

NEWSLETTER

May – June 2008

Disabled American Veterans

Blind Veterans National Chapter

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CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Please let the Blind Chapter Chaplain know if you are sick, hospitalized or you know of one of our members who is.

Contact Reverend Anthony Martino

25016 87th Street, Unit 2

Salem Wisconsin 53168.

847 736 2111

Deaconmart@wi.rr.com

DAV NATIONAL CONVENTION

The "Call For Delegates" is closed and we have experience an increase in members wishing to service as a delegate for the Blind Veterans National Chapter to the National Convention being held at Bally's Hotel Las Vegas from August 8th thru August 12th 2008.

The following members have been placed on the ballot which will be sent out shortly after this newsletter goes out. If you do not receive your ballot by the end of April please let Adjutant Jim know (address, phone number and email address are listed at the top of the newsletter).

Anthony Martino

Frank Merendino

Gerard Boucher

Richard Holden

Paul Johnson

Stephen Moffitt

Gordon Wahl

Joseph Link

Floyd Britting

Terry Livingston

Dennis O'Connell

Paul Kaminsky

The Blind Veterans National Chapter is authorized 4 delegates and 4 alternates.

You may only vote for four on the ballot.

The four members with the most votes are assigned as delegates and the four with the next highest number of votes are designated as Alternate Delegates.

The completed ballots are to be returned to the Adjutant in the envelope provide by May 31st. Members will be advised of the out come of the election.

Delegate/Alternate Convention

Registration Slips will be sent out the Delegates and Alternates.

The 1st meeting of the Blind Veterans National Chapter will be held at 9:00 AM, Friday, August 8, 2008 in Skyview 5 on the 26th Floor of the North Tower.

Delegates and Alternates need to take their Delegate or Alternate Registration Form to the Registration Section and pay a \$25.00 fee to register prior to the meeting. This fee will be reimbursed by the Chapter.

In addition to normal business at the 1st meeting delegates and alternates will be assigned to serve on DAV National Committees. Committees we served on

last year were Constitution & Bylaws, VAVS, Legislative & Veterans Rights & Nominations. A delegate and an alternate will be assigned to each committee. The time of the committee meeting and location will be listed in the Convention Pamphlet you will receive upon registering. The seating procedure at the DAV National Committee meetings is for the delegate to sit at the table and the alternate to sit against the wall. Whenever the delegate is not at the table the alternate will assume the seat at the table. Only the members at the table participate in the discussion. Both the delegate and alternate are responsible for attending all committee meetings.

Also at the 1st Blind Veterans National Chapter meeting the 1st Nomination of Officers will be done.

The 2nd Blind Veterans National Chapter meeting will be held on the afternoon of Friday, August 8, 2008 and the main item on the agenda will be the election of Officers for 2008-2009.

The installation of officers will be held Monday morning at the Blind Chapter's Breakfast.

The 3rd Blind Veterans National Chapter meeting and final meeting will be held shortly after the Installation of Officers.

Delegates and Alternates are required to attend the Final DAV National Business Session which will start at 1:30 pm, Tuesday, August 12, 2008.

DAV Membership Bulletin Articles Follow

STRENGTH THROUGH MEMBERSHIP

Recently, the DAV compared its membership database with the Social Security Administration's death index file. As part of this necessary self-audit, we found many instances where deceased members were still being counted as active on our membership roles.

We are in the process of purging those names. It is critical for our organization to maintain the highest standards of integrity in every area, and this is especially true when it comes to our membership.

DAV recruiters will undoubtedly go into high gear to make up for this shortfall and meet their goals.

Our challenge, moving forward, is to focus on recruiting for potential. When we look at our current membership, we see our numbers spiking around key demographics. The majority of our members are of the Vietnam era. There are still many World War II and Korean War veterans.

If we hope for the DAV to continue its legacy of hope, we must look for legacy members — we must look at the younger men and women who will fill our ranks and keep the fire burning when our lights have burned out.

Our dedication to our whole community is as strong as ever. But when we look at the future of our organization, it's clear that we need to focus our recruiting energy on the men and

women who served in more recent conflicts.

Constantly, we talk about Iraq and Afghanistan War veterans. Reaching out to these folks is important.

Reaching out to less-often thought about members of our community is equally important. The 18 and 19 year olds who served in Beirut and Grenada are in their early 40s today and probably have more time in their lives to be involved and take advantage of leadership opportunities than when they were getting out of the military two decades ago.

