



**DAV Department of Texas Headquarters**  
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## EVENTS & REMINDERS

★ **Teresa Johniken, DAV Adjutant**  
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The Fiscal Year ends June 30, 2016. Your Annual Financial Report is due on or before September 30, 2016.

The following is a few things that cause these reports to not be accepted:

- Not signed by the Audit Committee
- Required Schedules are not submitted
- Bank Statements ending June 30th are not submitted
- The Ending Balance does not match the Bank Statements

If I can ever be of any assistance please do not hesitate to call me at Department Headquarters

## CALENDAR

- Sunday, May 8th Mother's Day
- Monday, May 30th Memorial Day
- Friday, June 10th-12th Department Convention
- Sunday, June 19th Father's Day



**Teresa Johniken**  
 DAV ADJUTANT

# NEWS BULLETIN

VOLUME 25 ISSUE 7

MAY/JUNE 2016

CHARTERED BY ACT OF CONGRESS 1932

★ **Jay Johnson, DAV Commander**

davcommander@davtexas.org

As I sit down to pen my final newsletter as Commander for the Department of Texas Disabled American Veterans for the period June 2015 – June 2016,

I reflect on the responsibilities that came with the position and I am honored and indeed grateful to have been a part of the esteemed group of individuals who have so proudly served and led Texas to where it is today.

I validate the above statement having played a small part in the campaign and election of two past National Commanders both from District 20 (Texas), and am currently engaged in the campaign of Dennis Nixon from Texas in the National line to become DAV National Commander in the near future.

I begin by thanking every member of the Department of Texas Disabled Americans Veterans for the happy privilege to serve as your Commander. I have been humbled and inspired by interacting with Chapter and Auxiliary Commanders, officers and members.

Before I go further, for those of you who are not aware, we lost Past Department Commander Claude J. Boggs Sr. He was a beloved friend and dedicated member of the Disabled American Veterans from District V, Chapter 128. Claude departed from our presence to his eternal reward on 3 April 2016 from heart complications in San Antonio, Texas. Claude was the first African American to serve in the position as the DAV Commander for the Department of Texas.

It was a position which he sought and served with valor and distinction. I am proud to say that he was a role model for me

and many others. Namely because of his dedication for the organization which he loved and his awareness of the sacrifices made by Disabled American Veterans, and those who paid the supreme sacrifice to keep the citizens of America safe and secure from those who wish to change our way of life.

Please keep the Boggs family in your prayers. Claude Sr.'s wife, Past State Auxiliary Commander Minnie Boggs, and their son, Claude Boggs Jr., who is a life member of Roy B. Hodges Chapter 128. Claude Boggs Jr. also lost his wife, Rena Boggs, on April 2nd, 2016.

This is a reminder to all chapters to review your fundraising activities. Ensure you have permission to conduct the fundraiser. Should you collect donations for any purpose, you must have permission from the Department Executive Committee. If this is being done without permission, stop and send a request to the Department Adjutant to secure permission from the Department Executive Committee.

Don't forget our upcoming Department Convention in Austin, Texas. The dates are June 10 – 12 at the Double Tree Hotel in North Austin. The rates are \$106.00 and the phone number is 512-454-3737.

A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.

**A word of encouragement during a failure is worth more than an hour of praise after success.**

**Jay Johnson**  
DAV Commander

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

[cwedwards07@hotmail.com](mailto:cwedwards07@hotmail.com)

### **Our Commitments to Membership Growth**

There are only two short months left in this 2015-2016 DAV year, a year which to this point has been truly remarkable in fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served our nation as members of the United States Armed Forces. As of May 2nd, our full life membership percentage stands at 99%; we still need 671 new full life members to reach our goal of 58,932.

As we approach the end of this DAV year, I want to once again thank all of you who are working so hard to make

this another successful year for our organization, the Disabled American Veterans, Department of Texas. Now, I personally ask all of you to double your efforts within the next two months to recruit one new full life member.

**As hardworking members of the DAV, we must all assist in reaching our membership goal. With this in mind, I would like to close this last article as your membership chairman with a poem I once read called "GOALS."**

I have dreamed many dreams that never came true, I have seen them vanish at dawn;  
But I have realized enough of my dreams, thank God, to make me want to dream on.

I have prayed many prayers when no answer came, I have waited patient and long;  
But answers have come to enough of my prayers, thank God, to make me keep praying on.

I have trusted many a friend who failed, friends who left me to weep alone;  
But I have found enough of my friends true-blue, thank God, to make me keep trusting on.

I have sown many seeds that fell by the way, the birds did feed upon;  
But I have held enough golden leaves in my hand, thank God, to make me keep sowing on.

I have drunk from the cup of disappointment and pain, I have gone many days without song;  
But I have sipped enough nectar from the rose of life, thank God, to make me want to live on.

