



BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Massachusetts is known to be rich in colonial history, as seen preserved throughout the state in its many museums, memorials and the like. Our home has been the birthplace of many beginnings and "firsts" in the country, paving the way to "change the course of history," including that of Black History.

African-Americans have engaged in every war fought by or within the United States. In the North, we are the home of the first African-American regiment, the 54th Massachusetts Infantry.

William Harvey Carney, an African-American, served as a Sergeant in the 54th Massachusetts Infantry. Separated from his regiment during the storming of Fort Wagner, and having endured three acute wounds, he saved the 54th's flag from capture and did not let it touch the ground. In 1900, he was the first African-American awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor, our Nation's highest military award.

Charles Douglass is said to be the first soldier enlisted in African-American regiments from Massachusetts having served in the 54th Infantry and then as a first sergeant in the 5th Cavalry.

For more information, check out the online exhibit:

Fire and Thunder Massachusetts Blacks in the Civil War at the Commonwealth Museum. They mention it to be "a story worth telling" but it is also a story worth reading.

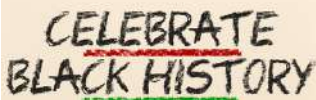
I would be remiss if I did not mention one of our very own, DAV Department of MA 2nd Junior Vice Commander and current Adjutant and Treasurer of Chapter 64, Andrea Gayle-Bennett who became the first African-American female O-6 in the history of the MA Army National Guard as well as the first non-physician and first African-American to hold that position. These are only a fraction of Andrea's accomplishments during her military service and she continues to serve beyond service in many ways.

February, is Black History Month.

Dedicated to create awareness of the contributions to the United States from African-Americans.

Massachusetts is rich in history and firsts, and there are many stories to be told.
Are you, or do you know an African-American veteran with a story to be told?

If so, email your story to inquiry@davma.org. A junior member is working on a project and your story could be highlighted on our Facebook page during the month!



*Article written and submitted by:
DAV Auxiliary MA State Commander, Kayla Valila*

F
E
B
R
U
A
R
Y

VOLUNTEER WITH US!

Click or Scan the
QR Codes for more
information!



UPCOMING EVENTS
Stay Connected via
FB and the calendar on
www.davma.org/events



IS YOUR CHAPTER
OR UNIT ACTIVE?
WE WANT TO SEE!

@DAVMASSACHUSETTS



COMMANDER RICHARD CONNOR

A raise in benefits was a great way to start 2023! This did not happen without support from our fellow veterans. Later this month we will again be traveling to Washington DC to meet with our legislators on important issues regarding our veterans and their families along with attending training seminars.

We are always looking for more veterans to accompany and attend these important sessions. If you or someone you know is interested please contact myself or our Department Adjutant Dan Stack.

As my time as your Department Commander is winding down, I am asking if you have anything that you need help with or would like to see happen, please reach out to me at 413-374-3016.

I have heard throughout my 5 years about the lack of people doing fundraising. I have offered to travel and help but have not received any calls. The Auxiliary Units are there to help the Chapters. Consider having them help with your fundraisers. We should all work together!

Your Chapter's monthly meetings should include a question and answer time. Educate your members on their benefits, and share your knowledge. We are all in this together!

If we can participate in local events including parades and other outreach events we may increase our membership and give the communities a better understanding on what DAV stands for and can do to help veterans and their families. I will be visiting different chapters until my term ends to see if there is anything I can do to help. If your chapter is meeting and would like me to attend, please give me a call.

Finally I am happy to announce that Russell Moore of Chapter 122 has been appointed VAVS of Bedford VA!!

SR. VICE BOB KINSMAN



This month, over 30 DAV & DAV Auxiliary members from the Department of Massachusetts will travel to Washington, D.C. to lobby our federal legislators on the importance of supporting [DAV's Critical Policy Goals](#). By enacting new laws supporting our ill & injured veterans, Congress can assist the VA in caring for our fellow veterans, helping us to fulfill the mission of the DAV.

Our goal for this visit is to ensure that Massachusetts Representatives & Senators strongly support our initiatives. Our combined efforts show up in the many veterans-related bills enacted into law by Congress. Examples of these successes are shown in the [2022 Legislative Victories for Veterans report](#). I am also including a PACT Act Overview for your use. The Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 is a new law that expands VA health care & benefits for Veterans exposed to burn pits and other toxic substances. This law helps us provide generations of Veterans and their survivors with the care and benefits they've earned and deserve, thanks in part to your efforts.

There is still time to sign-up for DAV Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. Feb 26- Mar 1, 2023!

