



FULFILLING OUR PROMISES
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio

August, 2016 Newsletter

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FROM THE DESK OF STATE COMMANDER DAVID BILINOVICH

A NEW RESPONSIBLE WAY FORWARD



When I was elected Commander, I had time to sit down with our Adjutant, Ken Marcum, and with our Finance Committee Chairman, Joe Lenhart, to review our budget. You may not know that over the past several years, we, as a Department, have annually exceeded our published budgets. We have, in fact, spent more money than we have taken in, in some cases by significant amounts. Some expenditures are not foreseeable at budget time and others were caused by under estimating cost increases. Regardless, it would be derelict of me, as your Commander, not to institute some budget reforms. Therefore, I have initiated some new measures.

Those of you that attended our recent Department Convention saw that there are now two fewer line officers on the Executive Committee, which will save the department around \$14,000 in travel and other expenses. It was also decided that we would not send our Senior Vice Commander to orientation at our National headquarters in Cold Spring, Kentucky, last month. This saved the Department another \$2,500 in travel and hotel costs. I also asked our Columbus office to look at cost savings measures there, everything from postage to purchases. I have also asked our Past Department Commanders (PDC) to recommend suggestions for prudent savings. Finally, I have also initiated two new temporary committees to review and recommend changes to both our Fall Conferences, which cost about \$30,000 each and are less attended every year and to our current Chapters and Units locale, participation and viabilities. These committees memberships consist of; an Executive Committee member, a Finance Committee member, a PDC member, an Auxiliary Department member and the Department Adjutant. The results of these committees' finding will be presented at the Fall Conference to a joint session.

Let me make it perfectly clear, your Department is not broke. We have simply been spending more money than we have been taking in and if the current rates of income and expenditure continue unchanged, we would have a financial crisis in the next few years. No business or household would continue to operate at a deficit and not make the needed changes. Other veteran and fraternal groups are also experiencing a more restrictive fiscal reality and hopefully they too will also make needed changes, because strong fraternal groups and veterans service organizations make Ohio a better place to live. Change is uncomfortable as it deviates from an established routine, but in our case, change is fiscally necessary. To you as members of DAV Team Ohio, make no mistake, our Department will continue to function effectively and provide service with little noticeable changes, but smart budget changes are being made and more are being studied. DAV Ohio will continue to be the premiere veteran's service organization in Ohio. However, fiscal reality dictates that your leadership takes a new responsible way forward.

David Bilinovich
State Commander

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

National Headquarters	(877) 426-2838
NSO Office, Cleveland	(216) 522-3507
NSO Office, Cincinnati	(513) 684-2676
Washington 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>	
Dayton DSO, Leland Sink	(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

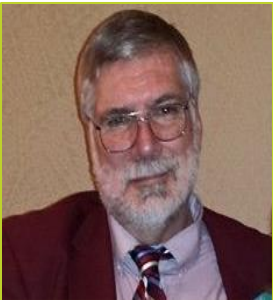
STATE OFFICERS 2016-2017

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

DATES TO REMEMBER

Aug. 4-5-6, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Madison County Ch. #93, Walmart, London, OH.
Aug. 12-13, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Darke County Ch. #57, Marathon Gas, Eikenberrys South, Ace Hardware, Greentown LLC, Kroger, Walmart, 8 a.m.-5p.m.
Aug. 12-13-14, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Madison County Ch. #93, Ben & Joy Restaurant, Mt. Sterling, OH.
August 20, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Auglaize County Ch. #73, Walmart, Community Market, True Value, Post Office, Wapakoneta, OH at 9 a.m.-12 noon
September 1-4, 2016	Forget Me Not, Northern Hills Ch. #115, Northgate Kroger, Mt. Airy Kroger, Montfort Heights Kroger, North College Hill Kroger, Brentwood Kroger, Forest Park Kroger.
September 3, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Wayne County Ch. #44, Walmart, Wooster, OH.
September 9-10, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Willie Marcum Ch. #72, Buhlers River Styx, 3626 Medina Rd., Medina, OH.
September 17, 2016	District 2 Meeting, VFW Post 9582, 4170 Old Springfield Rd., Vandalia, OH at 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
September 18, 2016	District 7 Meeting, Alliance Ch. #50, 9540 McCallum Ave., Alliance, OH at 1 p.m.
September 24, 2016	District 5 Meeting, Ch. #20, 1319 W. Erie Ave., Lorain, OH at 1 p.m.
October 15, 2016	District 8 Meeting, Ch. #117, 3134 Guernsey St., Bellaire, OH at 11 a.m.
October 16, 2016	District 4 Meeting, Ch. #43, 606 Fishlock Ave., Findlay, OH, Meeting at 1 p.m., Lunch at 2 p.m.
October 16, 2016	District 6 Meeting, Willie Marcum Ch. #72, 620 N. Broadway, Medina, OH, Lunch at 1 p.m. and Meeting to follow.
October 22, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Putnam County Ch. #77, Walmart, Ottawa, OH.
November 4-6, 2016	Fall Conference, Crowne Plaza, Dublin, Ohio.
November 19, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Wayne County Ch. #44, Buehlers, Orrville, OH.
Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2017	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
June 22-25, 2017	96 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
July 29-Aug. 1, 2017	National Convention, New Orleans, LA.
Nov. 3-5, 2017	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH.
February 25-28, 2018	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
June 21-24, 2018	97 th Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
Nov. 2-4, 2018	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH.

