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## Calendar

### July

4<sup>th</sup> – Independence Day

Department Headquarters will be closed July 3rd

### August

8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> – National Convention  
Denver Colorado

Annual Financial Reports are due on or before September 30, 2015.

**Fundraiser requests will not be approved until this information has been received by Department.** If

your gross income excluding per capita was over \$10,000 a copy must also be sent to National Headquarters. Each report will be checked to assure that your chapters is in compliance with NEC Regulation 9: Accumulation of Funds.

**Teresa Johniken**  
Department Adjutant

# NEWS BULLETIN

Volume 25 Issue 2

July/August 2015

Chartered by act of Congress 1932

★ *Jay Johnson, Commander*

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Greetings Comrades,

Let me begin by thanking each of you for allowing me to stand at the helm of this very fine Region called the Department of Texas. I am humbled and aware of the responsibilities that come in this leadership role. Also recognizing that we are a subordinate component of the Disabled American Veterans, governed by the National Executive Committee (NEC) and Board of Directors, and all business is conducted in accordance with the DAV Constitution and By-Laws.

Congratulations to the auxiliary and their new slate of officers. I am looking forward to a continued working relationship with Commander Darlene Spence. I am a life member of the auxiliary and encourage other chapter members to join.

Both Senior Vice Commander Charles Edwards and 1<sup>st</sup> Jr. Vice Commander Robert Squyres are proven valuable members of the Department of Texas. I am pleased to welcome to the line your 2<sup>nd</sup> Junior-Vice Commander Robert Delgado. He will be an asset in many ways to the Department and we welcome him into the line.

I have selected Teresa Johniken to serve as the Department Adjutant and Dennis Nixon as Assistant Adjutant. There is wealth of knowledge and longevity between these two individuals they are indeed an asset and will serve the Department of Texas well.

It will soon be time to visit Denver, Colorado for our National Convention. This year the Convention is at the Sheraton Denver Downtown Hotel, Denver, CO, August 7-10. At Department Convention in Austin, on 14 June 2015 we submitted a resolution supporting Dennis Nixon to get into the National Line for Commander of the Disabled American Veterans. I hope that many of you have made your reservations and will be joining us in supporting our efforts to place Comrade Nixon in the National Line to become the National Commander from the Department of Texas.

Now as we begin our journey for the year, there will be challenges and issues to confront which is the norm for successful organizations. But in the process

let us not forget that **our mission** is to help veterans who have borne the scares of war in protecting the freedom that we enjoy to lead high quality lives with respect and dignity.

**Jay Johnson**  
**Commander DAV**

★ **Darlene Spence, Commander DAVA**

[psdspence@aol.com](mailto:psdspence@aol.com)

Thank you! I am extremely honored to have been elected as your Auxiliary State Commander for Texas.

Congratulations to Commander Johnson, and his newly elected line Officers.

Let me introduce and congratulate the Auxiliary line officers:

Anita Cox - Sr. Vice  
Charlene Parker - 1st Jr. Vice  
Gay Lynn Lee - 2nd Jr. Vice  
Fannie Lowe - Chaplain  
Patti Rapisand - Judge Advocate  
Ruth Gates – Adjutant/Treasurer

Although Texas exceeded its membership quota for 2014 & 2015, continuing to increase our membership is very important if we are to meet additional service goals and objectives.

A new year has begun and with it comes new opportunities, responsibilities and challenges. Let us move forward, challenged to find new ways of providing services to our veterans and their families. We must be committed to keeping our eyes directed toward our vision and translate our vision into reality. The State of Texas Auxiliary remains committed to serving the DAV and their families.

Thank you for the privilege of serving as your Commander. We are **COMMITTED ALL THE WAY!!!!**

Please make plans to join Texas at the National Convention in Denver from August – 8th through 11th.

It will be a great opportunity to make new friends, share ideas, learn more about the DAV and Auxiliary and have lots of fun.

**Darlene Spence**  
**Commander DAVA**

★ **Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Membership**

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We must individually and collectively ask ourselves, what am I going to do as it relates to the growth of the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) Department of Texas before the 78<sup>th</sup> Annual State Convention which will be held in Austin, Texas.

