



& AUXILIARY MASSACHUSETTS NEWSLETTER



KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO
AMERICA'S VETERANS

AUGUST

2023
DAV
& Auxiliary
National Convention
ATLANTIC CITY

*Many, many events, trainings, and more coming up.
Stay on top of everything through our events calendar at
www.davma.org/events and stay connected via [Facebook!](#)*

DAV National Convention
Atlantic City, New Jersey
2023 Convention Program



Purple Heart Day
August 7, 2023



@DAVMASSACHUSETTS



COMMANDER, BOB KINSMAN

Some thoughts as we prepare for the upcoming year ... we are fortunate to have you as a part of our DAV team. Together, we will accomplish fantastic things! The DAV Department of Massachusetts currently has around 25,000 members. Just think what we could accomplish if each one of our inactive members volunteered just 10 hours of their time or donated only \$10 to assist needy veterans and their families. It is up to us to try to motivate these idle members to get involved in accomplishing our mission. Also, we need to remember that all volunteer organizations are struggling to maintain their membership rolls, including the DAV VFW, Legion, Rotary, Lions, etc. This is why I've chosen Membership as a key focus area for our Department this year. We need to attract younger post-9/11 veterans to join us and become the future leaders of our organization. In addition to our current Membership Committee, the new Diversity & Inclusion Committee will be key in attracting & welcoming new members to our fold. At the same time, we need to encourage our older more-experienced Vietnam-era veterans to join with us. Everyone has something to offer.

Annual elections were accomplished at the recent Department Convention. Congratulations to all involved. Your Leadership team has now completed filling Commander's Appointments & Committee Chairs, and is finishing up our goals & objectives for the year. Senior leaders (Commander, SVC, Asst. Adjutant & Treasurer) attended a training conference at the DAV National Headquarters in Kentucky. Training for Chapter Commanders & Adjutants was held in Gardner. We have over 100 people attending the DAV National Convention in Atlantic City, NJ. Remember, our DAV Department of MA Honor Guard will be acting as the DAV National Honor Guard at this year's convention. As soon as we return from the Convention, we should all be well-trained, motivated & ready to go.

Our Department Line Officers are planning to visit Chapters beginning soon after the National Convention. If you would like a Department Line Officer to attend a Chapter Event, please notify Mike Valila (mvalila@davma.org) so he can assign an Officer to attend. I will try to visit every chapter I possibly can during the year. We look forward to visiting your Chapter.

Recent Department activities include: weekly ZIP Trips with FOX-25 TV, an NSO Seminar in Billerica, Veterans in Prison visits to Norfolk & Gardner, three DAV Funeral Rituals in Greenfield, Peabody & Braintree, a Cornhole Tournament fundraiser in Rockland, and more. We need volunteers at our DAV Corporate Golf Tournament at Granite Links CC in Quincy, and we'd like to see more participants at the DAV-MA 5K Run/Walk/Roll at Castle Island in Boston in November. Don't forget about the annual WRKO Radiothon to support our 5K event. Finally, if your Chapter holds it's Forget-Me-Not fundraiser in the Fall, remember to order your Forget-Me-Not flowers from DAV National (only 2 boxes allowed).

In the balance of this newsletter you will read what our other line officers & their committees are doing, you will hear from the Adjutant on other department & chapter issues, and you will learn what our friends in the DAV Auxiliary have planned for the upcoming season.

SR. VICE, BOB BRONSON

Last month I explained what I, as the chairman of the Legislative Committee, had as my goals for this year. Having each Chapter submit three resolutions, one each for Local, State, and National. Obviously, this can only happen with the assistance of every one of our Chapters. For some, it may first sound overwhelming. Please don't think that you need to accomplish this all by yourself.



The national DAV website [Legislative Webinars - DAV](#) has quite a few webinars that can help. Below is one that will help explain about writing a resolution. [Resolutions and Preparing for Department Conventions – March 30th - YouTube](#)

For those of you that are going to the National Convention this year, I highly recommend watching the following webinar. [Preparing for National Convention - June 29, 2023 - YouTube](#) If you know that you're on one of the Legislative Committees, please watch the entire webinar, including the last half that is a "question and answer" section. If you still aren't sure of what to do, you can always reach out to any of the Department's Line Officers.

