

# DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

DEPARTMENT of TEXAS, HEADQUARTERS

## BULLETIN

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JANUARY 2007

### COMMANDER'S COMMENTS

#### HELLO FELLOW TEXANS

December was a busy month for all of us I'm sure. Between all the Christmas Parties and visiting family, friends, and comrades, I was able to attend Gal-Tex Chapter #15's elections. I also attended Chapter #84's Christmas party. And as always I enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new ones. While I was there I presented Teresa Johniken with an award from National Commander Brad Barton for appreciation of her services to the Disabled American Veterans and her community.



A new year is upon us and it is time to start making plans for DAV Mid-Winter Conference. I have not received instructions from Headquarters on the Legislative bills that the organization is supporting, as a matter of fact the new bills for the next Congress probably have yet to be penned. I will say that all of us should be interested in mandatory funding for healthcare. I feel with the changes that occurred during the last election, we probably have the best chance to get this though than we've had in years. I always enjoy meeting with my elected representatives and letting my voice be heard for increased funding for our VA programs that we rightly deserve. There is no doubt that more claims workers are needed. This

too needs to be addressed by Congress as it should not take as long for a claim to be processed. I also feel that the three plus years it takes an appeal to be worked is unacceptable. I will also be pressing for a full service hospital to be built to serve our veterans in the Valley. This has been needed for a long time. The drive from Brownsville, Harlingen, and McAllen to San Antonio for specialty care or hospital treatment can no longer be tolerated!

Lastly, I would like to wish all of you and yours a Happy New Year. This year will be filled with challenges, accomplishments and a few disappointments. But as a member of the best Veterans' Organization I know that by working together, we can continue to build on the foundation those who came before us have built. My biggest concern is the Department's Budget, as our membership is in decline which equates to dollars. And I'm concerned with membership in general. There is no doubt that we can recruit members to make our goal for this year with your help. What worries me is the lack of participation we have in our chapters. I know of one chapter that has a good turn out at their meetings, however, the members do not want the responsibility to seek office and help with the running of the chapter. I hope that you also share this concern.

Yours in comradeship,  
*Rex Lloyd*

Department Commander

### MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

**THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS,  
DEPARTMENT OF TEXAS HAD THE  
FOLLOWING POPULATION SUMMARY AS OF  
12/14/2006:**

Life Members	59,217
Part Life Members	22,483
Total Members	81,700

## Disabled American Veterans

This years GOAL for full paid life members is:

Goal	61,004
Members to make goal	1,787

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.

Over the past several months I have put Articles in the Bulletin regarding just reaching out to the comrades in our chapters across the state to both help the Department of Texas maintain their membership and at the same time increase our over all membership. Chapter 61, Seguin TX has, over the past several months, been in contact with the membership by letter and telephone, encouraging our comrades to come to the chapter meetings and attend the functions the Chapter is taking part in. When you get members to meetings try to get them involved in something such as nursing home visits or helping with the contacting of the membership to start getting involved. This has proved to be every successful for our chapter and has proven to be an excellent tool to keep your membership numbers up and increasing member attendance at meetings. Over the past several months members attending my chapter meetings has more than doubled and the national report of membership activity has increased as well. In the past the Chapter would have only 5 or 6 names on the report, over the last month I have seen the number grow to over 30+ plus. Many of these have been members making payments toward their life membership or paying off their life membership. I am glad to report that this works. All we have to do is reach out to them and show them we are interested in them and they do respond.

I hope you all had a very MERRY CHRISTMAS and will ENJOY A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

*Doug Herrle*

Membership Chairman

### ADJUTANT'S COMMENTS

2006 brought to light some new problems. One of which is a plan by National to transfer non-paying members from Departments/Chapters to the National at-large chapter after a set period of time. This will affect chapter voting strength and per capita income. To help offset this planned action, we

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

are all encouraged to make contact with those members and encourage them to make payments on their membership.

Some folks say things very well. The National Membership Director, "Tony" Baskerville, is such a person. I would hope that you've read his front page article HOMETOWN CHANGES in the October 31 Membership Bulletin. I would strongly encourage all chapters have that article reviewed and discussed at the next chapter meeting.

