



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio

April, 2017 Newsletter

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FROM THE DESK OF STATE COMMANDER DAVID BILINOVICH

APRIL FOOLS



April is the month that starts off with the playing of pranks. This tradition has been recorded as far back as 1564. Harmless pranks and jokes are fun, but be careful not to really hurt anyone's feelings. In order to help you out, I have some suggestions on how not to be a fool this month.

First, do not be foolish and miss your Spring District meeting. Your District Commander and the host Chapter spend a good deal of time, money and effort to make these meetings meaningful and worth your effort to attend. District meetings are also important in letting me and my staff know the true status of our Chapters and of their concerns. So, do not fool us by not attending and participating.

Also, Chapter Officers nominations and elections are nothing to fool with. The future of your Chapter depends on your participation. It would be foolish not to have a say in who will run your Chapter over the next twelve months. Only a fool would leave this to chance.

April is also when applications for participation in the Department Convention Committees should be submitted. New members and their ideas keep us from fooling ourselves by preventing groupthink and by offering new ideas and fresh perspectives. Don't fool yourselves into believing that your input is not valuable. This would only make all of us fools.

As the end of our fiscal year draws near, it would be foolish to not make sure that your Chapter has made enough donations to our many service needs and that it is not carrying over three times operating expenses in its treasury. Only a fool would believe that neither your Department staff nor our National headquarters will not review your annual financial report later this year.

Finally, after years of having the DAV / DAVA Department Commanders testimonial in Columbus, this year we are not fooling you when we announced that it would be in Wadsworth, Ohio later this month. As I am from our Medina County Chapter and my Auxiliary counterpart is from the Summit County (Akron) Unit, the city of Wadsworth is halfway between both of our home places. While Columbus is geographically centered, it does limit opportunities for many Chapters / Units to send members. So, this year, members of the Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Districts would be foolish not to attend this Department function. As for next year, I would be fooling you if I said that it would again be in Columbus, as I do not know. The next Commander may want to or he may choose to make it more convenient for the Districts closer to his home Chapter. We have done it both ways in the past and only a fool would claim to know the future.

April starts with pranks and jokes, but do not be fooled. My suggestions above will keep you from being a fool in the DAV. Oh, by the way, your shoe is untied.

-David Bilinovich
State Commander



IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Headquarters	(877) 426-2838
NSO Office, Cleveland	(216) 522-3507
Washington D.C. Office, DAV	(202) 554-3501
Cincinnati DSO, Tom Kirstein	(513) 475-6443
<i>Tuesday, Thursday</i>	
Lisa Wilson	(513) 475-6443
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
Chillicothe DSO, Charles Knipp	(740) 773-1141
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	Ext. 7916
Dayton DSO, Nikki Cochran	(937) 268-6511
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	Ext. 2962
Wade Park DSO, Walter Dryja	(216) 791-3800
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	Ext. 3395
Columbus DSO, Henry Snodgrass	(614) 257-5487
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	
Parma DSO, Richard Healy	(216) 739-7000
<i>Monday-Thursday</i>	Ext. 2405

2016-2017 STATE OFFICERS

State Commander:	David Bilinovich
Sr. Vice Commander:	James Bailey
1 st Jr. Vice Commander:	John Parker
2 nd Jr. Vice Commander:	John Plahovinsak
Executive Committee:	David Weeks
	Timothy Dibble
PDC (2015-2016):	Phillip Alexander

DEPARTMENT OF OHIO MEMBERSHIP

As of *March 29 2017*, the Department Membership Report stands at 32,248 members. The Department is 98.85% of goal and 341 members below the yearly goal of 29,571. Total full life membership is 29,230.

