



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

Disabled American Veterans, Department of Ohio

September, 2016 Newsletter

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

#### **THIS AND THAT**



*This past National Convention in Atlanta was a big success. There was a lot of new information regarding both DAV and VA plans and policies presented. We also heard from President Obama, VA Secretary McDonald, two VA under Secretaries and of course from most of our National Officers and Staff. DAV Team Ohio also participated in all the various Committees and one of our Resolutions was adopted by the DAV body. Our NEC meeting was visited by DAV Washington Director Garry Augustine, who spoke fondly of Ohio, and by now National Senior Vice Delphine Metcalf-Foster who presented our Department with a tribute to the Cleveland Cavaliers. DAV Team Ohio, forty strong, even found time to have a good old fashioned southern fried chicken dinner together. Atlanta will be remembered as a good mix of business and camaraderie. Thank you to all that participated.*

*That politics was not covered would be a mistake. As this year is a contentious political one, DAV National put out guidelines to remind all members that voting and campaign participation is an American right, but not while wearing DAV attire or giving the impression that the DAV supports one candidate over another. DAV is a non-profit veteran's service organization and only supports disabled veterans advocacy and issues. As a citizen, please vote your conscience, but as a DAV member, please refer to the Commander's Action Network for veteran's advocacy.*

*This year we will again have DAV at the Ballpark in Cleveland. The Indians game on Sunday, September 4th, against interleague opponent Miami, starts at 4:10 pm, it is also kid's fun day after the game but you can still get home before dark to plan your Labor Day cookout. Tickets are \$20 each through our Columbus office and parking is about \$12 at the stadium. DAV will also be recognized on the largest scoreboard in major league baseball. I hope to see you there.*

*That the Fall Conference is being done away with is not true. We will have the traditional Fall Conference in Dublin this year, November 4-6. Training for Chapter Officers will be held and our Auxiliary will conduct its annual auction and bingo. There will be a Hawaii themed dinner, so please wear a Hawaiian shirt that night, but I am not sure about anyone wearing a grass skirt. We will have a good mix of business and fun at this year's conference, so please try and attend.*

*This however will be the last Fall Conference in this format. Because of escalating costs and declining attendance, our new plans for a Fall meeting will be announced during the joint opening session. While I am determined that budget issues will not negate service work or other critical Department functions, I am obligated to make the necessary changes needed to keep us financially solvent. While I have a committee studying this issue, your input to our Adjutant is always welcome.*

*That is all for now. Thank you for your continued support. Together DAV Team Ohio will thrive and continue to be the best veteran's service organization in Ohio.*

*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, Leland Sink</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	

## STATE OFFICERS

### 2016-2017

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

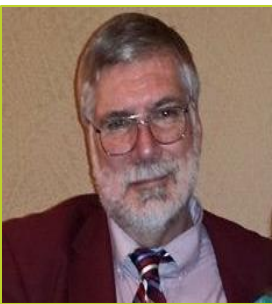
PDC (2015-2016)  
Phillip Alexander

## DATES TO REMEMBER

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 8, 2016	District 1 Meeting, Ch. #1, 9000 Reading Rd., Cincinnati, OH at 12 Noon.
October 15, 2016	District 8 Meeting, Ch. #52, 835 DAV Rd., Whipple, OH Lunch at 11 a.m. and Meeting at 12 Noon.
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	District 10 Meeting, Capital City Ch. #3, 280 E. Broad St., Columbus, OH at 11 a.m.
October 22, 2016	Forget-Me-Not, Putnam County Ch. #77, Walmart, Ottawa, OH.
October 23, 2016	District 3 Meeting, Van Wert Ch. #54, 111 N. Shannon St., Van Wert, OH at 1:00 p.m.
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 <sup>th</sup> 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 <sup>th</sup> 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

### VA PRIVATIZATION DEBATE TO HINGE ON COMING REPORT



WASHINGTON — The coming week could be a watershed moment in the volatile debate over privatizing more health care at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

A panel created by Congress to overhaul the VA is expected to release final recommendations July 6 that are two years in the making and will likely include the option of private care for the millions of veterans who now use the federal system of hospitals and clinics.

