

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

DEPARTMENT of TEXAS, HEADQUARTERS

BULLETIN

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AUGUST 2006

COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

From the Commander's Pen

Greetings fellow Texans

June 29th was a day the VA breathed a collective sigh of relief. The laptop computer that was stolen from the Maryland home of a VA employee was recovered by the FBI. The personal data of over 26.5 million veterans, active duty, National Guard and reserve members appears not to have been compromised after initial forensic tests.

The Bush administration had requested \$160.5 million to pay for credit monitoring for those affected by the theft. Some of the money for credit monitoring would be offset with spending cuts from other programs, including \$29 million from the VA by delaying some hiring of new claims workers until 2007. The free credit monitoring will be for a period of one year and the VA will send a detailed letter to people whose sensitive personal information may have been included in the stolen data in mid-August. This letter will explain how eligible people can enroll for the services.

If you believe you may be affected by the data theft go to www.firstgov.gov or call toll free 1-800-333-4636.

At the VA Regional Office, I had the pleasure of presenting Bob Manchester with The Department of Texas Veterans Benefits Employee of the Year for 2006 at Paul Black's (the Veterans Service Center's Manager) weekly staff meeting June 29th. Bob is very dedicated individual that goes out of his way to aid in the expeditious handling of veterans claims work.

The Houston Astro's held their DAV at the Ballpark on Saturday, July 8th. The turn out was very good, however, I was disappointed to see the Astro's organization not recognize the DAV at all, and did not see one of the DAV baseball cards



handed out as I have in years past. Despite that, a good time was had by all.

July marked the 9th Annual State Commanders & Adjutants Orientation held by the C&A Association. This orientation is designed for new state commanders, senior vice commanders, and adjutants to attend seminars that will better our skills in serving you.

Once again, I am looking forward to seeing all delegates that can attend the National Convention in Chicago.

Yours in comradeship,
Rex Lloyd
Department Commander

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HAD THE FOLLOWING POPULATION SUMMARY AS OF, 8/14/2006:

Life Members	57,976
Total Members	80,375

This years GOAL for full paid life members is:

Goal	61,004
Goal percentage as of 8/14/2006	95.04

UNDER Life Goal 3028

Membership is open to any man or woman, who was wounded, gassed, injured or disabled in line of duty during time of war, while in the service of either the military or naval forces of the United States of America, and who has not been dishonorably discharged or separated from such service, or who may still be in active service in the armed forces of the United States of America is eligible for membership in the Disabled American Veterans. Others, who are disabled while serving with any of the armed forces of any actions associated with the United States of America as allies during any of its war periods, who are American citizens and who are honorably discharged are also eligible.

I observed over the time that I have been elected Senior Vice Commander Department of Texas, that there are many chapters in the Department that have partial members owing under 100 dollars. If they would pay their remaining amount due for full life membership, this will guarantee that Texas makes and exceeds our goal for 2006-2007. I am asking all commanders to encourage their membership committee to develop a plan for this. If you have any questions please contact me at the DAV Chapter #61 home office (830) 379-3299, I am in the office 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Monday thru Wednesday.

Doug Herrle

Membership Chairman

ADJUTANT'S COMMENTS

The 2006 Department Convention was held in Fort Worth, June 2/4. Of the ninety three chapters in the state, fifty one were represented at the convention, by a total of 175 registered delegates. Issues were addressed and decisions made based on the voting strength of the registered delegates. Was your chapter represented?

Article V of the Department Constitution states that the location of the Department Convention shall be determined not more than 3 years in advance and goes on to say that invitations from delegations or cities must be submitted in advance to the Department Commander. The 2007 Convention will be held in Austin, June 22/24 at the DoubleTree Hotel, 6505 I-35 North. Reservation cutoff date is 5/30/07 to obtain the discount rate of

\$80 (single or double) plus 15% taxes. Department is actively seeking invitations for the 2008 and 2009 Department Conventions. I can provide interested parties with the meeting space/room requirements. Please contact me if this is something that your chapter or city would like to consider.

Now it's time to focus on the National Convention in Chicago. On Friday August 11 our District (Texas 20) will meet and elect a National Executive Committeeman for a two-year term and on Saturday the business sessions begin. Thirteen resolutions from our Department Convention have been sent and received by National for action by the appropriate Convention Committees. Again, will your chapter be represented?

