legislative Meeting and to accompany the National Commander to attend the House and Senate Committees on Veterans Affairs as he gave his testimony for the Disabled American Veterans.

His testimony was an in depth statement of the VA and the VAHC systems and how they must be funded properly, how converting to private care is not the answer and would be more expensive, and would not adequately give Veterans the care they were promised, and deserve. It covered our four major talking points:

Women Veterans, Comprehensive Caregiver Support, Fiscal Year 2016 VA Budget, and, Fully Developed Appeals.

1. Women Veterans; Reintegration challenges for women; Gaps in services for women; existing services not sensitive to the needs of women or equal to care for men.

2. Comprehensive Caregiver Support; There is a cost to providing access to VA's Caregiver Support Program. However it costs less to provide than it does to provide nursing home or other institutional care. A VA report to Congress shows the average cost per veteran is cheaper than private, state, or other federally funded care. It allows veterans to remain at home with their loved ones.

3. Fiscal Year 2016 Budget; VA programs have been underfunded for years, There should not be any shock that under funding of the VA has led to unmet demands. With the drawdown of forces of approximately one million members separating in the next few years demand of services are going to grow. The budget must be sufficient to enable the VA to keep up with the pace. There will be needs for more staff, more facilities, more equipment and upgrades.

4. For the past four years the VA has focused on a 2015 target goal of zero claims pending more than 125 days at 98 percent accuracy. As of January 22, 2015 over 350,000 appeals were pending. The average time for processing an appeal can now require from two to five years. The VA with the DAV and other Veterans Service organizations are trying to develop a proposed FDA pilot program.

The Talking points listed with "The Situation", "The Challenge", and "The Solution" for all four Talking points can be downloaded from the DAV.org website.

There are several State Bills we are supporting and these will be available on the Department's website shortly.

REMEMBER: You can make a difference in a veteran's life.

Robert Squyres
Legislative/BPT Chairman



★ **Ralph Marchesano, Chaplain**

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No American, especially one serving in our Armed Forces, should be forced to abandon his or her religious beliefs. Yet the rigors of military life – from boot camp to battlefield – bar our military from many things that civilians take for granted, such as attending church, participating in a Bible study, or even having a good discussion about their faith. So when General George Washington long ago commanded his officers to "procure chaplains..." he foreshadowed what our Constitution now mandates: that the military provide chaplains to enable service members to freely exercise their religious faith. And this is exactly what chaplains have nobly done since pre-Revolutionary times – serving their fellow believers and serving all military men and women by **nurturing the living, caring for the wounded, and honoring the dead**. Last month at our mid-winter department meeting many asked about a DAV chapter's chaplain's duty. First and foremost please take a look at the 'Official Ritual of the Disabled American Veterans' and follow those guidelines. Here is just a brief note on what a DAV Chaplain should consider. The DAV Chaplain serves a vital role in the lives of men and women in the DAV. Faith comes from hearing the Word of God. Veterans, like men and women everywhere, need to hear the Word of God proclaimed with vigor, conviction and love. Many veterans are often looking for religious guidance, or simply a friendly, approachable face

and an encouraging word. Some look to the Chaplain for comfort during times of emotional stress, when facing moral conflict, or the sadness of grief. The DAV Chaplaincy is a challenging and dynamic opportunity to reach out to men and women from various backgrounds of culture and religion in order to present the eternal Truths of God. Because the Chaplain knows firsthand what the veteran is going through, you are able to develop a special bond of spiritual friendship that makes it easier for the veteran to openly share their concerns and heartaches. Being a Chaplain for the DAV will utilize all your talents and stretch your abilities to their widest potential. DAV Chaplains have been bringing God's message of faith and life to veterans and their family members for over 90 years. The DAV chaplain shall act as the official spiritual representative of the Chapter. It is important to remember that our organization is composed of all faiths and religions. The role of the chaplain in the DAV is a very special one, and the duties of the chaplain are significant. A chaplain must always be aware when offering prayers and guidance not to offend any religion but to respect and honor all. Serving as chaplain provides the opportunity to guide members in fulfilling the purpose of our organization. The chaplain may be called upon in many ways – in visitations to hospitalized members, and with the approval of the Chapter may appoint one or more members to assist in these duties. The chaplain should also officiate at funerals or memorial services. The chaplain will also be called upon to render assistance at chapter meetings and to chapter members and their families. As the spiritual leader of the chapter, it is important to follow the ritual for all regular meetings and to use the Blessing and Closing Prayer as printed (in the rituals book) for regular meetings or one that is applicable. By doing so, the chapter meetings will begin and end in an inspiring manner. Not all chaplains are ordained ministers and some of the duties might be

limited. As an Ordained Minister, when I served as chapter chaplain, I performed not only memorial services and officiated at funerals, but also offered my services (free, do not ever charge a fee) to chapter members to perform several marriage ceremonies, baby dedications and more. Speaking at military reunions, visiting veterans in nursing homes and reaching out to local churches for new members can also be a great way for chaplains to serve their chapters. Offering CSO services to veterans in local churches can be a great recruitment tool. There are many other duties a chaplain can assist with, but most importantly a chaplain is a servant. A chaplain must have a servant's heart. A chaplain must be the greatest servant among his members. In closing I would like to offer my telephone number to any chaplain that needs advice or assistance. I'm a sinner, like most, not perfect and don't have all the answers, but together we can get them. There are many resources within the DAV including our National Chaplain and elsewhere. For any questions please do not hesitate to call me at 281-924-3267. Thank you and God bless you and our great nation of the United States of America!

Rev Ralph Marchesano
Chaplain

**Reservation Information for State
Convention**

Where: Double Tree by Hilton Hotel Austin
When: June 10, 2015 through June 13, 2015
Hotel Address:

6505 IH-35 North
Austin, TX 78752

Phone: 1-512-374-4870
1-800-347-0330 – Reservation Line

Reservations must be made by **May 18, 2015** in order to receive the contracted price. (see below for prices)

\$ 104- Room Rate

You must use the group name and code when making reservations.

Group Name: Disabled American Veterans
Department of Texas

Group Code: DVT