SR. VICE, BOB BRONSON CONTINUED...

Below is a link to the 2022-2023 Legislative Program document [LegislativeProgram_2022-2023.pdf \(dav.org\)](#). The first part of this document explains the importance of DAV Resolutions, along with the impact, such as the blue water and the Pact Act, and the process that it takes to get them approved at the DAV National Convention. The rest and majority of the document lists and explains the resolutions for 2022-2023. It's a large document, but will give you the best examples of how to write a resolution. You may even find that what you were thinking of has already been addressed. If it has, that doesn't mean you don't need to write another one. Try looking at it from another angle and see if you can put a different spin on it. More times than not, a resolution fails because of how it was written rather than what it was trying to address.

My other goal for this year is to have as many members, and their family members as possible, sign up for the DAV CAN organization, the Commander's Action Network. Anyone can sign up for it at [DAV | Sign In \(quorum.us\)](#). There is no requirement to be either a member of the DAV or a Veteran. Once you sign up, just click on the "Act Now" button. That will bring you to the list of active bills in both the Congress and the Senate. Look through the list, and when you see a bill that you want to support, hit the blue "Write" button on the right-hand side. That will bring up a prewritten letter, signed by you, that will be sent to your specific Congressperson or Senator encouraging him or her to support that bill. Keep in mind that the list I'm referring to now is for 2022-2023. You might want to wait a short time for the 2023-2024 Legislative Program to be released after the 2023 National Convention this August.



IST JR VICE, ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT

I hope this article finds you all in good health and high spirits. It is an honor to share some exciting updates on our membership initiatives.

First, thank you to everyone who volunteered to join the membership committee. At our committee meeting held on July 26, we gathered with a shared vision of expanding and strengthening our organization's reach. We recognize the invaluable contributions of our current members and the potential to make an even greater impact by welcoming new veterans into our ranks. With this in mind, I am thrilled to announce three ambitious membership committee priorities we have set for the Massachusetts DAV. They are:

1. Membership Growth:

Our first objective is to prioritize membership growth by recruiting new members. Our strength lies in our numbers, and we believe that by expanding our family, we can amplify our collective voice and better serve disabled veterans across the state.

2. Membership Engagement:

The 2nd priority is to achieve the goal of engagement and create a new image to attract younger veterans to the Massachusetts Disabled American Veterans (DAV). By collaborating with organizations that specifically cater to younger veterans, we aim to create a comprehensive support network that maximizes the impact of our programs and benefits for all those who have served.

3. Membership Outreach:

To achieve our growth targets, we are committed to reaching out to veterans in every corner of Massachusetts. Our Membership Committee will be actively engaging with local chapters, collaborating with fellow veterans' organizations, and leveraging social media to raise awareness about the benefits and support DAV offers.

Each one of us plays a pivotal role in the growth and impact of the Massachusetts DAV. Let's embrace this challenge. I encourage all of you to actively participate in our membership priorities and share our mission with fellow veterans. At the committee meeting we developed SMART goals and action plans for each priority, so stay tuned. Together, we can make a difference, we will build a stronger, more inclusive organization that upholds our mission to empower disabled veterans and their families, successfully engage with younger veterans, create a new image that appeals to all veterans and generate a lasting legacy for future generations of disabled veterans.

Thank you for your support.

2ND JR VICE DENNIS DEVINE



As we embark on another year of dedication to our veterans and communities, the Service and Charitable Committee is thrilled to outline our goals for the upcoming year. With a renewed focus on service, compassion, and inclusivity, we are committed to making a positive impact on the lives of veterans and their families. Our 4 primary goals are:

1. Enhancing Support Programs for Veterans.

Our primary mission is to provide support to our veterans. We are dedicated to ensuring that no veteran feels alone in their journey.