It will come amid controversial proposals to give all veterans a card to access private doctors and to turn the VA into a not-for-profit corporation. Those efforts to push the department toward privatized care caused near universal blowback from national veterans groups. Unionized VA employees were staging opposition rallies across the country due to fears over privatization in the lead-up to the commission's VA report.

"This is about closing VA medical centers — closing them, locking them up and doing away with them," said J. David Cox Sr., national president of the American Federation of Government Employees.

The union represents about 230,000 VA employees and had already staged 24 rallies as of June 24, with more than another dozen planned, Cox said.

"I think you are going to see this going on all summer," he said.

The union is concerned that the Commission on Care is bent on significantly expanding the use of private care to treat veterans — a move that Cox said could result in the closure of 12 to 15 VA health care facilities annually due to a lack of need.

A spokesman for the Commission on Care, which was created in 2014 in the wake of a nationwide VA wait-time scandal, declined an interview request and said the commission would comment when recommendations are released.

Veteran groups appeared less worried about the upcoming report, but there was still reason for concern.

Commission on Care members surprised the union workers and veterans in March with a proposal calling for a "bold transformation" that would transition the VA toward private care and close many facilities during the next 20 years.

Eight veterans groups, including the American Legion and the Veterans of Foreign Wars, strongly criticized the plan and warned they would reject any final recommendations aimed at privatizing the VA health care system, which is the largest integrated health care network in the country.

"Veterans want to receive more care from VA than what they now receive," said Carlos Fuentes, deputy legislative director for the VFW. It remains uncertain how much of the proposal will survive into the final recommendations set to be delivered to President Barack Obama.

A set of draft recommendations released by the commission earlier this month – the clearest indication of what its final report might contain – pointed toward a softer overhaul.

All VA doctors and patients would be given the option of choosing private health care as well as in-house treatment under the draft. The department's health care system "should allow clinicians and veterans to decide together if purchased care is in respective patients' best interest."

The recommendations also include consolidating VA's disconnected patchwork of private care networks now used across the country, which the department has been advocating to Congress during the past year as a crucial overhaul.

Those changes would be much more in line with what veterans groups have been advocating.

"What we are hoping to see really is recommendations that are going to embrace this idea of an integrated care model that will provide high-quality and timely access to health care," said Jackie Maffucci, the research director at Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America. "We've been saying for a while that the VA can't do this alone there has to be a community component."

The VA has long sent veterans out into the community to get some types of care. But the current debate over privatization burst open following the 2014 revelations that long waits at VA hospitals were systematically covered up by management.

Congress passed a \$16-billion VA overhaul aimed at relieving the appointments bottleneck. It created the Veterans Choice card, which provided access to outside doctors and providers for veterans who had to wait more than 30 days to be seen or lived more than 40 miles from a VA facility.

The card, though flawed and underutilized early on, dramatically increased the use of private care. This month, one million appointments had been scheduled under the program.

Lawmakers have floated proposals to further expand the use of private care.

Sen. John McCain, R-Ariz., is backing a bill to make the Choice card universal and permanent for all veterans, essentially transforming it into a new public health insurance card that could be used outside the VA system.

A more radical plan was sketched out earlier this month by Rep. Cathy McMorris Rodgers, R-Wash., who is the House GOP conference chairwoman. Her draft bill terminates the VA's role in hospital care, medical services and other health care and creates a government-chartered, not-for-profit corporation and board of directors to take its place.

Both proposals have been opposed by veterans. The McMorris Rodgers proposal "would have immediate and permanent negative consequences for millions of veterans who choose and rely on VA health care," according to a June letter to the lawmaker from 26 veteran groups.

The Commission on Care report could finally direct the debate toward specific changes at the department.

"I think it is a critical time because there are a lot of ideas floating around out there," IAVA's Maffucci said. "It seems like change is coming, so we've got to get it right."

