



# Disabled American Veterans Department of New Mexico Newsletter

Volume #1 Issue #5 December 2016

## DEPARTMENT RENOVATION PROJECT



On September 30th, 2016, Department was descended upon by more than 20 volunteers from Home Depot to complete the renovation grant project that had been in the planning stages for months. The project encompassed the kitchen, the conference room, the foyer and the restrooms and included paint and flooring as well as other necessary improvements. Four new swamp coolers were also included in the grant, which Department will have installed next spring. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of former Commander Gene Weber, current Adjutant David Alderete, the office staff at Department and the wonderful volunteers from Home Depot for bringing this project to fruition!





## *From the desk of The State Commander*

Time is flying by and all Chapters are getting ready for the holidays. Golden Corral was again a success for all participating Chapters, and Department would like to give a warm thank you from the Disabled American Veterans to Golden Corral corporate and the individual stores for letting us service New Mexican veterans and their families.

On behalf of the New Mexico Department, I would like to welcome Ms. Diana Wong and Mrs. Elaine Mitchell for being appointed as co-chairs of the Women Veterans Advisory Committee. Currently there are approximately 17,000 women veterans in New Mexico. This is a new program for DAV and New Mexico. Please be advised, Ms. Wong and Mrs. Mitchell, that all of us in the DAV Department and Chapters are behind you and your success. Let us all help New Mexico women veterans home and a successful transition to civilian life from the military life.

[vetsconnectonline.com](http://vetsconnectonline.com) is a new program for New Mexico veterans. The DAV Department of New Mexico has committed to the mid-region council of governments on the subject "Vet connect 2016: A Call to Action". This website is full of information for veterans including education, health and transportation. For further information, you can contact Michael Jiron at [mrc-og.nm.gov](http://mrc-og.nm.gov).

The Department needs help from all Chapters and chaplains. Please advise Department of the death or illness of any DAV member as soon as possible. Contact Department by phone or email.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Department Service Officers for helping veterans at the Raymond G. Murphy Medical Center. Our new location is T-62, the old Credit Union building. The following voluntary members are as follows:

Rob Brown

Keith Kosireg

Lewis Johnson

Dana Weakley

Charles Smith

Margaret Hor

Here's wishing all New Mexico veterans and their families a safe and happy holiday season!

*George Perez, Commander*

# Adjutant's Notes



Let me begin by wishing all DAV members and their families a "Joyous Holiday Season". Be thankful for the blessings you have received and enjoy every minute that remains in your life.

We have entered our 6th month of FY 16-17 and many things have happened which you may or may not be aware of. I will begin with the National Convention held in Atlanta, GA in August. All of you receive the DAV quarterly magazine which featured David Riley who was elected National Commander, the first Coast Guard veteran and a quadriplegic. The national Convention in 2017 will be held in New Orleans, LA.

The Golden Corral Veterans Day took place at 7 locations throughout New Mexico. The participating Chapters are believed to have matched or surpassed their fundraising efforts from last year. Not all Chapters have turned in the Department's share of the funds raised but will probably be turned in by the time this Newsletter goes to print. Congratulations to all participating Chapters and the Units that supported and helped in this effort.

The Department conducted its annual Thanksgiving basket drive to enable needy Veterans and their families to enjoy a meal which they may or may not have been fortunate enough to have. A total of 52 baskets were put together and distributed which included turkeys, canned vegetables, stuffing, potatoes, pies, etc. This was made possible with the help of donations received from DAV Chapters #3, #5 and #33 and the National Service Office, directed by Gary Prescott. This effort was further aided by donations from Larry Johnson, Chapter 5 Adjutant, who donated a turkey and 30 5lb. bags of potatoes, Dorothy Chavez, Unit 3 Commander, donated fifty 5lb. bags of potatoes with the help of the Barelvas Community Center, and Elaine Mitchell's family from Cimarron donated several canned goods. We were also blessed with a donation of 10 turkeys from Kirk Bauer and the crew at AmeriGas. A total of \$3,000 was donated which will be split and used for Thanksgiving and Christmas baskets.

It is with a note of sadness that I inform the membership of the closure of Española Valley DAV Chapter #22 located in Española, NM. The Commander and Sr. Vice Commander contacted me and informed the Dept. of the impending need to close the chapter due to lack of attendance and no meetings held in more than a year. They had requested that Dept. close the Chapter and place the members in Chapter 12 (Taos) or Chapter 15 (Santa Fe). National was notified of the request but but advised Dept. that rather than split the Chapter's membership to merge the Chapter with the Chapter nearest them. This request to merge is still pending at National Headquarters until the National Executive Committee meets and votes on the merger.

Last, but not least, as the Amendments to our State Constitution and Bylaws were tabled at this past Convention, I will be mailing the proposed amendments to the Chapters which will also include any other proposed amendments. You will be asked to comment on them and include any Chapters which the Chapters may want to include.

I want to thank everyone for the support I have received from some of the members and look forward to a successful year.