I frequently receive request from Chapters for blank Officer Report forms or Annual Financial Report forms. These are National forms and should be obtained from National.

On July 6, the National Judge Advocate approved the 2006/2007 Department Constitution and Bylaws as submitted with the exception of a change to Article IX, Section 2, Para. (a). The booklet will soon be published and distributed, two copies to each Chapter (Commander and Adjutant copies). If your Chapter wishes to obtain additional copies, contact Department. They will be provided at a nominal fee to cover printing and mailing cost. They will also be available via e-mail in pdf format. Also to be published and distributed is the Department Directory available as described above and two copies also sent to each Unit. Upon receiving the Directory, please inform Department of any errors to allow us to update our database. **ALSO** I would ask that you be mindful of the National by-laws Article 19, Section 19.2 that directs that names and addresses not be used for any purpose other than one directly connected to the activities of the Organization.

Eldon Armstrong

Department Adjutant / Treasurer

DISTRICT II

"Hello Texas!"

My wish is that everyone had an enjoyable 4th of July holiday and had a safe return home. While some of us stayed home and quietly celebrated Independence Day, others celebrated in many other ways. From all indications, this must have been a record breaking year for taking the family to the parks and lakes and celebrate the 4th of July activities closer to our homes.

Disabled American Veterans

I'm sure that most of us understand the reason we celebrate on the 4th of July. It is the celebration of our Country's Independence from the Mother Country, Great Brittan, in the year of 1776. However, we most likely would not have known if it had not been for our parents, our forefathers, or being taught in our schools. We in the Disabled American Veterans and the Auxiliary are doing our part in passing the patriotic traditions down to the younger generation by presenting Americanism Programs. As time passes on, it is becoming more and more of a problem to accomplish the task of teaching patriotism to our younger generation.

We must not let it be forgotten that many lives have been sacrificed in order to maintain our FREEDOM since getting our independence. Even as we celebrated, there were many of our men and women in harms way. We as Americans, more than ever before, need to show our love and support of our nation, it's defenders and the families of these defenders. So, as we celebrate, let us not forget these Heroes in our prayers.

Take time to thank a veteran and those serving our country today. When you meet one of our service men and women reach out a hand and give them a big Ol' Texas "Thank You."

Thank you for your service and God Bless America.

Yours in service,

Gerald Cowan

Commander, District II

DISTRICT III

Summer has arrived with all of its glory. I hope that all of you had a joyful and safe 4th of July. In our neck of the woods, the rain cancelled out the traditional fireworks and watermelon feast. But, I am very grateful to be living in this special place known as the United States of America. How blessed am I and all of us, too!

I have several news items to share with all of you. Due to the fact that our District convention had been scheduled to end three (3) days before the time allowed as per the Department Constitution & By-laws, Chapter #200 had to change the date. The new date will be Friday, March 23 to Sunday, March 25, 2007. I send a big "Thank you" to Commander Floyd Wells and the Ramada Inn for letting us accomplish this change without loss of money to the chapter.

Regretfully, District 1st Jr. Vice Commander James Woods submitted his resignation due to health reasons. Our thoughts and prayers are with

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him at this time in his life. We hope that he can return to the organization soon with renewed enthusiasm for the cause of helping the veteran.

It should be duly noted that District III was suspended at the 2006 Department Convention for not having submitted the correct minutes of the 2006 District III Convention. ***Editor's note: The minutes of the District Convention were due to be submitted to Department within 30 days of the convention, April 26. The Department Commander wrote the District Commander on May 13 requesting that the minutes be submitted. They were received on June 26.*** The ten (10) day suspension prevented the District III delegates from electing anyone to serve on the various Department committees. Guess what? In the Department Executive Committee Meeting held on Thursday, May 31, 2006, the Department adjutant did not have the minutes from the 2005 Department Convention for our viewing and or approval.

Several District III chapters received a letter from Department Commander Rex Lloyd. It admonished the delegates from those chapters in attendance for not attending the Commander's Banquet! Duly noted, Sir. ***Editor's note: This letter was mailed to all chapters in the state.***

I want everyone to continue to enjoy summertime. Remember, school is starting soon. Perhaps some of you could volunteer to tutor or mentor a student in your local district. Think about helping the future of our country. Schools could use your expertise and your caring natures. Do not forget, I am just a telephone call away, (512) 255-2969.

