



# COMMANDER'S LETTER

## November 2020



Greetings!

As you may know, a resurgence in the number of reported COVID-19 cases in Illinois has prompted Governor Pritzker to once again impose the closing of indoor gatherings in restaurants, bars and other facilities. Accordingly, your officers have voted to suspend monthly general meetings for the remainder of 2020. We hope to resume our general meetings on the first Friday of every month beginning in January 2021.

The suspension of our general meetings does not mean our work has been suspended. We will still be there to render assistance to our Veterans and their families. You can contact us via the website at [www.DAV84.org](http://www.DAV84.org) or by calling me directly at (708) 433-9522. Our service officers will still be working hard on your behalf, as will all of your officers.

As for the outlook of the COVID crisis, we should realize that returning to normal may be a year away. When a vaccine is developed, the manufacture, distribution and immunization of a sufficient number of Americans to garner safety within the population will take a significant amount of time. While I know that this reality seems bleak, I promise that the time will come when we can once more emerge from our isolation and resume a more normal life. In the meantime, stay

healthy and strong.

Our membership comprises men and women of all races, creeds, social and economic standing and ideologies. While we have many differences, the one thing we all share in common is the fact that once upon a time, we all raised our hands and swore a solemn oath to protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. There was no time limit mentioned when we took that oath, and accordingly, it remains binding.

The first sentence of the Constitution begins with the words, "We the People of the United States, in Order to form a more perfect Union ..." The authors and signers did not imply they were creating "a perfect union" or "the perfect union"; they instead chose to pen "a more perfect union." I believe they knew from the beginning that what they fashioned was a work in progress. And I believe that from its beginning, We the People have and continue to struggle for the perfection that remains the ideal that our founding fathers sought. While we have and continue to struggle towards a more perfect union, it is important that we recognize that the tools to bring about needed change were purposely embedded in our first binding compact — the Constitution of the United States.

The right to protest exists in America because the Constitution provides us with such right. Protests take place in America because it is too often the only way to bring attention to the need for change. In every protest I have lived to see in America, not one has called for abolishing our Constitution

— they have demanded that we pay attention to what it already says.

The path to change is sometimes scary and, unfortunately, it is sometimes bloody. Certainly, we don't have to agree to take any path lain before us. But it is important, I think, to remember that it is the right to propose such paths that we have sworn an oath to protect and defend and, indeed, laid pavement to with blood and sacrifice. While we have yet to find that perfect union, we are duty-bound to preserve safe passage for all who seek to find it, even those we may feel are misguided. What has made the Constitution of the United States the oldest constitution in the world is the humility in its words. It seeks to provide and protect forums for change, knowing that change is, and will always be, the path to perfection.

This month, we were asked to fulfill the obligation democracy demands of us through our election process. It is my hope that you voted for the candidates of your choice November 3rd.

This month, too, we took the time to recognize the service all Veterans who have, since our beginning, served, fought and died so that all people have the right to cast their vote. On the 11th month, upon the 11th day, we remembered the oath we shared, the comrades we lost, the service we gave and the freedoms and liberties we help to protect and defend.

Stay healthy, stay strong.

John J. Fanning  
Commander

# GENERAL NEWS ITEMS

## DAV 84 to Launch Mobile Accessibility Program

DAV 84 officers unanimously approved a motion to begin a Mobile Accessibility Program (MAP) that will provide disabled Veterans with electric scooters, wheelchairs and other devices needed by them to restore their ability to travel, shop and enjoy activities in their communities.

MAP will undertake to acquire mobile electric scooters, wheelchairs and other devices that will be loaned at no cost to Veterans who require such aids for as long as they are needed. Because the items will be on loan to each Veteran, DAV84 will undertake to service and repair all the loaned devices at no cost to the Veteran using the device.

Each mobile scooter will be custom painted with patriotic colors to denote that it is in use by a disabled Veteran. The Veteran will have the device delivered to their home and receive training on use of the device. Regular maintenance of the scooter will be done by DAV84 volunteers, as will any repairs needed over the lifetime of the scooter or other device.

Veterans requiring temporary use of wheelchairs, or who prefer a wheelchair over a scooter will also be accommodated. Crutches and canes will also be made available to Veterans requiring temporary support.

The program is set to launch in January 2021. Applications are now being accepted. DAV84 members will receive first priority on issuing scooters, followed by disabled Veterans in other Illinois areas. Because of the need to service the devices at each user's location, the program is initially set to accommodate the needs of Veterans within a 50-mile radius of the DAV84 headquarters in Crestwood, Illinois.

