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Monthly Newsletter
July 2025

North Central MN Chapter #7
PO Box 564
Bemidji, MN 56619



NEXT MEETING:
DAV Headquarters at

5441 15th Street NW, Bemidji, MN
Monday, July 21 at 6:30pm

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CHAPTER OFFICERS

COMMANDER:	Gene Schwantes - (218) 556-4592
SENIOR VICE:	Darrel Baltzell
JUNIOR VICE:	Tom Annonson
ADJUTANT:	Jeff Meyer
SERVICE OFFICERS:	Tom Annonson - (218) 251-3025
TREASURER:	Jeri Harvey
CHAPLAIN:	Mike Gutz - (218) 444-5015
JUDGE ADVOCATE:	Ward Sutton
SERGEANT AT ARMS:	Bruce Tiegen
OFFICER OF THE DAY:	Glenn Agard
LEGISLATIVE OFFICER:	Joe Vene
HISTORIAN:	Vacant
EXEC. COMMITTEE:	Bruce Tiegen, Gary Guggenberger, Andy Staudt, Henry Hammerback, Jim Pinsonnault

UPCOMING HOLIDAYS & EVENTS

July 2nd - Bemidji Jaycees Water Carnival Starts. Fireworks Display at Dusk	Aug 4th -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.
July 4th - Independence Day	Aug 6th - National Root Beer Float Day
July 6th - Bemidji Jaycees Water Carnival Grand Parade at 1300 Hrs.	Aug 7th - Purple Heart Day
July 7th -- DAV Chapter 7 Executive Committee meeting 1630 Hrs.	Aug 15th - Assumption of Mary (Christian celebration of the bodily and spiritual ascension of the Virgin Mary into Heaven)
July 21st -- DAV Chapter 7 General Membership meeting 1830 Hrs.	Aug 18th -- DAV Chapter 7 General Membership meeting 1830 Hrs.
July 25th - 27th - Bemidji All School Reunion	Aug 23rd - DAV Chapter 7 annual picnic at the Chapter HQ 1100-1500 Hrs.
July 25th - 27th -- Lake George Blueberry Festival	Aug 21st - International Day of Remembrance & Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism.
July 26th -- Blackduck Woodcarvers Arts and Crafts Festival 9 am-4 pm	
Aug 3rd - Ralph Gracie Post 14 annual picnic at Lazy Jacks	
Aug 3rd - Tisha B'Av (A day of mourning for the Jewish Community)	



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COMMANDER'S CORNER

Hello, Chapter 7 Members,

I hope everyone is doing well and enjoying our beautiful summer and the enjoyable work that goes with it. Summer is a time for friends and family get togethers, hometown celebrations, family reunions, county and state fairs, and do it all without heavy coats and insulated boots on, so get out and enjoy yourself.

OH YES AND THE GREATEST CELEBRATION OF THE SUMMER, THE DAV SUMMER PICNIC, WHICH WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, AUGUST 23, FROM 11 AM TO 3 PM. SO, GET SIGNED UP AS SOON AS POSSIBLE, CONTACT DARREL @ 218-766-9287 OR MYSELF @ 218-556-4592. THIS YEAR THE COUNTY VETERAN SERVICE OFFICERS WILL HAVE THEIR NEW MOBILE OFFICE AT DAV FOR YOU TO TOUR. SO COME EARLY AND VISIT WITH OUR CVSO AND TOUR THEIR MOBILE OFFICE. DINNER WILL BE SERVED AT NOON AND THE DRAWING FOR THE DOOR PRIZES WILL BE AT 2 PM AND YOU CAN BE SITTING AT HOME BY 3:30 SIPPING ON A COOL ONE, WITH YOUR BELLY FULL AND ADMIRING YOUR DOOR PRIZE. HOPE TO SEE EVERYONE THERE, YOU DO KNOW THAT THE WHOLE CHAPTER IS INVITED!!!!!!

At the June Chapter Meeting the members approved the budget for 2025/2026, selected the audit committee and discussed veterans in need requests. For the Good of the Order, Dan Engelen's wife, Jan passed away and there will be a Celebration of Life in her honor held at DAV Chapter

Headquarters on Saturday, July 26th at 1:30 pm, all members that know the Dan and Jan duo are invited. Dan has been a member of DAV Chapter 7 for the past 10 years.

As the story goes, any questions or concerns or to sign up for the picnic, please give me a call @ 218-556-4592.