We must ask ourselves, what would become of my Chapter or the Department if every member had done exactly as I have done last year? How many times have I been absent from my chapter meetings when I could have been present if I had only made an effort to do so?

We must ask ourselves, have I told any eligible veteran about the mission, vision and legislative goals of the DAV, and have I given him or her an application for membership? If I have been negligent, is it because I am at fault and totally relying on other members regarding our membership effort?

We must ask, am I going to continue in the same old way this year, or am I going to start something for the good of our organization? Am I in partnership with my chapter and department as it relates to running the business and activities of my Chapter and Department or simply a nonentity?

Is it right for someone else to do all the work and for me to expect an equal share of the benefits? I ask you to get busy for the cause of fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. Come to the meetings and please get involved. Yes, with every member working together, the Disabled American Veterans, (our Chapters and our Department) can only prosper and grow as we commit ourselves to membership growth.

I would like to thank all of you for your membership and especially those members who are now life members. I'm looking forward to your continued participation, and remember that your membership provides DAV the opportunity to take Disabled Veterans issues to Capitol Hill and to our state senators and representatives.

As always, I must say, it's folks like all of you that makes the DAV such a great organization to be a member of, but let all of us continue to invite others Disabled Veterans to be members of our Veterans Service Organization. **As of June 15, 2015, we need an additional 115 new life members before the end of this month.** I would offer my thanks all of you for your support as we together reach this membership growth for the DAV-Department of Texas. If you have any questions regarding membership, please do not hesitate to contact me at (210) 274-5841 or e-mail: [cwedwards07@hotmail.com](mailto:cwedwards07@hotmail.com).

May God bless each of you; it is real and we need each other.

**Dr. Charles Edwards**  
**Membership Chairman DAV**

★ *Anita Cox, DAVA Membership*

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I want to thank each of our Auxiliary members for such successful membership participation. It is my pleasure to announce that the great **State of Texas reached 100.8% in membership for 2014/2015 year.** That is absolutely astounding!! Give yourselves a hand for a job well done. I challenge you to make it **TWO YEARS IN A ROW** for 2015/2016! If we could all sign up "**JUST ONE MORE**" new member, what an awesome feat that would be!

For those of you who did not attend the State Convention in Austin, you surely missed an information packed weekend. It was such a pleasure to meet our National Commander, Lee Ann Karg. She gave us such invaluable information of the changes coming up during this next year.

I want to remind each of you of the big changes coming to Auxiliary membership starting July 1, 2015. On July 1, 2015, we will convert to a life membership program for all adult members. Encourage new members now to start their life membership with a \$20.00 down payment. Remind members paying toward a life membership that they now have nearly an unlimited amount of time to meet their payment goal, and they have the flexibility to submit life membership payments at their convenience whether it be the minimum of one payment per year or more frequent payment to pay the balance in full.

**Starting July 1, 2015** - there will be two junior membership options:

**Complimentary** - in keeping with elimination of the annual membership structure, junior memberships will be complimentary up to age 18, at which time, they will be automatically converted to a part-lifetime membership and payment billings will commence.

**Junior Life Membership** - will also be available for those under the age of 18 should parents or grandparents wish to get an early start on a life membership for their juniors. The minimum down payment will be \$ 20.00 and applied toward a \$250.00 life membership amount.

With this information in mind, now is the time to start planning your membership drives for the New Year. I wish you all great success with this year's membership. Don't wait. Let's get started working on Membership NOW. Remember... "**JUST ONE MORE**"

Congratulations to the **NEWLY ELECTED STATE OFFICERS** for the 2015/2016 year. **State Commander, Darlene Spence**, Sr. Voice Commander, Anita Cox, 1st Jr. Vice Commander, Charlene Parker, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander, Gay Lynn Lee. I know this will be an exciting and productive year for all of our Auxiliary members.

Remember, we are "**COMMITTED ALL THE WAY**"!!