Adjutants, some items to review with the Commander: Chapter Service Officers must be re-certified annually. I would expect that the NSO supervisor for your area to mail an announcement to you requesting the names of those who will be certified. Materials must be ordered by the NSO through National and those being certified must be listed by the chapter. On the Officer Report Form there is room for only one name which means that if the chapter has more than one person, a letter attachment must be sent to both National and Department listing those persons. Certification will probably be done at a District meeting and those are scheduled for March and April. It's time for the chapter to get started on this; Blank forms – do you have a blank Officer Report Form? If not, call National Membership toll free at 877-426-2838 to order one, or even better, complete it online. Chapter Commanders and Adjutants on record as such have this capability through National's web site [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org). However, if you do file online, e-mail my office at [davtx.adj@sbcglobal.net](mailto:davtx.adj@sbcglobal.net) so I'll know you've filed your report.

Have a successful year.

*Eldon Armstrong*

Department Adjutant / Treasurer

### DISTRICT I

I hope everyone had an enjoyable Holidays but alas all good things must come to an end. Now it is time to get back to work and start planning for Chapter, District and Department elections and conventions. First let's talk about chapter elections. Please, when you nominate someone make sure he or she will be active and perform the duties of their office. To many times they will take the office for prestige or other reasons not conducive to a smoother running chapter. Next, District convention in March. I beg all chapters to send as many delegates as possible as this will ensure all the things that are talked about at Chapter Meetings is discussed in an open forum and maybe spread a good

## Disabled American Veterans

idea. This is where you can start a resolution to go forward to Department and National. Want a change in the by-laws? Come to the convention. Last but not least the Department convention in June. If you have never been to one try to make at least one. The things that a person learns here is invaluable. If you don't believe me call Commander Garcia at Chapt.187 (915-751-5800) and ask him.

Let us all say a prayer for Chapter 26's Commander's wife who is in the hospital, 187's Sr. Vice's father who is gravely ill, and all of our other comrades and families who are ill. Lastly to all of you who keep asking me how I'm doing, thanks, and I am slowly getting better. Hope to see all of you in March.

PLEASE READ THIS TO YOUR MEMBERS AT YOUR NEXT MEETING.

*W. "Ted" Monette*  
Commander, District I

## DISTRICT II

### Hello Texas!!!

They came to Garland by the hundreds, from Waco and surrounding communities and experienced the emotions of the Vietnam Moving Wall. Many came for therapeutic reasons. Several schools brought busloads of children to observe the "Wall" and receive an abundance of historical information.

Having the DAV Mobile Van in Garland during this event was a very successful project. Many claims were processed and filed. Credit must be given to NSO David Reeves, out of Waco, for performing such an outstanding job for the veteran community of Garland.

Highlights of December were the Christmas activities we attended. I wish to thank Chapters/Units of Lufkin #84, Nacogdoches #83, Dallas #32 and Grand Prairie #42 for inviting us. It was apparent at each of these functions that a lot of hard work had gone into showing everyone who attended a good time.

At Grand Prairie, everyone participated in wrapping gifts for the veterans in the Dallas VA Hospital. They even found a job that I could do—curling the ribbons on the gift bags!

The Holiday season is just around the corner and as usual, decorating and shopping are pushing other tasks into last place in the race for time. We must not forget about the men and women that are serving our country during this

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

season. Remember them and say a prayer for their safety.

A group of veterans quite often forgotten during Veterans Day and during the Holidays are those living in nursing homes. I encourage you to locate and celebrate with these veterans. You will come away feeling good about having made some veteran's day enjoyable.

My family and I wish each of you a safe and happy Holiday season.

Yours in service,  
*Gerald Cowan*  
Commander, District II

## DISTRICT III

### Greetings to all of you in District III

By the time you read this letter, each chapter should have received the Call to Convention 2007. If by chance you have not, please let us know. Remember all of this information; delegate list, deceased list, and any resolutions, should be sent to Adjutant Dopkant, 810 Mountain View Cove, Pflugerville, Texas 78660 by March 15, 2007. If your chapter or unit would like to place an ad in the District III Convention Bulletin, please mail your ad and the money to Floyd Wells, 3805 Oaklawn, Bryan, Texas, 77801. The prices will be: 1 page: \$100; ½ page \$60, and ¼ page \$30.

The year 2007 has become a reality. Only yesterday, we were celebrating the birth of the new millennium. The time of the year we make resolutions to improve or to make our lives better. Perhaps one of yours could be to become more involved in your community. Volunteering helps those who reap the benefits. I do Meals-On-Wheels. I feel blessed that I can provide that ray of sunshine in someone's life. Maybe, you could consider driving the VA van, visiting a Nursing Home, mentoring at a school, or any variety of things. You will be surprised! You will receive rewards beyond measure. Make 2007 a new experience!