Yours in Comradeship,

James Prochnow

Commander, District III

DISTRICT IV

District IV in June

Chapter related activities: Swore in the newly elected officers of Chapter 233, Rosenberg, TX. Met with "Gunny" Vasquez to discuss Chapter 1's upcoming Installation Ceremony.

Accompanied "Gunny" Vasquez to the Ramsey 1 Unit - TDCJ to talk to Veteran Inmates. Spoke to a number of Inmates about their SC status and how to properly interact with the VA to avoid problems with their ratings and payments. Many expressed interest in DAV membership.

Spoke to Veterans at the Vet Center in Houston encouraging them to participate in the "DAV at

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the Ball Park". The majority of the Vet Center clients are severely disabled and range from WW II to current Afghanistan/Iraqi War Veterans. This is an opportunity to get younger Veterans aware of the services provided by the DAV and the benefits of membership.

Hope you had a Happy 4th of July and may the Flag continue to "proudly wave".

Yours in Comradeship,
Wolf Biedenfeld
Commander, District IV

DISTRICT V

In my last published article I noted the need for the DAV, as an organization, to improve upon its overall decorum, dress and appearance particularly while in public venues. As a result of my comments, I received considerable positive feedback from fellow comrades having similar concerns. Consequently, I appreciate the confirmation of my thoughts.

I want to correct an oversight not included in my input provided for our last Bulletin. I am sure everyone has heard about the uniquely superb Memorial Service presentation our own Chaplain Charles Edwards of District V, Chapter 128 provided during our June 2006 Department convention. At each Department convention he has somehow managed to exceed expectations, and his recent presentation, as usual, disappointed no one. If you are interested in a copy of the excerpts from his presentation, you may contact one of your convention delegates who should have copies distributed at the convention.

Some may also recall another of my previous articles where I briefly highlighted the military career and life of Ret. Army Colonel Argyle Houghton. So, it was no great surprise when the San Antonio media featured Col. Houghton's celebration of his 101st birthday while still residing at Audie L. Murphy's Extended Care Treatment Center facility. While this Bulletin was the first to recognize Colonel Houghton as one of our rare human treasures in the veterans' community, we are pleased San Antonio's newspaper and television media agreed with us.

In closing, I am excited that Department Commander Rex Lloyd and his Executive Staff had the confidence to select me as the DAV Department of Texas Chief of Staff for 2006-2007. I am sure most are aware Jack Barron has held this position for countless years while superbly serving our DAV

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organization. I look forward to getting Jack's experienced laden feedback to help ensure I don't "miss a beat" as I assume his role in providing support. So, I look forward to rubbing shoulders with everyone at our National convention in Chicago. Until next time---

James Scott
Commander, District V

BPT / LEGISLATIVE REPORT

BENEFITS PANEL NIXES SSDI, VA COMPENSATION OFFSET

Amid growing controversy over the scope of its congressional mandate, the Veterans' Disability Benefits Commission has voted to conduct a narrowly defined study into the issue of Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) benefits for veterans who receive VA disability compensation.

By an 11-2 vote, the commissioners agreed to limit its study of the issue to four distinct areas, which does not include consideration of an offset between SSDI and VA disability compensation. The commission, however, would be allowed to collect data on SSDI usage by disabled veterans to better understand issues such the impact of one or both benefits on the veteran's quality of life, underutilization by veterans who are eligible for benefits under both programs and how to expedite claims for service-connected disabled veterans who may be eligible for SSDI as well as VA compensation. The commission also would be able to explore the feasibility of granting waivers for disabled veterans who had not met the minimum Social Security insurance payment requirements for SSDI legibility.

The issue of SSDI and VA disability compensation became a highly charged one after the commission's March 16-17 meeting when move to sidestep proper procedures and hold a secret ballot on the matter was postponed. The commission chairman then asked for, and received, support from the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs and Armed Services committees to expand the study of veterans benefits to include SSDI, which was strongly opposed by the DAV. Many in the veterans community also became concerned that the study would set the stage for a recommendation to offset SSDI and VA disability compensation, something the commission has denied.

