

DAVA Awards at the National Convention 2017

At the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary National Convention held in New Orleans, July 29-August 1, Francis J Beaton Chapter 1 received the following awards. In the category of 201+ members.

Hospitality
VA Volunteer Services (VAVS)
Community Service
Legislative
and the Mae Holmes Award, an overall award

In the category of 101-200 members, Valley City Tom Lemly #24 received the Mae Holmes Award.

659 Auxiliary members registered at the Convention.

Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary Leadership
(TX) Craig Johniken - Commander
(NM) Ellen Timmerman - SR Vice Commander
(FL) Diane Franz - First JR Commander
(SC) Lynn Helms-Prosser - Second JR Vice Commander
(LA) Carolyn Sensot - Third JR Vice Commander
(CA) Julie Weisman-Steinboch - Fourth JR Vice Commander
(AZ) Donna Adams - Judge Advocate

This is a historic year, the first male commander for the auxiliary and the first female commander for the DAV.

John Heidrich Wins Outstanding Member Award 2016-2017



John Heidrich was presented the Outstanding Member Award 2016-2017 DAV Chapter 2 by Commander Bill Boner during Chapter Meeting May 2017.

Delphine Metcalf-Foster Elected DAV National Commander

Delphine Metcalf-Foster, a disabled U.S. Army veteran, was elected National Commander of the nearly 1.3 million-member DAV at the organization's 2017 National Convention in New Orleans, Louisiana.



Delphine Metcalf-Foster
DAV National Commander

The Vallejo, California native's military career included service with the U.S. Army Reserve, 689th Quartermaster Unit, 6253rd Hospital Unit and 6211th Transportation Unit, Letterman Army Medical Center. She retired from the Army Reserves with the rank of first sergeant in 1996.

Metcalf-Foster was injured in January 1991 while serving in Saudi Arabia in support of Desert Storm/Desert Shield. At the time she was supporting the Grave Registration Company mission. She was medically evacuated to Germany for care and treatment.

Metcalf-Foster is a life member of DAV Chapter 21, Vallejo, California. She currently serves on the First Data Military Advisory Council and is a member of the DAV Department of California Claims and Service Committee, and has served as Chairman for the DAV Department of California Resolution Committee.

Metcalf-Foster also completed a four year appointment as a member of the Secretary of Veterans Affairs Advisory Committee on Women Veterans in November 2015. A retired Quality Assurance work leader from the Alameda Naval Air Station in Alameda, California,

Metcalf-Foster's leadership has been sought at the local, state, and national levels. She served as chairman of the Hospital/Volunteer Intern Committee, National 16th District Executive Committee, and has served as director and treasurer for DAV at the national level.

A graduate of Solano Community College and Sonoma State University, Metcalf-Foster majored in psychology and liberal studies. She currently resides in Vallejo, California, and is the mother of three children, Linda, Shawn and Dana.



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At National Convention - DAV Honors Outstanding Employee of the Year from Each VA Administration

There are more than 350,000 full-time VA employees, but only three—one from each administration—were singled out to receive awards at the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) and DAV Auxiliary's 96th National Convention in New Orleans, on July 31.

Each year, through its National Commander's Awards Program, DAV honors "an outstanding individual within the Veterans Health Administration (VHA), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) and the National Cemetery Administration (NCA)."



VHA's Award Winner

This year's National Commander's Award for Outstanding VHA Employee of the Year went to Paul L. Roberts, director of the Cheyenne VA Medical Center, in Cheyenne, Wyoming.

As a retired lieutenant colonel who spent more than 20 years as an Army Medical Service Corps officer, Roberts said the award is "the greatest professional honor I have received."

Since joining VA in 2013, Roberts quickly climbed the ranks and became director in June 2016. He leads the delivery of health care to more than 24,000 Veterans and families, and directs medical programs and administrative operations at nine locations across 34,000 square miles of southeastern Wyoming, western Nebraska and northern Colorado.

