



& AUXILIARY MASSACHUSETTS NEWSLETTER

KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO
AMERICA'S VETERANS

May
2024



MENTAL Health Awareness Month

YOU ARE
NOT ALONE

TRUST THE
PROCESS

BREAK
the
STIGMA

TAKE A
DEEP
BREATH
THREE TIMES

THINGS
GET BETTER

ASKING FOR
HELP
IS OK

LET'S
TALK
ABOUT IT

We honor and remember our brave veterans who made the ultimate sacrifice for our country. Their selfless service and dedication will never be forgotten.

This Memorial Day, take a moment to reflect and express gratitude for their service. May you face the East, stand at attention in devoted memory of our departed Comrades. Though they have gone West, they face the East, as the sun rises for them on a new day.



Upcoming Events:



*All functions DAV or Auxiliary of Massachusetts host, or attend as a vendor, are listed on www.davma.org/events

*When adequate information and proper notice is supplied to the Department



COMMANDER, BOB KINSMAN

Thank you for serving the **DAV Department of Massachusetts** and your local Chapter this year. As you know, the volunteer work we accomplish is made possible only by the efforts of each of you, working individually and together as a team, committed to accomplishing our mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity.

On the Beacon Hill Legislative front, we are all awaiting a report from the *Joint Committee on Veterans & Federal Affairs* on **House Bill H.4172, known as the HERO Act** (AN ACT HONORING, EMPOWERING, AND RECOGNIZING OUR SERVICEMEMBERS AND VETERANS). The Joint Committee Report is due on Tuesday, **April 30, 2024**. The DAV Department of Massachusetts unequivocally supports Governor Maura T. Healey's Bill H.4172. On January 23, 2024, at the State House in Boston, DAV Department Commander Robert Kinsman and DAV National Vice Commander Colman Nee provided testimony at a public hearing on the bill (*see attached testimony*). This hearing garnered good press for our DAV Department and for the HERO Act itself (*see Boston Herald article attached*). We are optimistic that this bill encompassing 17 different spending & policy initiatives aimed at improving veterans' lives will pass and become the largest piece of veterans' legislation brought before the Commonwealth in decades.

The HERO Act expands benefits to veterans, creates more opportunities for inclusivity, and modernizes veteran services across the state, providing benefits to thousands of veterans. This Bill is recognized by many as one of the largest pieces of veteran legislation brought before the Commonwealth in decades, and for decades, our unwavering priority at DAV has been to provide access to benefits for veterans. As such, it is the position of DAV Department of Massachusetts to favorably support Governor Maura Healy's Bill H.4172 *An Act Honoring, Empowering & Recognizing Our Servicemembers and Veterans*.

An interesting tidbit of information is contained in **House Bill H.4396** (An Act Relative to Individuals with Intellectual or Developmental Disabilities). It amends various laws in 14 places by deleting the words "**disabled American veterans**" and inserting in place thereof the following words "**American veterans with disabilities**".

Your Membership Committee is working enthusiastically to secure DAV Division I Honors (*DAV-MA is still in 2nd place behind New York, only 1/3 of 1% out of the lead, and we really need your assistance in recruiting new members*)! Don't let the Evil Empire beat us. Also, I heard a rumor recently that DAV National will make Membership its #1 goal next year. You may remember that for 2023-24, the overarching goal for the Department of Massachusetts has been Membership ... so as usual, we are ahead of the curve.

We have many ongoing events that may attract new & younger members. We just need to invite those potential members to join us. A few recent activities included: the Lexington Patriots Day Parade, the Vietnam War Veterans Day Commemoration, a veterans family day at the Shriner's Circus, and the DAV Community Impact Day: "*A Day of Service*". In addition, DAV Auxiliary National Commander AnnMarie Hurley's Testimonial Dinner was enjoyed by all, with a tour of the John F. Kennedy Library & Museum included.

COMMANDER ROBERT KINSMAN, CONTINUED...

Parade season is upon us and next up is the Independence Day Parade in Pittsfield on Thursday, July 4. Chapters are encouraged to also participate in local parades and other commemorations honoring our comrades in arms. DAV-MA will again participate in the Memorial Day Ceremony at the Bourne National Veterans Cemetery to be held on Sunday, May 26.

Our Legislative Committee is awaiting your Resolutions, with a goal of receiving 3 Resolutions from each Chapter. The Service & Charitable Committee continues to promote our efforts to assist fellow veterans, so be sure to turn in your LVAP hours monthly. Advanced Service Officer Training is scheduled monthly. The Constitution & Bylaws Committee has completed a detailed review of our documents. All of our committees welcome new members, so please join one to learn and help out.

