

DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

DEPARTMENT of TEXAS, HEADQUARTERS

BULLETIN

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COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

From the Commander's Pen

HELLO AND FAREWELL

This is my final article as your Department Commander and Rex Lloyd should be your new commander. I know you will show him the same respect and loyalty that you have shown to me this past year. It has been an interesting and challenging year for myself, the Adjutant, and the Department. The Department continues to grow in strength and membership. Adjutant Armstrong continues to up-date our records and improves the way our Department runs. I can honestly say that his dedication and endless hours that he puts in on a daily basis has put the Department of Texas in line with the best in the country.

During the month of May, I along with DAVA State Commander Joyce Humes and State VAVS Representative Kurt Bennett, visited a number of VA Hospitals and Clinics. We started with the Amarillo VA Hospital, the Lubbock VA Clinic and then the Big Spring VA Hospital. The Amarillo VA Hospital has recently been renamed to Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center after a Marine Medal of Honor recipient who was killed in Vietnam. Charles Hood, George Koumalats and Betty Hood also joined us for the tour and discussions. Some of the issues we discussed with Dr Stenhouse and Carolyn Kingham included lack of street signage, vans with lifts, rules and regulations for picking up patients, parking for special vans, valet parking, woman's health, PTSD programs and treatments, the future Alzheimer's Unit, involvement of students and hospital funding. We then toured the Nursing Home and The Alzheimer unit and got to visit with a number of patients.

Our team then headed south to Lubbock to meet with staff members Laurie McClone and Leslie Shaw. Lubbock has one of the newer VA Clinics in Texas and one of the easiest buildings to find your

way around. After we signed in and received our ID tags we toured the facility before sitting down and discussing some of their issues. The only request they had was that they needed a new van as their van is getting up in miles and should be replaced.

We then headed south for Big Spring where we were welcomed by a West Texas Dust Storm and nearly missed 2 tornados. The following morning we were met by DAV & DAVA Representatives Ricky James & Clara Lewis, Department 2ND Jr Vice Commander Ed Meiser and his wife Heidrun at the Big Springs VA Hospital. We then met with Iva Jo Hanslik in their conference room. We were given a copy of the CARES decision and explanation of why they decided to keep the Big Spring VA Hospital open. Location of the hospital was the main deciding factor along with the cost required to build a new facility. This was definitely great news for the veterans in that entire region. CARES also made recommendations to expand the Mental Health & Domiciliary areas. VAVS State Rep Bennett pointed out that van drivers were not allowed to drop off or pick up veterans outside of their assigned routes, as if an accident occurred the VA would not be liable for damages. We also discussed their volunteer program, the need for Jr. volunteers, some of the pilot programs that will be starting and other issues. We were then led on a tour by Ms Hanslik to some of the wards to visit with patients. In the Nursing Home we met Mr. Ralph Parkinson who recently celebrated his 100th birthday. He is somewhat hard of hearing but other than that he is in great shape for his age and can he talk.

After having a few photos with this celebrated veteran we got to meet and talked with many other great veterans of WWII, Korea and Vietnam. After lunch with our DAV/DAVA team I met with 2ND Jr. Vice Commander Miser before heading home.



Looking good! Mr. Ralph Parkinson 100+

On the 9th of May we again assembled at the Temple VA Hospital where we met by Bobby Zimmerman, Trudy Bennett the DAVA Deputy Rep. and other staff and volunteers. We then toured their new LAB Facility where there is a lot of high tech research going on for heart disease and many other health issues. This is a state of the art facility and the Doctors and Professors doing the research studies are some of the best in the world. We then were introduced to Dr Thomas Smith, III, FACHE, who is the Associate Director for Operations. Mr. Smith is also a retired Army Lt. Col and he accepted this position with the VA so that he would be able to continue working and serving with veterans. We were then served a nice lunch including drink and desert and then we were off to Waco to visit their VA Hospital.

We again were greeted by Bobby Zimmerman and DAVA Rep. Joyce Brennen. We then were led on a tour of their facilities for the Blind. This is one of the high lights of my visits and tours. I was just over whelmed by all the gadgets, tools, computer programs etc that is available for the seeing impaired and the totally blind veterans. The veterans we met were incredible and their spirits were high and the staff that works with these veterans is totally dedicated to their jobs, something that is rare today. I could go on and on but my article is getting rather long so I will close with this.