2. Collaborating with the Membership Committee.

Unity within our organization is vital to achieving our objectives. Together, we will organize engaging events, workshops, and social gatherings.

3. Emphasizing Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

In alignment with the department's commitment to inclusivity, and by join forces with the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Committee, we will ensure that our programs and initiatives serve to the diverse needs of ALL veterans and where every veteran feels valued and heard.

4. Recruiting volunteers.

Additionally, we will actively recruit and mobilize volunteers to join our cause, ensuring a greater pool of support for our service projects.

I encourage all MA DAV members to join us and actively participate in our events, workshops, and service projects. Let's create a meaningful impact on the lives of our veterans, their families, and the communities we serve.

Some upcoming events include:

•VA Bedford Summer Vet Fest 23

o August 4th 200 Springs Road Bedford, MA

•Purple Heart Day

o August 7th Boston City Hall Plaza

•Fox25 Zip Trip

o August 4th Gloucester

o August 11th Whitman

o August 18th Sterling

o August 25th Natick

If you have any ideas, suggestions, or would like to get involved, please feel free to reach out to us. Your contributions are the backbone of our committee's success.

Be sure to check out the Events page on DAVMA.org or the [DAV Department of Massachusetts Facebook page](#) for any updates.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at National Convention or at one of our many upcoming events!



3RD JR VICE EUGENE MCGREEVY

Good Day Comrades,

I'm hoping everyone made it through the wet July. Now we have to brace ourselves for the heat and humidity of August. Please remember to hydrate!

I have reached out to the new members of the Constitution and Bylaws' committee by phone and we are looking to host our first meeting at National Convention in Atlantic City, NJ..

These are the members of the Committee:

Chair: Gene McGreevy
Co-Chair: Dennis Devine
Member: Nelson Serrano
Member: Deb Olson
Member: Mike Sullivan

Member: Phil Nadeau
Member: Dan Stack
Member: Mike Valila
Member: Bob Kinsman

3RD JR VICE EUGENE MCGREEVY CONTINUED...

The purpose of the Department Constitution and Bylaw Committee is to review, and recommend any changes to the Department Bylaws. Our recommendations then go before the voting body at Department Convention each June for approval.

As most of you are aware by now, as it was highlighted in our last newsletter, at this past Department Convention (June 2023) the Committee recommended a change to the Bylaws that would remove the current 5-year rule for Chapter Bylaws to be reviewed. My recommendation is that all Chapters have a Bylaws Committee consisting of at least a 3-member team. I will be passing along a base template for Chapter Bylaws to anyone who needs a starting point, and then all you would have to do is add your Chapter specific information.

As it is still a duty of the 3rd Jr Vice Commander to assist Chapters with their Bylaws, I will be reaching out to Chapters across the State by Zoom over the next coming months to ensure that everyone is up to date, and provide any assistance they may need.

August 3-8th will be National Convention in Atlantic City, NJ. Following National Convention our recommended Department Constitution and Bylaw changes shall be in effect. The updated Bylaws will then be made available on our Department website davma.org inside the members portal, under forms. If you have any questions in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me!

DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR DEB OLSON



A hybrid training session for chapter commanders and adjutants was held on July 6th. With 20 of our 47 active chapters in attendance. I was a little disappointed in the turn out. The Department is doing all we can to help chapters with the officers' tedious but necessary duties.

On August 30th, the department will host a hybrid training session for chapter treasurers. We ask that all treasurers be in attendance and bring with them the necessary documents required to complete their 2022-2023 Annual Financial Report. We will go through the AFR one line at a time and answer your questions so that your reports can be completed accurately. The Treasurer, as noted in your Officer report, will be notified via email with a Zoom link.