DATES TO REMEMBER

April 1, 2017	<i>District 5 Meeting, Huron County Ch. #62, 1544 US Highway 20 West, Norwalk, OH at 1 p.m.</i>
April 2, 2017	<i>District 6 Meeting, Brooklyn-Parma Ch. #116, Memorial Hall, Parma, OH Lunch at 1 p.m. & Meeting at 2 p.m.</i>
April 8, 2017	<i>District 9 Meeting, Dovel Myers Ch. #141, 108 Liberty St., Gallipolis, OH Lunch at 12 p.m. & Meeting at 1 p.m.</i>
April 8, 2017	<i>District 10 Meeting, Capital City Ch. #3, 280 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.</i>
April 15, 2017	<i>District 1 Meeting, Northern Hills Ch. #115, 1500 W. Galbraith Rd., Cincinnati, OH. Meeting at 12 Noon and lunch to follow.</i>
April 21-23, 2017	<i>Forget-Me-Not, Capital City Ch. #3, Golden Corral, 3710 W. Dublin-Granville, Columbus & 4750 E. Main St., Whitehall DAV & DAVA Commanders' Testimonial Dinner, Holiday Inn Express & Suites, Wadsworth, Ohio at 6:00 p.m.</i>
April 22, 2017	<i>District 2 Meeting, Champaign County Ch. #31, 220 E. Court St., Urbana, OH 11 a.m.-2 p.m.</i>
April 29, 2017	<i>District 4 Meeting, American Legion, 500 Glenwood Ave., Napoleon, OH. Meeting at 1 p.m., Lunch at 2 p.m.</i>
April 30, 2017	<i>District 7 Meeting, Alliance Ch. #50, 9540 McCallum Ave., Alliance, OH with Lunch at 12 noon & Meeting at 1 p.m.</i>
April 30, 2017	<i>District 8 Meeting, Bellaire Ch. #117, 3134 Guernsey St., Bellaire, OH with Lunch at 12 noon & Meeting at 1 p.m.</i>
April 30, 2017	<i>Forget-Me-Not, Northern-Hills Ch. #115, Kroger- Woodlawn, Montfort Height, Mt. Airy, Northgate, Brentwood & Forest Park.</i>
May 12-14, 2017	<i>Forget-Me-Not, Van Wert Ch. #54, Walmart, 301 Town Center Blvd., Van Wert, OH.</i>
June 3-4, 2017	<i>"Help Us, Help Our Heroes!" Annual 5k Walk/Run, Huron County Ch. #62.</i>
June 3, 2017	<i>96th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott Northwest, Dublin, Ohio.</i>
June 22-25, 2017	<i>National Convention, New Orleans, LA.</i>
July 29-Aug. 1, 2017	<i>Chapter Financial Reports are due!</i>
September 30, 2017	<i>Forget-Me-Not, Darke County Ch. #57, Eikenberries South Grocery Store, Ace Hardware, Greentown LLC Marathon, Kroger, Marathon and Rural King 8 a.m.-4 p.m.</i>
October 6-7, 2017	<i>Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH.</i>
November 3-5, 2017	<i>Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.</i>
Feb. 25-28, 2018	<i>97th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.</i>
June 7-10, 2018	<i>Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott Northwest, Dublin, OH.</i>
November 2-4, 2018	

NOTES FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT KENNETH MARCUM

THE FIRST STEP TO GREATNESS



This is a paper that I wrote for my Sociology Major that Chapter 32, Title 38, Vocational Rehabilitation furnished through the DAV. Somehow it feels fitting to share now that we are asking you to revitalize your chapters.

How is it that some veterans are able to use their military experience, especially the bad ones, to fuel their achievement? Conversely, why do other veterans allow their military experiences, even the good ones, to fuel their self-destruction? Both veterans experience success and hardships but one is able to succeed while the other one fails. Why is that?

My experience in working with veterans over the past several years has showed that the difference comes down to one thing: GOALS. More often than not, success and failure hinges on whether a veteran has the courage and foresight to dream, set, and pursue goals that improve their lives and really matter to them.

Dreams matter. Goals matter. Having the courage to take action MATTERS!

Dreams and goals, or the lack thereof, impact each of us; including ME AND YOU.

Let's use the military to think about this. Where were you before entering the service? Not the location, but rather employment, education, or relationships. What were you like as a person? What were your dreams and goals at that time of your life?

Now flash forward 10, 20 or 30 years later to the present. Are you living your before military dreams? Did you follow through with the goals that you had? Did you do your best to achieve them? Or did they change? New opportunities, additional education, ability to start a business, home ownership, new home of record or new trade.