Many of the young NCOs who served during the Invasion of Panama and the Gulf War during their second enlistments are eligible for military retirement now. These folks have the time and leadership ability to step in and fill our roles immediately. We need to reach out to them. They are critical to keeping our organization at its maximum strength for the next generation returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and the generations after that.

****Editor's Note: Your Adjutant has been trying to keep our chapter's data base current. There are times when I am not able to reach a member. Please provide the adjutant with an updated address, phone number and/or email address whenever they change. I plan on doing a data verification request in the near future and hope for your cooperation. If you do not receive information from the Blind Chapter for a period of several months then please contact the Adjutant using the

information at the beginning of this newsletter.

NATIONAL CONVENTION SCOOTERS **NO LONGER FREE**

Golden Technologies, supplier of more than 130 scooters for DAV conventions annually at no cost to DAV members, will no longer provide the scooters free of charge. An \$80 fee will be charged for scooter use beginning this year in Las Vegas.

Requests for scooter must be made in advance of the National Convention. To request a scooter, forward the name, address, telephone number and DAV chapter or unit affiliation to Michael J. Walsh, DAV Deputy Inspector General, toll-free, at 877-426-2838, ext. 2065, or e-mail mwalsh@davmail.org; requests may also be sent to Rojean Long, Membership Administrative Secretary, toll-free, at 877-426-2838, ext. 1342, or e-mail rlong@davmail.org. The information will be forwarded to Golden Technologies who will contact individuals for confirmation and arrange for payment of fees, shortly before the start of the convention. Payments may be made by credit card directly to Golden Technologies.

This new fee-based service remains a reasonable accommodation for those who need it. However, members are welcome and encouraged to bring their own scooter to the National Convention. Members who decide to purchase their reserved scooter may apply the \$80 fee toward the purchase price.

SOME VET BENEFITS ELIGIBLE TOWARD STIMULUS PAYMENT INCOME REQUIREMENTS

The recently passed economic stimulus law allows recipients of certain veterans' benefits to count those benefits toward the qualifying income requirement of \$3,000. Some who have already filed may need to amend a previously filed return to reach the qualifying income level. For more information visit:

http://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-news/irspub4664_va.pdf.

COMPENSATED WORK THERAPY PAYMENTS RULED TAX FREE

Payments under the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Compensated Work Therapy (CWT) program are no longer taxable and disabled veterans who paid tax on these benefits in the past three years can claim refunds. Recipients of CWT payments will no longer receive a Form 1099 from the Department of Veterans Affairs. Disabled veterans who paid tax on these benefits in 2004, 2005 or 2006 can claim a refund by filing an amended return using IRS Form 1040X. For more information

visit <http://www.irs.gov/newsroom/article/0,,id=176442,00.html>.

April 10, 2008

VETERANS' HOUSING PACKAGE PASSES SENATE

Includes Akaka's legislation to boost veterans' home loans to Stimulus Act level

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today U.S. Senator Daniel K. Akaka (D-HI), Chairman of the Veterans' Affairs Committee applauded Senate passage

of **H.R. 3321**, with the **Dodd-Shelby Housing** provisions, and noted that the bill incorporated provisions from Akaka's bill to boost limit on veterans' home loans, as well as other important housing provisions for current and former servicemembers.

"We must quickly approve this bill, for veterans and other Americans struggling with the national housing crisis," said Akaka. "I commend Senators Dodd and Shelby for developing a housing bill that helps provide shelter for veterans and servicemembers."

The **Economic Stimulus Act of 2008**, passed by Congress and signed into law in February, raised loan limits for Fannie Mae, Freddie Mac, and FHA home loans, but did not include an increase for the VA Home Loan Program. To correct this oversight, Chairman Akaka introduced **S. 2768**, which proposed to provide the appropriate increase to the VA Home Loan limits; provisions derived from this bill were included in **H.R. 3321**. If enacted, the Dodd-Shelby Housing provisions would provide for this increase throughout the calendar year.

Additionally, the Senate agreed to an amendment that would authorize VA to provide increased adapted housing grants to disabled veterans. Previous increases to the adapted housing grant program have been infrequent and insufficient given the rising costs of housing and construction.

The bill now moves to the House of Representatives.