It has been an Honor and a Privilege to have been your Department Commander for the past year and I have met and worked with some of the best and most dedicated veterans in the world. I wish I could have been able to visit with more chapters and members, but with the high cost of everything today and our limited budget it would

not have been the right thing to do. I also want to thank all the Line Officers and District Officers that represented the Department on my behalf all over the state. It was a pleasure working with you and I wish you all the best in your future endeavors. I have always enjoyed working with the Auxiliary and I want to thank DAVA Commander Joyce Humes and all her staff and members for being so kind this past year. The NSO's, DSO's and CSO's along with all our volunteers across this great state do an admirable job for our Department but especially for our veterans and their families. It would have been impossible to do this job well without a dedicated man like our Department Adjutant Eldon Armstrong. I can't say enough about this man except THANK YOU for all you have done this past year for me and that you will continue to do for our members and the Department in the coming years. My last visit will be the Kerrville VA Hospital on the 16TH of May. God Bless you all and God Bless our World.

Yours in comradeship,
L. Duke Hendershot
Department Commander

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS, DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HAD THE FOLLOWING POPULATION SUMMARY AS OF 5/10/2006:

Life Members	58,300
Part Life Members	22,790
Total Members	81,090

This years GOAL for full paid life members is:

Goal	58,503
Goal percentage	99.65

Members to make goal 203

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.

DAV LIFE MEMBERSHIP REACHES ONE MILLION

Brian K. Thomas , of Gulf Port, Mississippi, became the one millionth fully paid member of the Disabled American Veterans. He and his recruiter, Samuel Bordeaux will be going to Chicago to attend

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National with all expenses paid by National. I look forward to meeting these guys and congratulating them!

I'm excited about what we have done here in Department. We had many members recruiting this year to make it towards our goals. The final numbers aren't in yet as I am writing this, but I'm proud of what we've accomplished this year. I know many members worked hard at meeting our goals as well as the NSO'S and DSO'S who play such a large part in our recruiting!

I'm looking forward to the Department Convention, however, by the time you read this it will all be over! This has been a great year for me, and what has made it great was getting to work with such a dynamic group as all of you. Thank you for affording me this opportunity.

Rex Lloyd

Membership Chairman

ADJUTANT'S COMMENTS

The call to convention letter mailed to all Chapters in March said in part, "Please elect your delegates and alternates and return the enclosed form to Department Headquarters **not later than May 5, 2006.**" As of May 10 **there were 53 of the 93 chapters** that had not submitted their list. The cutoff date given in that letter for hotel rates was May 1. The Department convention is where the business of the Department is conducted and it appears to me that it isn't seen as a high priority by a majority of chapters.

National mailed their "Call to convention" letter on 4-25-06 and enclosed the yellow form to be returned by July 7. I would encourage chapters to elect delegates and submit that form as requested.

Once again I would encourage chapter Commanders to appoint their audit committee at their June chapter meeting and instruct the chapter Treasurer to obtain the Annual Financial Report form from National, prepare the report in July as soon as the bank statements for June are received, and give the completed report to the chairman of the audit committee to review and sign. Commanders and Treasurers should take a moment to review Article 9, Section 9.3 starting on page 47 of the 2005 National bylaws and ensure compliance.

National has stressed recruitment and it's good to see that their goal of one million fully paid life members has been met. Keep up the good work, promote our organization and carry two ap-

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plications in your wallet or purse, one for the DAV and one for the DAVA. We make a good team.

Eldon Armstrong

Department Adjutant / Treasurer

DISTRICT II

"Hello Texas!"

I want to bring you up to date on what your District II Commander has been doing this past month. It was an honor and a privilege to be able to speak at Oak Cliff Unit #32 and the Big "D" Unit #57 Americanism Programs. I thank both units for allowing me to visit with them. Both units served a wonderful meal and greeted my wife, Judy, and me with open arms and we were made to feel at home.