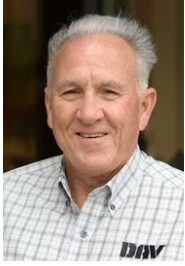
The Treasurer and Adjutant are to get all documents required to complete the chapter annual financial report. Start the process now, your reports need to be received no later than September 30th. For chapters with incomes over \$25,000, your AFR (Annual Financial Report) is to be received by National, NLT September 30, the department wants those NLT September 15. We want those reports required to be submitted to National to come to the department for review before submitting them. These reviews are to catch any issues so they can be addressed prior to submittal to National, so plan accordingly.

Chapters should now elect or appoint their Audit committee, which cannot consist of the Commander, Senior Vice, Adjutant, or Treasurer, as your AFR will need to be reviewed and signed prior to submittal. Your chapter's 990n is also due now. For most chapters, this process should take less than 15 minutes to complete. We will review this during training, should there be any concerns.

We are still waiting on DEC forms from several chapters. Please submit as soon as possible.

LVAP forms for July are due to the department within the first week of August. Please send to dolson@davma.org, they will be forwarded to National and the 2nd Jr Vice Dennis Devine. DSO and CSO please remember to also complete Mass monthly reporting form (SENA). Go to DAVMA.org, Member Portal, monthly reports to complete forms.

You will hear from me regularly to remind you of reports due and ask if you need any assistance or if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions. The Department is here to assist the chapters we were elected or appointed to serve you. We all stand at the ready, we are an email or a phone call away. Thank you for all you do in your community. Keeping the Promise.



ADJUTANT DANIEL STACK

DAV National Convention is August 3-8th in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Our Department is happy to support DAV National 2nd Junior Vice Commander Coleman Nee for higher office. We will also support PDC Frank Whitty to join the National Executive Committee, and our Auxiliary's AnnMarie Hurley will seek higher office to DAVA National Commander! This is a great year for DAV Department of Massachusetts, and our representation at the National level couldn't be better. We are proud of each one of these candidates!

As many of you have heard, the new PACT Act expanded toxic-exposed veterans access to VA care, extended health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era combat veterans, as well as added new presumptive conditions for radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and burn pit exposure.

There is no deadline to apply for PACT Act benefits, however there are upcoming timelines for retroactive benefits that will require urgent action to be eligible. If you file your PACT Act claim, or submit an intent to file by **August 9, 2023**, you may receive benefits retroactive to August 10, 2022 when the PACT Act was enacted. This is not something to wait on! If you are thinking about filing a claim, please contact a DAV Service Officer today! For a complete listing of our National, Department, and Chapter Service Officers, to include their office hours, locations, and contact information, please visit our website davma.org and click on "claims". The "locate your local office" tool at the top will direct you to the closest Service Officer in your area, and just below that is a complete listing of all our Department Service Officers, and contact information for our National Service Office team. Do not let this opportunity pass you by. Again, even filing an intent to file (saves your effective date and allows you 1 full year to formally file) will be enough to secure these benefits, but you **must** submit by August 9th!

Also on September 30, 2023 there is a deadline for some Post-9/11 veterans to enroll for VA health care under a special one-year window opened by the PACT Act. The bill automatically assumes those who served in certain locations were exposed. Once they are enrolled, veterans' individual cases will dictate what benefits they will receive. Our Service Officers will be happy to answer any questions you may have, and connect you with these benefits.

It has been a great ZipTrip season this far with Fox25 News. As we reach the half-way point in this season, we look forward to our upcoming trips to Gloucester on August 4, Whitman on August 11, Sterling on August 18, and finally Natick on August 25th! Thank you to all who have come out to support the Department at these events. If you would like to join us on an upcoming ZipTrip in your area, please reach out to Assistant Adjutant Mike Valila at mvalila@davma.org. He is always looking for DAV and Auxiliary members to help staff the table.

Adding Events to our Department Website Calendar

If you are looking to add a Chapter event to the calendar, please email the event information, to include any links, flyers, or registration information to Assistant Adjutant Mike Valila at mvalila@davma.org. Mike will be happy to not only add your event to our website calendar, but will share it on our social media as well!

Chapter Treasurer Training

The Department will host Chapter Treasurer Training Wednesday August 30th from 10am-2pm at the Veteran Advancement Program in Gardner, MA. Please ensure your Treasurer attends either in-person or by Zoom. There will **not** be a makeup date for this training.