Thanks to each of the chapters who invited my wife and me to celebrate Christmas with you. I am pleased to hear about all of the wonderful things you are doing to further the cause of helping our veterans and their families. I enjoyed sharing conversations with your members. Keep up your good work! You are making a difference!

Our thoughts and prayers go out to George Cox, Past DAV District III Commander, as he goes through his chemotherapy. We are pulling for you and Anita. Get Well wishes go out to our Adjutant

## Disabled American Veterans

Kristen Dopkant, who broke her foot at school before Christmas. Crutches are her mode of transportation, now.

The DAV District III staff and I want to wish you a Happy New Year, and we hope that it brings each of you health, happiness, and prosperity. Be safe and remember to cherish those moments with your friends and family.

Yours in Comradeship,  
*James Prochnow*  
Commander, District III

## DISTRICT IV

November has passed, a very busy month. Most individuals active in veterans' causes are involved in multiple activities during that month. The news from District IV reflects the tempo of the month. There were parades in most towns, Golden Corral programs, and BBQ's. All of the events I attended had good representation from the various DAV Chapters. It was a good feeling to see veterans honored by the public and by fellow Veterans.

I had the privilege of attending a planning session for the Houston VA Medical Center. The word is that more veterans are coming to Texas and the local VA is trying to plan for the services that will be required. Some of these veterans will be temporary "guests", since there are increasing Gulf Coast referrals to Houston, while others represent veterans relocating. Texas has the distinction of having the "youngest" veteran population in the US. This means the health care facilities will be needed for a long period of time.

On a personal note, I will be traveling less because of a "pinched" nerve that makes it difficult for me to walk or drive. Sooo, I'll be doing more business by phone and e-mail.

Yours in Comradeship,  
*Wolf Biedenfeld*  
Commander, District IV

## DISTRICT V

By the time this bulletin is printed, we hope the last phase of the 2006 Golden Corral Military Appreciation project has been finalized. If in the rare event, you haven't made required inputs to me and Adjutant Eldon Armstrong, please do so soonest. Nevertheless, my congratulations and thanks to all for their efforts and dedication thereby ensuring success of the 2006 Golden Corral and DAV partnered project.

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

Now on a completely different but very important issue, various chapters' elections are up coming for 2007. As a current Chapter and District commander, and as a reminder to all DAV members, I am keenly aware that I, and also other commanders, serve at the behest or pleasure of the membership. Simply stated, if we become too busy commanding and the DAV mission suffers, then a possible change should be seriously considered. With the remaining days before your election process becomes a reality, I offer these thoughts for consideration.

- A commander should lead the membership in such a manner that the focus remains on the DAV versus the commander. Unfortunately, after becoming a commander, too many of us immediately place ourselves on a pedestal and draw attention to ourselves while the mission suffers.
- A commander must be able to accept the answer "no" or it can't be done. Some of us don't want to listen when others tell us about a project that perhaps violates DAV Bylaws or Constitution. Keep in mind that there are times when "no" is the correct answer!
- Do listen intently to bad or unpleasant news a member may communicate about the organization. This information may be just what is needed to strengthen or enhance the status of the chapter.
- Never forget that funds of the chapter are not personal assets of the commander or any other member of the Executive Committee. The commander has the primary responsibility for proper stewardship of DAV funds.

These are but a few factors among many other possibilities we should use when considering candidates for commander and other positions of authority and responsibility.

I hope everyone had a blessed Holiday Season as we look forward to a joyous New Year!

Until next time,  
*James Scott*  
Commander, District V

## BPT / LEGISLATIVE REPORT

### RUSH TO PASS VETERANS BILL ILL-ADVISED

Lawmakers would be well advised to remember those time-honored words of wisdom, "act in haste, repent at leisure," as they rush to finalize a

## Disabled American Veterans

veterans benefits bill before the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress adjourns, said the Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

"Even though a piece of legislation may contain important provisions beneficial to our nation's veterans and their families, the actual implications of other provisions are much more serious and potentially adverse than is generally understood," said DAV National Commander Bradley S. Barton.

For example, the House of Representatives in an eleventh hour move will attempt to pass a Senate version of a veterans benefits package (S. 3421) which contains a provision that would permit attorneys to charge fees for assisting veterans with their benefits claims. The DAV believes the proposal is unnecessary and would increase costs to veterans and to the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) without significantly improving the claims process.