Anita Cox  
DAVA Membership Chairman

★ *Ruth Gates, DAVA Adjutant*

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Hello Everyone

We are entering a new year for the State Department. The State Convention went very well and we had lots of participation by the membership. Let's build on that united feeling and carrying it throughout this year. Thank you IPSC Thornton for all her hard work during the year and at the convention.

Congratulations to the new officers for the DAV and our DAV Auxiliary. I am certain we will be able to forge a strong partnership to make a continued difference in the lives of the veterans and their families of our State.

On behalf of the Auxiliary State Department, I would like to thank all our members who donated items for our raffle, all the units that returned quilt squares, our quilter-Karen Elling of Grand Prairie #42, and most of all YOU, the members of the DAV and DAVA, for participating in our raffle. It was a success and we are grateful for your continued support.

National Convention is next on our Agenda. I hope as many of the Texas membership that can attend will be able to support Craig Johniken as he continues to seek higher office in National and support our State Department in general.

We have many opportunities ahead of us this year as Commander Darlene's theme says we are "Committed all the Way" and our Sr Vice Anita say we need "Just one more" for membership to make and exceed quota this year. This is our organization and it is only as great as we make it. So let's make this a super year for not only our State Department but Unit as well. Our membership base builds the foundation that our State Departments and our National organization build on so let's make our foundation large and strong.

Proverb for this article: Instead of putting others in their place, put yourself in their place.

Ruth Gates  
DAVA Adjutant/Treasurer

★ *Tom Archer, District II DEC*

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As we go into the summer months, outdoor events tend to increase. Great time to have events that will bring comrades together, invite resent

veterans coming home, offer help in claims and let them know we care. The local media will gladly cover the event, better informing the public what DAV stands for.

DAV of Texas presented the Frank Webb Chapter membership award to Chapter 89, Paris, Texas. Great effort and service to disabled veterans produces membership, Congratulation.

District II recently came together for a day of fellowship. Had some great BBQ.

**Tom Archer**  
District II DEC

★ *Cynthia A. Barber, District III DEC*

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Hello. I want to introduce, or actually reintroduce, myself.

My name is Cynthia Barber and I have just been installed as the Executive Committee Member for District III. During the Department of Texas annual convention District III voted to give District Commander Tom Parker the job of being the District III Department Finance Committee member. As the District III, Senior Vice-Commander, I was alternate to the Department Executive Committee. I was installed to the DEC when Tom Parker resigned to be installed as the District III DFC.

I am looking forward to serving our district for the next year. I also look forward to learning my new duties and how all of our members can be best represented within the department. I hope to be able to visit all of the Chapters in our district in the next months.

As we all know, Denver is hosting the 94<sup>th</sup> DAV Convention which begins on August 8 and ends on August 11, 2015. My spouse Dan (also a Life Member of DAV) and I are planning to attend. The National Convention this year will be special because Dennis Nixon, Department Judge Advocate, is running for National office. We plan to be there to watch his installation, if elected. We also plan to attend the seminars available at the convention to improve our skills and knowledge about DAV.

While at National Dan and I also plan to enjoy our "Brother Rats" of the N.O.T.R., the National Order of Trench Rats. For those who have never heard of the Trench Rats this group is an auxiliary of the DAV and all of its members are Life Members of DAV.

The N.O.T.R was organized after the end of WWI. The name of the organization came from the common bond that many of our WWI Veterans experienced during combat in Europe. The trenches

were not only filled with troops they were also filled with rats, thus they called themselves "Trench Rats". The "Rats" are active in the recreation and rehabilitation of fellow veterans. There is an auxiliary for the N.O.T.R., they are called the Alley Cats. The name for the auxiliary comes from the fact that cats chase rats and the auxiliary tends chase after the Trench Rats. For DAV members who wish to learn more about the N.O.T.R. go to: [www.notrhq.com](http://www.notrhq.com)

**Cynthia Barber**  
District III DEC

★ *Marlin Howze, District V DEC*

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First, I would like to extend a formal condolence to Darlene and Percy Spence for their recent loss. Losing someone close is never an easy task to bear. But, I was encouraged to see the DAV family turn out to help and console them during a time of great sorrow. Well done to those who were there to ease their troubles and especially those who helped out with the details, particularly their home Chapter. God Bless Darlene and Percy and their family during this time of grieving.