Locally, at the Massachusetts State House we will need to be proactive with our Legislative & Executive branches of Government. Currently, the web site for the 193rd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts states: "there are no members appointed in the current General Court" assigned to the Joint Committee on Veterans and Federal Affairs. Our state government is currently addressing many worthwhile goals & priorities, and DAV Department of Massachusetts must do it's best to ensure that service to our military & veterans remains a top priority.

Also, at the next Department Executive Committee (DEC) Meeting, we will address a method for you to influence our legislative process by preparing a Resolution that will be reviewed by the DAV Department, then the National staff & volunteers at our Annual Meetings. If your proposal gets approved, it could be included by the DAV Legislative Team in next year's edition of DAV's Critical Policy Goals. I am attaching an overview on [Writing a DAV Resolution](#) in preparation for this future training session.

Scan/click QR Code to view the
Joint Committee on
Veterans Affairs Brief.



Scan/click QR Code to view the
2023 Critical Policy Goals.



Mid-Winter

TRAINING SESSION

FEBRUARY 11, 2023 10AM-2PM

3 VICTORY LANE GARDNER, MA 01440

LUNCH AND REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED.

HOSTED BY BOB KINSMAN



1ST JR VICE BOB BRONSON

National Web Site, DAV.org

[New Membership Goals Webinar](#)

[Webinar – Membership Department: How We Can Serve You](#)

Departments website at DAVMA.org.

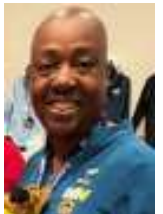
Membership Forms - DAVMA [MembersPortal](#)

First of all, I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season and that the New Years finds all of you in good health. Last week there was a Line Officer meeting that highlighted some of the different changes that are coming in the next few months. The main one is that the Department will be sending out a meeting template for Chapters to follow. The purpose of this is to build on some of the things that the more successful Chapters are doing and to have consistency throughout the State. It's not a requirement, but rather a suggestion as to what may help not only maintain, but build membership.

The Membership Committee met a few days after that and built on the outline of the previous Line Officer meeting. The bottom line was that if our Chapters want to not only survive, but to expand, each organization will have to attract new Veterans. The one thing that was least understood was that virtually any Veteran that discharged with a rating above dishonorable is qualified to join the DAV. Let me reiterate that, any Veteran that has a discharge above Dishonorable is eligible to join the DAV. I always thought that you had to have a disability rating of 10% or more to join. The reason why that isn't true is because you only need to be eligible to apply for a disability rating to join, so that leaves the door wide open to almost any Veteran. How you approach the Veteran is up to you, but a very good suggestion is to ask him or her to meet for coffee at a local restaurant. This way there isn't any pressure, and you can explain what we're all about before asking if they would like to come to a meeting. The details are up to you, but the more we reach out, the better the chances of increasing our membership. This not only helps us, the DAV, but it also helps the Veteran. He or she will better understand what his or her benefits are for having served. The final point you can stress is that by joining they will become a part of the top-rated Service Organization, who's only goal is to help other Veterans.

Most of us are already providing rides to our fellow veterans to medical appointments just to be a good friend. Please consider signing up for the DAV Transportation Network as a volunteer driver so those miles can get logged and credited to the Department! See flyer on the last page of this newsletter for further information on how to get involved!

2ND JR VICE ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT



February is Black History Month and the theme this year is Black Health and Wellness. What does this have to do with DAV Service and Charitable? Everything. Black Veterans have fought in our military since the Revolutionary War. DAV honors the service and dedication of Black veterans who served despite enduring racism and segregation in the country for which they fought. DAV not only acknowledged the past but has expressed a commitment to the future. Two 2023 DAV's Critical Policy Goals are:

1. Ensure equity in VA care, services and benefits for women, LGBTQ+ and minority veterans and
2. Provide a full spectrum of long-term care options for service disabled and aging veterans

As service and charitable we embrace those goals of Health and Wellness as we try to eliminate past barriers by volunteering to transport veterans to and from their VA medical appointments, helping at a VA facility or assisting veterans in the local community.

Additionally, Sunday, Feb 13, 2023, is the start of National Random Act of Kindness Week, which symbolizes our ability to make positive changes in our society through simple, meaningful actions. Just another reason to volunteer some of your time during that week to help veterans in your community and show your appreciation through kind actions.

It is time to think about nominations for the national [DAV scholarship program](#). The scholarship program helps to get the word out to get people brought into our volunteer program so we can help even more veterans, so we can help even more students meet their educational goals. The application deadline is February 28, 2023.