### **DID YOU KNOW???**

How many members of Congress have served in the military?

Only 20% of the 535 members of the new Congress have served in the military, 25 from the Senate and 90 from the House of Representatives. Juxtapose that with 1975, when over 70% of those elected had served in the armed forces.

How many war veterans are there in the United States?

There are 21.8 million veterans of the U.S. armed forces as of 2014, according the Census Bureau, approximately 10 percent of whom are women. To put that in context there are 319.2 million Americans, according to the bureau.

What percent of the population serves in the military?

Less than 0.5 percent of the population serves in the armed forces, compared with more than 12 percent during World War II. Even fewer of the privileged and powerful shoulder arms.

There are 8,400 attack helicopters in the world. The US owns 6,400 of them. Also, the US has 10 aircraft carriers. The rest of the world also has 10....combined.

The 442nd Infantry Regiment, composed of largely Japanese American unit that served during WWII, did so while their families were held in internment camps. Their motto was "Go for Broke" and they were the most decorated unit in U.S. military history.

The US Pentagon will fund Hollywood movies that portray the military in a positive light.

The U.S. government spent years holding fake arrival ceremonies honoring the return of American soldiers killed in WWII, Vietnam, and Korea to American soil, but the planes were actually empty. The ceremonies were known by staff as "The Big Lie."

In 2014 Congress spent \$120 million on tanks even though the Military repeatedly told them they have no use for them. For the second time.

The U.S. military originally planned to provide personnel, vehicles, and costumes for the film 'Independence Day', but backed out after producers refused to remove the script's Area 51 references.

Apache pilots train their eyes to work independently.

Even decades later the U.S. military is still tracking and arresting deserters from Vietnam. President Jimmy Carter pardoned civilian draft evaders in 1977. The pardon did not apply to those already serving in the military.

In the Gulf War, 9 M1 Abrams Tanks destroyed 28 T-Series Iraqi Tanks, 16 Iraqi personal carriers and 39 Iraqi trucks in under 23

minutes.

Russia built and flew a nuclear powered bomber that killed its own crew by lack of radioactive shielding.

A French Canadian soldier during WWII single-handedly captured 93 German soldiers and He declined the invitation to be decorated, because according to him General Montgomery (who was giving the award) was "incompetent" and in no position to be giving out medals.

There was a small group of Korean soldiers during World War II who were captured and forced into the Japanese army, then captured and forced into the Soviet army, then captured and forced into the Nazi German army, and ended up fighting in the Invasion of Normandy where they were captured once again by American forces.

Women make better fighter pilots than men because the female body is better suited to handle g-force and less likely to lose consciousness during flight.

Due to American Public Law 94-479, by the 94th Congress, George Washington is protected from being outranked by any officer in past, present, and future – so if there's a 6 star general, Washington is automatically upgraded to 7.

The US Military has a cemetery where the 'dishonored dead' are buried.

Medal of Honor recipient Thomas Baker was gravely wounded and had his comrades leave him behind, propped up against a tree with a pistol that had 8 bullets remaining. Later they found his body next to the tree, surrounded by 8 dead Japanese soldiers.

The only person a 5-star U.S. general will salute first (other than the president) is a Medal of Honor recipient.

A man who joined the Marines as a private, got promoted to Sergeant and then became an officer as a Lieutenant, then got discharged, enlisted as a Private again, then became an officer again, and ended up being a Lieutenant General.

Military dogs were branded as "equipment" and soldiers were ordered to leave them behind if necessary. A bill is now in place that makes them veterans of war and once they return home, they are retrained and re homed to finish living their lives.

To prevent mistreatment, dogs in the military are always higher ranks than their handlers.

The United States Marine Corps tested the usefulness of ordinary skateboards in urban combat.

The U.S. government has specifications for its pens used by personnel: The pen consists of seven different parts and meets 16 pages of military specs, including that it be able to write for a mile with no fading and withstand temperatures up to 160 degrees and down to 40 degrees below zero.

The U.S. Air Force issues "Go Pills" to pilots to reduce fatigue and increase awareness on long-term flights.

