



**FULFILLING OUR PROMISES**  
TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED

Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio

January, 2017 Newsletter

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**FROM THE DESK OF STATE COMMANDER DAVID BILINOVICH**

**HAPPY NEW YEAR**



Happy 2017 to all. Now that 2016 is in the books, it is appropriate not to dwell on it, but rather to take the lessons learned and to use them to make this New Year better. That goes not only for us individually, but for DAV Ohio as well. Learning the lessons of 2016 will help us all make 2017 a great year.

My tour started with a successful transition thanks to PDC Phillip Alexander and all of his hard work over the previous year. Building upon his actions, it was necessary to manage our budget more effectively, analyze all of our Chapters and then to offer assistance to those that are struggling, revise our office staff and employees jobs descriptions, salary ranges, benefits, etc. in the personnel manual, revise our Fall Conference format, better promote the DAV in Ohio and to strengthen our relationship with our Auxiliary.

I am happy to say that our relationship with our sister Auxiliary is as strong as ever and I have made every effort to accommodate my counterpart Commander, Carol Parker Park, and to support her goals throughout the year. The annual Fall Conference will continue, but in a shorter format focusing primarily on Chapters Officers training. New ways in promoting the public awareness of the DAV in Ohio were undertaken. These efforts ranged from getting publicity and financial support from an OSU fraternity, to purchasing a DAV van for the Greater Cleveland Fisher House and in continuing to support the Cleveland I-X Center's salute to veterans. Also the revision of the Department's Personnel Manual and policies have been updated to reflect our employees true job descriptions, salary ranges and benefits available. All of our Chapters have been notified as to expectations, requirements and assistance available. Finally, budget changes to reduce office supplies, postage and travel expenses have been implemented to keep your Department financially sound.

As January also marks the half-way mark of my tour as your Commander, I am focusing on completing the tasks started in 2016, so that my successor can start with his own vision and agenda, after our June convention. I am confident that the next Commander will be able to build upon our successes and lead us through a prosperous second half of the year. Until then, there is still much more work to do. Thank you to all of you and for your support over the past six months.

Now that 2016 is over, the lessons learned are being implemented today or will be in the near future. All of these efforts are to make DAV Team Ohio a stronger and more vibrant service organization that is better able to support our core mission and values. Your continued support is essential to our success in the New Year. Keep up the good work and happy 2017 to all.

*David Bilinovich*  
State Commander

## IMPORTANT NUMBERS

<b>National Headquarters</b>	(877) 426-2838
<b>NSO Office, Cleveland</b>	(216) 522-3507
<b>NSO Office, Cincinnati</b>	(513) 684-2676
<b>Washington Office, DAV</b>	(202) 554-3501
<b>Cincinnati DSO, Tom Kirstein</b>	(513) 475-6443
<i>Tuesday, Thursday</i>	
Lisa Wilson (513) 475-6443	
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
<b>Chillicothe DSO, Charles Knipp</b>	(740) 773-1141
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	
Ext. 7916	
<b>Dayton DSO, Nikki Cochran</b>	(937) 268-6511
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	
Ext. 2962	
<b>Wade Park DSO, Walter Dryja</b>	(216) 791-3800
<i>Monday, Wednesday, Friday</i>	
Ext. 3395	
<b>Columbus DSO, Henry Snodgrass</b>	(614) 257-5487
<i>Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday</i>	
<b>Parma DSO, Richard Healy</b>	(216) 739-7000
<i>Monday-Thursday</i>	
Ext. 2405	