Closer to home, [DAV Chapter 64 Scholarship Program](#) also administers a program for Lynn and Swampscott residents. Let's get the word out.

Lastly, February 20th, is #NationalLoveYourPetDay. Let's give some special attention to our pets and service animals to remind them how special they are.

What are you doing to serve this month? Share your photos on social media and include the hashtags #DAV, #DAVMA, #NationalLoveYourPetDay and #RandomActsOfKindness.

Don't forget to complete both of your monthly volunteer reports.

•[DAV Service Form](#) •[VAVS Form 60: Monthly Reporting Form 60 – LVAP \(xlsx\)](#)

If you have not completed the VAVS forms in the past, You can go back up to 3 years on the VAVS 60.(Fiscal Years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022)

COMMANDER KAYLA VALILA



This year has been flying by. Conventions will be around the corner before we know it. This being said, come the end of the month, Mid-Winter Conference is before us. Many units take time off during the winter from meeting due to the weather. If your unit is meeting, let me know. I would love to join you, see your area and all that you do to support our veterans and their families! These next months tend to go by quickly so be sure to let me know when you meet and if I can be of any assistance. If your unit is not meeting, and you are looking to stay active, reach out to another unit and see if you can be of any help. Whether in person or virtual, it doesn't hurt to reach out.

Let us sustain and surpass the exceptional work we do. By leading the way, being the best at what we do, together, we will continue to set the bar high and set the standards of service for our veterans and their families. Accept nothing less.

SR. VICE DEBRA GEARY

Annual Hospital Fundraiser



Tickets are being or have been distributed to all DAV/DAVA of MA officers, committee members and delegates. Each person will receive five books of 6 raffle tickets and more upon request. Interested? Reach out and get yours today!

Ticket price is \$2.00 for one ticket or \$10.00 for the 6 tickets.

This year's raffle will include 3 baskets of scratch tickets, as follows:

1st prize – Basket with \$300 lottery tickets

2nd prize – Basket with \$200 lottery tickets

3rd prize – Basket with \$100 lottery tickets

in addition to a number of other gift baskets valuing \$25 and up!

All proceeds benefit veterans in the VA hospitals and Soldiers Homes.

Day of the drawing is May 13, 2023 in Gardner, MA



All tickets and donations should be made payable to "DAVA Dept of MA" and mailed to Diane Sullivan, 83 Bay State Avenue, Somerville MA 02144. Also if you would like additional tickets please let Diane know. Should you have any questions, please contact Diane at 781-325-6591 or by email at dsullivan.dava@gmail.com



JUDGE ADVOCATE FRANCES COSTA

Due to the fact that MA State convention is a week earlier this year, please note that any proposed amendments to our State Standing Rules are due to me in writing with a rationale for the proposal no later than April 24th. It may be emailed to fl02447@aol.com or mailed hard copy to my home. -Thank you for your attention to this matter.

ADJUTANT LIZ BUTTERS

National Annual Report Forms were sent to all unit adjutants. Units are encouraged to complete and return the forms to me by the April 28, 2023, deadline to receive the recognition they deserve for their advocacy and work supporting our veterans and their families.

The DAV/DAVA State Convention this year will be held June 8 – 11 at the Double Tree Hilton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA 01453. \$159.00/night + taxes. For reservations call 978-534-9000. **Members who wish to participate on reports judging committees should be present at the hotel by 1:00 p.m. on Thursday, June 8.** Members should inform me by email of their committee preferences. A sign-up sheet for judging committees will also be available at the March SEC meeting in Gardner, MA.

DAVA SEC Meeting – March 11, 2023
DAV Dept. of MA, 3 Victory Lane, Gardner, MA 01440.
9:00 a.m. Coffee Hour – 10:00 a.m. Meeting
All members are welcome to attend.

ADJUTANT, LIZ BUTTERS

EMAIL: MILTONLASS2@GMAIL.COM
CELL PHONE: 781-588-2520

ASST. ADJUTANT, DIANE SULLIVAN

EMAIL: DSULLIVAN.DAVA@GMAIL.COM
CELL PHONE: 781-325-6591

ADJ./ASST. ADJ. MENTEE, JEN BARBARO

EMAIL: JBARBARO@DAVMA.ORG
OFFICE PHONE (M-F): 978-632-1271
CELL PHONE: 978-413-9315

**ADJUTANT DANIEL STACK**

We are working to improve communication within the Department beginning at the chapter level. As many of you have already seen, we will be compiling and dispersing a monthly order of business template to our chapters. This template is in attempt to ensure we are all sharing the same pertinent information at our chapter meetings, but also to bring us back online past the pandemic to ensure we are following proper meeting rituals, utilizing our line officers and chair people, sharing up to date reports, and recording proper minutes.