To take part in the program, download the appropriate applications at the "FORMS" section of the DAV84 website: [www.DAV84.org](http://www.DAV84.org)

## Important Dates



## November 2020

*\*Please call before attending any community events. It is likely that they will be postponed or canceled as a result of the coronavirus. You can find CDC coronavirus information at [cdc.gov/coronavirus](https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus); AARP has additional resources at [aarp.org/coronavirus](https://www.aarp.org/coronavirus).*

### **November 16 - Battle Body Retraining Group**

10:00am  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

### **November 16 - Understanding Readjustment Group**

11:00am  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

### **November 17 - Veteran Food Pantry**

11:00am  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

### **November 17 - Phenix Legacy for OEF/OIF/OND and Transitioning Post 9/11 Veterans**

1:00pm  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

## Important Dates (cont.)

### **November 18 - Open Art Studio**

1:00pm  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

### **November 18 - American Legion 9th District Meeting**

7:00pm  
American Legion #974  
9757 Pacific Ave.  
Franklin Park, IL 60131

### **November 18 - American Legion 7th District Meeting**

7:30pm  
American Legion Post 134  
6144 W Dempster St.  
Morton Grove, IL 60053

### **November 19 - MXD Veterans Appreciation Information Session 2020**

2:00pm  
Virtual Webinar  
Register at [www.mxdusa.org/events](http://www.mxdusa.org/events)

### **November 19 - Employment Services for Post 9/11 Veterans**

9:30am  
Jesse Brown VA Medical Center  
820 South Damen Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60612

## Illinois Veterans Residing in State Veteran Homes Need Uplifting Messages

While we are all feeling the effects of the COVID quarantine, our Veterans living in one of the four homes operated by the Illinois Department of Veteran Affairs are feeling the pain more deeply than we. Nearly 1,000 Veterans reside in these homes and are unable to get out for day trips, or even come into contact with visitors.

You can help by organizing a letter-writing campaign, sending banners and other items to wish our state Veterans well during this crisis. Below is the list and contact information for our Veteran homes. If you can take the time to write or organize a writing campaign with school children or other groups in your community, please do. These Vets need to hear from you and have their spirits lifted.

### **Illinois Veterans' Home at Anna**

792 N. Main Street, Anna, Illinois 62906  
C/O: Anthony Barnett  
[Anthony.Barnett2@illinois.gov](mailto:Anthony.Barnett2@illinois.gov)

### **Illinois Veterans' Home at LaSalle**

1015 Oconor Avenue, LaSalle, Illinois 61301  
C/O: Susan Scully  
[Susan.Scully@illinois.gov](mailto:Susan.Scully@illinois.gov)

### **Illinois Veterans' Home at Manteno**

1 Veterans Drive, Manteno, Illinois 60950  
C/O: Dave Pedersen  
[David.W.Pedersen@illinois.gov](mailto:David.W.Pedersen@illinois.gov)

### **Illinois Veterans' Home at Quincy**

1707 N. 12th Street, Quincy, Illinois 62301  
C/O: Sara Colgrove  
[Sara.Colgrove@illinois.gov](mailto:Sara.Colgrove@illinois.gov)

### **Prince Home at Manteno**

1 Veterans Drive, Manteno, Illinois 60950  
C/O Wali Lewis  
[Wali.Lewis2@illinois.gov](mailto:Wali.Lewis2@illinois.gov)

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# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

## Dan Reinhard, Chaplain

Greetings,

The last eight months have been tough for all of us. The COVID-19 pandemic seemingly lurched from the darkness to instantly change the lives of people around the world. Here in the United States there have been many unexpected changes.

We had to learn to wear a mask, while social distancing. Some of us had to learn to work from home. Many have been laid off, had their hours cut, or have lost their employment entirely. You may know relatives whose businesses had to close. Our hospitals became overwhelmed with patients and the number of those who are no longer with us is staggering.

We at DAV84 would like you to know that we are keeping veterans in our thoughts and prayers. If we can be of service to our members and their extended family or help you mourn for a veteran or a family member, please contact us at [chaplain@dav84.org](mailto:chaplain@dav84.org).

On a parting note, we learned yesterday that one of our DAV84 members was admitted to the Hines VA Hospital. His name is Michael Malley. Let us all offer our thoughts and prayers to Michael and his family.

