



# NEWSLETTER

A PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS  
OF THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS  
DEPARTMENT OF NEW YORK

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## CHANGING OF THE GUARD

*Leo Ortiz, Department Commander*

It is with great pride that I became your 2009-2010 Department Commander on July 1, 2009.

For those of you who don't know me, I've been a DAV life member since 1982. I served in the US Army from 1967-1969 in the Republic of Korea on the DMZ where I was severely injured resulting in the traumatic amputation of my right foot.

I am a member of Edward G. Galian Memorial Chapter 212, Goshen, New York. I am also a proud member of National Amputation Chapter 76, Malverne, New York.

No man is an island; I cannot do it alone. I will be counting on each and every one of you to step up when called upon.

We will soon be having an open house to celebrate the grand opening of our new Department Headquarters. Please make yourself available for this event.

There are many great bills and initiatives that have been approved by the House of Representatives. Some of these include the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act and the DAV Stand Up for Veterans. Thanks to all who wrote letters, made phone calls and sent e-mails. We must continue to support DAV initiatives and stand committed to improving the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

I am proud to announce my line officers elected with me: Sr. Vice Commander Deane L. Springstead and Jr. Vice Commanders Frank Cassella, Samuel Mantilla, Richard Castellano, Donald Day and Thomas Reiter.

## “MAGGIE’S- DRAWERS”

*Sidney Siller, Sr., PDC; Department Adjutant*

The symbolism to those of us who were especially interested in becoming adept with our Garard A-1's, were ashamed when we learned that our score was seen by one and all on the rifle range with one waive of “Maggie's Drawers.” For those who never experienced Rifle Training with the use of manually raised targets by other GI's in the target pits who scored our hits and misses, “Maggie's Drawers” (a red pair of drawers on a pole) was signaled from the pit that a rookie had totally missed the target.

“Maggie's Drawers,” was the first thought I had when I learned of the most recent debacle at the VAMC in Philadelphia, where its been recently reported approximately 100 veterans, treated for Prostate Cancer, were negligently treated. The pellets that where allegedly aimed at their prostates, ended up in their rectums or their stomachs.

How could this happen to our fellow veterans is still, weeks later, an unanswered question. How in the world, with modern medicine and the advanced state of technology, could we ever have a case of “Maggie's Drawers” in the greatest hospital system extant?

The prostate problem, on top of the colonoscopy and hepatitis crisis, creates a mandate for an emergency peer review that the VA Central Office must efficiently solve. We cannot, when it comes to VA health care tolerate anything lower than excellence.

Peer review is really a great technique that the VA uses regularly, but it must begin to hit the target without any misses. In health, “Maggie's Drawers,” is not funny even though its' origins do sound humor-

*Continued on page 2*

*Continued from Sidney Siller, Sr.'s column, page 1*

# ALL NATIONAL CONVENTION (GO-ERS) DELEGATES

If you are attending the National Convention in August, please note that the DAV District Meetings for our District will be held on Friday, August 21, 2009 from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm and it is imperative that you be there. Check the Convention Agenda for the meeting room location.

## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**2009 National DAV Convention**  
August 22, 2009 to August 25, 2009  
Sheraton Hotel Denver  
Denver, CO 80202

### CHAPTER OFFICERS - PLEASE TAKE NOTICE

Please take care when filling out the Chapter Officer Report and the Chapter Recommendation For Committees Form. Make sure the names and addresses are legible. Do not forget to include the correct zip codes.

#### Membership Status as of 7/16/09

Trial Members: 2,247  
Part Life Members: 2,194  
Full Life Members: 46,255  
Total Members: 50,696  
Goal for Full Life Members: 49,915 (98.59%)

#### DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

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ous. However, sad to say it's not.

On the other side of the VA, we've learned that the backlog in claims adjudication has risen to under one (1) million undecided claims. This figure is ridiculous in light of the fact that there are approximately two (2) million WWII's alive from a population of over sixteen (16) million. This attrition does not factor in our newly disabled comrades from Iraq and Afghanistan, nor the aging Korean and Vietnam veterans.

The issues raised require extraordinary attention by review and follow up. Let's not lose the greatest assets we have in the VA. Their best efforts and attention to all of the veterans of this country.

\*E.N. The writer had a few "Maggie's Drawers" during Armored Force Training at Fort Knox, and qualified as an expert marksman on every weapon except the 45 pistol.

## A GREAT DAY FOR VETERANS AND DAV

*Art Wilson, National Adjutant*

June 23, 2009, was a great day for veterans and a proud day for DAV, so I want to take a moment to share this news with everyone because you have all played a part in this success.

On the night of June 23, the House of Representatives voted 409 to 1 to approve H.R. 1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act, historic legislation that will provide advance appropriations for the VA health care system. Enactment of this legislation will ensure sufficient, timely and predictable funding for the VA health care system, which will strengthen and sustain the delivery of medical services to millions of veterans, particularly disabled veterans.