## 2016-2017 STATE OFFICERS

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

## DATES TO REMEMBER

Feb. 26-Mar. 1, 2017	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
March 25, 2017	<i>District 10 Meeting</i> , Capital City Ch. #3, 280 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH at 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.
April 1, 2017	<i>District 5 Meeting</i> , Huron County Ch. #62, 1544 US Highway 20 West, Norwalk, OH. Time TBA
April 2, 2017	<i>District 6 Meeting</i> , Brooklyn-Parma Ch. #116, Memorial Hall, Parma, OH. Time TBA
April 22, 2017	DAV & DAVA Commanders' Testimonial Dinner, Wadsworth, Ohio. More information to follow.
April 29, 2017	<i>District 2 Meeting</i> , Champaign County Ch. #31, 220 E. Court St., Urbana, OH 11 a.m.-2 p.m.
April 30, 2017	<i>District 4 Meeting</i> , American Legion, 500 Glenwood Ave., Napoleon, OH. Meeting at 1 p.m., Lunch at 2 p.m.
April 30, 2017	<i>District 7 Meeting</i> , Alliance Ch. #50, 9540 McCallum Ave., Alliance, OH with Lunch at 12 noon and the Meeting at 1 p.m.
April 30, 2017	<i>District 8 Meeting</i> , Bellaire Ch. #117, 3134 Guernsey St., Bellaire, OH with Lunch at 12 noon and the Meeting at 1 p.m.
June 22-25, 2017	96 <sup>th</sup> Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
July 29-Aug. 1, 2017	National Convention, New Orleans, LA.
September 30, 2017	Chapter Financial Reports are due!
November 3-5, 2017	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH.
Feb. 25-28, 2018	Mid-Winter Conference, Arlington, VA.
June 7-10, 2018	97 <sup>th</sup> Department of Ohio Convention, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, Ohio.
November 2-4, 2018	Fall Conference, Columbus Marriott North, Dublin, OH.

## DEPARTMENT OF OHIO MEMBERSHIP

As of *December 27, 2016*, the Department Membership Report stands at 32,014 members. The Department is 98.15% of goal and 546 members below the yearly goal of 29,571. Total full life membership is 29,025.

## NOTES FROM THE STATE ADJUTANT KENNETH MARCUM



### \$42K IN VA MORTGAGE BENEFITS YOU MAY NOT BE CLAIMING

If you're a veteran, you may want to make a quick spot check to ensure you're receiving the full value of the VA benefits to which you're entitled. Among the most valuable of these are mortgage benefits which, when properly accessed, have a staggering average lifetime value of \$42k.

#### **I am a veteran and DO NOT own a home**

The VA has been helping veterans buy homes less expensively since 1944, offering the following tremendous benefits:

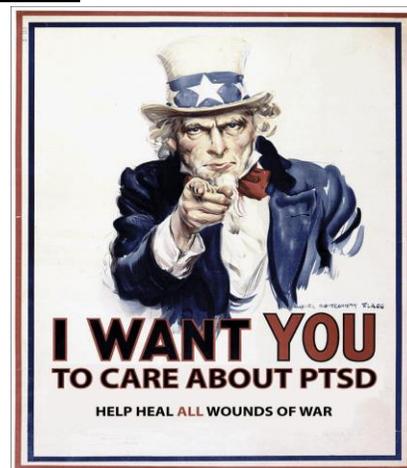
- 0% down payment: Many people think they can't buy a home unless they've saved tens of thousands for a down payment. While this may be true for most people, it is not true for qualified veterans. Vets can access this program to buy a home with 0% down. With rates as low as they are now, you'll likely be surprised at how much house you can afford when buying vs. renting.
- Reduced payments and lower interest: The federal government guarantees VA mortgages, allowing approved lenders to offer lower rates. In fact, between rates that average a little under half a point less, and the fact that vets do not have to pay private mortgage insurance, VA loan payments on a \$250k mortgage average about \$3,100 less than a conventional loan.
- Prequalification: Getting prequalified is the best way to start testing the home buying market. It costs nothing to do it, but lets you know exactly how much house and what benefits you actually qualify for. Plus, touring homes with a prequal letter from a VA lender in your pocket will make sellers sit up and take you more seriously as a potential buyer.
- I previously purchased WITHOUT getting VA benefits: The good news for those who didn't tap into their benefits when they bought a home is that they still can. Even better news is that the average savings for those who refinance from a conventional mortgage to a mortgage with VA benefits is a healthy \$3,100 a year. Just think about how far an extra \$3,100 a year can go.
- I already have a VA mortgage: One of the most powerful features of a VA mortgage is the possibility of easily reducing your existing rate by making a "Streamline Refinance" or IRRRL. This is a simple process that can be completed without an appraisal and without any out-of-pocket expenses. It's far simpler than the original loan because you don't need

another Certificate of Eligibility. Effectively it's a scan for lower rates, and if a lower rate is available, a reduction of your payment to that lower rate.

### **10 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO HELP VETERANS WITH PTSD**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder is one of the signature medical issues for returning combat veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars. So, it's important that the civilian community from employers to educators understand and know how to help those living with PTSD.