*David Alderete, Adjutant*

## DEPARTMENT VANDALISM

On September 29, 2016, Department Headquarters was the victim of thoughtless vandals. The perpetrators cut the ropes on the flagpole and defiled the flag by shredding it and throwing it in the dumpster. The phone wires were also cut, leaving us without phone or internet. A police report was filed, but no suspects have been apprehended at this time. This incident happened, unfortunately, the day before the Home Depot project was to take place. We were able to rally and go ahead with the renovations but because of this, the locks have been changed and cameras and a new alarm system have been installed. We were able to get the phones and internet back up in a timely fashion, but had to change our email address. Please make a note of our new email address:

[davnewmexico@gmail.com](mailto:davnewmexico@gmail.com)

This is the second instance of vandalism to Department Headquarters this year. Shortly before this year's Convention, a stray bullet came through one of the east-facing windows. Luckily, no one was here at the time.



We at Department hope that all of our Comrades had an enjoyable Veterans Day and were able to take advantage of the Golden Corral/DAV partnership once again this year. Here in New Mexico, the fundraiser was once again a rousing success. With numbers still coming in from Chapters across the state, we are projected to meet or even surpass our goals. While this is a Department fundraiser, we take a minimal percentage and let the Chapters keep the lion's share of the proceeds. In past years, the split was done in a tiered approach which was a bit confusing. This year, a 15/85 split was agreed upon. There are 7 Golden Corrals around the state; Roswell, Farmington, Las Cruces, Gallup, and 3 in Albuquerque (2701 Coors, 10415 Central NE and 5207 San Mateo NE).



Members of Chapter and Unit 3 and Chapter 5 at Golden Corral (store #936) in Albuquerque. Clockwise from left: Elaine Mitchell (Ch.5), Forest Barka (Ch.3), David Alderete (Ch.3/Dept. Adjutant), Mary Alderete (Unit 3), and Sarah Langley (Ch.3) at center.



THE DAV TRANSPORTATION PROGRAM IS IN NEED OF A FEW GOOD MEN AND WOMEN TO VOLUNTEER AS POV DRIVERS TO HELP OUR STATE'S VETERANS GET TO AND FROM THEIR NECESSARY MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS. TO VOLUNTEER OR FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT LUPE CRUZ, ALBUQUERQUE TRANSPORTATION COORDINATOR, AT (505) 265-2821. YOU CAN ALSO FIND COORDINATORS IN YOUR AREA ON DEPARTMENT'S WEBSITE AT: [www.davnewmexico.org](http://www.davnewmexico.org)



## Departed Comrades

**Benjamin F. Espinoza, Chapter 3**

**Joe F. Chavez, Chapter 3**

**Edward J. Molina, Chapter 3**

**Teresa L. Gilooly, Chapter 6**

**Donald G. Villers, Chapter 9**

**Tony A. Saiz, Chapter 9**

**Lonnie A. Hendrick, Chapter 15**

**Tony Romero, Chapter 21**

**John H. Otero, Chapter 33**

**George A. Martinez, Chapter 33**

**Adenago Guerrero, Chapter 7  
(Cactus)**

*(This information is compiled from what is received by Department. If you have information on a departed comrade that was not included in this list, let us know and we will make sure they are listed in the following issue of the Newsletter)*

## Loving Thunder Therapeutic Riding Receives Grant from Veterans Affairs Dept.

(submitted by Larry Johnson)

Loving Thunder Therapeutic Riding, Inc., a member of The Professional Association of Therapeutic Horsemanship International, in Rio Rancho has been awarded a Federal Grant from the Veterans Affairs Department. Out of 240 nationwide applications 90 were awarded. Loving Thunder was the only facility in New Mexico to receive this grant. It will enable them to provide therapeutic riding lessons on specially trained horses for Veterans with PTSD and other adaptive sport needs. Loving Thunder is offering 120 FREE ground and riding lessons for Veterans who may have physical, mental or behavioral challenges of all types as well as those using wheel chairs, braces, walkers, or amputees. There are four sessions of six-week lessons each 2-hour long. Participants must be under 225 pounds.

Those Veterans who may be over the weight limit may participate in ground work benefiting mentally, physically and showing their support of fellow veterans.

Whether you're a Veteran or not, volunteers are always needed and welcomed to Loving Thunder. It's a great way to pay it forward and enjoy a real feeling of satisfaction and accomplishment.

All Veterans who are interested in taking advantage of this program can go to [www.lovingthunder.com](http://www.lovingthunder.com) and click on the Veteran tab for an application. Anyone interested in volunteering can click on the volunteer tab for an application as well.

For more information visit [info@lovingthunder.com](mailto:info@lovingthunder.com) or call 505-554-9493.



The ladies of Stitches of Love at Our Lady of Guadalupe Church in Peralta, NM once again donated over 20 quilts to Department for hospitalized veterans. This is the third year they have donated to Department. Thank you ladies!

Pictured from left: Isabelle Albers, Candy Dunlap, Colfita Sanchez, Marlene Monteith, and Mary Ann Gonzales.