



**DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS**  
**SIMPSON-TURNER/CHAPTER 27**  
**P.O. BOX 10275**  
**RUSSELLVILLE AR 72812**



I would like to share some of the things we have accomplished at Chapter 27. Chapter 27 has one of the best group of officers, members and auxiliary that any chapter could ask for. It is to their credit that this chapter is as successful as it has become.

When I assumed the position as commander in April of 2015 the chapter was on the verge of closing. The first thing I did was encourage the members to take a more positive approach creating the changes necessary to improve our chapter and to become more actively involved in chapter activities to raise funds, recruit new members and be more visible in the local communities. Today we can say that we have one of the best chapters in Arkansas and one that I am very proud to serve in.

When I assumed the position of commander, I had three DAV members and three DAVA members, I presented a vision of what I wanted to accomplish and created a strategy to reach the goal of significant improvement in the chapter. As we worked diligently to create the successful chapter we have become, we started getting new members who wanted to become an active part the vision for what this DAV chapter could do as a beacon to the service of veterans in this area. Today we have 35 to 40 members at every monthly meeting.

As we have increased our membership over the last five years we have been able to:

1. Start attending events, fairs, and setting up in front of stores.
2. Increased our public awareness by speaking to civic groups.
3. Created an effective Veteran Service Officer program, that started at two days a week, and today we have built that to five days a week. Our reputation as a chapter that helps veterans, has resulted in veterans from different parts of the state coming to this chapter to get their claims completed. In 2018 we helped over 400 veterans with their claims and assisted veterans in getting access to the VA system, in 2019 it appears that we will surpass that number.
4. Five years ago, we ran the DAV van one day a week, today we run the van five days a week, transporting an average of about 55 veterans a week to the VA facilities.
5. Purchased a new van this year for the purpose of transporting veterans to the VA facilities in Conway, Little Rock and North Little Rock at a cost of approximately \$33,000.00.
6. We donated our old van to another DAV organization in Arkansas.
7. We established a committee that works with veterans when they have a critical financial need with rent, mortgage payments, gas, water, heating and electric bills, car repairs and groceries, in 2019 year we provided over \$13,000 in grants to veterans. As a result of the increase in veteran homelessness, in 2020 we expect to exceed that amount.

8. Our chapter has become a member of three-local area chambers of commerce, we wanted to make contacts in the communities we serve but most importantly we wanted the community to know our DAV Chapter is a part of their community and the services we can provide to the veterans.
9. We provide services and assistance to veterans in three counties, plus those traveling through the area that need help.
10. We were approached by the Russellville Chamber of Commerce to participate in the Business Expo, for the last two years we have had a booth at the Expo, furnished by our local paper.
11. I served as the State Chaplain for three years, 1st Junior Vice one year, and during this time I also served on the membership committee, audit committee, nomination committee, and the training committee.
12. When I served as state chaplain for the DAV, I volunteered to open the Russellville City Council with prayer, I still do that today on an irregular basis and it makes for good relations with the community leaders.
13. We provide our senior Veterans with emergency alert life monitors if requested.
14. We provide 30 day use cell phones for veterans who are looking for work and do not have a cell phones.
15. We provide lodging for homeless veterans and for travelers going through our area who need help.
16. We started a scholarship program, two scholarships for children or widows/ widowers of Disabled Veterans.
17. We work with the DAV Auxiliary in providing gifts to veterans in the nursing homes and VA hospitals.
18. Work with the local Arkansas DVA representative in providing continued training for our VSO's.
19. We started a radio program, the first Friday of the month, a 15-minute segment, offered freely by our local radio station.
20. I am part of the veteran's coalition, both locally and state, I participate in the veteran's groups at the local college, I am part of the VA/Clergy group as a chaplain and commander of the DAV, and I belong to the local ministerial association, I also support the Out of Darkness and all outreach programs to better serve our community and our veterans.
21. Two years ago, we started the Disabled American Veterans Big Bass Fishing tournament to raise funds for the local DAV and the state DAV. We work this program with the help of many civic leaders and citizens.
22. Over the last five years our average attendance has gone from 7 to 35 in our chapter meetings.
23. We have the office opened five days a week and we work off appointment for time when veterans can't meet the scheduled times of our office being open.
24. We expanded the number of junior officers from one to four, giving them responsibility for certain programs, ex: one junior vice serves as the events

- coordinator, another is responsible for promote the DAV to areas outside of our county and one serves as our van coordinator.
25. I appointed a member as our webmaster to develop and promote our Chapter through social media.
  26. We started a group that meets on a regular basis to discuss and visit with veterans who have suffered from PTSD or other issues related to their military experience.
  27. We established various committees, I started a grievance committee, if anyone has a complaint, they take it to the grievance committee, this prevents disruption a chapter meeting, I started a veterans intake committee to interview veterans needing help, I also started a building and fund-raising committee for the purpose of exploring the cost building a new Chapter building.
  28. We work with a group called Out of Darkness to assist people contemplating suicide.
  29. I visit other Chapters as a state officer to offer encouragement and suggestions to these chapters.

As a result of these initiatives our chapter is highly visible in the community, respected and supported by the community leaders and businesses. We work with various organization in our community that help those in need, I have asked them to refer their veterans to us at Chapter 27, since we only work with veterans. I have asked the director of Help Network (An organization that helps meet the needs of people in our community) to be part of our interviewing process, so that we can prevent people from abusing the system acquiring resources from more than one organization. We are very careful to use the money we raise to see that it goes to veterans that truly need it. We have businesses and individuals that contribute to us on a regular basis because they see and hear what we do in the community and how we take care of our veterans.

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