I am proud to say that H.R. 1016 was developed, proposed and promoted by DAV as part of our Stand Up For Veterans initiative, and we have devoted significant time and resources to aid in its approval. I encourage you to read DAV's press release, and a New York Times article which highlights the significance of this legislation on our website [www.dav.org](http://www.dav.org).

The House also approved H.R. 1211, the Women Veterans Health Care Improvement Act, another bill that comes directly out of DAV's Stand Up For Veterans ini-

tiative. Both of these bills have strong bipartisan support in the Senate and we expect to see President Obama signing them into law sometime later this year.

Although we are not yet finished with this legislative process, I think it is important to reflect on how we have achieved these successes and to thank all of you who have played a role.

When DAV's legislative team meets with Members of the House and Senate, we walk through the door armed with DAV's stellar reputation, something that you have all helped to enrich. When we put DAV's name behind a legislative proposal, we are strengthened by the many ways in which our service, volunteer, transportation and other programs have assisted disabled veterans.

So whether you are in Cold Spring, Kentucky or Washington, DC or in any one of the 50 States, the District of Columbia or Puerto Rico where DAV works on behalf of disabled veterans, you should all feel proud of the work you have done to support and sustain DAV.

If you are also one of the thousands of people who made phone calls, wrote letters or sent emails to your Members of Congress asking them to support DAV's legislative agenda, know that you have played a key role in helping us develop such a broad and bipartisan coalition of supporters on Capitol Hill.

I am confident that there are many more good days and many more victories to come, but for now let me express my thanks for the work you do and my pride in the commitment you have shown to improving the lives of disabled veterans and their families.

## **CHARGE FOR LIST, LABELS AND DISCS**

*Anthony L. Baskerville,  
National Membership Director*

Several years ago DAV made a significant investment in technology to improve work efficiency and enable chapters and departments to become self reliant when requiring lists and labels for newsletters and other membership projects. Unfortunately, many chapters and some departments have neglected to utilize this technology at an ongoing expense to our national organization.

The very key to our success as the premier veterans' service organization has been our ability to evolve with changing times to remain relevant efficient in our procedures. Since the unveiling of our

Web-based membership system, we have on average processed over 24,000 requests for lists, labels or discs. Over this six years span the membership department has continued to print and mail more than 7.2 million labels alone at tremendous expense to the organization. If we continue on this path, this expense will one day exceed the considerable investment we made to enable its chapters and departments to download these items on their own.

It is vitally important for chapter leaders to reach out to their members as newsletters are essential communications tools. The ability to download list and labels without reliance on others is a key component of our web-based membership system and we encourage all of you to take full advantage of this tool.

It's simple and above all, it's FREE – just by logging on to [www.davmembers.org](http://www.davmembers.org), then clicking on "reports" on the report dropdown, and selecting "membership list" with your appropriate department/chapter information. By default, labels are selected. To receive a listing of member names, remove the Avery check mark. Once the report is displayed, save the document to your computer or thumb drive, burn it to a CD Rom, or E-mail it to your local printer.

For detailed information, please consult your Disabled American Veterans Membership System User Manual for Department and Chapter. On pages 21 thru 27 you will find instructions on how to access and download reports and labels. You may also call the Membership Department toll free at 1-888-236-8313 for assistance.

Considering the significant investment we made to bring this technology to you. Effective July 1, 2009, all Chapters, Departments, Auxiliaries and their subordinate units (including the National Order of Trench Rats and National Blind and Amputation chapters), will be required to reimburse the national organization for the printing and shipping of list, labels and discs. Please refer to the attached price chart for your familiarization.

## **DAV LIST, LABELS AND DISC PRICE CHART**

<u>QTY OF NAMES</u>	<u>LIST</u>	<u>LABELS</u>	<u>DISC</u>
1-3000	\$10.00	\$19.00	\$5.00
3001-6000	\$16.00	\$31.00	\$5.00
6001-9000	\$22.00	\$43.00	\$5.00

These prices include shipping and handling. If express or next day mail is required, the additional shipping cost will be added to your price. If Auxiliary names are included add \$15.00 to your order for additional processing.

It is our sincere hope that this new direction will encourage you to take full advantage of our commitment and the technology provided for your self-reliance.

## VA HANDBOOK 2009

*Source: www.va.gov July 2009*

The latest edition of the Federal Benefits for Veterans and Dependents Pamphlet (i.e. handbook) 80-09-01 can be obtained from the Department of Veterans Affairs online or by mail. It updates the rates for certain federal payments and outlines a variety of programs and benefits for American veterans. Most of the nation's 25 million veterans qualify for some VA benefits, which range from health care to burial in a national cemetery. In addition to health-care and burial benefits, veterans may be eligible for programs providing home loan guaranties, educational assistance, training and vocational rehabilitation, income assistance pensions, life insurance and compensation for service-connected illnesses or disabilities. In some cases, survivors of veterans may also be entitled to benefits. The handbook describes programs for veterans with specific service experiences, such as prisoners of war or those concerned about environmental exposures in Vietnam or in the Gulf War, as well as special benefits for veterans with severe disabilities. In addition to describing benefits provided by VA, the 2007 edition of the 155-page booklet provides an overview of programs and services for veterans provided by other federal agencies. It also includes resources to help veterans access their benefits, with a listing of phone numbers, Internet addresses and a directory of VA facilities throughout the country.