Well, looks like the rain is giving us a chance to regroup. Many are appreciative of the renewed and refreshed water levels following the damaging drought of the last few years. But many are recovering from catastrophic damage created by those same refreshing rains. We must remember to look around us and help those that might be in dire need right now. Many areas to the north and east are suffering from damaged property and worse, loss of life. When we see an opportunity to help, we should jump at the chance. We jump now because we may be wanting someone to jump for us in the future.

By now, the State Convention is passed and we will have a new set of Officers ready to get busy with the referendums passed at that Convention. We too, should be ready to support them as they move forward on legislation and reforms that reflect on the DAV's prime missions. Many will have a new slate of Officers coming into their Chapters as well. These front line people will need a lot of support as well. The really great thing about getting new Officers are the new ideas that keep us fresh. Some of those ideas may take us out of our comfort zone, but don't be hesitant to support the idea. Yes, the idea may have been attempted in the past and you may think you know the outcome. But under a different approach that idea might succeed. We must try not to be the nay-sayer, but rather the supporter. Sure, it never hurts to offer information on

how it went wrong in the past. But, the information should be posed in a manner to help the idea succeed.

Lastly, it's going to be a hot humid summer due to all the water in the ground. Take appropriate measures to ensure your own safety while working/playing in the heat. Testing the VA's health system is not a pleasant way to enjoy your summer. Be safe.

**Marlin Howze**  
**District V DEC**

★ **Christy Sloane Women Vet Coord.**

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This month I met with the Texas Women Veterans Organization in Houston to possibly team up and learn what is being done for women Veterans. Their Motto is "Veteran to Veteran rebuilding the dream through social entrepreneurship". They provide well organized outreach services for women Veterans to include re-entry services back into civilian life, entrepreneur training, debt relief counseling, financial planning, counseling services, and some part-time employment opportunities. At this meeting Dr. El Serag, Director Women's Health Center at the Houston VA came and talked with us about what the VA is doing to improve women's services and medical care at the VAMC. She reported that the MEDVAMC currently provides care to approximately 13,000 female veterans with this number almost doubling in the last 5 years. The MEDVAMC has widened their range of comprehensive services to cater to the needs of us female veterans. The Women's Health Program now consists of a Women's Health Medical Director, Women Veteran Program Manager, Maternity Coordinator, and Breast Care Coordinator. They have also added multiple specialties with providers proficient in catering to female Veteran needs. The Houston VA Medical Center is set to Honor Women Veterans on August 7, 2015. The Houston VA Medical Center will hold a special celebration and resource fair at the hospital's 4th Floor Auditorium, to honor women Veterans and to reinforce their commitment to the care of Woman Veterans. The event will showcase local resources for women Veterans and offer a special ceremony to recognize female Veterans who demonstrate exceptional resilience.

**Christy Sloane**  
**Women's Veteran Coordinator**

★ **Howard T. Ray, Legislation & Veteran Rights**

[htray1931@gmail.com](mailto:htray1931@gmail.com)

I would like to thank Commander Johnson for appointing me to serve in this critical position. As your chairman, I plan to fulfill the duties of this position to the best of my ability and welcome your help and support to make it happen. Please do not hesitate to contact me on any matters in your Chapter as pertains to the duties of this Committee at any time.

Howard T. Ray  
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I would like to Commend Chairman Robert Squyres for Service and Contributions to this Important Position, and congratulate him on his Election to 1<sup>st</sup> Junior Vice Commander.

I ran across this article with Video and thought it would be some good (for the Older Military) Training, Information and Education: TI&E Hope you enjoy.