[Click here for details!](#)

Department Executive Committee (DEC)

Our next DEC meeting will be on September 9, 2023. The meeting will be hybrid format, hosted at the Veteran Advancement Program, 3 Victory Lane, Gardner, MA. Doors open at 9am for coffee hour, and meeting will begin promptly at 10am. If you are unable to join in-person we have a Zoom option.

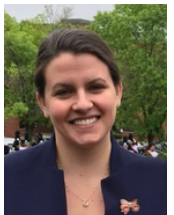
[Click here for details!](#)



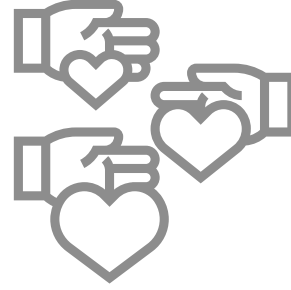
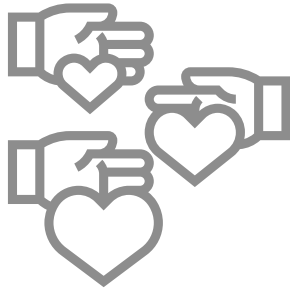
STATE COMMANDER, DIANE SULLIVAN

I have attended a few events thus far, this year. I volunteered and sat at a hole at the DAV Golf Tournament at BlissfulMeadows on June 19th. I rode in a convertible with Commander Bob Kinsman on July 1st in the Braintree fourth of July Parade, also with PSC Mary Ficociello. I went to Chapter 3's cornhole tournament fundraiser on July 22nd. I am currently busy putting together material for next month's orientation meeting for the line officers. Also getting ready for the National Convention next week. I'm really looking forward to attending and reconnecting with other Auxiliary members.. On another note, I can't believe that the summaries half over. Hope everyone's enjoying this warm weather instead of rain. Looking forward to seeing everyone in September. If you have any questions or need anything in the meantime, please do not hesitate to contact me.

SR VICE COMMANDER, KAYLA VALILA



With the snap of a finger, we find ourselves into a new month with National Convention upon us. Excited to share some of the ideas for our fundraiser this year and look forward to your input! Stay tuned... details to follow in my next newsletter article!



1ST JR VICE COMMANDER, REBECCA HASSELMANN



YOU are our greatest resource for increasing membership, and we are stronger in numbers. Looking forward to this year's membership initiatives to strengthen the services and efforts of our auxiliary across the state. Summer is flying by with September right around the corner. Please be prepared to cover some of your unit's ideas that they would like to see come from the state to aid their efforts to increase membership in your area.

Would love to hear feedback on what has worked for you or what has not. Old ideas and new are welcome. It is a new year which means our quota count has started over again. Let's hit that goal! Like I said, we are stronger in numbers. The more of us that become part of this organization makes it possible for us to make a difference in that many more veterans and their families lives.



Join us!



2ND JR VICE COMMANDER, ALLISON DEVINE

I am looking forward to seeing many of you in Atlantic City for the National Convention this month. I know that it will be a great time as we support our National Line officers. Some would think the Summer would be a slower time but it's been crazy having to juggle staff vacations, so I can't wait for some down time; I'm sure many of you feel the same way.

As a reminder if you have not done so, please make sure you sign up for the Commander's Action Network and support the DAV supported legislation. It's a very easy process and it truly makes a difference.

In the latest CAN support legislation: H.R. 4566 the Providing Radiation Exposed Servicemembers Undisputed Medical Eligibility (PRESUME) Act. The bill would eliminate VA's current practice of requiring radiation dose estimates for veterans claiming diseases related to radiation exposure.

Currently, VA requires not only proof of the veteran's onsite participation at a radiation risk activity, but also radiation dose estimates from the Defense Reduction Agency and a medical opinion indicating the dose estimate caused the claimed presumptive disease.