Hope to see you at the next Chapter Meeting or at the DAV Picnic,
Gene Schwantes

AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S CORNER

Hello all,

The June meeting was very exciting with many new projects being planned for this year.

Please contact Gene Schwantes(DAV Commander) if you are interested in being in the July 4th parade and also if you want to attend our annual picnic on Aug 23rd.

Hope to see everyone at our July meeting.

Lyndsey Moe, Commander, DAVA Unit 7

MINNESOTA: UPCOMING DAV MN OUTDOOR EVENTS

The Minnesota DAV Department's Outdoor program has scheduled their upcoming events and posted them on their website. Check them out at: <https://davmn.org/events-activities/events-for-veterans/>



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THE DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER #7

REGULARLY CONVENED ON 16 JUNE 2025 AT 1830.

OPENING CEREMONY: * OPENING PRAYER * PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

A. ROLL CALL of OFFICERS to determine if a quorum is present.

Commander	Gene Schwantes	Present
Senior Vice Commander	Darrell Baltzell	Present
Junior Vice Commander	Tom Annonson	Present
Adjutant	Jeff Meyer	Present
Treasurer	Jeri Harvey	Present
Chaplain	Mike Gutz	Present
Judge Advocate	Ward Sutton	Present
Sergeant-At-Arms	Bruce Tiegen	Present
Officer of the Day	Glen Aagard	Excused
Historian	Vacant	N/A

B. Members Present: 13

C. Introduction of Guests or Visitors: NA

D. Minutes of Previous Meeting:

1. Motion to suspend the reading and accept the minutes as they are provided to the general membership in the monthly newsletter. Motion by Tom, 2d by Dave, the motion carried.

E. Treasurer's Report:

1. The treasurer's report was read by Treasurer Jeri, the motion to accept the report was made by Tom, and the 2d by Mike, and the motion was carried.

F. Communications:

1. Kiera Hesseldahl and Summer Hesseldahl, both sisters and recipients of this year's Chapter scholarship, both sent us thank you letters thanking us for their selection as scholarship recipients.
2. Denise Bennett took time out of her busy schedule to write us a thank you letter, thanking us for paying for the repair work on her boyfriend Bryan Rawls' vehicle. Bryan is a Veteran and has been out of work for a few years due to extensive injuries received while in the service.
3. Val Aherns sent us a thank you note thanking us for our donation to this year's "Ride for the Troops."
4. Joyce Plinke sent us a thank you note for all the work we do with Veterans in need, as well as a donation of fifteen dollars.
5. Bemidji CrossFit sent us a donation check of \$260.00 as a result of their annual military appreciation fundraiser.
6. Marion Evans sent us a thank you note for all the work we do with Veterans in need as well as a donation of twenty dollars.
7. DAV National has announced a partnership with and donation from Cornerstone Caregiving which will greatly benefit the new Caregivers Support program.
8. DAV National has announced a partnership with not one but two cellular phone companies, AirTalk Wireless, powered by AirVoice Wireless and T-Mobile. Both companies also donated \$50,000.00 each to help the DAV's efforts to provide no-cost services to Veterans and their families.
9. Clearwater County Commissioners sent us a thank you letter thanking us for the help with and donation of the 2012 Honda Handicap Van to assist handicapped Veterans in getting to and from medical appointments.

G. Committee Reports:

1. Membership: 1 new member was recognized tonight, Emily Booth, welcome!
2. Service Officer: Tom reports several Veteran's referred over to the CVSO Shane and Luke for benefits earned.
3. Hospital/Sickness and Distress: NA

4. Legislative: NA

5. Entertainment: Truck and trailer (with candy) will be part of this year's Independence Day parade. If you are interested in riding along in the parade, please contact the adjutant or commander for additional information. Additionally, the dates for this year's Chapter picnic will be 8/23/2025 from 1100-1500 hrs., and the Beltrami County Veterans Services Office will have their new mobile office on display at the picnic this year.
6. Publicity and Fundraising: The Blackduck Wood Carvers Festival will be held on 7/26/25 from 0900-1600 hrs.
7. Medical Equipment: 24 Issues and 15 donations.
8. The Scholarship Committee reports that the 2025/2026 school year application is complete, and awardees have been selected. Scholarship funds will be sent to the respective institutions at the end of Aug. or the beginning of September.