Chances are that whether or not you realized your dreams and achieved your goals and more depending a lot on your military experience. Did you use your service time to strengthen your resolve to achieve your goals? Or, did your goals and dreams just die after being discharged? Unfortunately for many veterans their dreams are a major casualty of their military experience.

Dreams and goals that were once a source of motivation are now just thought to be meaningless. The death of a dream is a sad thing. Without dreams, people don't have goals and lack the desire to shape their own future. There is no purpose for them to work towards. They lose the drive that is necessary for personal growth. Setting goals and working towards them is the ONLY way for anyone to maximize their efforts. Goals are the deciding points between success and failure. Pursuing a goal keeps you accountable to yourself. Goals give you the framework to ask: "Did I own today?" or "Did I make progress to achieving my goal?" Answering "NO" to either of these questions means that you are surviving but not thriving. Don't you want to live the best life that you can? Live the life that you fought so hard for others to live? If so, the first step is just asking yourself about your goals. Take time to answer. Don't BS yourself. Think about whether the goal you think of actually matters to you? Does the goal make you happy when you envision yourself achieving it? The time from entry to discharge in the service went by in a flash. It's important that you leave the next years of your life with some goals to work toward. Who will you be in the future? What will you have accomplished? Are you committed to being the successful veteran? You need to dream to envision a great life for the future. You need specific goals to achieve that life. You need courage to pursue it. Do yourself a favor and dream now. Set some goals now. Create a plan of action now. Don't wait until tomorrow. Your time is running out. Now let's all get those YOGA MATS!!!

PARK INSIDE 'FREE SPEECH ZONE'



A Minnesota city that drew backlash after pulling a cross from a veteran's memorial park has agreed to bring it back as early as Tuesday -- inside a section of the park those supporters have called a "free speech zone." The Freedom from Religion Foundation demanded the city of Belle Plaine remove the cross last month, claiming it violated the separation of church and state. After workers took it down, many supporters of vets responded by setting up their own crosses, and the Second Brigade Motorcycle Club patrolled the park to watch out for vandalism.

I'm told they will be welding the cross back on by as early as tonight. The memorial will look like this again soon.

Amid the controversy in that city, the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian nonprofit, proposed setting up a "limited public forum" inside the park, where the original cross could stand. The name "free speech zone" has stuck, even though the park is public. The city council narrowly approved the proposal, by a vote of 3-2. Under the plan, city leaders would set up a method of considering each proposed display, giving priority to veterans groups.

"It sets it up so we can have something to memorialize our fallen but it also gives others a chance to memorialize theirs as well," Katie Novotny, a supporter of the cross who lived in Belle Plaine, told the news station. "It doesn't matter if you're Jewish, Christian, or Muslim; we're all Americans fighting this war together."

The Freedom from Religion Foundation called the idea "constitutionally problematic" in a letter before Monday's vote. The group reportedly claimed it would submit a proposal for a memorial of its own in the park.

The newly approved plan "ensures that there is no endorsement of religion by the city whatsoever because the memorials that will be put up represent the citizens that put them up," Doug Wardlow, who represented the Alliance Defending Freedom, responded.

The original memorial showed the silhouette of a soldier holding a gun and kneeling in front of a small cross. It could reappear in the park as early as Tuesday evening, 02/07/2017.

Cheers erupted in City Hall after the council gave the OK.

-Kenneth Marcum
State Adjutant

NEW VA SECRETARY HAS PICKED UP THE TORCH OF LEADERSHIP

Dr. David M. Shulkin having been confirmed by the U.S. Senate is the newly installed Secretary of Veteran Affairs, a member of the Cabinet and leader of the nation's largest hospital system. He has been designated to lead the 59 VA Medical Centers and

1700 other medical care centers as well as taking on duties of overseeing the VBA, the benefits side of the VA, housing, education, pension & compensation. This not hyperbole; Medicare may have more patients; however, it does not own nor direct a single hospital nor clinic. Secretary Shulkin has a career of decades of medical center leadership and most recently has been Undersecretary of the VA, its Chief of Medicine.