The award write-up stated that, in just one year as director, Roberts "reduced appointment wait times by 53 percent; reduced high-risk consults by 94 percent; and increased the Medical Support Specialist compliance rating from 51 to 85 percent."

"Paul is clearly committed to ensuring the best quality care for our nation's heroes," said DAV National Commander Dave Riley. "He has facilitated timely communication and effective procedures to ensure Veterans are receiving the care and assistance they need from all available resources."

NCA's Award Winner

The National Commander's Award for Outstanding NCA Employee of the Year went to Deborah Kamisato, administrative officer for the Dallas-Fort Worth National Cemetery in Texas.

Kamisato, who has been with the NCA since 2012, is an instrumental part of the cemetery being selected as a "National Shrine"—a designation reserved



Deborah Kamisato

for only the top five percent of all VA national cemeteries.

"I was nominated by the local [DAV] chapter after they

heard about my role in the Secretary's shift from being a rules-based organization to a principles-based one, when I made an executive decision to allow a high-profile burial for a killed-on-duty Dallas police officer to be held on a weekend," said Kamisato. "This type of decision requires executive approval, but based on the high public awareness of the situation, I did not want to delay a response and cause any unnecessary media interest in the VA."

"It is because of Deborah—and employees like her—that Veterans and their families are confident in VA national cemeteries to honor their service and sacrifice," said Riley.

VBA's Award Winner

The National Commander's Award for Outstanding VBA Employee of the Year went to Jamie Shuemaker of the VA Regional Office in Togus, Maine.

A Navy Veteran who joined VBA as a file clerk in 2009, Shuemaker has held multiple positions where she has shown dedication to ensuring Veterans get the benefits they've earned. In her current position as an intake analyst, she has been very active in incorporating the VA paperless claims process and ensuring the process goes as smoothly as possible.

"I love my job and really enjoy what I do," said Shuemaker. "Helping VSOs [Veterans service organizations] like DAV assist their Veterans is what I am here to do. I come to work to help Veterans who have served our country. I come because I enjoy giving back however I can."

All In a Day's Work

This same sentiment was expressed by all three of the VA award recipients. It was clear that they would do it all over again, accolades aside.

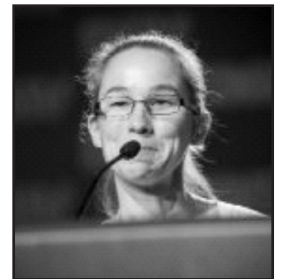
"Being recognized is a great honor, and knowing others recognize my commitment to our Veterans is just as wonderful," said Kamisato, "but this is what I do and I don't expect to be recognized for doing what all VA employees should do as part of their daily job."

Roberts said he sees his achievement as a reflection of his whole team's efforts.

"We have accomplished everything we have accomplished because of the great staff and volunteers we have here in Cheyenne, in Northern Colorado and in Sidney, Nebraska," he said. "It's one team, one fight, [and] when one person wins, we all win. When we all win, we feel special as individuals that we are part of that team."

"Getting an award like this," said Shuemaker, "makes you feel valued and that what you do does make a difference. At the end of the day, it's about providing the best service possible."

Photos courtesy of Disabled American Veterans (official DAV photos).



Jamie Shuemaker

North Dakota Was Well Represented at the National DAV & DAVA National Convention



Back Row: Kathleen Vandrovec, Mike Vandrovec, Warren Tobin and some of the other North Dakota delegation.



Upper Left: Mike Vandrovec and Dave Riley (now former) DAV National Commander

Left: Mike Vandrovec, Butch Whitehead, and Dennis Nixon



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Tom Saddler
Past ND Department Commander

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Jake Liudahl
 Owner/President

11-East Broadway Suite 101
 Williston, ND 58801
www.balcouniform.com
 1-800-544-1270
 Cell: 701-570-0798
 Fax: 701-572-4824
jake@balcouniform.com

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