

Hey there Blinded Veterans, BVA family, and friends. Unfortunately, I am starting this newsletter out on a sad note; as some of you have heard, our BVA immediate Past President, Chief Joe Parker, passed away on August 27th. He called me just a few days before and, in some of his last words, expressed three proud career choices he had made during his life: his career in the U.S. Navy, his career as a Civil Servant, and serving as President of the Blinded Veterans Association. Sail on Chief, we have the watch.

August was a very busy month for the BVA, thanks to a very successful 74th convention that we all prepared for, conducted, and are currently recovering and refitting from. With all the great things that happened in Tulsa, one was a big hit: our first ever Caregivers Discussion Panel with Gary Barg. We are already preparing to improve this event for our caregivers next year. Normally, September is where the Headquarters Team can catch their collective breaths but, this year, we are still running to get ready for our move into our new home.

While all this is going on, the next steps for the Blind Appalachian Trail occur in September. The Ladies of the BVA wrapped up the Georgia portion in May, and now the Gentlemen will be hitting the next leg to strive to conquer the North Carolina and Tennessee stretch. Hike strong BAT!

For those that answered the surveys, thank you for your valuable input. During the first week of September, we will be working on our new Strategic Plan to take us to the next level of performance, service and success. I'm very excited to see where we go to with our service to our Blinded Veterans and families; this is why I am humbled to serve as YOUR Executive Director.

Everyone have a safe and enjoyable Labor Day Weekend!

Joseph C. Bogart
Major, U.S. Army, (Retired)