Vietnam veterans have been instrumental in pushing for PTSD awareness among the military hierarchy, government officials and civilian communities. For veterans, understanding the symptoms and seeking early treatment is critical for successfully living with the disorder. But civilians can help too.



1. **Understand** that anyone can experience trauma, such as accidents, assault, war or disasters.
2. **Think** broadly. When trauma happens, the survivor's family, friends, coworkers, and community are affected.
3. **Learn** about common reactions to trauma and readjustment to life outside a war zone.
4. **Be Aware** of where to get help for trauma survivors, Veterans, and people with PTSD.
5. **Expand** your understanding of how PTSD is identified and treated.
6. **Know** that treatment for PTSD works.
7. **Ask** a veteran or trauma survivor if talking would help, but do not push if someone is not ready to discuss

things.

8. **Realize** that stigma is a barrier to getting treatment. Getting people to talk or seek help is not always easy.
9. **Know** the facts. More than half of US adults will experience trauma in their lifetime.
10. **Connect** with self-help resources, apps, and videos about PTSD.

### **VA CEMETERIES OFFERING PRE-ENROLLMENT FOR ELIGIBLE VETERANS**

The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) this week announced it now provides eligibility determinations for interment in a VA national cemetery prior to the time of need. Through the Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility Program, upon request, individuals can learn if they are eligible for burial or memorialization in a VA national cemetery. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Robert A. McDonald said, "This new program reaffirms our commitment to providing a lifetime of benefits and services for veterans and their families." Now veterans and their families can plan for their burial needs which will alleviate some of the burden later.

Interested individuals may submit VA Form 40-10007, Application for Pre-Need Determination of Eligibility for Burial in a VA National Cemetery, and supporting documentation, such as a DD Form 214, if readily available, to the VA National Cemetery Scheduling Office by toll-free fax at 1-855-840-8299; email to [Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov](mailto:Eligibility.PreNeed@va.gov); or mail to the National Cemetery Scheduling Office, P.O. Box 510543, St. Louis, MO 63151.

### **WHAT TO SAY**

#### *1. Ask before throwing a welcome-home party.*

"When they're ready, or even before they return, ask how they would feel about a small, welcome-home gathering of close friends," says Jamie Lynn De Coster, 31, who deployed to the Arabian Gulf, South China Sea, Iraq and Afghanistan, among other places, with the U.S. Navy. "Family and friends often want to gather around the returning service member, celebrate their return and just want to be near them. But the truth is, we don't want the Budweiser parade. Look at the soldier's face in that commercial – my veteran friends and I interpreted that not as happy surprise, but as being totally overwhelmed."

#### *2. Give updates on fellow troops from a vet's unit.*

"Keep in mind that the majority of a veteran's unit is still going to be in combat if he gets injured and sent home," says Michael Schlitz, 37, a Purple Heart recipient who lost both hands and the vision in his left eye when a propane tank exploded during a road-clearing mission in Southern Baghdad in 2007. The Army veteran spent six months in the intensive care unit and an additional four months in the burn ward while recovering from his injuries. "Vets are going to want to hear how their guys are doing. They still wish they could be with them. But because they're not there, they're going to want to make sure people are watching their backs that they're getting what they need."

3. *Dole out the tough love when necessary.*

"If you happen to reach a point where a guy is lying in bed, seven days a week, not doing anything, someone's got to step in, slap him upside the head and say, "You're still alive, you go forward and live for the people who don't have that opportunity," says Tommy Clack, 67, a triple amputee and Vietnam War Veteran.

4. *Ask detailed questions relating to that individual.*

"I don't like when people ask, 'What was it like?' as if there's a single answer that one individual could give that would cover the experience of everyone," says David Eisler, 29, an Iraq and Afghanistan veteran. "It's not meant as a stupid question, but it feels like quite the burden to answer for every single vet, especially if you're being approached by a stranger. Start with more general questions – What did you do? When did you serve? – When talking to veterans you don't already know."

