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## Calendar

**JANUARY 18<sup>th</sup> - Martin Luther King Jr. Day**

**FEBRUARY 14<sup>TH</sup> - Valentine's Day**

**FEBRUARY 15<sup>TH</sup> – President's Day**

Just a couple of reminders. Our Mid-Year Seminar is on January 22, 2016 through January 24, 2016 at the Double Tree Hotel in Austin, Texas. This year we will be presenting a power point as well as having our training manual.

Award applications are due no later than February 15, 2016 in order for the awards committee to make their selections. These are for the Disabled Veterans of the Year, Outstanding VBA Employee, Outstanding VHA Employee, Outstanding NCA as well as Small Employer, Medium Employer, and Large Employer. Applications may be found on the website [www.davtexas.org](http://www.davtexas.org), under the news tab.

Teresa Johniken  
Adjutant, DAV

# News Bulletin

Volume 25 Issue 5

January/February 2016

Chartered by act of Congress 1932

★ *Jay Johnson, Commander*

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Hello Comrades,

As we go into the holiday season and the end of the year. I hope all had a great Thanksgiving and wishing every member of the Department of Texas Disabled American Veterans Chapters and Auxiliaries good health and happiness on the coming Holiday Season and into the year 2016.

As we give thanks first for living in this great nation we call America, and having the freedoms that many other countries are not able to appreciate but can only envy.

Thanks to the efforts of the many brave and courageous men and women who have sacrificed life and limb, to maintain and protect our way of life that many have sometimes taken for granted.

We can no longer afford that luxury with the way our world is today. We must pray for our men and women who have and are yet still sacrificing life, and limb to protect us from more terrorism throughout the world, and in some cases our own country.

One may not agree with all the policies and procedures our country stands for, but cannot help but agree that thanks to our fore fathers, it is the best system going. We must be ever diligent to protect it from without and from within from those who would wish to destroy it. Please join me and pray for and be thankful this holiday season for all that God has given us in this great nation we call **The United States of America.**

Permit me to name a few: The first principle of the American Republic is that God has given us rights that no government can deny. That is the argument the Founders made repeatedly to an unheeding British Parliament and King that taxed them without representation and shut down their colonial legislatures. That is the argument Thomas Jefferson made in the Declaration of Independence when he wrote that all people, "are endowed by their creator with certain inalienable rights." That is the argument Ben Franklin

made when he insisted the Constitutional Convention open with a prayer. That is the augment George Washington made when taking the oath of office as our First President and he placed his hand on the bible and swore his loyalty to the Constitution saying, "So help me God." That is the argument that James Madison made when at the same time he was writing the First Amendment, he supported hiring a Chaplain for the House of Representatives. And that is the argument that Congress made in 1954 when uncontested voices in both chambers added the word, "Under God" to the Pledge of Allegiance.

**We the Disabled American Veterans of our nation are fully aware that "freedom" was paid with a price. It is not free!!!**

Jay E. Johnson  
Commander, DAV

★ *Darlene Spence, Commander DAVA*

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Hello everyone!

I wish all of you a Happy New Year and extend a Texas size thank you for your heartfelt support provided to our veterans and their families during the holidays. A big thank you for the Christmas party invitations I enjoyed them all very much.

Let your New Year's resolution be to meet your units' quota. With us all working together Texas can meet their quota two years in a row. In addition, please find ways for our junior members to stay active during the year, they are our future.

I am excited and can't wait to see all of you at Mid-Winter/State School of Instruction, January 24 through 26, 2016 at the Doubletree Hotel in Austin, TX. There will be time to learn and have fun.

**"May the New Year bring you new strength, new hope and new dreams."  
— Lailah**

Darlene Spence  
Commander, DAVA

★ *Dr. Charles W. Edwards, Membership*

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I wish to express to all of you my hope that your Thanksgiving and Christmas Holiday Seasons were full of the joy and blessings that our God and Creator gives to your personal and to all our Disabled American Veterans families.

I am looking forward to our upcoming Department of Texas Mid-Year Seminar which will be held January 22-24, 2016, at the Double Tree Hotel in Austin, Texas. This seminar will offer quality time for fellowship and training for our colleagues/members as we together discuss common issues.