I hope that each and every one of you will live on and continue to work as we together accomplish the goals and ideas of the DAV. Yes, the strength of the DAV lies in the combined efforts of all of us, therefore, let all of us remain committed and dedicated as hardworking members of this great organization.

I am looking forward to seeing all of you at our Department Convention, June 10-12, 2016. Thank you for your commitment to our membership goal. I am deeply grateful for your service to our country and to the Disabled American Veterans - Department of Texas. God bless each of you.

**Dr. Charles Edwards**  
DAV Senior Vice Commander  
Membership Chairman

## ★ Ruth Gates, DAVA Adjutant

[ruth.gates@aig.com](mailto:ruth.gates@aig.com)

Hello Auxiliary Members.

State Convention is just around the corner. All the information has been sent to each Unit Adjutant. If you are coming to State Convention, the first meeting will be at 9:00 am on June 10th for the Joint Session. The Auxiliary registration will open on Thursday, June 9th at 12:00 noon. The cost will be \$20. Our Forget me not Luncheon will be Saturday, June 11th and the cost for it will be \$20. Please make plans to attend if you can.

May is the month in which each Unit has an opportunity to elect a State Executive Committeeperson and Alternate. Please try to elect members to fill these positions as they will be your representative to vote on any items or issues that arise at the State level.

We will have the Auxiliary National Commander, Leann Karg at our convention. I am certain she would love to meet as many members as possible.

We are in the process of making changes in the way our Districts function and the National Auxiliary is in the process of making changes in our membership process effective July 1. I have some additional information here and it will be handed out at State convention. I am sure that Commander Karg will go over it with us as well.

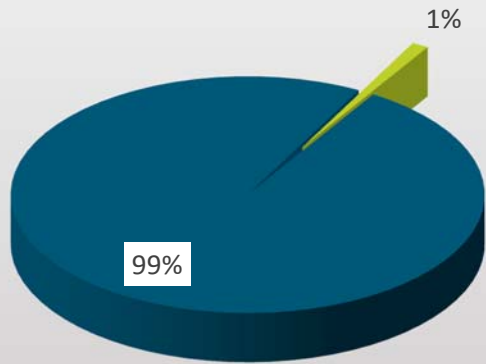
I saw this quote on Saturday and thought it holds an important message for each of us. It certainly made me examine my life and the impact I wish to have on those I have contact with.

***There are 2 kinds of folks in this world—the folks of words and the folks of deeds***

Which one are YOU? And is that the impression you wish to leave with everyone you meet?

***Ruth Gates***  
Adjutant, DAVA

## Membership



■ Total Full Life Members (58,261) ■ Needed (671)

## ★ Darlene Spence, DAVA Commander

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

Where has the time gone! Just as everything is bigger in Texas, time passes faster in Texas. I can't believe this is my last newsletter entry as DAVA State Commander.

Thank you for your support, your friendship and your caring, diligent team work in support of our Veterans and their Families. This has been a very challenging and rewarding year, one that I will always treasure.

As we move forward toward meeting our state membership goal, congratulations to the Units that have already made quota, and thanks to the Units that are still working to meet quota. Texas is at 97.50% and we only need 151 new members to meet our state goal. It will be awesome to see Texas make quota two years in a row. Additionally, it has also been encouraging to see increased involvement of our Junior Members. After all, they are our future service providers.

The state convention is just around the corner, safe travels and I look forward to seeing you all there.

I will remain "COMMITTED ALL THE WAY" Serving our Veterans and their Families.

***Darlene Spence***  
Commander, DAVA

★ **Robert Simmons Jr. , District I DEC**

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Lubbock, Chapter 44 held elections:

Commander - Robert Simmons  
Sr Vice - Laurie Urias  
1st Jr Vice - John Davenport  
2nd Jr Vice - Denise Estenson  
Adjutant - John Gragowski  
Treasurer - Harry Carroll  
Chaplin - Rod Manning

Meetings are every 2nd Saturday of the month at 1100 hrs  
- meal to follow.

Taylor County Chapter 36 recently gave an appreciation award to Gloria Hickman celebrating 36 years of dedicated service to the community and Hubert Smith celebrating 33 years of dedicated service to the community and DAV. Chapter 36 is very grateful to have such dedicated members.