*Kenneth Marcum*  
State Adjutant

### **THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE – 1893 YOU HEARD IT HEAR FIRST!**

1893 Event Marked the Official Start of the Pledge of Allegiance in the U.S.

"I pledge allegiance to my flag..." On April 25th, 1893, these words were uttered as the nation's official Pledge of Allegiance for the very first time. The site Light Attendants Stations – better known as Twin Lights (Light House) – and the occasion was the most eagerly anticipated Flag Raising Ceremony in American history. A large crowd gathered as a huge flag was hoisted up the Liberty Pole, the 135-foot tall "national flagpole" erected for the event. The pole was twice as tall as the Twin Lights towers!

A review of naval vessels from all over the World, invited by President Grover Cleveland, filled the horizon as it joined the United States Navy in providing a glorious backdrop to the proceedings. Offshore, an international flotilla of naval vessels-on their way to New York Harbor-fired a salute as they passed. The lead ship was the Miantonomah, the last U.S. navy ironclad warship in service.

The call for a national oath was triggered by the wave of immigrants coming to America in the 1890's. For millions entering the country through Ellis Island, the Liberty Pole and Twin Lights were the first part of America they saw rising above the horizon.

The 1893 event was dreamed up two years earlier by a Newark businessman named William Osborne McDowell in anticipation of the 400th anniversary of the discovery of America. McDowell wanted to erect a flagpole of unusual height at the highest point of land on the Atlantic coast in the continental United States. That's where Twin Lights Light House entered the equation. He wanted the Liberty Pole to be the first sight to greet immigrants and travelers as they approached New York Harbor.

The Pledge of Allegiance was written by Francis Bellamy for the Youth's Companion, and gained support of Presidents Benjamin Harrison and Grover Cleveland as America's Oath of Loyalty. Using "The Companion's" considerable influence with the nation's public schools and capitalizing on the riding tide of patriotism in the run-up to the Chicago World's Fair-the publisher's nephew, James Bailey Upham, was able to introduce the American flag along with the pledge itself into countless classrooms from coast to coast!

"I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic, for which it stands, on nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." (Original Pledge of Allegiance)

*David J. Weeks*  
Executive Committeeman

### **WELL WISHES**

Former Chaplain for the Department for many years Jim Keller was recently admitted to a rehab facility. If you would like to send well wishes, his address is: Signature Healthcare of Chillicothe, 60 Marietta Road, Chillicothe, Ohio 45601.

## **DISCUSSION OF VETERANS ISSUES WITH CONGRESSMAN BRAD WENSTRUP**



Congressman Brad Wenstrup, of the Ohio Second Congressional District, met with Chapter #63 (Clermont County) Commander John Plahovinsak to discuss veterans' issues during one of Representative Wenstrup's Coffee Cup Briefings in his District. The Ohio DAV Delegation met with members of Congressman Wenstrup's staff during the 2016 Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, DC, to discuss veterans' issues. However, meeting with Congressional Representatives in their own home district is an excellent way to communicate and articulate the views of veterans concerning pertinent legislation in a direct face-to-face manner. Chapter Commander Plahovinsak was able to discuss H.R. 2054 (increased access to VA Health Care for Women Veterans); H.R. 2915 (the Female Veteran Suicide Prevention Act); H.R. 5588 (Veterans' Compensation COLA Act of 2016); and S. 1885 (Veteran Housing Stability Act of 2015) with Congressman Wenstrup. A Lieutenant Colonel in the US Army Reserve, Representative Wenstrup was very receptive to the legislative discussion and accepted a copy of the DAV Publication

"Women Veterans: The Long Journey Home" as well as an Annual Summary of the Activities accomplished by Chapter #63 (Clermont County) in 2015. Commander Plahovinsak also mentioned to Congressman Wenstrup that the DAV Mobile Service Office (MSO) will be in Clermont County providing services to our veterans in August. Meeting with Congressional Representatives and Senators in their home districts or states is an excellent way to participate in the Benefit Protection Team Leaders (BPTL) Program and to articulate veterans' issues and concerns to our legislative leaders.