Disabled American Veterans opened its February Mid-Winter Conference in Washington with an address by Secretary Shulkin speaking to the DAV in his first address as Secretary. He outlined ten goals for his tenure which will be grounded upon the ongoing reforms he has directed in the prior two years under the previous Secretary. He shared his vision of care choice bounded by the overall need to preserve the VA medical system as an independent nationwide system of medical care for the job who would have moved to privatized VA medicine under the guise of choice, overblown and arguable misrepresentative. The reforms and the improvements will continue under his direction.

Reassuring the hotel auditorium of over 200 DAV leaders that the ongoing VA reforms will continue VA Secretary Shulkin displayed he has hit the ground running and has already dispensed with all the first years learning. He concluded that there are some 140 studies of how to improve the VA, now is the time for implementation. The Nations Veterans will be well served by VA Secretary Shulkin.

-William Caine
Past Department Commander

APRIL IS MONTH OF THE MILITARY CHILD

In 1986 April was designated Month of the Military Child by Casper Weinberger to recognize and thank children from military families for the sacrifices they make living the military lifestyle. Purple Up is the campaign that propels activities throughout the Month of the Military Child to honor, acknowledge, and support Military Connected Youth in our schools and communities. A Military Connected Youth is a child or adolescent with a close family member (parent, step parent, sibling, step-sibling, cousin) or friend serving in any branch of the United States Armed Forces and any status, Active Duty, Reserve, or National Guard. Military Connected Youth face unique circumstances living the military lifestyle, which can be challenging, or opportunities for growth.



VA FINALIZED NEW RULE

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) finalized a new rule on 13 January 2017 to consider eight diseases as presumptive for service connection. This presumptive service connection provides VA disability benefits for veterans who have one of eight diseases and have served for 30 days or longer (consecutive or nonconsecutive) on permanent or temporary duty at Camp Lejeune, NC between 1 August 1953 and 31 December 1987. The eight diseases covered under the new rule are: adult leukemia; aplastic anemia and other myelodysplastic syndromes; bladder cancer; kidney cancer; liver cancer; multiple myeloma; non-Hodgkin's lymphoma; and Parkinson's disease.

The rule became effective 14 March 2017 following Congressional review. In accordance, the Marine Corps will mail registrants pertinent information and updates about the VA's new rule.

Congress granted the VA the authority to prescribe all rules and regulations presumptively connecting a disease to service. We appreciate efforts by the VA and Congress to support our Marines and their families.

-Steven Strodbeck
NSO Cleveland Supervisor

THEY'RE LISTENING TO US NOW...

Fourteen (14) veteran-related legislative bills, initiated by DAV resolutions, were enacted and signed into Public Law during the past 114th Congress. These new laws range from the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act to the Jeff Miller and Richard Blumenthal Veterans Care and Benefits Improvement Act of 2016.

In an era where Congress has been accused of being in a "total gridlock," the DAV was able to get 14 pieces of veterans-related legislation enacted into Public Law. How is this possible?

It would be easy to attribute all the positive legislative action to the DAV National Legislative Staff in Washington, DC. Their ability to manage key legislative bills as they pass through the House and Senate has paid dividends in getting legislation passed into laws. But they are not the sole reason for outstanding success that has been achieved for all veterans.

Coupled with the actions of the DAV Legislative Staff is the successful implementation of the Commander's Action Line (C.A.N.) The C.A.N. is a program which enables a DAV member to send a focused, tailored message to a Representative or Senator on a pending piece of legislation. Our Ohio Representatives and Senators acknowledge receipt of the C.A.N. and normally respond with a detailed email concerning their position on the pending legislation.

We are not the only veteran service organization encouraging this contact with our legislative leaders. The Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), via their "Call to Action," generates e-mails from their members to their legislative leaders. During the last week of February, members of the DAV, the VFW, the American Legion and the AmVets were all visiting their respective legislators on Capitol Hill and identifying their key legislative issues.

Another factor directly related to the legislative bills enacted is that more veterans are getting elected to Congress. Beginning with the 105th Congress in 1997, the number of veterans in Congress has declined until the 114th Congress. The 114th Congress was composed of 100 veterans. The 115th Congress is composed of 103 veterans or 19% of the total Congress.

