



February 14, 2026



February 16, 2026

February 2026

# DAV DISPATCH

## News from Adam Klein Chapter #3, Bismarck, North Dakota

### OFFICERS

#### Commander:

Lamar Kruckenberg

#### Sr. Vice Commander:

Tom Newton

#### Jr. Vice Commander:

David Schall

#### Chaplain:

Leslie Ross

#### Treasurer/Adjutant:

Mark Landis

#### Auxiliary Commander:

Linda Otto

#### Auxiliary Adjutant

Bonnie Leingang

### MEETINGS

1st Thursday, 7 p.m.

4023 State Street

Bismarck, ND

### EMAIL

[aklein3dav@gmail.com](mailto:aklein3dav@gmail.com)

### MAILING ADDRESS

P.O. Box 915

Bismarck, ND 58502-0915

## DAV Scholarship Offered for 2026-2027 School Year

Veterans and eligible family members may now apply for the Gene L. Kouba Memorial Scholarship for the next school year. The scholarship program has been offered by our chapter since 2011. The maximum award is \$1,000 per student. The application deadline is March 15, 2026. Scholarship eligibility is explained on the application, which is available on the chapter website. It will also be emailed or sent by U.S. mail upon request. Last year, we approved 15 applicants.



## Volunteer Banquet Draws Another Excellent Turnout

Our programs and activities depend on participation, and Adam Klein Chapter #3 of the DAV has a growing list of faithful volunteers. Approximately 90 members and guests gathered during a bone-chilling January evening for the annual Volunteer Recognition Banquet at the Bismarck AMVETS Club. In addition to a fine meal, the audience enjoyed the program, which began with our Chapter Honor Guard presenting the colors of our nation. Chapter volunteers were recognized for increasing their donated hours by 26 percent in 2025. Volunteer drivers also increased the total number of miles and hours last year.

## Chapter Will Serve Community Meals in February



We will serve lunch for youth and other members of the community at First Lutheran Church in Mandan on Thursday, February 26th. This is the third year that we have supported this event. The lunch is free and open to the public. It is a non-denominational effort to reach out to the community. Some of those attending may be veterans or children of veterans. Our volunteers always have a fun time. Please contact the chapter if you would like to serve for a few hours.

## Chaplain Chats

As we move through February - a month marked by remembrance, civic reflection, and renewal - we are also invited to consider the meaning of love in its broadest and most enduring form. Alongside Black History Month and President's Day, Valentine's Day reminds us that love is not only romantic, but expressed through loyalty, sacrifice, and care for one another. In the current climate of our nation, where division, uncertainty, and fatigue weigh heavily on many, this kind of love matters deeply. As a DAV chaplain, I see love made visible when veterans support veterans, when the families and volunteers show up without being asked, and when we choose empathy over anger and service over silence. February calls us to practice a steady, principled love - one rooted in respect, inclusion, and shared responsibility - recognizing that tending to one another's well being is both an act of compassion and a quiet, powerful form of patriotism.



*Leslie Ross, Chaplain*



## Message from the Commander

It may not seem like it now, but Spring really is coming up quickly. Our chapter is resuming normal business activities after a holiday break and an outstanding Volunteer Recognition Banquet. We will host the DAV Department of North Dakota convention on the first weekend in May. It will be an abbreviated format, starting Friday afternoon and concluding on Saturday. The department will save a considerable amount of money and we hope this new format will be well received. Changing times call for new approaches. During our February chapter business meeting, we will discuss our role in this process. Of course, we will also have some food!

*LaMar Kruckenberg, Commander*

**\*\*\*VA Updates on Page Two\*\*\***

Visit us at <https://www.aklein3dav.org>

*Keeping Our Promise to America's Veterans*

# **\*\*\*VA Updates\*\*\***

## **February 2026**

- Progress continues on construction projects at the Fargo VA campus. The new mental health unit and primary care unit are scheduled for completion in the spring of 2027. The inpatient psychiatric unit is undergoing a complete remodel. Patient capacity will be reduced to five until the project is complete.
- The new electronic health record system is scheduled to launch in 2027.
- Realignment and reorganizations in the VA are not affecting health care. Some employees are being reassigned but not losing their jobs.
- The new Bismarck VA clinic will be constructed in north Bismarck. The VA has selected real estate at 43<sup>rd</sup> Avenue and 15<sup>th</sup> Street, near Wal Mart and other commercial development. The clinic will provide more specialty care and feature triple the square footage of the current facility. Opening is scheduled in 2027.
- There will be a Veterans Town Hall in Bismarck on May 14<sup>th</sup>. The location has not been determined. If a facility cannot be arranged, the event may be conducted virtually.
- VA providers are authorized to provide medical opinion letters in support of disability claims. However, they are not required to write an opinion if they are not comfortable in doing so.
- The VA has reduced the nationwide disability claim backlog to less than 100,000, representing a 56% reduction in the last 12 months. A claim is considered part of the backlog if it is more than 125 days old. The average processing time has been reduced to 90 days. North Dakota veterans have 1,377 pending claims, with 334 claims in the backlog.
- Compensation examinations conducted by private providers are a valuable tool for the VA to reduce the backlog and provide convenience for veterans. The exams are arranged by private contractors. There have been several reports of delays on the part of the contractors, and VA is addressing the complaints on a case-by-case basis.
- The Veterans Benefits Administration has resumed hiring externally.