5. Go beyond saying, "Thank you for your service."

"I've heard some veterans don't like when civilians tell them, 'Thank you for your Service,'" says Liguori of Unite US. "It's not offensive to them, but it creates a barrier, like civilians can just say thank you and it's enough. Many vets are leaving the service and coming home from overseas struggling with unemployment or just not knowing what they want to do after the uniform. It's hard for a guy who shot a machine gun for 15 months to come back home and see how shooting a machine gun applies to digital marketing. Veterans are finding it challenging to really transition to civilian life. They would rather hear, 'Thank you for your service. How can I help you?' since that second part gives civilians a way to find out how they can help."

*Kenneth Marcum*  
State Adjutant

**RETIRED MLB UMPIRE AT CLEVELAND VAMC**



I greeted retired Major League Baseball Umpire Larry Barnett at the Cleveland VA Medical Center and was accompanied by him during a tour of the facility.

*David Bilinovich*  
State Commander

**BENEFITS PROTECTION TEAM LEADER PROGRAM**

The relationship between a veteran and the government is a "Sacred Contract" which begins on the first day of enlistment and last throughout the course of a veteran's life. In essence, the government "promises" to care for veterans and their families in exchange for military service rendered.

The government's promise made to veterans needs to be maintained. A theme of the 2016 DAV National Convention was "Keep the Promise to American Veterans." A strong advocate, DAV will ensure that the promise is kept.

Although the DAV has had a "grassroots" advocacy network for federal legislation in place, the DAV decided to re-energize our voice. The elected leaders in Washington, D.C. need to hear from us in greater volume. To accomplish this, a new initiative was implemented in January of 2016.

The DAV Departments and Chapter Legislative Chairs were transitioned to an entirely new position – the Benefits Protection Team Leader (BPTL) positions. In the past, the Legislative Chairs were engaged in a primarily passive role, which consisted of informing our membership of pending federal legislation.

The BPTL will be a pro-active position with a dual mission of energizing the DAV members and delivering DAV's most critical messages to our legislators. This can only be accomplished by a total commitment of all DAV members.

The DAV National Legislative Director Joy Ilem has provided the Department of Ohio with initial guidance on developing a strategic plan for the implementation of the BPTL initiative. We will be working closely with the DAV National to refine our Department's strategic plan.

A BPTL Workshop was held at the DAV National Convention in Atlanta To help implement the BPTL initiative, The DAV National has inserted a 28-page BPTL toolkit on its' website. The focus of the workshop/toolkit was to provide a basic orientation of the BPTL and to subsequently develop a "grassroots organization" at the DAV department/chapter levels.

The main vehicle to be used by the "grassroots organizations" is the Commander's Action Network (C.A.N.), which sends out periodic Legislative Alerts and Updates. Initiated in 2015, C.A.N. is a conduit with pre-written electronic letters, which can be modified and e-mailed directly to your Congressional members. Last year, a total of 128,361 electronic letters were sent to Congress. These e-mails urged Congressional members to take action on matters of importance to wounded, ill and injured veterans.

The DAV is not alone in developing an advocacy network to voice our concerns about veterans. The Veterans of

Foreign Wars (VFW) has established a VFW Action Corps based upon the same principles of the C.A.N. According to the VFW, from April to July of 2015, over 32,000 e-mails were sent to members of Congress on three (3) significant issues.

In the next monthly Department Newsletter, information will be provided on developing the Department's Strategic Plan to implement the BPTL Program. Also additional information will be provided on how individual chapter and auxiliary members can participate in the BPTL to make a difference in the lives of veterans and their families.

The National DAV will continue targeted issue campaigns, by the C.A.N. and the BPTL Program, dealing with: (1) the family caregivers of wounded, injured and ill veterans; (2) reforms of the claims appeals system and the VA health care system; and (3) improving VA programs and services for women veterans.

For us to be successful in advancing important issues and achieving legislative victories in Washington, D.C., all Department Chapters and the Auxiliary must actively participate in the BPTL Program After all; we all must strive to "Keep the Promise!"

*John Plahovinsak*  
2nd Junior Vice Commander

### **YOUNGSTOWN CHAPTER #2**



Saturday, December 17, 2016 members of Youngstown Chapter #2 passed out 200 hams for Christmas to those in need. We are very happy to make a difference in the community.

*Leo Connelly*  
District 7 Commander/Ch. #2 Member



### **THANK YOU FROM THE AUXILIARY**

Thanks to everyone that helped with the auction at the State Fall Conference and Thank you to all that brought items to be auctioned off. Due to your help in making our auction a success we made \$1,868.