H. Executive Committee Action Items: None.

I. Old Business:

1. 2025/2026 Budget proposal has been finalized; Mike made the motion to approve the budget, Dave made the 2d, and the budget was approved.
2. Jeri reminded us that we cannot take on any new lifetime members until after 7/1 due to the close-out of the fiscal year and reconciliation of the checking account.

J. New Business:

1. Independence Day Parade will be held on 7/6/25, line up at 1100 hrs., and the parade will begin at 1300 hrs.
2. This year's summer picnic will be held on 8/23/25 from 1100 hrs. – 1500 hrs. with lots of food and door prizes. This year we will also have the new CVSO mobile office on display. Please see any of the chapter officers or come by the headquarters to get signed up for the picnic so we have an accurate count of food.
3. A veteran in need request came before the Executive Committee in May from Steve, the CVSO down in Backus. The Veteran needed \$714.50 dollars to help with house payments, and the executive committee approved up to \$1000 dollars.
4. A Veteran in need request came before the Executive Committee in May from Darren, Beltrami CVSO. The Veteran needed \$968.82 dollars for propane, and the executive committee approved up to \$1000 dollars.
5. A Veteran in need request came from Darren Beltrami, CVSO, requesting \$1706.08. There was some controversy concerning this Veteran, and after a significant discussion concerning the Veteran, the motion to help with his expenses was voted down 3 to 6. This request will be sent back to the CVSO, who can resubmit once a different situation with the Veteran has been obtained.
6. This year's Audit committee volunteers are Andy, Jack, and Tom. The motion to approve was made by Pete, the 2d by Dave, and the audit committee was approved.

K. Good of the Order:

1. The American Legion picnic will be held on 8/3/25 from 11-3 P.m. at Lazy Jacks.
2. Dan and Jan Engelen's Celebration of Life will be held at the chapter headquarters on Saturday, 7/26/25 at 1330; all are welcome.

L. Closing Ceremonies performed.

M. Motion to Adjourn:

- Motion by Mike and second by Tom. Motion carried.
- The meeting adjourned at 2000.
- Next meeting 7/21/2025 @1830.

MILITARY HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCE DAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR:

July 4 – Independence Day

July 27 – National Korean War Veterans Armistice Day

Aug. 27 – Coast Guard Birthday

Aug. 7 – Purple Heart Day – A time for Americans to pause to remember and honor the brave men and women who were either wounded on the battlefield or paid the ultimate sacrifice.

Aug. 29 – Marine Forces Reserve Birthday

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Our discussion this month will be about The Book of Ephesians. We had mentioned this fact at the end of our last article (June 2025). We will be spending the rest of this year in this book. So, let's get ready to fly (USAF), orbit (USSF), dive (USN), land (USMC), sail (USCG), and march (USA) into this wonderful and awesome book.

There is a wholesomeness and complete unity of thought found throughout this book. Amazingly this book encapsulates God's original purpose and plans for creation, the current dynamics and operation of this world, as well as a complete and practical application of scripture into our daily lives. The Book of Ephesians is a time capsule that can be open anytime in the past, present and future, all the while being as relevant to any and every generation living on this planet.

We begin with a mystery. This mystery is actually found in the person, life and work of Jesus Christ from The Father whose intent from the beginning was to create a people for Himself. Whenever Paul (writer) uses the phrase 'in Christ' (Book of Ephesians) under the inspiration of The Holy Spirit, he is referring to this mystery. This mystery was actually never revealed in the Old Testament, except to say, there were events and conversations with God, through the prophets that provided indicators pointing to this mystery such as Abraham sacrificing Isaac. An example of this elsewhere in the scriptures is found in John 1:1-4, 14 "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men." (Isaiah 9:6) ... and the Word became flesh and tabernacle among us ... "(Isaiah 40) (New American Standard Bible - NASB). A second example of this mystery is found in Revelation 13:8 "All who dwell on the earth will worship Him, everyone whose name has not been written in The Book of Life; of the Lamb who was slain from the foundation of the world." (NASB with note). Unfortunately, so many people have heard this mystery so many times, the full impact and implications of this mystery have lost its' special meaning. Yet for many more of us, this mystery will never lose its flavor or special place in our hearts.

We will be further exploring this mystery next month. Take care and if there is something we may do for you, please do not hesitate.

Blessings to everyone.

Mike and Julie Gutz

MINNESOTA: UPCOMING WOMEN VETERANS OUTDOOR EVENTS

Women's trips are designed to introduce and deepen the unique and meaningful benefits of time spent in nature within a safe space inclusive of all women. Join us on a kayak tour of the Apostle Islands National Lakeshore. Experience a series of sea kayaking and hiking day trips from our Little Sand Bay Base Camp.