Jim Roos
BPT/Legislative Chairman

Women Veteran's Representative

DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER



I recently read an Article from the 'Journal of General Internal Medicine' which was published in March 2003. This article discussed women's clinics (WC) versus traditional primary care clinics in the VA. The survey was conducted among 10 sites.

Clearly the survey concluded that women veterans were more satisfied with their care in a WC than the traditional primary care clinic. Those surveyed felt that these clinics allowed more time to discuss female –only items, age related issues and had more provider sensitivity. The five satisfaction domains used in the survey were; getting care, privacy and comfort, communication, complete care and follow-up care with an over-all overall satisfaction rating of excellent.

The only down side to the Women's Clinics are they are based in medical centers and not in outpatient clinics which causes many women to have the inability to take advantage of this opportunity. As we all know many clinics are 100-200 miles away from most outpatient clinics which makes it difficult if not impossible for many veterans to obtain specialty care such as this. Although the DAV transportation network has been a God send for veterans; many of the clinics still struggle to keep volunteer drivers available.

The article also pointed out that the women veteran population is expected to double by 2010. The VA first started encouraging the establishment of women clinics in 1993 yet the 10 sites that were surveyed actually did not come into effect until 1995. This tells me that a lot of work needs to be done in a short time if we are going to be sure that all women veterans have access to a WC in the future.

In my opinion we once again come to the fact that mandatory funding is the only way that we can be assured that all arenas in the VA health Care system are funded in the manner that is needed. As a group we are a strong force and we must take the time to contact our elected officials to discuss our feelings on mandatory funding.

Yours in service
Teresa Johniken

Women Veterans Department Appointee

MISSION POSSIBLE!

I announced at the State Convention that my theme for my term of office as your State Commander is "Mission Possible"! So I would like to try and give you a Mission each month, which you may or may not wish to accept, that will be of interest to you.

Our Auxiliary was founded on the desire to render service to the disabled veterans and their dependents, to alleviate their sufferings, to help them take their place in life, and to provide for their families. Over time the Auxiliary expanded their mission to include many more facets of service. We now have the Education Loan fund, a Service/Support fund, and the volunteer and transportation programs. We take an active part in legislation with our letters, phone calls and personal contacts with our elected representatives on Veterans issues, include our own children in service projects, and spread Americanism through our schools and communities.

At our State convention our National Senior Vice Commander, Donna Tanner, asked how many of us knew about the Freedoms Foundation and why we support it. No one was able to answer her question.

"Now more than ever, creating an informed and involved citizenry is one of the greatest challenges facing our democracy. There is an urgent need for our youth – the leaders of tomorrow – to embrace the values and practices essential to responsible citizenship in a free society, beginning with a solid understanding of the principles on which American government was founded". (Freedoms Foundation)

If you agree with this statement, you will surely want to learn more about the Freedoms Foundation at Valley Forge. You, or someone in your family, probably have a computer but if not, you can go to your local library and use one there and go on the internet to freedomfoundation.com where you will find a great deal of information about this outstanding program. Along with other information there is a Flag Etiquette site your Unit

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Americanism chairperson might be interested in that could be incorporated into your next Americanism or Flag program. If you do not have access to a computer, perhaps your local librarian could help you locate information on the Foundation.

So Auxiliary members, *your Mission this month* is to find out why the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary is a proud sponsor of the Youth and the Graduate programs at Freedoms Foundation, and hold a discussion about it at your next meeting. I believe you will be happy to learn about this program, and proud that our Auxiliary has included it in our continually growing efforts to serve our Veterans and our Country.

If you did not read it in the DAV Adjutant's column, the 2007 Convention will be held in Austin, June 22/24 at the DoubleTree Hotel, 6505 I-35 North. Reservation cutoff date is 5/30/07 to obtain the discount rate of \$80 (single or double) plus 15% taxes.