*Carol Parker-Park*, DAVA Commander  
*Joyce Hutchinson*, DAVA State Adjutant

### **RETIRED NATIONAL GUARDSMEN AND RESERVISTS**

Retired National Guardsmen and Reservists will be granted "Veteran Status" for the first time in the history of the United States, following Presidential approval of a much-haggled bill. President Barack Obama signed the provision into law as part of a larger package on veterans' benefits. Now, Guard and Reserve members will be recognized as Veterans if they serve honorably for 20 years. The measure was contained within the Miller-Blumenthal Veterans Health Care and Benefits Act, a comprehensive document that amends title 38 of the United States Code, pertaining to veterans' benefits.

*David May*  
PDC

### **DEFIANCE CHAPTER & UNIT #36 CHRISTMAS FOR VETS**

Defiance Chapter and Unit 36 delivered Christmas gifts to Defiance area nursing homes and assisting living facilities on Wednesday, December 21, 2016. DAV Chapter Adjutant and PDC David Uetterling and DAV Chapter Commander and Fourth District Commander David Pollock gave a gift of appreciation to veteran Ralph Hutchinson at GlennPark.



## LOCAL VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LVAP)

**REMINDER TO CHAPTERS AND UNITS:** Please make sure you are submitting your LVAP Forms **NO LATER than forty-five (45) days** after the months end. Please complete the entire form for each month, including the last four (4) digits of the volunteers Social Security Number (SSN) and return the completed form to Department Headquarters, P.O. Box 15099, Columbus, Ohio 43215-0099 for processing- Instructions for reporting are located on the bottom of the LVAP Form. Also include a Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP) Volunteer Form for volunteers who are new to the program. If you are in need of the LVAP Form or LVAP Volunteer Form please contact Department Headquarters at (614) 221-3582.

## VETERANS DAY HONOR

This is a picture of Deputy Sheriff Rodney Roe who is the service officer at Buckeye Local High School in Rayland, Ohio. He and I both went to school together. We are both Vietnam Veterans and we both were police officers and firemen. This picture was taken on November 11, 2016. Just six days later, US Bank in Brilliant, Ohio had an armed robbery and was captured by none other than Rodney Roe. Deputy Roe has received awards for saving lives in the past. I am honored to have a very good friend like Rodney. Many Veterans when they get out of the Military they become police, firemen, EMT's, paramedics or otherwise known as First Responders. We are very thankful for our active duty military and our veterans and our nation, God Bless them all.



We Veterans attended both Buckeye Local High School in Rayland, Ohio and Buckeye North Grade School in Brilliant, Ohio on November 11, 2016 Veterans Day the director of the program at North Elementary School respectfully had everyone stand during the Pledge of Allegiance, Veterans Day Prayer and stand during the Star Spangled Banner. Patriotic and Pro-Military poems were read by students with titles such as, *Take a Moment to Thank a Veteran, Honor Our Military and A Thankful Heart, Best on Earth and the Bravest Man I know*, songs were sung such as, America The Beautiful, the Marine's Hymn, My Country Tis of Thee, and Yankee Doodle.

Veterans on stage and the audience were asked to stand and be recognized as the Grand finale was sung, God Bless America, and God Bless the U.S. It was followed by the rifle salute of Three Volleys and playing of Taps I was honored to be a part of the program and on the Firing Squad.

*James Bailey*  
Senior Vice Commander

## VETERANS HELPING VETERANS



I was contacted by the Columbus VA Geriatrics Department Home Based Primary Care Social Workers. They have a patient and asked if we could provide a wheel chair for him. I delivered a Large Hoverround to Mr. Terrance Clark on Tuesday November 29th. The chair meets all of his specific requirements. It was donated to the Chapter last year and we had just put \$450 of new batteries in the like new chair. I was told that this was something that the VA could not order or provide.

It is great that our Chapter can help the VA provide for our Veterans!

Both Terry and his wife have expressed their appreciation for this blessing!

*Thomas Cunningham*  
Capital City Ch. #3 Commander

## VAN WERT CHAPTER #54

Van Wert Chapter #54 Commander and District Three Commander Robert Habern and Defiance Chapter #36 Commander and District Four Commander David Pollock came together this Holiday Season to deliver Christmas to a Disabled Veteran in need in Toledo, Ohio.