Currently, veterans may hire an attorney for advice and counseling prior to filing a claim for benefits or after the VA administrative proceedings have been completed. But there is no prohibition against attorney's providing pro bono services to veterans, noted Barton, who is an attorney himself.

"Allowing attorneys to charge veterans for claims representation is not an acceptable substitute for taking the necessary steps to fix the claims processing system so it serves veterans' interests in an informal and non-adversarial manner," said Commander Barton. "Also, because this large omnibus bill has been quickly rewritten at the last moment, there has been insufficient time for members of Congress to carefully review it to ensure it does not contain objectionable provisions or unintended adverse consequences."

"The Department of Veterans Affairs itself has said that attorney fees would consume significant amounts of payments under programs meant to benefit veterans," Commander Barton said. "The VA would have to create a substantial new bureaucracy to perform the additional accreditation and oversight responsibilities. Instead the VA should use its scarce resources to hire more claims adjudicators and provide them with the training needed to improve the quality as well as timeliness of decisions."

"Congress should not be rushed into adopting such controversial provisions buried among otherwise beneficial ones. Lawmakers have a responsibility to fully explore the pros and cons of every piece of legislation and be on the alert for provisions that could actually be harmful to our nation's

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

veterans and the programs created to best serve them" Barton said.

The 1.3 million-member Disabled American Veterans, a non-profit organization founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932, represents this nation's disabled veterans. It is dedicated to a single purpose: building better lives for our nation's disabled veterans and their families. For more information, visit the organization's Web site [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).

*Jim Roos*

BPT/Legislative Chairman

## VAVS REPORT

### Beaumont Out Patient Clinic

The Beaumont Out Patient Clinic (BOPC) opened its doors the 3rd of May 1977. The clinic is associated with MED Houston VA Medical Center. It is 84 miles from the Houston VA. BOPC serves Orange, Jefferson and Hardin Counties. In 1999 the BOPC was relocated to a new facility with over 28,000 sq. feet. They have a primary health care clinic for sick and ailing veterans. The 2005 – 2006 year they saw over 73,000 out patient visits. At the BOPC there is a pharmacy, lab, radiology, physical therapy, mental health and a podiatry clinic. At the BOPC there are over 30 active volunteers with an estimated 30,000 hours of service per year. There are 4 organizations giving their time to the clinic. The DAV has over 12 volunteers at the clinic giving their time in some of the more than 15 different volunteer jobs. The Transportation program has over 9 volunteer drivers logging over 300 hours and 3600 miles a month. **Viola Derbonne**, the Volunteer Coordinator, one of the many hats she wears, would like to see more volunteers. The clinic is always in need of items like TVs, VCRs, coffee makers, books and magazines. Any questions about the program may be directed to **Viola Derbonne**, Volunteer Coordinator at 409-981-8560. A Special THANK YOU to all the volunteers who help make things happen at the Beaumont Out Patient Clinic.

*Marcie Hill*

Department VAVS Chairman

## AWARDS COMMITTEE

### National Commanders Awards

This is my last chance to use the bulletin and remind (gripe at) all of you of the deadline for the nominations for the 2007 National Commanders Awards.

I reiterate: Please send me your completed

## Disabled American Veterans

nominations to **arrive by February 14th** in order for the Awards Committee to process and get them to National for their deadline of February 28th.

I remind you again that if these dates are not met, all of the hard work that you put into this will be returned to you, and your nominee will lose a chance to be recognized.

I haven't heard a peep from anyone, so I know everything must be going very well for this very worthy program. Just in case you have a question, just email ( [edgar\\_meiser@msn.com](mailto:edgar_meiser@msn.com) ) or give me a ring at 432-263-5163.

Please send all completed nominations to : **Ed Meiser, Awards Chairman, 2405 Carleton Dr., Big Spring, Texas 79720-7312.**

I express gratitude to you for your earnest work and dedication to the Disabled American Veterans and your wonderful service to our veterans.

Yours in Comardeship,  
*Ed Meiser*, Chairman

## Women Veteran's Representative

As women our health issues are unique. We have an array of potential problems so we must all adhere to preventive care to hopefully avoid all of the problems we could have.