The 2006 Department Convention is in District II again and makes it desirable for a large representation from this District. So mark your calendars and help us make this convention another good one. I'm looking forward to seeing many of you at the Department Convention in Fort Worth, June 2 - 4, 2006.

As you may know, I like to have our District II Officers take part in putting together our input to the Department Bulletin each month. Well, as Commander let me introduce to you, our Chaplain, **Cynthia Burks.**

Hello Commanders, Chaplains, Officers and Comrades of District II. One of the main goals of a Chaplain is to be there to assist a member when they are in need. As your Chaplain, I want to fulfill that goal. If you have members of your Chapters in the VA hospital or any hospital please let me know by phone or e-mail.

You need to notify both DAV National and DAV Department of Texas when you have a deceased member. For your Chapter Memorial Service do you need a copy of TAPS? If you need a copy, please phone or e-mail me and I will send you a copy. DAV Encouragements cards (#901375) and DAV Sympathy cards (#901302) can be ordered by calling DAV National at 888-236-8313.

We are God's servants and we are here to serve our veterans with love, pride and dignity. Remember Communication is very important to use in your meeting. Let your DAV members know that you care and they will be greatly appreciated. My address, phone number and e-mail are listed below:

Cynthia Burks
1426 Lakecrest

Disabled American Veterans

Grand Prairie, Texas 75051

Phone: 972-264-5381

E-mail: desertfox68@hotmail.com

God's phone is never busy and he loves us all. So I ask you to love one another just as God loves us. May God Bless you, and God Bless America.

Cynthia Burks, District II Chaplain

Yours in service,

Gerald J. Cowan

Commander, District II

DISTRICT III

By the time all of you have read this article, we will have had our Department convention and elected a new slate of officers for the state. I want to thank all of you who took the time to attend this meeting and to participate in the workings of the state DAV. Our role in the DAV has become an important one. Without our involvement, our organization will die. I congratulate you for your concern and your interest. Keep up the good work!

Thank you to the people who attended District III Women's Veteran's Meeting. Floyd Wells, Chapter #200; Kirk Bennett, Chapter #29; Felicia Weston, Chapter #111; Kristen Dopkant, Chapter #173; James Woods, Chapter #234; George Cox, Chapter #86; Billy Wright, Chapter #219; Roger Garza, Chapter #215; veteran's who will be their chapter's representative; and myself. We discussed many things pertinent to the subject. The major issue stated is we need to have someone available to talk to the women veterans because they might not feel comfortable talking to a male veteran. I encourage each chapter to appoint someone to serve in this capacity.

Congratulations to those of you who received awards at the Annual VAVS Banquet. As volunteers, we provide a valuable service for the Veteran's Administration. It feels good to be recognized for a job well done. The following were people recognized: Kirk Bennett, Sam Bier, Billie Fulford, Ruth Bier, David Dopkant, Kristen Gholson, Ed Palmer, and many more. Keep up the good work!

Have a great and safe June. Happy Mother's Day and Father's Day to all! Any questions or problems, contact me at (512) 255-2969 or kggholson@hotmail.com.

Yours in Comradeship,

Jim Prochnow

Commander, District III

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DISTRICT IV

This has been a busy month. There has been an opportunity, almost daily, to discuss the DAV and it's support of veterans.

Among the individuals I spoke with was "Gunny" Vasquez of Chapter 1. He volunteers regularly at the Houston Medical Center. He states that this Volunteerism is not only satisfying but it also helps him meet Veterans and explain the mission of the DAV. This helps recruit Veterans for his Chapter. People respond to organizations that help at the local level. Our impact may help protect the Benefits of Veterans at the National level but people view it from the local level. We also discussed the importance of Chapter representation at District, Department and National Conventions. These are where the direction of our DAV is determined and where problems, and their solutions are identified.

I also had discussions with Umberto Romero of Chapter 233. He is a strong advocate of recruitment and active Chapter participation. We also discussed the importance of Convention attendance.

It is clear that the DAV tradition of Volunteerism is a strong recruiting tool. It is recommended that those Chapters that have not identified community activities to volunteer in are missing a prime area to meet Veterans who meet the eligibility criteria for DAV but have never been asked to join.

Information about the Department Convention was distributed including the Agenda which was eMailed by our Department Adjutant.