NOTES FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT KENNETH MARCUM



The 19th Annual Commanders & Adjutants Orientation was held July 9-12, 2016 at the National Headquarters in Cold Springs, Ky. Commander Bilinovich and I attended. There were 46 states represented and 151 in attendance making this the largest orientation in the 19 year history! Topics ranged from Inspector General, Communications, Membership, IT, Employment, Voluntary Services, Legislation and Services to Veterans. It was all very inspirational. Many Departments share what was working or problems that have encountered along the way.

Three main themes came up on all the following topics:

- 1.) Increasing membership
- 2.) Stimulating greater involvement and support of DAV programs by members
- 3.) Improving awareness and acceptance and support of DAV and its programs from community leaders, opinion-makers and general public.

Our emphasis was membership virtually on every subject, "it's the life blood of the DAV". We have to evolve and learn to embrace the changes that have and will continue to occur as time goes on. We need to continue to effectively respond to the needs of past and present generations of veterans and their families, providing unwavering dedication to those who have sacrificed for our way of life, often with a life-changing illness or injury.

DAV has 52 state-level departments and 1,280 active chapters nationwide. In June 2015, DAV closed the year achieving a new landmark with 1,301,539 members.

Remember ***we are all leaders in the DAV!*** You are a spokesperson for our organization in your community and state. Your authority to speak out on issues affecting ill and injured veterans and their families come directly from your

position and membership in the organization that represents this group of people. Don't take that for granted. Learn the issues, participate in legislation and stay informed.

A LITTLE-KNOWN BENEFIT FOR AGING VETERANS

Here's a riddle: When is a government benefit that pays for caregivers, assisted living and a nursing home not a benefit? When hardly any people know they're entitled to it.

That seems to be the story with a Department of Veterans Affairs benefit called the Aid and Attendance and Housebound Improved Pension benefit, known as A&A, which can cover the costs of caregivers in the home (including sons and daughters who are paid to be caregivers, though not spouses) or be used for assisted living or a nursing home.

The benefit is not insignificant: up to \$2,019 monthly for a veteran and spouse and up to \$1,094 for the widow of a veteran.

Surprised that you've never heard of it? You're not alone.

It's probably one of the lesser-known benefits. Of the 1.7 million World War II veterans alive as of 2011, who were in need of caregiving assistance and thus eligible, only 38,076 veterans and 38,685 surviving spouses were granted the A&A benefit that year.

Not much has changed. A search of the Veterans Affairs Web site for evidence of public information efforts in the six years since came up blank.

The program's low visibility might be an effect of the size of the department. The V.A. is the second-largest agency in the federal government, and you can't expect everybody to know everything.

To bridge the information gap, the introduction of VeteranAid.org, a Web site and a 501(c)(3) charity, in 2005, to provide information about A&A eligibility and how to apply.

To qualify, a veteran need not have suffered a service-related injury. He or she only had to have clocked at least one day of his or her 90-day minimum military service during a time of war and need caregiving for activities of daily living.