DAV-MA Department Commander Robert Kinsman & DAV Auxiliary State Commander Diane Sullivan's Joint Testimonial Dinner will be held on Sunday, May 5 in North Chelmsford. Please join us. Officer Installation Ceremonies will be held throughout the month on May. The annual Department Convention is fast approaching. Please continue to promote DAV-MA Ad Book sales. Our Department Line Officers are completing Chapter Visits throughout the year. Contact any officer if you have questions or need assistance.



**Public Hearing Testimony
H. 4172 The Hero Act**



**Boston Herald Article;
Hero Act**

SR. VICE, BOB BRONSON



This Legislative session for inputting Resolutions for the Department to select and send to National, is just about over. At the start of the year, I had asked for three from each Chapter to be submitted by May 1st 2024. That time frame has obviously passed, but you're still not out of time. We have until May 11th to have them available for the Department Executive Committee meeting on that day. To assist, we will have a Zoom Resolution Training Session on the evening of the 6th of May at 6:00pm. An Email with the Zoom link will be sent out to every Chapter, and it is also posted on the Department website: www.davma.org on the event calendar. The following is an example of a Resolution that has been excepted by our National Legislation Committee: It contains three sections. The first section (**bold and underlined**) explains what is being asked to be changed or updated. The next is the "Whereas" section and is used to explain why the change is needed. The last section is the "NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED" section and it explains the impact of the Resolution being implemented.



Example Resolution

If anyone needs any help to write a Resolution, contact any of the Department Line Officers, or sign onto our training session on May 6, 2024 at 6pm via Zoom.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89043960435?pwd=cVZnQWhqQ0NRT2p1clF5UmlrdVh4dz09>

Further details can be found on davma.org by clicking on the 'Event' tab.

1ST JR VICE, ANDREA GAYLE-BENNETT

This month let's take a moment to acknowledge several important observances that are significant to our community. May is National Mental Health Awareness Month, National Military Appreciation Month, and it culminates with Memorial Day—a time when we honor the sacrifices of our fallen heroes.



National Mental Health Awareness Month reminds us of the importance of supporting the mental well being of our veterans. Many of our comrades face challenges related to mental health, and it's crucial that we continue to provide resources, support, and understanding to those who may be struggling. Let's raise awareness, reduce stigma, and ensure that every veteran has access to the mental health care they deserve.

National Military Appreciation Month is a time to recognize and honor the contributions and sacrifices of all our military members—past, present, and future. As disabled veterans, we understand firsthand the dedication and commitment required to serve our country. Let's take this opportunity to express our gratitude to our fellow service members and their families for their unwavering commitment and sacrifice.

Finally, as we approach Memorial Day, let us pause to remember and honor the brave men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our nation. Their courage and selflessness will never be forgotten, and it's our duty to ensure that their legacy lives on.

In the spirit of these observances, and looking ahead, I want to emphasize the importance of increasing DAV membership and continuing our recruitment and engagement efforts. I encourage you to continue to actively recruit and engage with fellow veterans and encourage them to join us. Together, we can increase our membership goals and strengthen our collective voice. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of our fellow comrades and ensure that their sacrifices are never forgotten.

Thank you everyone for your continued support, and let's make May a month of reflection, appreciation, and action!

2ND JR VICE DENNIS DEVINE

Wow! 50 years have passed since I became a lifetime member of the DAV. It has been one of the best things I have ever done. The DAV has always been there for me; whether helping with my claims or visiting me when I had medical issues.



Memorial Day will soon be here. A perfect time for remembrance of those who have died in service to our country. They gave the ultimate sacrifice. I have close friends in this category as I am sure almost everyone does. My friend, Edward "Buddy" Skahill died in Vietnam. His was the first military wake and funeral I attended. I had 3 shipmates get killed on the Puget Sound. I went to bed and when I woke up I was told they were gone. At 19 that was a shock to my system. They hold a special place in my heart and are especially remembered on Memorial Day.

To serve other veterans, sometimes all you need to do is ask. Use your imagination and do all that you can. Keep in touch with veterans you have served in the past to see if they are doing okay, if for no other reason than to know they are not forgotten and to see if they need help with anything. Fixing, helping, and serving are all acts of being charitable in different ways. What is most important is to show genuine concern and compassion for all veterans.

CONNECT

with us on Facebook!



