



KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO AMERICA'S VETERANS

& AUXILIARY MASSACHUSETTS NEWSLETTER



A GLIMPSE INTO THE 2023

MID-WINTER CONFERENCE

AND MORE

"DEDICATED TO A SINGLE PURPOSE"



MARCH

OUR DEBT TO THE HEROIC MEN AND VALIANT WOMEN IN THE SERVICE OF OUR COUNTRY CAN NEVER BE REPAID. THEY HAVE EARNED OUR UNDYING GRATITUDE. AMERICA WILL NEVER FORGET THEIR SACRIFICES.
PRESIDENT HARRY S. TRUMAN

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

Another great trip to our Mid-Winter Conference hosted in Washington, D.C. with 30 of our very own from Massachusetts. I would like to emphasize how important it is for us as an organization having the opportunity to meet up with our legislators to specifically address the issues that are important to our veterans.

I will be visiting many of our Chapters to help them with any problems that they may have or questions that may come up along the way. If I don't know the correct answer, I will do my best to try and find it. It has become this time of year again where our

Chapters will be voting for their new Line Officers. If you have never run for office, this could be your year.

As spring is heading our way, it's a great time for your chapter to start thinking about different ways on how to do some fundraising. Also, outdoor activities to promote our Chapters and the DAV. Let's all get out there and try to sign up one member each.



SR. VICE BOB KINSMAN



A group of DAV-MA and auxiliary members recently completed a DAV-MA Mid-Winter Orientation & Training Seminar in preparation for attending the 2023 DAV Mid-Winter Conference in Washington, D.C. This comprehensive session provided guidance on DAV's 2023 mission-critical areas of focus. The six major areas of concentration include: (1) PACT Act Implementation; (2) Mental Health/Suicide Reduction; (3) Compensation Benefits Parity; (4) Equity in Care for Women & Minorities; (5) Long-Term Care Options; and (6) Expansion of VA's Capacity to Deliver Care. These major areas are further broken down into 23 separate Critical Policy Goals to be discussed with Congress.

As previously mentioned, 30 DAV & DAV Auxiliary members from the Department of Massachusetts journeyed to our Nation's Capitol to discuss DAV's Critical Policy Goals with our federal legislators. Meetings were scheduled with all of our local Massachusetts legislators, including: U.S. Senators Elizabeth Warren & Edward Markey and U.S. Representatives Richard Neal, James McGovern, Lori Trahan, Jake Auchincloss, Katherine Clark, Seth Moulton, Ayanna Pressley, Stephen Lynch and William Keating. Our goal for this visit is to ensure that Massachusetts Senators & Representatives strongly support our initiatives. Our combined efforts show up in the many veterans-related bills enacted into law by Congress, thereby assisting the VA in caring for our fellow veterans.

Locally, at the Massachusetts State House we have a new **Secretary of Veterans Services, State Rep. Jon Santiago, M.D.** He is a Major in the U.S. Army Reserves, as well as an emergency medicine physician at Boston Medical Center. The appointment has been elevated by Governor Maura Healey to a Cabinet-level position. This is a great opportunity for the DAV to partner with our new Secretary to achieve shared goals. Remember, our state government is currently addressing many worthwhile goals & priorities, and the DAV Department of Massachusetts must do its best to ensure that service to our military & veterans remains a top priority.

EXCLUSIVE

COVERAGE



**Jon Santiago named inaugural Secretary of
the Executive Office of Veterans' Services
- WBZ-TV's Anna Meiler reports.**

Please, if you haven't already done this, join the [DAV Commander's Action Network \(CAN\) here](#). This is a national quick-reaction service that notifies our legislators of DAV support for bills that are important to veterans. 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.



1ST JR VICE BOB BRONSON

Everyone, welcome Major Jon Santiago, our new Cabinet-level Veteran's Secretary. As mentioned, this change in the Massachusetts Department of Veteran Services role takes the place of Cheryl Poppe. She will be missed but I am sure she will continue to be successful wherever she lands. Thank you, Cheryl, for all that you have done for us.

Although Major Santiago is not the first stop resource, he is there to assist all of us when we run into a roadblock or stone wall preventing us from helping our fellow Veterans. The more we are out in the public helping, the more we will attract new members. Veterans want to be part of active and successful service organizations. March 9-29 is DAV March Membership Madness. Let's get out there and show them what we are all about! Don't forget to visit mydav.org for your membership recruitment QR code. Membership fees will be increasing in a few months, so urge veterans to sign-up now while it's still only \$300 for a lifetime membership! (As little as \$10 down to begin!)