There are 82 veterans in the House and 21 veterans serving in the Senate. Four (4) Senators and 26 Representatives have served in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The final factor explaining why so much veteran-related legislation passed in the 114th Congress is the highly educated and military attuned legislative staff that each legislator possesses. Many of the legislative staffers have military backgrounds and are well versed in veteran-related issues.

These staffers know the demographic composition of their Congressional Districts and know that veterans are persistent in getting things done. These staffers also are cognizant of how to disseminate information to their elected leaders and to do the right thing for veterans.

Added altogether, the 114th Congress was highly successful in terms of passed and enacted Public Laws. However there is still much to be done! After thanking our legislators for what they accomplished, we should also remind them that we need their assistance on other key issues.

As the DAV, our mission is to fight for the rights of injured and ill veterans on Capitol Hill and this is what we will do in the future. Our elective legislators are listening to us now and our DAV job is to keep them listening.

-John J. Plahovinsak
2nd Junior Vice Commander

IMPORTANT NOTE TO CHAPTER OFFICERS

In order for the Department to cut back on expenses, the Department is only mailing to the *Officer Authorized to Receive Mail* of each Chapter. This person who you have chosen for your Chapter, whether it's the Commander, Adjutant, Treasurer, etc., is responsible for communicating messages from Department Headquarters to your Chapter members at Chapter meetings.

As Chapters begin the process of electing new officers for their Chapter for the upcoming year, please make sure that you are electing someone who is responsible and does well with communicating to the other Chapter officers and members.

Another note: If you need an Officer Report please contact National Headquarters at 877-426-2838. The Department Headquarters does not have any blank copies available.

C & A MID-WINTER CONFERENCE 2017



DAV State of Ohio team that attended the Mid-Winter Conference February 26 – March 1, 2017, from left to right: PDC Phillip Alexander, PDC David Uetterling, PDC Dennis Hanneman, 2nd Jr. Vice Commander John Plahovinsak, Adjutant Kenneth Marcum, Commander David Bilinovich, PDC Frank Williams, PDC/NEC Robert Bertschy, Executive Committeeman David Weeks, Dayton VAWS Representative Vincent Dec and PDC William Caine. Also in attendance but not pictured: National Service Officers (NSO's) Steven Strodbeck, Jacob Drost, Mathew Hicks, Michael Shaw and Paul Webber. All contributed to an extremely successful visit to the Capitol. In all, Ohio visited 26 Representatives and 2 Senators- no state made more visits on the Hill that OHIO!

Executive Committeeman David Weeks and Past Department Commander and Legislative Chairman Frank Williams meet with Congressman Tim Ryan to discuss important veterans issues.



96th ANNUAL DEPARTMENT CONVENTION

The Department of Ohio, 96th Annual Convention is being held June 23, 24, 25, 2017 at the Columbus Marriott Northwest, 5605 Blazer Parkway, Dublin, Ohio room rates are \$113.00 and Reservations can be made by calling (614) 791-1000. Cut off date for *room reservations is by May 31, 2017.*

Pre-Registration is \$25.00 and the Banquet on Saturday night is \$50.00 per ticket and is a buffet dinner. If you would like to pre-register, please contact Department Headquarters to receive a Pre-Registration form and send your form and check made payable to the DAV, Department of Ohio to Department Headquarters, PO Box 15099, Columbus, Ohio 43215-0099. *Pre-Registration is due by June 16, 2017.* Registration after this date will cost \$30.00 instead of \$25.00!

VETERANS MOVING FORWARD

May 24th, 2017 3PM - 6PM

Wright State Student Union Apollo Rm

Hosted by Greater Miami Valley My Veteran Community

ALL VETERANS: THOSE WHO SERVE

JOIN US to learn about Veteran support in our community BE HEARD and see what building a connected community means NETWORK with other Veterans. This event will highlight resources available to Veterans in our community.

REGISTER FOR FREE - www.veteransmovingforward.org

RTA and Greene CATS will provide free rides to Veterans to and from Wright State University on May 24, 2017. Please show proof of Military Service upon boarding.

VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS: SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE

Be a part of our community that is coming together to provide resources to support our Veterans and their families.

REGISTER FOR A TABLE - www.veteransmovingforward.org