[@DAVMASSACHUSETTS](https://www.facebook.com/DAVMASSACHUSETTS)



3RD JR VICE EUGENE MCGREEVY

April has come and gone, the weather was a mix of sunshine and rain. Winter clean up and grass cutting has started.

Chapters are having elections and new committees will be formed, with the goal of making the Department and Chapters stronger. Chapters will start doing Forget Me Nots across the State & using the proceeds towards making the lives of Disabled Veterans lives better.

Department Convention is only a few weeks away and Line Officers will be elected and Bylaws will be updated with the approval of the Department Body. I look forward to completing my roll as 3rd Junior Vice and working with the other Line Officers to make the Department stronger.

DEPARTMENT INSPECTOR DEB OLSON



Forms, Forms, Forms. It is that time of year again, the chapter adjutants will be busy completing the forms for installations, officer reports, service officer nominations, department and national conventions. If you have any questions or concerns about completing these forms, please contact any line officer or myself for assistance.

Following your installation, the Chapter's OER (Officer Election Report) is to be completed on-line via www.MYDAV.ORG, AFTER your chapter installation. Please fill in all positions completely: name, address, membership number, phone number and email address. All officers should have a current email. Be watching for emails from National on the proper procedure.

The Chapter Service Officer nomination form is also available online, it is in the same location as the warrant request. The training will be on June 6th at Wachusett College. Chapters are to submit the names of members for training and certification. If your name is not submitted, you will not be allowed into training. Make sure your name has been submitted to your commander and adjutant for consideration for this important position. All service officers are CSOs first and must be on the chapter's Service Officer Nomination form. The Department Commander appoints DSOs each year. Forms are to be submitted to dav.vbsbos@va.gov AND dolson@davma.org.

The Department Convention package has been sent to all chapters. Chapter and Business Ads are due no later than May 13, 2024. Delegate and dinner forms are due no later than May 30, 2024. These forms are to be mailed to Department Headquarters or emailed to dolson@davma.org.

All forms should be completed online, filling in ALL the information required, double-checking phone numbers and email addresses especially.

LVAP (LOCAL VETERANS ASSISTANCE PROGRAM) forms for April 2024 are due to the department within the first week of May. Please send them to dolson@davma.org, they will be forwarded to National and the 2nd Jr Vice Dennis Devine. DSO (Department Service Officers) and CSO (Chapter Service Officers) please remember to also complete Mass monthly reporting form SENA (Service Encounter & Needs Assessment). Go to <https://DAVMA.org>, Membership, Member Portal, forms, monthly reporting to complete forms. These reports can be completed by any member, including auxiliary, assisting veterans in their communities. I want to thank everyone who is submitting their hours. Please continue the magnificent work, just a reminder if you have not submitted an LVAP for this year please do so. We can use those numbers when we see our congressional team during mid-winter. Please complete the SENA on-line, the matrix from this will help us to identify needs in our communities, write resolutions, and seek funds and support to address these needs.

If you need any assistance or if you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions please contact your line officers, 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 MIKE VALILA

2023-2024 has been quite the ride. We have accomplished so much over this past year, and with Department Convention right around the corner June 7-8th at the DoubleTree Hilton, 99 Erdman Way, Leominster MA I could not be more excited. I hope each of you will come out to see what Convention has to offer, and to learn more about DAV and our Department! This year at Department Convention, we are packing a **ton** into our 2 days.

Our vendors coming in this year will be bountiful, and I've asked them each to ensure they bring plenty of materials to hand out to our members. We have a wide variety of vendors coming this year so there should be appeal for veterans and families of all ages. We will also be having a members fun-night following our Department Award Banquet Friday evening. So whether you are coming to convention as a delegate for your Chapter, or you're a less-active member who only receives DAV Magazine and this Electronic Department Newsletter monthly, please come out and see all that Department Convention has in-store this year!

Our Veteran Advancement Programs in Gardner, Leominster, and Farm in Fitzwilliam, NH are in need of a good spring cleanup. I am looking for volunteers who would like to assist with basic landscaping, to more vigorous work such as clearing hiking trails, building a new fire pit area, and many other projects. If you or a group of friends/family would like to come out to volunteer and assist, please contact Chris Akey at cakey@davma.org or myself. Chris and I will be working together to plan these site clean-ups.

I want to thank everyone who has stepped up this past year in making it the success that it has been. There have been 3 Chapters that were reorganized, over 100 outreach events tabled across the state, more than 30 parades that the Department and Chapters have participated in, we've recruited 194 new DAV members, grown our Transportation Network to new heights, had over 80k service encounters with veterans, and volunteered over 35,000 hours in the community!!