One such event will be our interim membership committee meeting which is scheduled for Friday afternoon at 4:00 p.m. Another training event of tremendous important is our program on membership which is scheduled for Saturday morning, January 23, 2016.

Our Department DAV Motto for this year is: "Our Commitment to Membership Growth within the Department of Texas"

The agenda for program on membership will be as follows:

- I. Membership Seminar Introduction
- II. DAV Mission Statement
- III. Who Is DAV?
- IV. Membership Eligibility and Application
- V. Official Membership Transfer Form
- VI. Join Our Ranks
- VII. Membership Seminar Conclusion/Questions and Answers

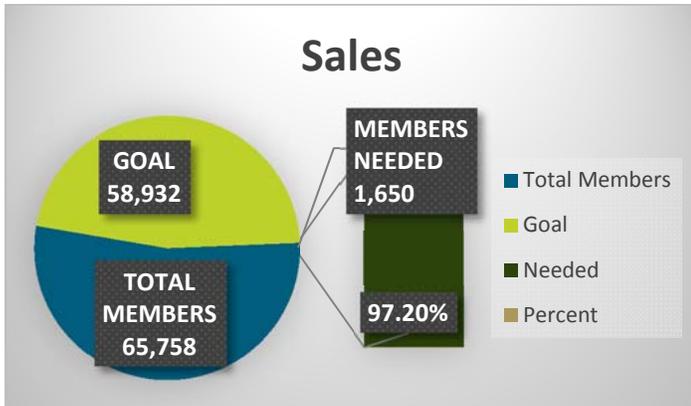
We must remember that yesterday is not ours to recover, but tomorrow is ours to win or lose. We are winners! Where some see barriers, we see bridges. We believe that nothing should stand in the way of a growing organization, our DAV-Department of Texas.

I also recognize that no one of us is smarter than all of us together. We have and will continue to serve by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them. We are veterans serving veterans; because no one should go it alone. Please come and share your ideas as they relate to membership growth.

Finally, allow me to thank all of you for the trust you place in the DAV/Department of Texas through your valuable membership. 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).

Wishing you a New Year, 2016, filled with peace and happiness. God bless each of you.

Dr. Charles Edwards  
Sr. Vice Commander  
Membership Chairman, DAV



★ *Anita Lee, Sr Vice Commander*

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Membership:

I pray everyone had a wonderful and joyful Christmas. Now that it is the New Year, let's us get going once again to reach 100% in Membership before the end of our physical Calendar. We are currently at 96.05% with only 239 new members still needed to reach our goal. Let's kick this year off with a great start! Again, if each member would sign up "Just One" new member, we could reach our 100% goal by the end of January. Wouldn't that be terrific?? I would encourage each member to carry at least one BLANK MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION with you all the time. There is no telling where you might find that "ONE New Member" out there. He or she may just be sitting right there next you right now? I know there are plenty of opportunities to meet and greet possible new members. We just need to reach out. It won't be long before the "Winter Meetings" will start for Unit's "School of Instruction" so, invite a possible new member to the event as a guest and give them a chance to see what we do and what we are about. Also, when you set up your

"Forget-Me-Not" drive, set up a booth with volunteers and applications and talk to people that stop by to donate. They may not know they are eligible to join our Auxiliary. Let each of us take advantage of these chances to introduce who we are and what this great organization stands for!

See you all at "Winter Meeting"

Anita Lee  
Sr. Vice Commander, DAVA

★ *Ruth Gates, DAVA Adjutant*

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Hello Everyone,

By the time you receive this bulletin, we will be well into the holiday spirit. Christmas will have come and gone. The New Year will be fresh and new. I hope that each of you had a very special holiday season with your families, friends and communities. On behalf of Commander Spence and our State VAVS chairperson, Joann Johnson, thank you to each and every Chapter and Unit that participated in our Annual VAVS Christmas program for our hospitalized veterans. Your combined donations allowed us to increase our donation to each Medical Center this year. Without the generosity of each of you, our continued support of the hospitalized veterans would not be possible.

Attention Adjutants: It is time again to start watching for mail outs from State Headquarters for upcoming events and activities. Remember this mail is for your Unit and take it to your meetings to read and share with your group.

