



DAV Auxiliary Commander Report

Greetings to my fellow Auxiliary Unit members and friends of the DAV!

The sense of the seasons passing along is amazing. It just seemed I was enjoying the spectacular colors of Autumn and now my front lawn has its first dusting of snow. The calendar and time halts for no one!

My biggest struggle as your State Commander has been our shared experience with the pandemic. Upon being elected, I wanted to be there visiting all our Units, meeting with VA staff and most importantly connecting with our beloved Veterans. Due to the uptick of COVID-19 cases in the Badger State, many Unit meetings have lessened, our Department of Wisconsin State Veterans Homes have curtailed visits and our traditional Chapter activities have been minimal. This is all being done so to not pass along the virus to our most vulnerable.

I did have the experience to attend a Veterans Day ceremony in Oshkosh. Everybody wore masks, practiced social distancing and so forth. Upon completion of the ceremony, I was walking back to my car and I truly realized how badly I missed my Veteran, and Auxiliary friends. Together, we would be engaged on a daily basis, with planning a coming event or project. In the process of all the meetings, and discussions, our relationships became close and thus we became a close-knit family. We are bound by a common mind set and mission.

While we are bound with our natural families through biology and experience. Our "Veteran Family" holds a deep feeling within our very soul. While it appears that I maybe pouring my heart out to you, I know that I am not alone and many of you are experiencing the same emotions.

However, as the old saying goes "When given a lemon, make lemonade"! I encourage that Unit members maintain contact with each other through a simple phone call or even a card in the mail. It must be recognized that beyond COVID-19 having a medical toll, all of us experience a mental health toll. We need each other and this virus has pushed us away. It is our responsibility to take charge and elevate ourselves above the situation. We do that by stepping up and making that personal connection.



I am not here to highlight myself, but the story has value. Case in point, my husband Mike and I have a friend that is at King VA Nursing Home. We know that the situation has been tough for the residents due to COVID and the personal restrictions within their wards. We contacted the Administrative team and found out what local vendors can deliver to King. We got the list and unknown to our friend, we ordered him a pizza, on us. He was ecstatic, not just for the pizza but that of being remembered. I highly encourage that you take this opportunity and identify that veteran either within your Chapter, VA Nursing Home or within your community and make that connection. Remember, together we make a difference in the lives of our Veterans.

Julie Hert
Commander
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Department of Wisconsin, Inc.