The following is a preventive health guide that VA has published which all women should follow:

### GENERAL INFO

Low fat diet  
Exercise regularly  
Get adequate sleep  
Manage & reduce stress  
Monthly self-breast exam  
Avoid heavy drinking  
Avoid too much sun  
Maintain healthy weight

### ANNUAL EXAMS INCLUDING:

Clinical Breast Exam  
GYN Exam  
PAP Smear  
Mammography  
Blood Pressure Check  
Cholesterol Screening  
Colorectal Screening  
Patient Education

Since we are starting a new year and we all try to make resolutions now would be a great time for us all to take the time to make sure that we schedule our preventive health care. I hope you all

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

had a great holiday season and that 2007 turns out to be a great year for you.

Yours in service  
*Teresa Johniken*

Women's Veteran Department Appointee

## ITEMS OF INTEREST

Department has taken steps to collect all DAV/DAVA unclaimed property from the Texas Comptroller. If your Chapter/Unit had monies that were being held and you were not notified, contact the respective DAV/DAVA state Adjutant.

## DAV AUXILIARY COMMANDER



## Happy New Year

Every New Year we all start off with the best of intentions. Most of us resolve to lose weight, adhere to a budget, remember birthdays, and exercise.

I make the same New Year resolutions too. In our family, January offers me a chance to remember 20 birthdays, so I start the year off with a bang! Unfortunately not all of my family was born in January and by June the birthday cards are often belated and those last 2 or 3 months of the year birthdays don't fair well at all!

This year, as we make our resolutions, perhaps we should look back at the past year and what we did on behalf of our Veterans and make it our mission to do even more this year. Did you contact an elected official and ask them to support our Veterans on important legislation issues? If so, you did good! Now this year why not resolve to contact her/him again, and others also, and remind them that the need for our Veterans is growing. With so many being injured and needing care during this time of conflict, added to those who have served in the past and still need their benefits, we continue to need the support in Congress to assure that ALL who are entitled to benefits will receive them. Issues of importance include health care, education, jobs and job training, (especially for those disabled), family benefits, and burial benefits.

It is because of the spirit of Americans and of those who are willing to take the time to make a

## Disabled American Veterans

stand for our country that makes us what we are. We are a country that cherishes individual freedom but, have too many stretched that concept to "I want the freedom to do, have, and say what I wish, but I don't think you should have the same freedom unless you agree with me on things"?

Let's face it, I'm not going to stick to a diet, to a budget or to an exercise program so this New Year my resolutions are going to be different.

**I resolve** to take the time to contact my Representatives in Congress with my desire for them to support important Veterans issues.

**I resolve** to be open minded and patient when others voice their opinions so that I may continue to enjoy the freedom to voice my opinions.

**I resolve** to allow and respect others who follow their faith because if I do not, I know I will be in jeopardy of losing the right to practice my faith.

And **I resolve** to remind adults and children that we are a nation that has more freedom than any other country on earth and it is due to those who have been, and who are now willing to stand up for the rights of all of us, not just a select few.

**I resolve**, and my Mission will be, to stand up for my Country, my Flag, my Freedom and yours everyday! I welcome you to join me in this Mission.

*Alice Armstrong*

Commander, DAV Auxiliary



Junior Members receive recognition in Lufkin

## Bulletin JANUARY 2007

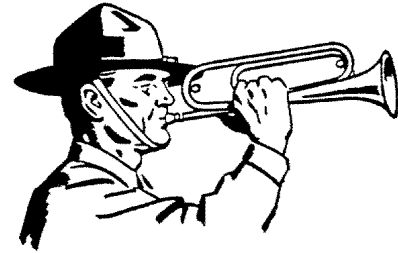
The Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary had the following Population Summary as of 12/14/2006:

Life Members	5,979
Total Members	6,624

### THIS YEARS GOAL is:

Goal	7,053
Goal percentage	93.92

**UNDER Goal** 429



## TAPS

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

**Kenneth Smith**, Ch 14 passed Oct 06

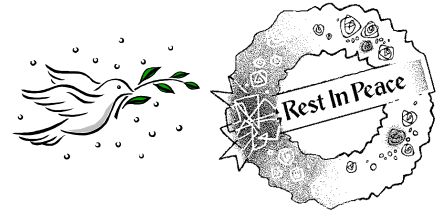
**Valton Moore**, Ch 32 passed Nov 06

**Johnny L. Garrison**, Ch 137 passed Dec 06

**Lieu Fagin**, Ch 26 passed Dec 06

**Elmar Amason**, Ch 83 passed Dec 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.

**Disabled American Veterans  
Bulletin**  
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THANKS TO THOSE WHO GAVE THEIR ALL