Wolf Biendfeld

Commander, District IV

DISTRICT V

As I reviewed my notes from our April 2006 Spring Convention, of course I was reminded of several significant factors which had emerged from the event. Among the most noted such as, the excellent guest speakers, the fine banquet, and the superb hospitality room and service, was the involvement of District V's various Past Commanders.

I want to mention some of the Past Commanders (particularly Department and District) whom I have observed as devoted participants not only at our recent DAV Convention, but also at many others over the past several years. I have seen the likes of Jack Ledford, Claude Boggs, Leo-

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nard Humes, Jay Johnson, and who don't just attend these events but they constantly, mentor, teach and guide those of us who are following along their path. Equally important is "the patience of Job" which Eldon Armstrong, Dept, Adjutant consistently demonstrates while assisting many of us with wide ranging DAV issues. Perhaps my best description of these trailblazers is that they provide the necessary scaffolding required for the continuity and ultimate survival of our DAV organization. Thanks to these Comrades and others in the same category but not mentioned here, future veterans, their widows, and dependents will be assured of needed support well into the future.

Finally, let us all remember to take some time to visit our comrades who are patients at various health facilities. Visit those veterans who are not only in military or veteran health care facilities, but those who may be in civilian hospitals or those assigned to government contracted health care. When you make your visit, ask which of the veteran patients hasn't had regular visitors then make this category tops on you list. I recommend you telephone the non-veteran care facilities in advance of your visit to determine if there are veteran residents.

Until next time,

James Scott

Commander, District V

BPT / LEGISLATIVE REPORT

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) today announced a special outreach campaign to inform veterans about VA's disability compensation program.

During the month of May, VA will be conducting outreach efforts in Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, New Jersey and Connecticut to reach those veterans who may have a disability related to their military service, but are not currently receiving VA benefits for their disabilities.

Under the VA compensation program, monthly tax-free payments are made to veterans who have medical conditions that are determined to be the result of their military service. VA was recently directed by Congress to undertake this special outreach in response to concerns that the average amount of VA disability compensation received by veterans in the six states is lower than in other states.

VA emphasized that all veterans with the

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same degree of disability should receive the same amount of VA compensation, regardless of where they live. However, historical differences in the average amount of VA disability compensation received by veterans from one state to another have existed for decades and appear to relate to such factors as the wartime period served, the branch of a veteran's service, the number of officer and enlisted personnel in a state, as well as the number of veterans who apply for benefits and the number of disabilities claimed by veterans in certain areas.

To help get the word out, VA is distributing informational brochures and enlisting the support of veterans service organizations, state and county veterans offices, and congressional offices throughout the state.

Veterans already receiving VA disability compensation benefits, and for whom VA therefore has a current address, will receive a letter from VA advising them of the steps to follow if they want to reopen their disability claim. About 326,000 veterans in the six states are included in the letter-mailing effort.

These letters will include a special flyer advising veterans how to submit a claim for increased benefits if they believe their service-connected conditions have worsened or they have an additional disability not previously claimed. Information will also be provided on what is required if a veteran believes an error was made in an earlier decision and wants VA to review the claim.

Jim Roos

BPT/Legislative Chairman

VAVS REPORT

Fellow Vets,

May has turned out to be a busy month so far. Along with Cmdr. Hendershot and Cmdr. Humes, I have visited the VA hospitals in Amarillo, Big Springs, Temple and Waco and also the OPC in Lubbock. All the visits were informative and the administration and staff not only courteous, but friendly. In case you have not heard yet, the Big Spring VA will remain open. Nothing has come out yet about Waco.

Summer youth volunteers are going to be starting in June. We need our chapters to sponsor as many youths as they can manage. Get in touch with the Hospital VAVS Rep or his Deputy to get the particulars. Also on the agenda is the loss of long time volunteers, there are not enough new ones to replace them. Get off your duff and be a

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part of what makes us the best in the service organization crowd.

Be careful out there!

Kirk Bennett

Department VAVS Chairman

DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER



Hello everyone –

This past month (April) was a busy time for me with Unit and church activities, but the main reason was my husband's eye surgery and follow-up appointments. It was exciting to watch and listen to "What color is that?", "Look at the colors!", "I thought that was black." (when it was actually purple). We are so thankful that he came through his eye surgery o.k. All the cards and calls were very much appreciated.