Contact John Carson at john@davmn.org to signup for one of the following events.

July 17th – July 20th, 2025 or August 21st - August 24th, 2025

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 3rd Jr Vice Commander Bill Gordon, Anoka Chapter 39
 4th Jr Vice Commander Kenneth Olson, Willmar Chapter 34

Judge Advocate Debra Petersen, Faribault Chapter 20
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NATIONAL: AIRTALK DONATES \$50,000 TO SUPPORT DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS

Posted June 10th , 2025

ERLANGER, Ky. – DAV (Disabled American Veterans) is thrilled to announce a \$50,000 donation from AirTalk Wireless, powered by AirVoice Wireless, in support of its mission to assist veterans nationwide. AirTalk’s donation will help DAV connect veterans and its nearly one million members with vital telecommunication resources.

Headquartered in Erlanger, Kentucky, DAV provides an expansive range of nationwide programs, such as benefits assistance, transportation to and from VA medical appointments, employment assistance and more – all at no cost to veterans and their families. This is DAV’s first partnership with AirTalk, a company that provides eligible customers with a free 4G/5G+LTE smartphone, such as an iPhone or Samsung device or sim card, along with additional benefits such as free data, unlimited talk and text and free international calling.

“We are excited for this partnership with AirTalk and look forward to helping even more veterans access the care they deserve,” said DAV CEO and National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski. “AirTalk helps veterans stay connected to their communities and care providers, no matter their financial situation.”

“At AirTalk, we take great pride in serving over one million subscribers by helping to bridge the digital divide,” shared AirTalk CEO Henry Do when asked about this exciting partnership. “For many, connectivity is more than just a convenience—it’s a vital link to education, healthcare, employment and loved ones. We understand how crucial these connections are in everyday life, and we are committed to building a future where everyone has the opportunity to thrive through equal access to technology.”

To learn more about DAV, please visit www.dav.org.

To learn more about AirTalk Wireless, please visit www.airtalkwireless.com/dav-lifeline-application.

NATIONAL: COMMANDER’S ACTION NETWORK (CAN)

To stay informed and take action to support federal legislation and policies affecting veterans, their families and survivors, please join DAV CAN (Commander’s Action Network).

To enroll, go to the DAV.org website and do a search for the “Commander’s Action Network” it will direct you to a results page and there you will find the link to sign up and become an active participant in the program. Once you are enrolled you will periodically receive emails with “canned” letters to your individual representatives on legislative matters pertaining to veterans’ issues that are currently before them in Congress encouraging them to act on behalf of all veterans that the proposed bill in question is addressing. Simply click the “take action” button at the bottom of the email and the letter will automatically be sent.

NATIONAL: NATIONAL MEMBER NEWS

The link below is to the National’s web page that highlights some of the activities of Chapters and members from around the Country. The page has some interesting accounts of the various things that might spark some ideas that other Chapters might consider incorporating in their local areas of influence.

Check it out at <https://www.dav.org/news-media/member-news>

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NATIONAL: T-MOBILE DONATES \$50,000 TO SUPPORT VETERAN/SPOUSE ENTREPRENEURS

Posted on Jun 18, 2025

ERLANGER, Ky. – DAV (Disabled American Veterans) has received a generous \$50,000 donation from T-Mobile to sponsor the organization’s veteran entrepreneurship contests, DAV Patriots Pitch. Hosted three times annually, the contests are specifically designed for veteran and spouse founders to showcase their innovative business ideas, secure potential investment and educate their fellow entrepreneurs on the art of pitching their ventures.

Inspired by the popular TV show “Shark Tank,” this dynamic event brings together a panel of accomplished veteran investors, industry experts and successful entrepreneurs who are eager to support and invest in veteran-led businesses. The contest is a part of DAV Patriot Boot Camp—an entrepreneurial program that empowers founders in the veteran and military community, including spouses, to become entrepreneurs.

“We are grateful to T-Mobile for helping us grow this exciting program and incentivizing our entrepreneurs,” said Barry Jesinoski, DAV’s CEO and national adjutant. “As the presenting sponsor, T-Mobile provides veterans with the opportunity to refine their pitch and compete for non-dilutive capital to grow their business. This opportunity is life-changing for each veteran and their family.”