The Great American Heroes Podcast is a monthly podcast where we invite DAV supporters, community partners, sponsors, and distinguished guests on to speak about why they choose DAV. This month our guest is Regional Manager Jim Blake of Eastern Propane. For those of you who do not know, Jim and his whole team at Eastern Propane are very military friendly! Jim came to us some months ago asking permission to place DAV Department of MA's logo on 2 of his trucks. For each gallon sold, a penny will go directly back to the DAV Department of MA to our service fund to help us in our mission to serve veterans and their families through our great service programs. It's Community partners like Jim and Eastern Propane that have allowed us to grow so much over the past year, and we will only continue to get stronger and service more veterans in time! Please check out this wonderful podcast featuring Jim, and if you haven't already, contact Eastern Propane to become your service provider. They have a phenomenal military/veteran discount, and we just can't say enough good things about them!



[Click to here](#) for the latest Great American Heroes Podcasts with guest, Regional Manager Jim Blake of Eastern Propane.



SAVE THE DATE

JUNE 22-JUNE 23

2024

WOMEN VETERANS WELLNESS RETREAT

A FREE, RELAXING,
WEEKEND OVERNIGHT
GETAWAY

LOCATED IN FITZWILLIAM, NH

JOIN OTHER WOMEN VETERANS
FOR YOGA, MEDITATION, REIKI,
GARDENING, CAMPFIRE,
CAMERADERIE AND MORE!

**Space is limited. Registration with
confirmation is required to attend.
Proof of veteran status required.

Follow us on Facebook
[@DAVMassachusetts](#) for more
details, or contact us at
inquiry@davma.org with your
interest of attending this event.

If you are a service provider
interested in partnering with
us, please contact us at
inquiry@davma.org.



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KEEPING OUR PROMISE TO
AMERICA'S VETERANS

DEPARTMENT OF MASSACHUSETTS

WWW.DAVMA.ORG



STATE COMMANDER, DIANE SULLIVAN

Spring has sprung and summer is not far away, as it is bringing my year to an end. I continue to be as active as I can. We had a wonderful time at AnnMarie's Testimonial.

Our SEC meeting is on Saturday May 11th in Malden, MA a Chapter 85, located at 85 Willow St. As you all are aware, it's that time again for annual reports. We have tools to share with you in case you missed the training, please reach out to me. Reminder, installation of officers must be completed no later than May 31, 2024. You must request a warrant from Janet Pratt. If you would like myself or another DAVA member to install your Unit, please send in your request, ASAP.

Commander Bob Kinsman and myself would like you to celebrate our year with us at our Joint Testimonial on May 5, 2024. Flyers are available.

As always, if you have any issues, questions or concerns, please feel free to reach out to me at dsullivan.dava@gmail.com or 781-325-6591.

STATE TREASURER, PSC JEAN SHIFFLETT

Anyone needing a check for reimbursement should contact me at 617-827-1911 at least a week ahead of time so I can request a warrant from the State Adjutant. Checks will not be issued without a warrant. If your unit has not yet paid its 2023-2024 State Mandate fee of \$30, please do so immediately. Make checks payable to DAVA Dept. of MA and send to me at 109 Edgehill Road, E. Braintree, MA 02184. The 990-N must be completed no later than November 15, 2023.

JUDGE ADVOCATE, FRAN COSTA

The deadline has passed for State Standing Rules proposed amendments to be submitted for consideration of the SSR committee to be voted on at State Convention in June. Sadly this is the first time in our history that nothing has been submitted. I will be in contact with the SSR Committee.

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT: PSC SANDY FINCEL CHAIRMAN

Reminder: There will be a budget meeting immediately after the SEC meeting on May 11, 2024. All members of the finance committee are required to attend this meeting including the Commander, Senior Vice Commander, and Treasurer.

Any requests for money to be considered at this meeting must be in writing 10 days prior to the meeting either by USPS mail or e-mail to Sandy Fincel at gorsfincel@gmail.com. No requests are allowed from the floor as it says in our budget rules.

NANCY MOONEY DAVA CHAIR OF COMMUNITY SERVICE

Community Service W.I.N.G. S.

W. is for: Working in your community will instill worthiness in yourself.

I. is for: Insight of the needs of veterans in your community both large and small.

N. is for: Nurturing others in your community to promote their personal growth.

G. is for: Good the feeling one experiences when being flexible, caring, and diverse when serving veterans in your community

S. is for: Service to veterans in your community and stimulating your Unit members to join in with projects or acts of kindness to the veterans in your community.