Also remember to make sure a copy of you officer reports and audit reports are forwarded to National Auxiliary Headquarters, State Auxiliary Headquarters and DAV State Dept of Texas Headquarters once your elections and installations are completed. These reports are EXTREMELY important to each Headquarters.

I would like to take this opportunity to wish each member of the Auxiliary and the Chapters a very special Holiday from my family. I know many of you have endured struggles this year but we are nearing a New Year with a fresh start and outlook for us.

Thought for the month:

To me, every hour of the day and night is an unspeakably perfect miracle. Walt Whitman.

Ruth Gates,  
Adjutant, DAVA

★ *Robert Simmons Jr., District I DEC*

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Well, another year has passed. I hope everyone had a "Merry Christmas" and a very "Happy New Year!" As we transition to 2016, let us renew our resolve to help our brothers.

I hope to see each of you at the Mid-Winter in Austin. The training should serve all of us well.

Robert Simmons Jr.,  
District I DEC,



★ *Marlin Howze, District V DEC*

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I hope everyone has survived the Holidays and looking forward to a great New Year. As usual for the DAV, our work is never done. We are grateful for the little breaks we get, but we know there are others that are not getting any breaks and depend on us to help them out. With Mid-Winter nearby, it's a good time to re-evaluate what we do in our Chapters and other offices for our comrades and their families. Mid-winter offers a really great opportunity to sharpen our skillsets by getting updated on the way we operate within the organization. Mid-winter also provides an opportunity to renew old friendships between Chapters and State and maybe glean some tips on how we can do better inside our own Chapters. I hope all the Officers and perspective Officers at least plan to show up.

During the Holiday period we (at least in my home Chapter) experienced an uptick in the number of homeless and near homeless that came through our doors. We were able to help all that came through, but we did so with the help of connections with other organizations to help us out. Never underestimate the value of a good strong network to help you in your jobs. I know that sometimes in the communities we live in we can have awkward relationships with other organizations, but we should never look at them as competitors. Better would be to look at them as assets with different agendas than ours. What I'm saying is that we in the veteran community should be able to have a good enough relationship with brother organizations that we would not hesitate to lean on one another for help in solving tough social problems, homelessness in point. Strengthen those bonds between organizations, be as helpful to them as you would like them to be helpful to you.

Continue strengthening your Service Office skills. These skills help veterans and they will help you with your efforts in recruiting. My experience has shown me that if you offer them something that is free, tangible and of great use to them, they will want to join you. Maybe not on the front line right away, but they will want to be a part of an organization that offers so much. I hope you had wonderful holidays and are spiritually ready for the year before us. Hopefully I will see you at Mid-winter, but if not, success to your new year.

Marlin Howze  
District V DEC

★ *Fannie Lowe, DAVA Chaplain*

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Greetings All,

As 2015 is slipping into our memory of years past, we move toward a new year with excitement and wonder for what lies ahead. This is also a time of reflecting on what has passed. I have often dwelled too long on things of the past and missed opportunities to adjust for the future. I hope sharing what this experience has taught me will help you in some way.

Now, as time moves us into a new day, a new year; I ask myself these questions:

- Have I released or have I held on to those things that continue to haunt me and cause needless worry, i.e., have I forgiven or asked forgiveness for some past negative remarks or deeds?
  - I no longer drag these things along from day to day or from one year to the next.
- What things are to be retained as memories and never to be purposefully forgotten?
  - Some memories of joy, happy times, love and peace should be present always.
- What things do I bring forward and continue, or bring forward and adjust for future use?
  - Viable projects, ideas worthy of further development and other worthwhile acts of love, gratitude and service may be continued from day to day or year to year.

"For I know the plans that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare, and not for calamity, to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11, (NHEB)

With the aforementioned thoughts in mind, my wishes for you in the year ahead are that the God given gifts of love, joy, freedom and security be yours. May you be able to share and/or assist others to know these same gifts; be able to keep moving forward to fulfill our DAVA Mission; and, be able to remain "Committed All the Way", to serving our Disabled American Veterans and their families.

May the peace of God which passes all understanding be yours throughout 2016 and beyond.

Fannie Lowe  
Chaplain, DAVA

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

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In each chamber of Congress, four forms of legislative measures may be introduced or submitted, and acted upon. These include bills, joint resolutions, concurrent resolutions, and simple resolutions. Resolutions are not laws but rather the statements of intent or declarations that affect the operations of Congress.