The 2009 publication in English can be downloaded at no cost from VA's Web site at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedben.pdf> or [http://www1.va.gov/OPA/vadocs/current\\_benefits.asp](http://www1.va.gov/OPA/vadocs/current_benefits.asp). A Spanish version of the 2008 handbook can be downloaded at <http://www1.va.gov/opa/vadocs/fedbensp.pdf>. Hard copies of the 2009 English version can be purchased from the U.S. Government Printing Office (GPO). GPO accepts credit card orders for the publication at (866) 512-1800 or (202) 512-1800/2104F for a cost of \$5 each to U.S. addresses.

Add 40% for overseas addresses. If order is by mail make check out to Superintendent of Documents and mail to the GPO at Superintendent of Documents, P.O. Box 371954, Pittsburgh, PA 15250-7954.

## VETERANS GROUP LIFE INSURANCE

*Source: NavyTimes Rick Maze article 6 Jul 09*

A House subcommittee is wrestling with what changes are needed in life insurance programs to accommodate a new generation of disabled combat veterans who are not yet thinking about long-term financial stability for their families. The House Veterans' Affairs Committee's disability assistance panel is considering revisions to the Veterans' Group Life Insurance (VGLI) program that would give disabled veterans several opportunities to increase their coverage.

Rep. Steve Buyer (R-IN), said current law limits veterans to choosing their special life insurance coverage one year after leaving the military — and the decision is irrevocable. "Many separating service members are young and don't see the need to carry a large amount of life insurance coverage," he said. "As they grow older and have a family, many of them require additional coverage." Buyer favors allowing veterans to buy up to \$400,000 of VGLI coverage in \$25,000 increments with a chance to change coverage every five years until age 60. One key issue to be resolved is whether improvements would be fully or heavily subsidized by taxpayers, or whether veterans would bear the cost through higher monthly premiums.

## TAPS

Department has been notified that the following comrades have been called into final formation above:

**Luther E. Williams**, Chapter #153, 7/14/09

**Dominick Procopio**, Chapter #211, 7/16/09

Department and the membership extend deepest sympathies to the family members, friends and comrades of these fallen heroes. May each one rest in honor.

Please feel free to call, write or e-mail [davny@optonline.net](mailto:davny@optonline.net) Headquarters if you have a loss in your Chapter that you would like to include in this column.

## 2009-2010 DEPARTMENT OFFICERS

Leo Ortiz .....Commander  
 Deane L. Springstead .....Sr. Vice Commander  
 Frank Cassella .....Jr. Vice Commander  
 Samuel Mantilla .....Jr. Vice Commander  
 Richard J. Castellano .....Jr. Vice Commander  
 Donald Day .....Jr. Vice Commander  
 Thomas Reiter .....Jr. Vice Commander  
 Anthony L. Mirando .....Treasurer  
 William Novak Jr., PDC .....Judge Advocate  
 Richard T. Robinson .....Chaplain  
 Sidney Siller, Sr., PDC .....Adjutant

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 Leo Ortiz . . . . . Advisor  
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 Janice Bailey..... 1st Jr Vice Commander  
 Theresa Grabowski..... 2nd Jr Vice Commander  
 Anita Ingram, PSC..... Judge Advocate  
 Josephine Minard..... Treasurer  
 Peter Rauh ..... Chaplain  
 Frances Ortiz, PSC..... Adjutant

## 2009- 2010 DAV DEPARTMENT EXECUTIVE COMMITTEEMEN

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Peter Antonaccio, Alternate	
Vernon C. Christian	District 2
John Lazos, Alternate	
Rosario LoBello	District 3
Jose A. Gonzalez, Alternate	
William Sturges	District 4
John Devine, Alternate	
Norwood D. Hunter	District 5
Sal Grasso, Alternate	
Paul Morales	District 6
Thomas Ingram, Alternate	
William L. Creech	District 7
Israel Rivera, Alternate	
Tony Lee	District 8
Gerald L. Jenkins, Alternate	
Nelson Braswell	District 9
Thomas Lopez, Alternate	
Frank Budd	District 10
Gerald E. Lewis, Alternate	
Kevin M. Larson	District 11
John Ryan, Alternate	
David R. Manore	District 12
James H. Owens, Alternate	
Gordon H. Williams	District 13
James McDermott, Alternate	
Richard E. Martin Jr.	District 14
Joseph Shydhinski, Alternate	
Thomas Abbott	District 15
Howard Brittain, Alternate	