Dept. Commander "Duke" Hendershot and I and the Dept. VAVS Rep, Kirk Bennet, traveled to Amarillo where we toured the Thomas E. Creek VA Medical Center. We were met by DAV - VAVS rep Charles Hook, his deputy George Koumalaut and Betty Hood (who has agreed to be the Auxiliary VAVS Rep there). We met Carolyn Kingham, Community Patient Relations, and Dr. Stenhouse, the Chief of Staff. We were taken on a tour of the hospital and were able to talk to some of the nursing home residents along the way. From there we traveled to Lubbock and toured the outpatient clinic. We were taken around by Leslie Shaw and Laurie Glone who gave us a thorough walk through. On both of these tours, I noticed the bright colors and the cheerful atmosphere which is a good environment for our veterans to be in.

We came into Big Spring with a red sand storm welcoming us. Let's just say that that was a new experience for me. Dept. 2nd JVC Ed Meiser and his wife Heidrun joined us at the Big Spring VA Medical Center. VAVS reps Clara Lewis-Moran (DAVA) and Ricky James (DAV) were there to greet us and we met with Alva Jo Hanslik, Director of Community Relations. She escorted us through the hospital and we were greeted with great enthusiasm by some of the nursing home patients. One young man, Ralph Parkison (100 yrs 13 days), who has

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started on his next 100 years, was a very talkative veteran and he kept us busy for awhile.

We also toured the Temple, Waco and Kerrville. On the 31st of May I will tour the Dallas VA. We have a few more activities still to come.

This will be my last newsletter as the DAV Auxiliary Commander and I want to tell all of you that it has been a pleasure to have served the state of Texas this past year as your commander. I hope you've enjoyed reading my newsletters as much as I've enjoyed writing them. I wish all of you the very best in the future and it is my wish that we all support the new commander and her officers when they are elected and installed.

Hope to see all of you at State Convention.

Joyce Humes

Commander, DAV Auxiliary

The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary had the following Population Summary as of 5/10/2006:

Life Members	5,997
Total Members	6,819

THIS YEARS GOAL is:

Goal	7,153
Goal percentage	95.33
UNDER Goal	334

DAV AUXILIARY SR VICE COMMANDER

Tea for State Commander Joyce Humes

Many Auxiliary members and guests gathered at the Atonement Lutheran Church in San Antonio on Saturday, May 13th, to honor our 2005-2006 State Commander, Joyce Humes.

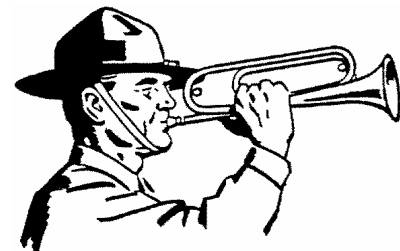
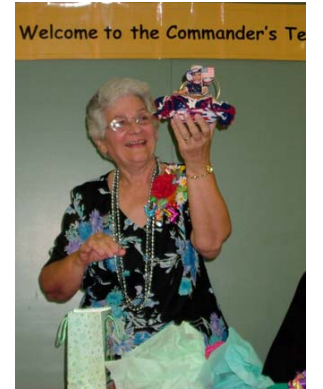
It was a fun filled afternoon of visiting and thanking our esteem Commander for her excellent leadership. We all now know a lot of inside stories about this gentle lady thanks to her daughters, husband, sister and close friends.

Hats off to Earlene Cole and Sharon Thornton and the members of Unit 114 for a truly delightful afternoon, and thanks to Joyce for her dedication to the DAV and Auxiliary.

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TAPS

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

Albert Sims, Chapter 11, passed 4-22-06

Luther Cecil Swan, Chapter 157, passed 4-5-06

Franklyn Blalock, Chapter 5, passed 5-7-06.

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To:



Hospital visits by the Department Commander and the DAVA State Commander along with the VAVS Chairman and the local VAVS volunteers are an important means of seeing how the system is working and what the DAV can do to help our fellow veterans.