2ND JR VICE ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT

March is a month jam packed with opportunities to serve. It's Women's History Month and Brain Injury Awareness Month.

In celebration of Women's History Month, DAV, DAVA, WVN, MassHire and the National Park Service are sponsoring a workshop for women veterans on March 8, 2023. Anyone interested in volunteering at this event, let me know.

St. Patrick's Day is on March 17th! There are several parades around the Commonwealth. I'm guessing that many of you won't have an issue finding some green camo in your closet to wear! The Department is participating in parades on March 19th in both Holyoke and South Boston.

Holyoke St. Patrick's Parade: 11am-5pm; Celebrate with the DAV as we march with our DAV MA Commander Richard Connor! If interested in marching, please email Adjutant of Chapter 11 Westover at chapter11davphil@gmail.com.

South Boston St. Patrick's Parade: 1pm-5pm; Celebrate with the DAV as we march with our National 2nd Jr. Vice Commander and the 2023 Chief Marshal Coleman Nee!

For more information, please see the [events calendar](#).

March 29 is National Vietnam War Veterans Day. DAV is proud to honor our Vietnam veterans and their families for the sacrifices they made to protect our freedoms. Decades later, many Vietnam veterans are still fighting for the benefits they've earned with the help of DAV.

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

Don't forget to complete both of your MONTHLY volunteer reports!

DAVMA Service Form:
<https://forms.gle/cLQA4Moqtm3LVcw86>



VAVS Form 60: Monthly Reporting Form 60 – LVAP (xlsx)
If you have not completed these forms in the past, You can go back up to 3 years on the VAVS 60.(Fiscal Years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022)



3RD JR VICE DENNIS DEVINE

If any Chapters need any assistance with review or proposed revisions of their by-laws, please do not hesitate to reach out.

Constitution & By-Laws Committee will be meeting in the next few weeks. Please keep an eye out for further details.

My phone number is 508-400-0328. I am happy to be of assistance.

COMMANDER KAYLA VALILA



Mid-Winter Conference in Washington D.C. did not disappoint. As a first-time attendee, after being a member for the past 7+ years, there is still so much to learn. The world around us is always changing. Knowing this, it must be expected that the needs of our veterans and their families will also change. However unfortunate, it cannot be assumed that the well-being of our veterans and their families are deemed a priority in the eyes of others.

It is our duty to make certain the needs of our veterans and their families are at the forefront of our legislators' discussions pertaining to new legislation, and any proposed changes to current legislation, that may impact them. Likewise, it is also our duty to inform veterans and their families of said legislation.

Have you ever been upset, angry, frustrated or found yourself in disbelief about something and thought "there ought to be a law"? These are words of Shane Liermann, Deputy National Legislative Director. During Mid-Winter, he offered a crash course on how one can make that happen- through DAV Resolutions. I have included a copy of his presentation below. I urge everyone to review it and stay abreast the local, state and federal legislation for our veterans and their families. One cannot prepare for where one was not attentive. There is no better time than now to get involved!

DAV Resolutions Training: Our Voice for Disabled Veterans, Survivors and their Families
-by Shane Liermann,
Deputy National Legislative Director



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.

-Commander Kayla Valila

SR. VICE DEBRA GEARY



Update on the DAVA State Hospital Fundraiser. All tickets have been distributed to DAV/DAVA members who are either line officers or DEC/SEC representatives. If you have not received tickets please let Diane Sullivan know. Sales are dribbling in but we need more sales to meet our goal. In the past we have received donations as well as ticket sales. This year we have had no donations, if you are able please send a donation. This raffle goes directly to the hospitals including Chelsea and Holyoke. If you haven't sent your tickets back, please mail them to Diane Sullivan, 83 Bay State Ave, Somerville MA 02144 or bring them to the DEC/SEC March meeting in Gardner MA on March 11th. All checks should be payable to the DAV Auxiliary Department of MA. Also, if you would like additional tickets please email or call Diane Sullivan at dsullivan.dava@gmail.com or 781-325-6591.

IST JR VICE GENEVIEVE DOWNEY

I'd like to thank you all for your hard work signing up new members. We are nearing our yearly quota. This is proving to be exceedingly more difficult in our current economy. Just a reminder that new, Senior and Junior members are free of charge. Also let's make sure our members who's significant others belong to the DAV sign up with your Unit. God Bless





2ND JR VICE CAROLE EVANGELISTA

I hope this newsletter bulletin finds you well. Legislation is an important role for serving our disabled veterans. I can't emphasize enough the importance of our SEC members to bring this information back to your unit to discuss in addition to signing up for the Commanders Action Network. See you all at our SEC meeting!