We are starting a new OEF/OIF PTSD group.  
Place: 2555 Grape St, Abilene TX  
When: Every Tuesday starting 26 April 2016  
Time: 1400-1500

**Robert Simmons**  
District I DEC

★ **Marlin Howze, District V DEC**

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Summer and the State and National Conventions are upon us. DAV Chapters across the State and the US are gearing up for the promotion (or continuance) of Officers to higher position, representing our organization. What makes this special is that this is also an election year for the White House. No matter which way the election goes, there will be strong challenges for the Local, State, and National DAV organization ahead. We have already seen visions of possible affects to the medical, educational, and other benefits veterans have earned through their service being eroded or withheld. Short comings in fully funding the VA's budget, withholding Cola and compensation yearly increases and other benefits that are due to veterans. At the same time we have made some headway as well in pushing for better medical treatment in the areas of TBI, PTSD, and letting Congress know we want better

treatment for the veterans suffering from the unknown ailments of Gulf War veterans and those who suffer conditions related to burn pit exposures.

The need for leaders to step up and help the DAV organization remind Congress of the strength and numbers of the veteran population are important and an influence to be reckoned. This begins at the Chapter level with our leadership paying attention to the needs of our local veterans and passing that up through resolutions that will eventually be fought on the floors of Congress.

Elect and get behind our Officers. Send them to Conventions with tools to work with that they may effect these grassroots desires, and then send them to National and Congress for implementation. Let us not miss these important opportunities to keep our organization in the front line of helping veterans lead better lives and to maintain our goals as a Veteran Service Organization. My term is at an end and I thank all of you for the opportunity to have been a part of the Department leadership team. I know that whoever is my replacement will do a stellar job, because I know my "Shipmates" in this organization are all worthy veterans putting their time towards the benefit of other veterans.

**Marlin Howze**  
District V DEC

★ **Howard T. Ray, Legislative/BPT Chairman**

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**"SUICIDE"**

According to a recent report issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs, veterans suffer a suicide rate of 22 per day, or approximately 8,000 per year. America entire active duty armed force suffers at a much lower rate, but it is still like losing a battalion in combat every year.

The U.S. Navy recently completed a profile of those individuals likely to commit suicide:

- a) Those with depression.
- b) Those not considered part of the group or team.
- c) Those dealing with bad news such as divorce, a death or financial issues.
- d) Those suffering from P.T.S.D.

Other encounters with negativity in their lives, including issues related to their veteran status may also contribute. The list allows us a framework to begin talking with friends, co-workers, subordinates and any others you associate with. Discussing these issues will not lessen our warrior spirit or make us appear weak but rather show us as caring and being "our brothers keepers."

### **Power of 1 ONE SMALL ACT**

HELPING A VETERAN YOU CARE ABOUT is simpler than you think. It starts with one conversation. The power of one person or one connection can make a difference in the life of a veteran going through a difficult time.

### **IDENTIFY SOMEONE IN CRISIS**

Learn to recognize these warning signs in yourself or someone you care about.

### **EXPERIENCING MOOD SWINGS**

Moving between what seems normal one minute and down-and-out or abnormally cheerful the next, without a reasonable explanation.

### **FEELING HOPELESS, AS IF THERE IS NO REASON TO LIVE OR NO WAY OUT**

Some people who have lost home feel powerless, while others feel there is no point in living.

### **ENGAGING IN RISKY ACTIVITIES WITHOUT THINKING**

Dangerous behavior, like recklessly driving a motorcycle or car, gambling away large sums of money or starting fights.

### **ABUSING ALCOHOL OR DRUGS**

When consuming alcohol becomes a daily habit, a sleeping aid or a reason to get out of bed in the morning, or interferes with daily life.

### **WITHDRAWING FROM FAMILY AND FRIENDS**

Spending less time with friends and family and more time alone, no longer engaging in the activities that used to be pleasurable, or avoiding social interactions of any kind.

### **THE FOLLOWING SIGNIFIERS REQUIRE IMMEDIATE ATTENTION AND PROFESSIONAL INTERVENTION:**

If you or a veteran you know is exhibiting any of these signs, call the Veterans Crisis Line at 1-800-267-8255 and Press 1, chat at [VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat](http://VeteransCrisisLine.net/chat) or text to

838255 to get confidential support 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year.

For someone going through a difficult time, one simple act has the power to make a difference. Reach out to the veterans and service members in your life today and let them know they're not alone. One conversation can open the door to support.

**Howard T. Ray**  
Legislative/BPT Chairman

★ **Rev. Ralph Marchesano, DAV Chaplain**

[rjmarche@windstream.net](mailto:rjmarche@windstream.net)

### **Providing Comfort to the bereaved.**

High on the list of jobs nobody wants is the task of comforting and ministering to a loved one or a close friend of one who has passed away. Very few people volunteer to give long term assistance to survivors in the aftermath of their loss. There is no formula, no set of correct phrases that can ease the shock and pain. Grieving the death of a loved one isn't an easy process, nor is it the same for each person. In reality, coping with the death of a loved one can be a lonesome and difficult journey. Still, ministering to families of veterans can provide opportunities for significant support and care for those who need it most. Some bereaved people remember every detail of the early moments of grief, while others retain only vague, general recollections. In either case, they typically recall with gratitude anyone who, with sensitivity and compassion, helped them through this dark moment of life. There is nothing more vital than honoring the sacrifice of a veteran. And there is no greater way to render that honor than by helping the family in the aftermath of their loss. Just as we will never leave a fallen comrade behind on the battlefield, we will always do our utmost to assist the families of our comrades in their time of need. Effective communication with survivors, involves three elements: patient listening; honest feedback; and a 'ministry of presence.'