Headquartered in Erlanger, Kentucky, DAV provides an expansive range of nationwide programs, such as benefits assistance, transportation to and from VA medical appointments, employment assistance and more – all at no cost to veterans and their families. The sponsorship marks the second year that T-Mobile has partnered with DAV.

“T-Mobile is proud to stand alongside DAV and support a program that will help veterans build new skills to grow their professional experience in an impactful way,” said Cole Staudt, T-Mobile External Affairs Manager. “We’re honored to renew our support of DAV’s mission and continue championing veterans, their families, small businesses and entrepreneurs.”

To learn more about DAV Patriot Boot Camp and DAV Patriots Pitch contests, please visit patriotbootcamp.org.

VA: POSTED JUNE 11TH, 2025

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs today announced the availability of \$42 million in grants to eligible organizations to assist homeless Veterans and those at risk of homelessness with various legal services.

Grant applications are due by 4 p.m. ET, July 7. Organizations can apply for grants worth up to \$500,000, which will fund operations for a two-year period beginning Oct. 1, 2025, through Sept. 30, 2027.

The funds are being made available through VA’s Legal Services for Veterans Grant Program and are designed to help Veterans in several ways, including:

Providing Veterans with representation in landlord-tenant disputes to prevent eviction.

Assisting with court proceedings for child support, custody or estate planning.

Helping Veterans obtain benefits like disability compensation.

Defending Veterans in criminal cases that can prolong or increase their risk of homelessness, such as outstanding warrants, fines, and driver’s license revocation.

“Services to help Veterans obtain benefits, maintain access to housing and navigate other common legal issues can make a huge difference in preventing or resolving homelessness,” said VA Secretary Doug Collins. “These important grants will help us make a positive difference in the lives of thousands of Veterans.”

Learn more about the grant program eligibility and award process online or by emailing lsv@va.gov.

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VA: IMPORTANCE OF MAINTAINING YOUR VA ID CARD

As a Veteran receiving health care, one of the most crucial assets you possess is your VA ID card. It's imperative to understand why maintaining and updating your VA ID card is essential and how you can ensure it remains functional.

Identification at VA Facilities

Your VA ID card serves as your primary identification at VA facilities. Whether you're seeking medical care, accessing benefits, or attending appointments, this card is vital. It streamlines the identification process, reducing potential human errors and allowing seamless access to your personal files and medical records.

Check-in for Appointments

When you have appointments at VA facilities, your VA ID card is a necessity for check-in. It helps staff quickly verify your identity, ensuring a smooth and efficient process.

Updating Your VA ID Card

If you need to update your VA ID card, visit the enrollment office at your local VA facility. No appointment is necessary for this process. The staff at the enrollment office are there to assist you in updating your information. Don't hesitate to ask any VA employee for guidance or assistance. They are more than willing to help you navigate the process of updating or obtaining a new VA ID card.

Inspecting Your VA ID Card for Serviceability

Image Accuracy

Ensure that the photo on your card accurately reflects your current appearance. If not, it might be time for an update.

Expiration Check

Regularly check the expiration date on your VA ID card. An expired card might hinder your access to services and benefits. If your card has expired or is about to, it's crucial to visit the enrollment office for renewal.

Ensuring Barcode and Card Information Accuracy

Your VA ID card's barcode and information play a pivotal role in swiftly accessing the benefits and services you're entitled to as a veteran. Regularly inspecting and ensuring the integrity of these components is essential for a hassle-free experience when utilizing your card at VA facilities. If you notice any issues with the barcode, information accuracy, or physical wear on the card, promptly address them by seeking a replacement or an update at your nearest VA enrollment office.

Maintaining and updating your VA ID card is pivotal for ensuring a smooth experience when accessing VA services and benefits. Whether for medical care, benefit claims, or appointments, a functional and up-to-date VA ID card simplifies the process. The VA is committed to assisting veterans in this regard, providing the necessary resources and support for a hassle-free experience.

Veterans have sacrificed and served our nation, and the VA ID card is a token of appreciation and commitment to providing the care and support deserved. By keeping your VA ID card current and well-maintained, you're taking a proactive step to ensure that you receive the benefits and services you've rightfully earned through your service to the country.



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For a century, the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) of Minnesota has championed veterans' needs, from supporting World War I survivors to addressing modern challenges. Overcoming a 1960s decline, the organization revitalized under Stephen Whitehead's 2012 leadership, resolving operational hurdles and strengthening community ties. As we look to 2025, DAV of Minnesota is planning strategically to meet a projected 70% rise in long-term care demands, ensuring unwavering support for veterans and their families.