Commander Action Network

Learn about more legislative initiatives DAV supports and take action now!

PNC, COMMUNITY SERVICE CHAIR NANCY MOONEY



Recently DAVA National Chaplain Aura Lee Nicodemus requested members perform an act of kindness to a veteran in memory of her husband, Robert, who passed. If our DAVA members honored her wishes, there would have been many veterans remembered by acts of kindness.

Kindness makes you beautiful and looks better on you than any clothes you wear. There is nothing as wonderful in this world than showing someone you care, especially a veteran in your community. Kindness can be anything from opening a door, making and sharing a cup of coffee, or perhaps baking some cookies for a veteran.

Many veterans wear hats that identify them as such, so go out of your way to say 'Hello'. A smile can make a veteran feel noticed and appreciated for their service. A random act of kindness can mean the world to a lonely veteran in your community even if your random act of kindness seems quite small. A person's most useful asset is not a head full of knowledge, but a heart full of love, an ear ready to listen and a hand willing to help others.



DAV AUXILIARY MA STATE ADJUTANT, LIZ ELDRIDGE

The end of our auxiliary year is fast approaching! Units and state departments are readying for officer elections. It is a time for unit and state officers to work toward strengthening our membership that has dwindled severely since the onset of the Covid pandemic. Members are encouraged to apply for unit or state department offices. Your unit and state officers stand ready to assist you at every meeting. Outside of unit or state meetings, we are only a phone call or email away to answer your questions.

It is not enough to recruit members only to increase our ranks. We must also focus on recruiting members who will be active and involved by regularly attending unit and state meetings and who will participate in all aspects of the auxiliary's programs.

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.

Officer Report Forms: Completed forms must be submitted to National HQ no later than 10 days following Unit installation of officers. Please ensure names & addresses are properly spelled and phone numbers & email addresses are current.

National HQ Indebtedness Statements: Units incur these bills from National HQ because they do not have sufficient per capita funds, which are derived from part of the dues that Unit members pay that are held in escrow to cover the cost of National mandates.

ADJUTANT, LIZ BUTTERS

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ADJUTANT DANIEL STACK

The Department had a great showing at this years Mid-Winter Conference. Over 30 of our members came down to meet with our legislators on Capitol Hill and have our voice heard. The biggest thing we can do as individuals, chapters, and as a Department is to continue to stand up and be heard. I urge you all to write resolutions, bring them before your chapter for approval, and then send along to the Department. These resolutions guide us year to year what our mission will be to advocate and lobby for veterans benefits, legislation, and more! Please reach out to our Sr. Vice Commander Bob Kinsman, or Assistant Adjutant Mike Valila if you need any assistance in putting together resolutions. A formal training will be held at Department Convention this year to assist you in writing resolutions.

DAV's March Membership Madness runs March 9th-29th. On the next page includes the up-to-date 2023 bracket. As Doug Wells, National Membership Director, states, size of department doesn't matter for this tournament. Department and Chapter leaders may request "hot list" from the Membership Department which will include the "most viable prospective members in your area."

Looking for more opportunities to recruit new members? Be sure to continue to check our event calendar for updates and to be sure we are advertising events your Chapter is participating in. The calendar is always being updated with new information as we receive it. This will also help participation and communication amongst Chapters as well as our counterpart, the Auxiliary, so we can help each other succeed in the work we do.

Additionally, start planning ahead for State Convention. This year, Department Convention will be June 8-11th. Convention will be held at the Double Tree by Hilton at 99 Erdman Way, Leominster, MA. For reservations, please call 978-534-9000.

Last, our Department Golf Tournament will be held at Blissful Meadows Monday, June 19th. Please start planning ahead for this date, get a team together, and get some sponsors from your community to support DAV Department of MA!

DEDICATED

TO A SINGLE PURPOSE





Are you a veteran in need of transportation to your VA medical appointments?

Transportation Network Volunteer Drivers are certified through the VA and are here to help!

For requests within the Boston VA Medical System to include: Brockton, W. Roxbury, Jamaica Plains, Bedford, or Outpatient VA Facilities, please call: 617-295-7001

For requests within the Central/Western MA VA Medical System to include: Leeds, Worcester, or Outpatient VA Facilities, please call: 413-582-3078.

For more info, please scan/click the QR Code below.



Interested in transporting veterans for VA medical appointments? Become a Volunteer Driver today!

Scan or click 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 info, please contact Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC) Terry Mate
Phone: 617-295-7001
Email: trobert@davma.org