Applying can be confusing and arduous. If you know the program's name and search the Veterans Affairs Web site for Aid and Attendance, the first page states, among other things, that you are not eligible for A&A unless you already qualify for a basic Veterans Affairs pension — for which you have to be "totally disabled."

That's more than a little misleading.

What people don't know is that when wartime veterans turn 65, the V.A. automatically classifies them as 'totally disabled. And if they meet income and asset criteria, they are eligible for a basic pension.

The A&A benefit can be more than 50 percent higher than the basic veteran's pension (\$24,239 annually for a veteran and spouse with A&A, versus \$16,051 for a basic pension). The income and asset cutoffs are also higher than for A&A benefits.

Not all Veterans Affairs officers are in the dark about A&A.

One warning note: Scams abound. The department forbids anyone to charge to help veterans fill out these challenging forms, yet a growing number of companies — many of which, on a Web search for "Aid and Attendance," pop up with waving flags and red-white-and-blue banners — offer to "help" veterans fill out the forms free, then charge thousands of dollars for financial consultation.

Financial planners at assisted living facilities are putting on seminars about the A&A benefit — but it isn't out of the goodness of their hearts. They are trolling for residents who have too much money to qualify, to get them to move assets into annuity products that don't count as income or assets and yield big commissions. (This is possible because, unlike Medicaid, with its five-year lookback, Veterans Affairs has no lookback on asset transfers.)

The department does not reveal maximum allowable assets. But \$80,000 (the house and a car are exempt from this total) seems to be in the ballpark, though someone with more assets could still qualify if expenses were very high.

Income limits are not set in stone either. But the maximum is around \$20,000 to \$23,000 after deducting costs for medical expenses, caregivers, and assisted living or nursing home fees.

KOCHS' CONCERNED VETERANS FOR AMERICA PUSH FOR PRIVATIZATION OVER OBJECTIONS OF VETERAN SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS

The Kochs' veterans' "advocacy" group, Concerned Veterans for America, got a seat on the Commission on Care—formed by the 2014 Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act to improve veteran care—despite objections from Veteran Service Organizations. These misgivings were well placed as CVA is now under fire for its role in drafting a document outside the normal deliberative process of the commission calling for the privatization of VHA services.

The faction of seven commission members dubbed their proposal "The Strawman Document." Echoing the Kochs'

previous pushes to dismantle the Veteran's Health Administration, the paper recommends the privatization of veterans' health services and a "BRAC-like process" of closures for existing VHA infrastructure.

While Concerned Veterans for America and medical industry executives—executives representing businesses that stand to benefit financially from privatization—splintered from the group to meet without the input of other advisers and recommend closure, representatives from groups that actually represent the interests of veterans strongly condemned The Strawman Document's proposals to privatize veterans' care. Disabled American Veterans, Veterans Of Foreign Wars Of The United States, The American Legion, Paralyzed Veterans Of America, Military Order Of The Purple Heart, AMVETS, Vietnam Veterans Of America, And Iraq And Afghanistan Veterans Of America signed onto a letter expressing "grave concerns" with the documents proposals.

Concerned Veterans for America's hell bent campaign to dismantle the Veterans Health Administration while sidelining groups that represent over 5 million veterans demonstrates that CVA is nothing more but another tool of the Kochs' insatiable drive to gut government services and expand their influence—even if veterans have to pay the price.

Kenneth Marcum
State Adjutant

DAV MAKING LEGISLATIVE STRIDES IN CONGRESS

The efforts that the DAV Department of Ohio made in February of 2016 during the Mid-Winter Conference are now paying off in Congress. Four veteran related bills were passed in June and one in July by the House of Representatives and will be referred to the United States Senate for further consideration and action. All five(5) bills were DAV National Resolutions, as a part of an overall legislative program entitled "Operation: Keep the Promise."

Operation: Keep the Promise was an initiative started during the administration of Past National Commander Joe Johnston, a life member of DAV Chapter #63 (Clermont County, Ohio). Since starting Operation: Keep the Promise, two (2) computerize programs (Commander's Call and Setting the Record Straight) have also been initiated by the National DAV.