*"Here is a very well-done and staggering video on the losses during WWII. Most people today have no idea of this. History like this is not taught in a lot of schools today. Many young people, including college level, don't even know when WWII happened. (and many don't care, equally troubling)! Yet it was the most momentous event in recent history. It is hard to grasp the toll in human life. Stalin (one of the biggest butchers of all) once said "the death of one man is a tragedy...the death of millions a statistic".*

*Please pass on to all who may be interested. It should not be forgotten."*

<https://vimeo.com/128373915>

**Howard T. Ray**  
**Chairman of Legislation and veterans rights**

★ *Ralph Marchesano, Chaplain*

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This subject is very dear to my heart and although I have covered it before I find it necessary to write about it again. The DAV is an important organization in assisting veterans with filing claims and providing many other services. Sometimes we get so focused on the veteran that we forget their families. Remember the DAV is dedicated to also provide services to widows and orphans. We must never forget the words of President Lincoln when he said: "With malice toward none, with charity for all, with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in, to bind up the nation's wounds, to care for him who shall have borne the battle and for his widow, and his orphan, to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves and with all nations." When our members pass away are we caring for the widows and orphans? God is pretty clear when it comes to charity for those that have lost loved ones. There are numerous passages in the Bible dealing with widows. God has a special concern for them, along with orphans and others in difficult circumstances. Many passages lay down laws to protect widows. God is described as their protector and judge: "A father of the fatherless and a judge for the widows is God in His holy habitation" (Ps. 68:5). "The Lord protects the strangers; He supports the fatherless and the widow" (Ps. 146:9). "Cursed is he who distorts the justice due an alien, orphan, and widow" (Deut. 27:19). Are we forgetting those that are left behind?

These verses sound a warning to us to not forget. The spirit of our age is, "I've worked hard all my life. I've saved up enough to enjoy myself. Now that I'm retired, I don't want to be bugged. I'm going to block out the world and its problems and live for me." But a godly person approaching retirement should see it as an opportunity to be freed up so that he or she can devote more time to serving others. Real fulfillment is not found in living for pleasure and self-gratification; that is death. Real fulfillment is found in living for God and serving others for His sake. I know that many of us have our own lives, many of us still work, and many of us have so much going on that it's difficult enough to keep up with our own issues. But what about the widows, children or grandchildren of those that are gone? Each DAV chapter should be organized to have an outreach program, visiting veterans in hospitals, nursing homes, and also visiting widows and orphans. Sometimes we get lost in filing those claims or with the veteran themselves and forget those left behind. Remember they also paid the price, living with a sick or injured veteran. Living with a veteran with PTSD or being a caregiver for a veteran dying from a service

connected condition. Then when the veteran dies they are forgotten. As an organization dedicated to providing veterans professional services, we must also not forget those that have also borne the burden. Let us reach out to them, many have families and might not need much, but many have been left with no one to care for them. It doesn't take much to make a phone call or send an email or a short visitation. One thing I have realized in my years in the ministry, even when someone is extremely busy, when something is important enough for someone; then they will find the time to do it. So let us make this a priority, let's put this on our lists of things to do.

To sum up let me say this, if the family is consistently there for the widow and orphans, that's great! It doesn't hurt to check on them to find out. If there is no family then such widows and orphans should be visited and checked on. In closing let me leave you with this: Do you not think that their departed loved one, our brothers, sisters, comrades past would want us to do this? What if it's your spouse, mother, sister, daughter etc.. A little care and concern goes a long way to remind them; they have not been forgotten. Let me close with this "The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: a good understanding have all they that do his commandments: his praise endureth forever. Blessed be the name of his glorious kingdom forever and ever." Psalms 111:10

May our Lord continue to bless the DAV/DAVA each and every member, their families and our great nation. May his peace be upon you today and in years to come, Amen.

**Rev. Ralph Marchesano**  
**Chaplain DAV**

PICTURED BELOW:  
OUR JUNIOR DAVA  
MEMBERS AT THE 2015  
STATE CONVENTION IN  
AUSTIN, TEXAS



**THIS IS A FREE EDITION CURTOUSY OF DEPARTMENT HEADQUARTERS.  
ALONG WITH THIS BULLETIN, YOU WILL FIND SOME INFORMATION  
REGARDING THE COSTS AND THE OPTION TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THE  
DEPARTMENT NEWSLETTER.**