Joint resolutions are legislative measure that requires approval by the Senate and the House and is presented to the President for his approval or disapproval, in exactly the same case as a bill.

Concurrent resolutions are legislative measures adopted by both houses of a bicameral legislature that lacks the force of law (is non-binding) and does not require the approval of the chief executive (president).

Concurrent resolutions are typically adopted to regulate the internal affairs of the legislature that adopted it, or for other purposes where authority of law is not necessary-such as awards or recognitions.

Simple resolutions are used to delegate official internal Congressional business.

In total 6,739 bills containing 3,818 amendments and 1154 resolutions have been introduced in the United States Congress of which 3,853 are under Committee consideration and 838 are under Floor consideration. Of those, on average only about 4% will become law. Those outstanding must be enacted before the end of the 2015-2017 session of the 114th Congress sometime before 3 JAN 2017.

To date 809 bills have been passed by one chamber, 158 bills have been passed by both chambers of which 33 are 2 resolving differences, 120 have been sent to the president who to date has vetoed 2 nonveteran bills (not counting the NDAA 2016 initial veto) and signed 115 into law of which 3 were veteran related (Clay Hunt SAV Act, Vet ID Card, & Vet Choice additional funding). As of 31 DEC, of the 4,312 House and 2,427 Senate bills introduced in the 114<sup>th</sup> Congress, the ones listed below could in one way or another impact on the veteran community. A good indication on the likelihood of a bill of being forwarded to the House or Senate for passage and subsequently being signed into law by the President is the number of cosponsors who have signed onto the bill. An alternate way for it to become law is if it is added as an addendum to another bill such as the annual National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) and survives the conference committee assigned to iron out the difference between the House and Senate bills. To locate a summary of all House/Senate bills and resolutions in numerical order go to

<http://beta.congress.gov/search?q=%7B%22source%22%3A%22legislation%22%7D#> and select “Ascending” or “Descending”. This **Congress.gov** site will display up to 500 bills per page (selectable) and each item’s bill number, short title, sponsor and date introduced, number of cosponsors, last major action, and how far it is advanced in the legislation process to become law (i.e. passed House | passed Senate | sent to President | Became law). To see what the original title was (i.e. what the bill is intended to do), complete text, amendments, or related bill numbers click on the bill number.

**Congress.gov** is the official source for federal legislative information. It replaces the nearly 20-year-old THOMAS.gov site

<http://thomas.loc.gov/home/thomas.php> with a system that includes platform mobility, comprehensive information retrieval and user friendly presentation. It currently includes all data sets available on THOMAS except nominations, treaties and communications. Thomas was supposed to be permanently retired at the end of 2014 but is still being updated and is accessible. Preformatted message for automatic transmission to their legislator requesting he/she support the bill.

H.R.333: **Disabled Veterans Tax Termination Act.** A bill to amend title 10, United States Code, to permit retired members of the Armed Forces who have a service-connected disability rated less than 50 percent to receive concurrent payment of both retired pay and veterans' disability compensation, to extend eligibility for concurrent receipt to chapter 61 disability retirees with less than 20 years of service, and for other purposes.

Howard T. Ray  
Chairman of Legislation and Veterans Rights

★ *Ralph Marchesano, Chaplain*

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Well it’s a NEW YEAR, when in a fit of optimism many of us make new resolutions and great promises to ourselves about what we are going to do in 2016 that we usually abandon in a few weeks (or sooner). Let’s be honest now. How many of you kept to a diet for losing weight or getting healthier?

How many of you actually kept going to the gym in the past few weeks? So I am not the only one, am I? Well this year I am determined it’s going to be different. I have made a couple of New Years’ resolutions I know I will be able to keep for the whole of 2016.

Are you ready? Here they are. I have decided to eat more and exercise less. I have decided to spend at least

an extra half an hour a day off my feet. Now I might well be able to keep those kinds of resolutions but they wouldn’t make a great deal of difference to my life, except perhaps to increase my waist size by several inches. In contrast I want to talk to you about some resolutions; some commitments which I guarantee will make a radical difference in my life and your life if you follow through on them.