Leadership & Impact

Besides the six national commanders Minnesota has given to the organization, at least two others since World War II have become national officers. Stuart Lindman, a well-known television newsman, became commander of DAV of Minnesota and later was a national vice commander. Dean Ascheman, a state commander and a state adjutant at several



crucial times in the history of the state organization—and who was often the behind-the-scenes motivator and mentor for state DAV programs—was also a vice commander in the 1960s.

And Minnesota produced one more national commander: Jim Sursuly (2004–05) represented Florida but was a Minnesota native and maintained his Minnesota membership.

More emphasis was given to promoting legislation for Veterans, and a full-time legislative officer, Trent Dilks, was hired. DAV of Minnesota has been in the forefront of several key laws that benefitted Veterans, including changing the property tax inclusion in Minnesota to include widows of disabled Veterans.



New Leadership

Stephen "Butch" Whitehead was hired in 2012 as state adjutant. In his interview for the job, he stressed making the DAV chapters of Minnesota stronger in their communities. He spent his first six months on the road meeting the members in chapters across the state.

DAV of Minnesota had an early crisis with Savers, the national company that ran the thrift store business but was having legal issues. Plus, the national organization was unhappy because the arrangement DAV of Minnesota had with Savers didn't quite align with national bylaws. DAV of Minnesota established a vendor relationship with Savers, and the arrangement has worked well since. In 2019, DAV of Minnesota became the featured charity partner at all Savers and Unique stores in Minnesota.

Whitehead said the job of convincing 30 chapters that collecting used stuff in bins was worthwhile took a while. But the chapters came to believe that the bins advertise who you are, that DAV of Minnesota is one team, and that the revenue would be shared with chapters. "It was a big turning point for us," Whitehead said. Chapters earned over \$14 million in revenue for their collections in 2024.

Leaders within DAV recognize that chapter growth is an essential pillar of our mission. Minnesota has consistently exceeded its membership goals every year, a testament to the unwavering commitment of our members

and supporters. DAV stands proud as the sole Veterans' organization in Minnesota that continues to experience growth. This year, the department set an ambitious target of recruiting 444 new members to maintain our momentum. Not only did we meet that goal—we surpassed it, welcoming 509 new members into our community. Together, we're driving lasting impact for the Veteran community.

In the last 13 years, DAV of Minnesota has won the Judge Max Award for the best membership program 10 times. While we lost two chapters along the way, we added two new ones. Membership is about 19,000. DAV of Minnesota's goal is to keep the mission going.

In 2015, Whitehead applied for the national commander position at the urging of a friend. "I went to a national meeting just to answer questions. Again I told them that having strong chapters in our communities was the key. All of a sudden, I was fourth vice commander."

Leadership and members understand that in order for DAV to be strong, it has to happen at the lowest level. We need to have the tools to be successful.

DAV recently introduced a new initiative aimed at assisting Veterans—and members—with improvements to their homes. This program has already provided support with various repairs and enhancements, reflecting DAV's dedication to positively impacting the lives of those who have served.



Dean Ascheman

Lyle Pearson elected National Commander 1975-76

Pearson was born in Montevideo and grew up near St. Peter. He flew B-17 bombers in World War II and was a prisoner of war, shot down on his 37th and final mission. He was active in DAV of Minnesota and served on the national legislative committee before being elected national commander in 1976. He was selected as one of six Americans to represent the country when the Soviet Union celebrated the 30th anniversary of World War II. A close personal friend of Sen. Paul Wellstone, he helped the senator earn a reputation as the most Veteran-friendly senator in Congress. The VA clinic in Mankato is named after him.



1975



2019

Stephen "Butch" Whitehead elected National Commander, serves two terms 2019-21

Whitehead, a native of Trimont, Minnesota, became adjutant of DAV of Minnesota in 2012. He served 32 years in the Army and Minnesota National Guard and retired in 2023 as the senior enlisted advisor to the Adjutant General. He has two Iraq Campaign Medals. He has a bachelor's degree in business from the University of Phoenix. He became fourth national vice commander in 2015 and was elected national commander in 2019. With the pandemic raging in the U.S., DAV canceled its 2020 national convention and asked Whitehead to serve a second term. He was the second person in the 100-year history of the organization to serve two terms.

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