The Department of Justice (DOJ), Radiation Exposure Claims Act (RECA) program establishes compensation for individuals who contracted specified diseases related to atmospheric nuclear weapons development tests in the American southwest. The RECA program is available to uranium workers and miners, civilians exposed in down-wind areas and veterans. A lump sum is payable to veterans who were onsite participants at an atmospheric nuclear weapons test.

RECA does not require claimants to prove causation of the diseases related to the radiation exposure, nor does it require dose estimates of exposures. Veterans who were exposed onsite can receive compensation from the government without dose estimates and without proving that the claimed disease is directly caused by the dose estimate of radiation exposure.

Radiation exposed veterans are held to a higher standard by the VA, than the DOJ for civilians exposed to radiation. This unfair practice must be halted.

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed. It is the only thing that ever has." — Margaret Mead

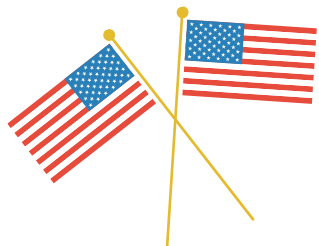


ADJUTANT, JANET PRATT

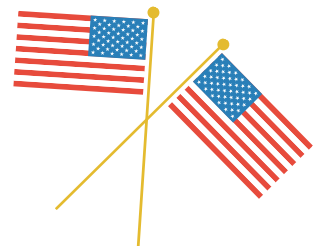
Unit Financial Report Form, instructions, and guidelines for completing the annual audit for the 2022-2023 filling year have been sent out by National HQ to Unit Adjutants. National HQ must receive the completed form no later than September 30, 2023.

State Executive Committee (SEC) Meetings: Each unit annually elects a State Executive Committee member and an Alternate State Executive Committee member. It is expected that one of these people will represent your unit at each SEC meeting. If both SEC and Alternate attend the meetings only the SEC can vote.

IRS 990-N-e Post Card Reminder: All Chapters, Units and State Departments have until November 15, 2023, to complete.



The DAV Auxiliary State of Massachusetts proudly supports DAVA National Senior Vice Commander AnnMarie Hurley for higher office this year at the 2023 DAV National Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey!!





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.



The new PACT Act

- » Expands toxic-exposed Veterans access to VA care
- » Extends health care eligibility for Vietnam, Gulf War, and Post-9/11 era combat Veterans
- » Adds new presumptive conditions for radiation, Agent Orange, Gulf War toxins, and burn pit exposures

EXPANDED VA CARE & BENEFITS

Learn more at VA.gov
1-800-MyVA411 (800-698-2411)



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.**

VOLUNTEER

For more info, please contact
Hospital Service Coordinator (HSC)
Terry Mate
Phone: 617-295-7001
Email: trobort@davma.org



Moving is the Best Medicine

Research shows that mild to moderate exercise is beneficial for people with arthritis. In fact, exercise is considered the most effective, non-drug treatment for reducing pain and improving movement in patients with osteoarthritis. Whether you are just getting started or have been working out for a while, the Arthritis Foundation has a wealth of resources to help you move your way.



Walk With Ease

The Arthritis Foundation's Walk With Ease Program can get you safely moving toward better health. While walking is the central activity, the program includes health education, stretching and strengthening exercises, as well as motivational strategies. Studies have shown Walk With Ease reduces pain, increases balance and strength and improves overall health. You can complete the six-week program on your own or with a group. Visit [Walk with Ease](#) to learn more!

Your Exercise Solution (YES)

Your Exercise Solution (YES) is a library of workout videos available on the Arthritis Foundation's website and YouTube channel. Each video focuses on a specific area of the body, allowing you to create a customized routine specific to your needs and ability level. There are even modifications developed and approved by physical therapists to help you exercise safely. Get started today at [Your Healthy Living](#).



For more information or to get in touch with the local Massachusetts Office reach out to **Erica D'Agostino at (857) 327-5688 or by email edagostino@arthritis.org**
All of our resources for Military & Veterans Services can be found at www.arthritis.org/veteran