In fact, what I want to do is to offer to you a way of starting the New Year which could significantly change your life. Here is what I want to suggest to you: if you will make four commitments that God in His Word encourages you to make I guarantee you that the start of 2016 could become one of the most significant events in your life. The New Year, instead of being simply about having a few days off, if you will follow God’s advice, could become a way for you; the gateway to have a better life. I want to challenge you to make 4 new commitments for this New Year and here they are:

#### 1: COMMIT YOURSELF TO FORGET YOUR FAILURES

2000yrs ago one the first Church leaders, Paul gave this advice “Forgetting what is behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on towards the goal for which God has called me heavenwards....” That advice from God’s Word has stood the test of time. I don’t know of any more relevant and practical advice for us at the start of 2016. God is here so you don’t have to live your life imprisoned by your past. All of us have failed in some way in our lives over the last year and these failures are recorded in our hearts and minds. For many of us our failures are painful memories. Maybe for you it is a memory of how you failed in a relationship. You made the wrong decisions, said and did the wrong things and the relationship ended. Some of you who are parents probably know that you failed your children in some way, many of us are aware that we have failed our parents and it’s more than likely that many of us know that most of all we have failed ourselves in some ways. What God’s Word is saying is that we must not allow ourselves to be bogged down by our past failures. That we should not dwell on our past so that it stops us moving forward into the future that God has for us. I think that the start of New Year is a good time for you to rise to that challenge. To say to yourself I am going to, with help from God, forget my past. I am going to stop torturing myself about what I did or didn’t do. This New Year is a good time to stop being chained to your past failures. God is saying here in His Word that he doesn’t want you to go through your life branding yourself as a failure.

#### 2: COMMIT YOURSELF TO GIVE UP YOUR GRUDGES

I want you to pay attention to these words from the book of Colossians because in them you’ll realize the

second challenge I believe God wants you to rise to if you want to make 2016 a significant turning point in your life . “Bear with each other and forgive each other whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.” Did you catch that challenge? God in those words is challenging you directly and personally to give up your grudges. That is what he means when he says forgive each other whatever grievances you may have against one another. What’s a grudge? A grudge is a deep ongoing resentment that we cultivate in our hearts against someone else.

A grudge is an unforgiving spirit that leads to unforgiving attitudes and unforgiving actions. Now I know you know what I am talking about. Harboring a grudge is about nursing a dislike for someone. What you need to know is that grudges are dangerous because they are destructive. Grudges destroy marriages Grudges break up families. Grudges ruin friendships. Grudges split churches.

Let’s be honest enough to admit that grudges can destroy believer’s unity and can destroy any organization, including the DAV. Holding a grudge or un-forgiveness against one another will destroy each of you. Today if you know you are holding a grudge against someone then God has something to say to you. He says “give it up.” I want to remind you that grudges are not just destructive they are also self-destructive. When you hold a grudge against someone you will hurt yourself as much and perhaps more than you will hurt the person you are holding it against. God says that that deep-seated resentment you have against that person has to go. What better time to make that difficult decision to forgive than the start of a new year? Now don’t tell God you can’t forgive, because what you really mean when you say that is that you won’t forgive. If God can forgive you your sins then you can give up your grievance whatever the cost. The question is will you do it?

### 3: COMMIT YOURSELF TO RESTORE YOUR RELATIONSHIPS

Every time I turn on my computer a little windows pops up that asks if I want to run a check to see if my programs are all working properly. God in his word issues a very similar invitation. It is the invitation not to check to see if our computer software is working properly to but check whether our personal relationships are working properly. Here is how the Lord issues that challenge (His Word.) “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” The important phrase there is, as far as it depends on you. God by using that phrase is personally challenging each one of us to do all we can to restore our relationships. The Lord wants you to do everything you can to restore any relationships that have gone wrong in your life. Some relationships might have gone wrong in your life because of what other people have done and they might well not want that relationship

