



A strong thriving Auxiliary is a phenomenal resource for DAV Chapters

It is truly an honor and privilege that I'm serving as your Auxiliary Commander for the 2020-2021 term. A special thank you to Elizabeth Honacker, Immediate Past State Commander, for her guidance, support, and friendship. Elizabeth set a high standard as our Commander and can take satisfaction with having touched the lives of our veterans.

In terms of the coming year, the big story has been COVID-19. It's hard to believe that our State and National DAV & Auxiliary Conventions have been cancelled. At a local level, we have seen Auxiliary Unit meetings cancelled across the state. This is brand new territory for us personally and our beloved organization. We all recognize that many of our members may fall within the realm of being high risk and a Unit meeting is not worth the risk.

In our modern world, we now wear face masks, conduct social distancing, and aggressively use hand sanitizer. While we are experiencing these changes within our lives, it should be recognized that our mission remains steadfast. We will support our veterans so they can lead lives of dignity and respect.

In terms of the Way Forward, I would like to provide the following guidance. We have received our membership notice from National DAVA and our membership goal is 40 new members. This is a very doable goal for us to achieve together. I would like to partner with the Department and Chapters to reach, if possible exceed, this number. Here is the "Bottom Line Up Front" moment regarding it.

DAV Wisconsin has nearly 15,000 members and 43 Chapters throughout the state. Every DAV member can join the Auxiliary plus I suspect each DAV member has one to four family members that are eligible to join as well.

A good example is our very own DAV Commander Matt Kempainen who leads by example. Commander Kempainen is a member of the Auxiliary plus both of his daughters are Unit members. Quite frankly, we could probably double the size of our Auxiliary Units, if there was a complete support and buy in by DAV members.

This begins with leadership at the Department and Chapter level. Our membership is very observant of the example set by the leadership teams at both levels.

If members see that a leader is not a member of the Auxiliary or if their immediate families are not actively engaged with the Unit, they will conclude being part of the Auxiliary is not part of the DAV culture and will not look toward completing an Auxiliary membership application. I recognize my candor may appear to be bold on this subject however it needs to be addressed.

We can no longer shrug our shoulders, look up at the ceiling or discover our shoes when the topic of Auxiliary membership is discussed. A strong thriving Auxiliary is a phenomenal resource to your Chapters. Need help a brat fry, "Forget Me Not" Campaign, a Chapter mailing or a DAV Community event?? Just reach out to your Auxiliary and they will be there.

Never forget the Auxiliary mission is all about serving our veterans. A strong Auxiliary Unit will be an excellent compliment to our DAV Chapters. As Commander Kempainen states with a portion of his motto, "Unity" is a major focus in the coming year. Together DAV and Auxiliary are an incredible dynamic force that will ensure our veterans will lead high quality lives with respect and dignity.

If any immediate questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. My phone number is 920-379-1573 and my email address is hertjulie@yahoo.com

God Bless and I look forward to working with everybody this year!

Julie Hert
Auxiliary State Commander