ADJUTANT, JANET PRATT

Tis the season for unit elections! You are encouraged to elect members who will be active and involved by regularly attending unit and state meetings. Units elect a State Executive Committee (SEC) member and Alternate SEC member to ensure the unit is represented by one of them at each state meeting. Unit Commanders are urged to ensure they do so. Unit Commanders are reminded that unit delegates to be eligible to vote at DAVA State & DAVA

NATIONAL. ADJUTANT, JANET PRATT, EMAIL: JANETPRATTDAVA@GMAIL.COM CELL PHONE: 617-957-0294. ASST. ADJUTANT, PATRICIA MESSINA, EMAIL: TRICIAMESSINA57@GMAIL.COM. CELL PHONE: 617-666-0423

National Conventions, units must have filed their 2023-2024 officer report and 2022-2023 financial report forms with DAVA National HQ, and that they complete and file 2023-2024 State & National delegate and alternate forms with DAVA State and National HQ. Units are encouraged to ensure all their paperwork is filed by the required due dates.

State Convention meal order forms were sent April 17 to all Auxiliary members for whom I have email addresses. Please ensure your completed forms and checks, payable to DAV Department of Massachusetts, are returned to DAV Department of Massachusetts. Please pay by the due date of May 30, 2024. Mailing address & telephone number are on the form if you have questions.

All members are welcome to attend the May 11, 2024, SEC Meeting in Malden at Chapter 85, 85 Willow St. Malden

ADJUTANT

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STATE COMMANDER

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AccessSportAmerica Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe Program for Veterans

The Competitive Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe Program for Veterans (CHOC) is an 8-week program where participants are guided through a progressive training program, preparing for the ultimate challenge – a regatta with multiple races. This is open to veterans and a family member. You can sign up for a multiple or a single session.

Our veteran specific program was started in 2022, and for 2024 has been expanded to include both day and evening sessions, and added a competitive regatta to end the program, too. The program is designed to provide a unique and empowering experience for veterans of all ages facing physical or mental health challenges, offering a supportive environment to enhance well-being. Through the ancient Hawaiian tradition of outrigger canoeing, participants not only engage in a physically invigorating activity but also find a sense of camaraderie, and a positive impact on overall quality of life.

The Competitive Hawaiian Outrigger Canoe Program for Veterans is an 8-week program where participants are guided through a progressive training program, preparing for the ultimate challenge – a regatta with multiple races. The program consists of one 1.5-hour session per week for 8 weeks. Each session is designed to provide 1.5 hours of skill-building, teamwork, and enjoyment on the water in a 4-person outrigger canoe. Paddle & other adaptations are made for each individual as needed.

Veterans can bring a family member to paddle. Due to the high staff to participant ratio advance registration is required (sorry, no drop-ins).

Go to our webpage to sign up: <https://goaccess.org/veterans/>
Or write ross@goaccess.org for more information.

May is Arthritis Awareness Month

This year, Arthritis Awareness Month is all about sharing inspiration. One of the best ways to experience inspiration in action is through an Arthritis Foundation Connect Group. There are several specialty Connect Group meetings happening this month.



Making Connections

Connect Groups offer online virtual support and community for people living with arthritis. Check out these May events:

Military & Veterans Connect Group - Find Flow & Relief with Qi Gong and Tai Chi!

Wednesday May 8, 7:30-9:00 PM ET

<https://bit.ly/ConnectGroups-Veterans>

Newly Diagnosed Connect Group - Next Steps

Thursday May 9, 7:30-9:00 PM ET

<https://bit.ly/ConnectGroups-New>

Gout Connect Group - Quarterly Meeting

Saturday May 18, 7:30 - 9:00 PM ET

<https://bit.ly/ConnectGroups-Gout>

Osteoarthritis Connect Group - Open Sharing and Support

Tuesday May 28, 6:00 - 7:00 PM ET

<https://bit.ly/ConnectGroups-OA>

Learn more: <https://connectgroups.arthritis.org>

UPCOMING WEBINAR:

Advances in Arthritis Care

Join us on May 23 at 6:00pm ET as we Learn about the latest in arthritis research, including current studies, promising drug advances and emerging therapies. Also, hear the perspectives about potential new treatments from researchers, healthcare professionals, and patients. Register at:

<https://joinus.arthritis.org/webinarmay>



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