Patient listening is something each of us can do and is vitally important when supporting survivors during their journey of grief and recovery. As a surviving spouse once said, "The question that can never be asked too much or too often is: tell me about your loved one?" Family members want to talk about the deceased and they want us to listen. Another survivor said, "Let us tell you how he/she lived." Sometimes all survivors need is a compassionate person who is willing to listen to them talk about their loved one, their loneliness and all the other



emotions, feelings and situations that accompany the grief process. One of the mistakes we often make when dealing with families is that we talk to them by giving lots of information that we know they will need in the future – but we neglect the opportunity to give them time to talk back to us. Sometimes we ask if they have any questions, but rarely inquire about the memory of the deceased. Survivors have told me that they want to talk about their loss but they need permission to do so, and they want to sense genuine tolerance when they talk about the endearing qualities of the person that died. Most importantly they appreciate it when supporters are "active - patient" listeners, and permit them to take the lead in conversation. They have said that they need approval to mourn and to express as much grief as they are willing to share. It is important to remember that the emotions of families are fragile and delicate, and unless sincere compassion is displayed they will seek help elsewhere.

Although patient listening is essential when giving support, offering honest feedback is just as critical for their healing and recovery. While it's important to acknowledge sorrow and pain, it's also crucial to assure survivors that they have our sincere condolence and that they are not crazy when they express emotion amidst the loss of their loved one. Past studies have shown that survivors listed a number of useful suggestions for those attempting to help in the process of grief recovery.

- *Silence is golden. Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing at all.*
- *Don't tell someone that you know what they're going through. Grief is unique to each individual and we never know the depth of another person's pain.*
- *Those that grieve need others to hold their hands. Refer them to people, not just resources.*
- *Ask survivors to tell you the story of their loved one.*
- *Remember to extend condolences to the 'forgotten mourners,' siblings, stepchildren, aunts and uncles, cousins and friends.*
- *Be observant of the surviving children, who mourn as well in their own way.*

With the help a solid support system of Family and friends, people learn to live with loss, make new adjustments, and handle the changes necessary to cope with each day's challenges. But it takes time.

The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes states there is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens; a time to be silent and a time to speak. (Ecclesiastes 3:1, 7). There are times when words are unnecessary and all that's needed is a quiet 'ministry of presence.' That may sound like something reserved only

for ministers, but anyone can offer this simple, profound consolation to another person. Oftentimes, it's the most important gift we can give. Our ministry of presence is a way of "being" with someone, rather than a way of "doing" or "telling." As you prepare to comfort those who grieve, don't simply focus on what to say or do. Don't try to anticipate how to react if certain situations arise. Instead, inwardly prepare yourself to focus on the "now" with feeling and care. Pray for understanding, love, comfort and peace. Also, remember that self-awareness is important when working with people in grief. Take care of yourself. Being with those in grief can be emotionally draining. To maintain a healthy balance in your own life, it's important to remain aware of your own thoughts and feelings, and share them with those you trust.

**Ralph Marchesano**  
DAV Chaplain

★ **Fannie Lowe, DAVA Chaplain**

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

H Greetings All,

"If any of you is lacking in wisdom, ask God, who gives to all generously and ungrudgingly, and it will be given to you." - James 1:5

When we seek true wisdom, not the type that comes from knowledge of the government, facts and formulas, we must open our hearts and be receptive to learn from the Word of God. To know how to see the world around us and to figure out what's really going on takes asking for sensitivity to see the inner desires, loneliness, hunger or thirst of others. Too often we can be talking to someone in need and never know it. Father, will You help us as a service oriented team, sense those moments when something as simple as a smile, an encouraging word, an offer of a cup of coffee or tea may serve to restore a sense of wellbeing to an otherwise sad and lonely individual? Help us move forward seeking more wisdom and passing on love, joy, peace and friendship.

As we move toward the end of another DAVA service year, if I can be of service and support please allow me to do so. You may request any services that I, as your State of Texas DAV Auxiliary Chaplain, can provide by contacting me by phone at (512) 461-2924; by mail at 20605 Raptor Roost Rd., Pflugerville, TX 78660; or at e-mail address, [fannielowe@aol.com](mailto:fannielowe@aol.com).

**Ruth Gates**  
Adjutant, DAVA



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