This is very much a work in progress, so if you would like to see any changes or have any suggestions please reach out and let us know! We would love to hear your feedback on this initiative!

To view current Bills before the 193rd General Court of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, please visit <https://malegislature.gov/bills> and in the search bar on the left type "veteran". We have 75 Bills before the State at this time. While the Department will be reviewing and staying current with all veteran related bills our concentration at this time will be increasing annuities for disabled veterans and gold star families, and tax abatements.

Would you like to see any new laws, or changes made to benefit veterans in the State or Federally? Please, work with your chapter to write a Resolution! Resolutions will be passed forward to the Department, reviewed, and voted on at Department Convention.



VA Life Insurance policies have been serving our nation's Veterans, service members, and their families for over 100 years. Starting January 1, 2023, enrollment opens for Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife)—a new program offering increased access for Veterans age 80 or under with any level of service-connected disability (0-100%).

Life insurance is a key component for future financial planning. With the right policy and coverage amount, life insurance can cover end-of-life costs, provide an inheritance to family, serve as income to a spouse, or cover some outstanding debts.

Those currently enrolled in VA's current policy for service-connected Veterans, Service-Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (S-DVI), may keep their coverage or switch to VALife. Although S-DVI will be closed to new enrollments after December 31, 2022

Eligibility

All Veterans age 80 and under, who have a VA disability rating of 0 to 100 percent are eligible for the VALife program and have no time limit to apply. Veterans who are 81 or older and have applied for VA Disability Compensation before age 81 but did not receive the rating for a new service-connected condition until after turning 81 are also eligible if they apply within two years of their rating.

Type of Coverage

The VALife program offers whole life guaranteed acceptance coverage. Under this type of coverage, the face amount of coverage takes effect two years after the date of enrollment as long as premiums are paid during the two-year period. This two-year waiting period replaces the need for medical underwriting. If the insured dies within this two year period, the beneficiary will receive all premiums paid plus interest.

Cost

The premium rate (the amount you will pay each month or annually for your coverage) depends on your age and the amount of coverage you elect. The premiums for VALife are fixed and based on your age when you enroll. Click here to [FIND OUT MORE ON PREMIUM COSTS](#).

Can premiums be waived?

There are no premium waivers for the VALife program.

How to Apply?

VALife will take effect January 1, 2023. The application will become available on VA's website at that time

Important Dates:

Mid-Winter Feb 25-Mar 1
BOD Meeting March 1, 2023
DEC Meeting March 8, 2023

**If you are considering any fundraising activities, a motion should be brought before your chapter. If approved, please send into the Board of Directors NLT February 25, 2023.

Stay tuned for updates on the calendar! We'll include a constitution & bylaws meeting to occur prior to next DEC meeting, convention information and more!

The year is going to start filling up quick. If you have any events in your area, be sure to send them in to us so we can add them!



DAV provides FREE transportation to veterans for any VA medical appointments

Our Transportation Network drivers are certified through the VA, and ready & willing to assist

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON DAV SERVICES & PROGRAMS
SCAN THE QR CODE TODAY!
ALL SERVICES ARE FREE TO VETERANS



FOR TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE BOSTON VA MEDICAL SYSTEM, TO INCLUDE BROCKTON, WEST ROXBURY, JAMAICA PLAINS, BEDFORD, OR OUTPATIENT VA FACILITIES
CALL: 617-295-7001

FOR TRANSPORTATION WITHIN THE CENTRAL/WESTERN VA MEDICAL SYSTEM, TO INCLUDE LEEDS, WORCESTER, OR OUTPATIENT VA FACILITIES
CALL: 413-582-3078



DAV TRANSPORTATION NETWORK IS IN NEED OF VOLUNTEER DRIVERS

You do not have to be a Veteran or a member to become a volunteer driver. Anyone with interest in assisting veterans through driving is welcome to apply!

Choose the days & hours that work for YOU!

To Apply:

Scan the QR Code below and complete the application. In the comment section at the bottom, please state you would like to become a DAV transportation Network Volunteer Driver



For more information contact our Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) Mr. Terry Mate:
Phone: 617-295-7001
Email: trobert@davma.org



WWW.VETERANSCRISISLINE.NET

24/7, confidential crisis support for Veterans and their loved ones.

You do not have to be enrolled in VA benefits or health care to connect.