Alice Armstrong

Commander, DAV Auxiliary

DAV AUXILIARY MEMBER COUNT

The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary had the following Population Summary as of 8/14/2006:

Life Members	5,912
Total Members	6,397

GOAL:	7,053
Goal percentage	90.70
UNDER Goal	656

ITEMS OF INTEREST

I would hope that all chapters received and read the Membership Bulletin dated May 31, 2006. "Tony" Baskerville, the National Membership Director hit it on the head in his article when he said in part: "If we hope to continue the traditions of comradeship and the bonds of brotherhood that made the DAV the premier service organization for disabled veterans, we must now reach out to a new generation of veterans with open arms, open minds, and open hearts. . . . We must break with old ways that distract us from our primary objectives. We must make these veterans feel welcome. We need to open our eyes to their desires and invite their whole families into the fold." 'Nuff said.

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DAV DAY AT THE BALLPARK RANGERS VS CLEVELAND BROWNS

We all know how much a relaxing day at the ballpark is for some of our comrades. On Sunday, September 3rd, our Department 2nd Junior Vice Commander, Teresa Johniken, gets to demonstrate her throwing powers when she throws the opening pitch of the game in Arlington at 1:00 p.m. With all of the chapters in the metroplex area, it would be fitting if the DAV community were there to cheer her on. Might I suggest that the chapters in the area use some of their funds to purchase a block of tickets to give to veterans who would attend the game? Outfield seats (regular \$14) are \$7.50 each plus a one time charge of \$3 per order. E-mail jwillms@texastrangers.com or call 817-436-5974 with your order.

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow

There are two days in every week about which we should not worry, two days which should be kept free from fear and apprehension. One of those days is yesterday with its mistakes and pains. Yesterday has passed forever beyond our control.

All the money in the world cannot bring back yesterday. We cannot undo a single act we performed. We cannot erase a single word we said. Yesterday is gone.

The other word that we should not worry about is tomorrow with its possible adversities, its burden, its large promise and poor performance. Tomorrow is also beyond our immediate control.

Tomorrow's sun will rise, either in splendor or behind a mask of clouds - but it will rise, until it does, we have no stake in tomorrow, for it is yet unborn.

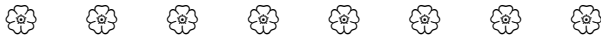
This leaves only one day - today. Any person can fight the battles of just one day. It is only when you add the burdens of those two awful eternities - yesterday and tomorrow - that we break down.

It is not the experience of today that drives people mad - it is the remorse or bitterness for something which happened yesterday and the dread of what tomorrow may bring.

Therefore, by the grace of God, live one day at a time.

Dr. Charles E. Edwards, Jr.

Department Chaplain



PRAYER LIST

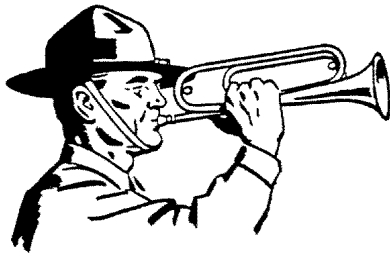
Prayers are needed for the following:

Both **Jack and Beverly Barron**, Chapter/Unit 29, continue to experience health problems. Jack opted to resign as Chief of Staff after having served several Commanders. He operated the Hospitality room with the help of many individuals and he wishes to thank all of them for their help. Please keep the two of them in your prayers. They each have served the DAV/DAVA honorably.

Billy Taylor Chapter 31 underwent triple bypass surgery in July at the Dallas VA Hospital.

Tom Bateman, Chapter 101 had surgery 7-10-06 at the Dallas VA Hospital.

Alene Goodman, Unit 26 underwent knee surgery in June.



TAPS

Department has been notified that the following comrades have been called into final formation above:

William Denton, Ch 57 passed June 06

Doyle Willis Sr., Ch 20 passed 6-22-06

Walter L. Brasher, Ch 21, passed 6-23-06

Manuel Martinez, reported by Ch 15, passed 6-15-06

Harry A. Lohse, Ch 21 passed 7-7-06

Harry H. Seidel, Ch 21 passed July 06

Department and the membership extend deepest sympathies to the family members, friends, and comrades of these fallen heroes. May each one rest in honor.



Please feel free to call, write, or email the Adjutant's office if you have a loss in your family, Chapter, or Unit that should be included in this column.

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Texas' own Bobby Barrera is
running for National 2nd Junior
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behind him 100% and help this
highly qualified man move up
the rungs of the ladder. A better
choice couldn't be made.

GO TEXAS!