The five (5) veteran-related House of Representatives bills are:

H.R. 5229, Improving Transition Programs for All Veterans Act. This bill would authorize a new study to evaluate the effectiveness of transition services for new veterans, with special emphasis on women veterans, which directly corresponds to DAV National Resolutions #129 and #138. Submitted by Rep. Mark Takano and co-sponsored by Rep. Aumua Redewagen, this bill focuses on the unique transition challenges faced by women and also veterans with disabilities. Rep. Redewagen's staff met with the DAV Department of Ohio delegation in February.

H.R. 2460 To Improve the Provision of Adult Day Care Services for Veterans. This bill would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) to pay costs associated with veterans receiving adult day care services to state veterans' homes, which directly corresponds to DAV National Resolution #101. The State of Ohio operates veterans' homes in Georgetown and Sandusky and this proposed legislation will directly impact their operations in a positive manner. This bill was co-sponsored by Rep. Marcy Kaptur and Rep. Tim Ryan, both representing the State of Ohio. Rep. Kaptur's staff met with the DAV Department of Ohio delegation in February.

H.R. 3956 VA Health Center Management Stability and Improvement.

This bill would authorize the Department of Veterans Affairs to develop a plan to hire a director for each VA Medical Center without a permanent director. Hiring priority would be given to Medical Centers that have not had a permanent director for the longest period, which directly corresponds to DAV National Resolution #126. This bill was sponsored by Rep. Mike Bost and co-sponsored by Rep. Beto O'Rourke. Rep. O'Rourke's staff met with the DAV Department of Ohio delegation in February.

H.R. 3989 Support Our Military Caregivers Act.

This bill would establish a special appellate-like program to enable a family caregiver of a severely disabled veteran to challenge VA's decision to reduce or deny caregiver supports and services, which directly corresponds to DAV National Resolution #106. An independent contractor would perform an external clinical review and the individual would be notified in writing of the results in 120 days. This bill was sponsored by Rep. Elise Stefanik and co-sponsored by Rep. James

Renacci of the 16th Congressional District of Ohio.

H.B. 5588 The Veterans Compensation COLA Act of 2016.

This bill was introduced by Rep. Ralph Abraham and would provide an increase (COLA) in the rates of compensation for veterans with disabilities. This significant aspect of this bill is that it does not contain the round-down provision that reduced the compensation payment by millions to disabled veterans, which directly corresponds to DAV National Resolution #17. This bill passed in the House of Representatives on July 11, 2016, and was forwarded to the U.S. Senate for action. Rep. Brad Wenstrup (of Ohio) supported this bill and Rep. Wenstrup's staff met with the DAV Department of Ohio delegation in February.

In addition to these five (5) bills, Senator Robert Portman, of Ohio, notified Department Adjutant Kenneth Marcum that he had recently co-sponsored Senate Bill 2921 Veterans First Act. This Bill (S.B. 2921) would "help change the culture at the VA by improving accountability;" "address the crisis of opioid over-prescription among veterans;" "strengthened programs to combat veteran homelessness while improving the disability claims and appeals process;" and "enhancing education benefits for veterans, surviving spouses and children while allowing mobilized Reservists to earn GI Bill eligibility." Senator Portman's staff met with the DAV Department of Ohio delegation in February.

The DAV is making significant strides in getting legislation enacted in Congress during the 114th Congressional Session to benefit our disabled veterans. It appears that the efforts made by the DAV Department of Ohio in February in Washington, DC, are now paying off for the benefit of our disabled members.

John Plahovinsak
2nd Jr. Vice Commander

VETERAN'S HIRING FAIR

Veterans of the Air Force, Army, Coastguard, Marine Corps, Navy, Guardsmen, Reservists and those transitioning from active duty.

DATE: Wednesday, August 17, 2016
TIME: 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
LOCATION: Woods King Armory, 4303 Green Rd., Highland Hills, OH 44128

-FREE PARKING

- Opening Ceremony begins at 9:50 a.m.
- Bring copies of your DD 214, Resume and be prepared to interview on site.
- For more information call: Dan Abraham (216) 308-8403 or Paul Lord (216) 701-3045

Directions:

From I-271 South, Take exit 28B for Harvard Road, turn right onto Harvard Rd., drive 1.3 miles, turn left onto Green Rd., drive 0.3 miles, 4303 Green Road in on the left.

From I-271 North, take exit 28B for Harvard Road, turn left onto Harvard Rd., drive 1.3 miles, turn left onto Green Rd., drive 0.3 miles, 4303 Green Road in on the left.