restored. God recognizes that. That is why he starts by saying “If it’s possible” But let’s be honest some of our relationships have gone wrong because of what we have done haven’t they? When God’s word says here as far as it depends on you, “live at peace with everyone” it is saying if you have caused a rift in a relationship then you have a responsibility to do everything you can to restore it. That everything includes the one thing we all probably find most difficult, asking for forgiveness. Am I the only person who finds it hardest to say “I am sorry” to the people I am closest too? I wonder how many relationships have been ruined imply because someone won’t say “I was wrong, I am sorry, will you forgive me.” I am certain that some of us who are married need to ask forgiveness for “harsh words and cutting remarks” that have really wounded our partners over the years. Maybe God is saying to some of you that this change of year is the right time to restore that relationships you ruined by going and sincerely saying that you are sorry for those angry words or those selfish and un-thoughtful actions. You see restitution is not always about property or giving something back, it also deals with going back and making things right for hurtful things I’ve said or done. It’s far easier for me to tell you some phony story than to tell you of the difficult and painful times I’ve had to ask my wife, my children, my boss, friends and coworkers to forgive me. Restitution is asking forgiveness for harsh words, quick tongue, or cutting remarks. It is asking forgiveness from a brother you hurt, a mother you caused heartache to, or a former spouse which you maligned. Restitution is confessing and seeking forgiveness from an old business partner, neighbor, or comrade. It is admitting my past errors in relationships and humbly seeking forgiveness from the one I’ve hurt. And it’s harder to make personal restitution than property restitution.” Make no mistake it will be hard to do but one of the most significant things that you can do to mark the New Year is not set off a firework but to admit your past errors in relationships and humbly seek forgiveness from the one you have hurt. Will you rise to the challenge and make a commitment to restore your broken relationships in this New Year?

### 4: COMMIT YOURSELF TO TURN YOUR BACK ON YOUR TRANSGRESSIONS.

Listen to God’s Words “Do not let sin control the way you live, do not give in to its lustful desires ... we are no longer slaves to sin.” That is the last challenge that I believe if you will rise to meet will make this New Year truly significant for you. When God says “Do not let sin control the way you live, do not give in to its lustful desires He is issuing the challenge to turn your back on your transgressions. I had an IT technician working on a computer a few years ago who turned on the machine and it said on the screen “Error code #3152764” or whatever. He looked at and said “Same old fault” He then explained that some of these computers had a program fault and this

unit usually has a particular way of going wrong that happens time and time again. That is a principle that is as true in the spiritual world as it is in the electronic world. Believers used to talk about something called besetting sins. What they meant by besetting sins were particular sins that a particular believer was prone to doing time and time again. For most of us it is easy to give up some bad habits, but there are other things that we know are wrong that we really battle with. Those are our besetting sins. Many of us end up choosing to give into our besetting sins and end up living double lives. A few years back I was reading an article in a magazine written by an anonymous pastor that described his battle with his besetting sin. How he gave into it time after time and then was overcome with guilt. Maybe that is how you lived over the last year, constantly defeated by the same old bad habit or sin. God in His Word challenges you to turn your back on that, whatever it is. To stop letting it control the way you live. To stop giving in to it, He wants you to stop obeying your old master. That is the last challenge that I believe if you will rise to meet will make this New Year truly significant for you. When God says "Do not let sin control the way you live, do not give in to its lustful desires He is issuing the challenge to turn your back on your transgressions.

#### Conclusion

It all boils down to this: Will this New Year be just a calendar changing event for you or are you willing to rise to these challenges from God's word and make these commitments and so make it a life changing event? Are you willing to make these 4 commitments for 2016?

-Will you commit yourself to forget your failures?

-Will you commit yourself to give up your grudges?

-Will you commit yourself to restore your relationships?

-Will you commit yourself to turning your back on your transgressions?

This New Year will really be something to celebrate if you'll make forgiveness the heart of what it's all about for you. Have the courage right now to do this. May our Lord bless you and keep you in the New Year may your life be filled with His blessings and favor and may God bless the DAV and the United States of America.

Rev. Ralph Marchesano  
DAV Chaplain

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### DATES TO REMEMBER

JANUARY 22-24, 2016

MID-YEAR SEMINAR

JUNE 9-13, 2016

78<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL CONVENTION



# OPERATION HOLIDAY PACKING OF THE BAGS

DAV Commander Jay Johnson and DAVA Commander Darlene Spence, along with members from Chapter and Unit 17 were out spreading the holiday cheer to our Veterans at VA Villa Serena.

Unit 114 was also spreading cheer by serving lunch to our veterans





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