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## YOUR DAV84 OFFICERS

### Joseph Bertucci

TREASURER

[treasurer@dav84.org](mailto:treasurer@dav84.org)

### John Fanning

COMMANDER

[commander@dav84.org](mailto:commander@dav84.org)

### John Stevo

CHAPTER SERVICE OFFICER

[cso@dav84.org](mailto:cso@dav84.org)

### Herbert Bishop

SENIOR VICE COMMANDER

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### Ben Fugate

JUNIOR VICE COMMANDER

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### Terry Vorderer

JUDGE ADVOCATE

[ja@dav84.org](mailto:ja@dav84.org)

### James Carollo

MEMBERSHIP CHAIRMAN

[membership@dav84.org](mailto:membership@dav84.org)

### Mary Jeanette Paul

ADJUTANT

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### Tony DeBella

SERGEANT AT ARMS

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### Dan Reinhard

CHAPLAIN

[chaplain@dav84.org](mailto:chaplain@dav84.org)

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**FULFILLING OUR PROMISES TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED**

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# NSO REPORT



## Ben Fugate, 2nd Vice Commander

For almost a century, DAV has been advocating for better federal veterans programs, benefits, health care and transition services for the men and women who served, their families and survivors. DAV's National Legislative Department takes the resolutions adopted by DAV members at our annual National Conventions to Congress to advocate for improved federal laws, regulations and policies of the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and other federal agencies whose programs support the veteran population.

In the 115th Congress, a number of DAV's key legislative priorities were enacted, including the historic VA MISSION Act, a bill to reform and strengthen the VA health care system and expand VA's caregiver program to all eras of veterans. In addition, new legislation was approved to modernize the claims and appeals process, and improve earned benefits for veterans, their families and survivors.

For the second session of the 116th Congress, DAV is actively working to achieve these five Critical Policy Goals:

- Toxic exposures
- Enhance survivor benefits
- Fully and Faithfully Implement VA MISSION Act of 2018
- Strengthen Veterans Mental Health Care and Suicide Prevention Programs
- VA's Women Veterans Health Care Program

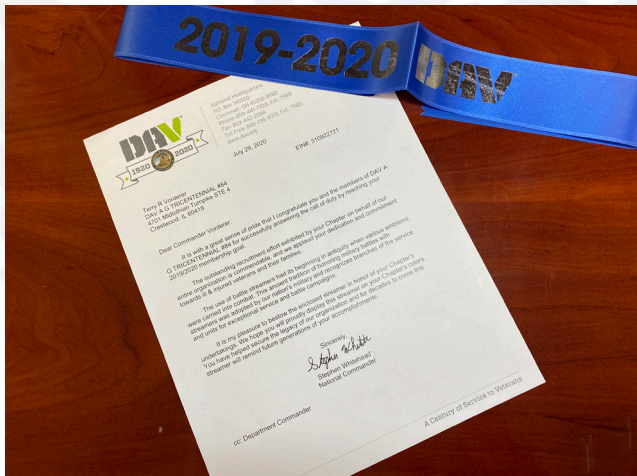
Please stay tuned for developments in these crucial discussions.

DAV84  
NORTHERN ILLINOIS

# AUXILIARY

Did you know that our full chapter name is: Disabled American Veterans, Alfred Grajek Tricentennial, Chapter 84?

Alfred Grajek, who our chapter is named after, served in the Army Air Corp during World War II as a Radar Technician in the India-Burma Theater. Following the War, Al became an active member of several veterans' organizations including the DAV. He was named the 50th Imperil Golden Rodent of the National order of Trench Rats – an honorary order founded by disabled veterans following the first World War. Al was also a Department Commander of the DAV and played a significant role in bringing the Eternal Flame Veterans Memorial to Worth, Illinois. He was a long time barber and owned the Veterans Barber Shop originally in the Roseland area of Chicago, and then in suburban Worth. Al passed away of a heart attack while attending the dedication of the Abraham Lincoln National Cemetery. His name was adopted by our Chapter in honor of his work for veteran causes.



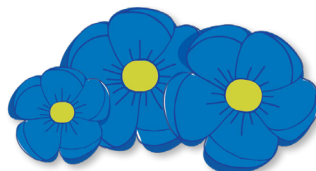
# FORGET-ME-NOTS

## DAV 84 Officers Vote to Suspend Forget-Me-Not Drive for Remainder of 2020

The Forget-Me-Not fundraising drive has been suspended for the remainder of 2020, in accordance with a motion unanimously carried by DAV 84 Officers at their November Meeting.

While the Forget-Me-Not fundraiser is an essential tool necessary to carry out the mission of DAV 84, the threat of exposure to our volunteers from the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the reluctance of contributors to come in close contact with our volunteers makes undertaking the drive too difficult and dangerous.

Officers are looking at several suggestions that may offer an alternative fundraising method, but no final decision has been made.



FORGET-ME-NOT



[www.dav84.org](http://www.dav84.org)

FULFILLING OUR PROMISES TO THE MEN AND WOMEN WHO SERVED