DEPARTMENT MAILINGS

To cut down on mailing costs, the Department will only be sending items to the person Authorized to Receive Mail on your Chapter Officers Report and the Adjutant on the Unit Officers Report.

The Department mailings will also only be sent out on a monthly basis, unless it is urgent. Department Staff can always email documents as needed, as long as an email has been provided.

If you have any questions feel free to contact Department Headquarters at (614) 221-3582.

NEW OFFICERS FOR 2016-2017

David Bilinovich of Medina was unanimously elected State Commander of the more than 31-thousand members Ohio Disabled American Veterans at the 95th Annual State Convention, June 24-25-26, 2016 in Dublin, Ohio.

Officers elected to serve with Commander David Bilinovich were Senior Vice Commander James Bailey of Brilliant, 1st Junior Vice Commander John Parker of Barberton, 2nd Junior Vice Commander John Plahovinsak of Cincinnati, Executive Committeeman David Weeks of Vandalia, and Executive Committeeman Timothy Dibble of Ashtabula. Thomas Keller of Cincinnati was elected to the Finance Committee, 5-year term. Kenneth Marcum of Springfield was appointed as State Adjutant/Treasurer.

Appointments by Commander Bilinovich approved by the Executive Committee were Robert Habern of Latty, Chaplain; Raymond Hutchinson of Hillsboro, Hospital Chairman; David May of Canton, Assistant Hospital Chairman; Joseph Lenhart of Wapakoneta, Judge Advocate; Richard Healy of Olmsted Falls; Department Inspector (North); Frank Williams of South Vienna, Department Inspector (South) and Legislative Chairman; Steve Strodbeck of Eastlake, Director of Service; Kenneth Reed of London, Officer of the Day; Pete Kazakis of Hartsville, Assistant Officer of the Day; Jymmie Wetherbee of Elyria, Honorary Officer of the Day; Robert Gross of Akron, Sergeant-At-Arms; Curtis Schwehm, Chief of Staff; James Kaster of Strongsville, Assistant Legislative Chairman; Terry Sayers of Liberty, Photographer; Kenneth Marcum of Springfield, Employment Chairman; James Johnston of Batavia, Color Guard Captain.

Commander Bilinovich with the approval by the Executive Committee appointed Eugene Smith of Cincinnati, District One (1) Commander; Robert Foster of Greenville, District Two (2) Commander; Robert Habern of Latty, District Three (3) Commander; David Pollock of Defiance, District Four (4) Commander; Clifton Lewis of Bucyrus, District Five (5) Commander; Andrew Gerhart of Cuyahoga Falls, District Six (6) Commander; Leo Connelly of Youngstown, District Seven (7) Commander; Andrew Matheny of Marietta, District Eight (8) Commander; Robert Mitchell of Bidwell, District Nine (9) Commander; James Kaster of Strongsville, District Ten (10) Commander.

MSO FALL SCHEDULE

DATE	LOCATION	CHP	ADDRESS	P.O.C.	P.O.C. PHONE #
22-Aug	VFW 1275	19	124 East Elm, Lima, OH 45801	Rodney Keller	419-230-2856
23-Aug	Golden Corral	63	4394 Glen Este-Withamsville Rd, Cincinnati, OH	John Plahovinsak	513-474-3863
24-Aug	Cincinnati	1	9000 Reading Road, Cincinnati, OH	Eugene Smith	513-429-3576
25-Aug	Amvets	18	317 East Main St., Chillicothe, OH 45601	Joseph Helsel	740-779-3172
26-Aug	Golden Corral	115	8750 Colerain Ave, Cincinnati, OH 45251	Richard Blue	513-741-1263
29-Aug	Ashtabula CVSO	39	1212 Lake Ave, Ashtabula, OH 44004	Tim Dibble	440-344-1828
30-Aug	Summit CVSO	35	1060 East Waterloo Road, Akron, OH 44306	Mike Stith	330-873-9550
1-Sep	Canfield Fair	2	7265 Columbiana-Canfield Rd, Canfield, OH	Tom Moss	330-727-7215
2-Sep	Chapter 38	38	821 Erie St. South, Massillon, OH 44646	Dave May	330-806-9910
9-Sep	Ohio State University		1739 North High Street	Mike Forrest	614-292-7047