*John Plahovinsak*  
Commander, Chapter #63 (Clermont County)

## **NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS MONTH**

Family matters. Friendship matters. Support matters. Every veteran matters.

This September, Suicide Prevention Month encourages veterans and their loved ones to focus on the things that give life meaning—the things that matter. Anyone who knows a veteran can help.

Whether a veteran has just returned home, or served years ago, their experiences remain with them. Their wounds might not be visible, but they need our attention. We can support veterans who are dealing with challenges of all kinds; we're in this together.

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs urges groups and individuals nationwide to stay alert for signs of suicide risk in the veterans they care about. If you're concerned about the veteran in your life, lending a hand doesn't have to be hard. Just talking about it opens the door to finding support. The Veterans Crisis Line can help.

The Veterans Crisis Line is a free, confidential resource that veterans and their families and friends can access any day, any time. Trained professionals at the Veterans Crisis Line—many of them veterans themselves—are ready to listen, providing free, confidential support, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

### Some signs of concerning behavior include:

- Hopelessness, feeling like there is no way out
- Anxiety, agitation, sleeplessness, or mood swings
- Feeling like there is no reason to live
- Rage or anger
- Engaging in risky activities without thinking
- Increasing alcohol or drug use
- Withdrawing from family and friends

### If you notice any signs of concerning behavior here are some things you can do:

- Start a conversation: Mention the signs that prompted you to talk to them. Stay calm and let the person know you want to help them. Don't leave the person alone.
- Listen, express concern and reassure the individual: Let the person know you care and that you take the situation seriously. Letting the person know you care will go a long way in establishing a support system.
- Create a safety plan: Ask the person if they have access to anything that could harm them and call for help if you feel the situation is dangerous.
- Get the individual help: Provide resources for the individual. Call the Veteran's crisis line at 1(800)-273-8255. Or if you feel the situation is severe, take the individual to the closest emergency room or call for help.

Individuals experiencing such thoughts and behavior can make simple yet effective lifestyle changes to help alleviate these harmful thoughts and behavior. These can include getting exercise, taking time off of work, and spending time with friends and family to avoid isolation. Ultimately, anyone at risk or feeling uneasy should talk to their health care provider.



**Confidential help for  
Veterans and their families**

**HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE 95<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL NATIONAL CONVENTION IN ATLANTA GEORGIA**



Some star power made it to Atlanta to say “thank you” in person to our veterans after previewing a rough cut of their new movie Hacksaw Ridge. The movie, due out in November 2016, is about the country’s first conscientious objector, Desmond Doss, to receive the Medal of Honor. Disclaimer- DAV did not pay for Mr. Gibson or Mr. Vaughn to attend the convention or speak. They asked if they could attend to show their new film.



Department of Ohio 1<sup>st</sup> Junior Vice Commander John Parker spoke as the National Resolutions Committee Chairman to DAV members about the resolutions to be considered by National.



President Barack Obama spoke to thousands of DAV members at our National Convention in Atlanta. He discussed how we can ensure our veterans receive the benefits they have earned, as well as continue expanding opportunities for our service members, veterans, and their families.



The State of Ohio was honored to have DAV National 1<sup>st</sup> Jr. Vice Commander Delphine Metcalf-Foster from the Department of California, attend the Department Convention back in June, and in light of the Cleveland Cavaliers beating her Golden State Warriors presented the Department of Ohio Commander David Bilinovich with a poster stating “Ok, You Won,” and even wore her Cavaliers shirt with pride at the National Convention! Congratulations Delphine on moving up to DAV National Senior Vice Commander!



DAV Department of Ohio National Service Officer’s with Marine One; which is the call sign of any United States Marine Corps aircraft carrying the President of the United States. Our team soared high with the best at National Convention.



New National Commander, Dave Riley of Mobile, Alabama DAV Chapter 7. Dave is the first quadruple amputee and first Coast Guard veteran to assume the post of National Commander.