



See You in

RENO!

Join us for Convention
and learn more about "Battle Buddies" along with
the Center for Post-Traumatic Growth (more on pg. 8)

DAV DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NEWS

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IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

DAV California 2019 Convention DAV National 2019 Convention

June 5-8, 2019
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino
 2500 East Second St.
 Reno, NV 89595
 (800) 648-5080
 \$94 Single/Double
 Reservation cutoff date:
 May 19th, 2019

August 3-6, 2019
Rosen Shingle Creek
 9939 Universal Boulevard
 Orlando, FL 32819
 866-996-9939
 \$137 Single/ Double

DAV California 2020 Midwinter DAV National 2020 Midwinter

January 17-18, 2020
Pacific Palm Resort
 1 Industry Hills Pkwy
 City of Industry, CA 91744
 (626) 810-4455
 \$139 Single/Double
 Reservation cutoff date:
 December 24th, 2019

February 23 – February 26, 2020
 (Tentative, pending confirmation
 on Capitol Hill)
Crystal Gateway Marriott
 1700 Jefferson Davis Highway
 Arlington, VA 22202
 (800) 266-9432 or (703) 920-3230
 \$199 Single/Double

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ARE YOU MOVING?

NEW ADDRESS

Name Membership Code #

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City State Zip

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ON THE COVER: Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno

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Service:

The Heart of Our Mission

It's been such an honor to be your State Commander for the DAV Department of California. The end of my term is coming, but I'm still not done.

Travelling has kept me busy. The National Midwinter Conference was a great time and especially productive. We witnessed the National Commander present our legislative agenda before the Joint Congressional Veterans Affairs Committee; and our California team met with dozens of our representatives to share with them the importance of supporting Veteran-friendly legislation. There were also several informative workshops and seminars presented, as well as some exciting new developments to our membership program.

While travelling has kept me busy, it's also been rewarding. I've enjoyed visiting with several of your chapters throughout the state. I've been impressed by your hospitality at events such as at the barbecue at the Barstow Veterans Home put on by Chapter #68.

As always, membership and volunteerism are essential to local chapters and a healthy DAV community. Remember that our *Local Veterans Assistance Program* includes volunteers who help Veterans in nearly any capacity; so even if you help out your Veteran neighbors, you should sign up

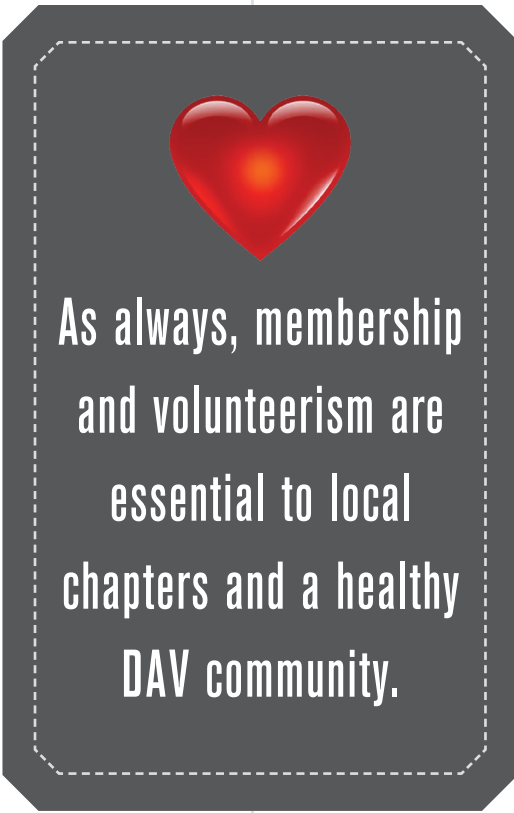
for the program at: <https://www.dav.org/help-dav/volunteer/>, if you haven't already. Also, be sure to log and turn in your hours so that our DAV Department of California can get credit and show the rest of the country how Californians take care of each other at the upcoming Convention in Orlando, Florida.

Thank you to our chapters for all your hard work recruiting, volunteering, and helping Veterans in your local communities.

It's been a great adventure, and as they say, all good things must come to an end. Hoping to see all the members at our department convention in Reno, Nevada, which will be held on June 5th, 2019 - June 8th, 2019. As always, there will be committee meetings going on. Attend as many as you can to obtain a better knowledge of how things are going. I hope all of our chapters will take advantage of the *Chapter Convention Attendance Program* (CCAP).

In closing, once again, I'd like to say it's been my honor and privilege to serve the members of the Department of California.

Let's always remember our motto by, "fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served."



As always, membership and volunteerism are essential to local chapters and a healthy DAV community.

Ron Vogel, COMMANDER



ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

Voluntary Service *at the Core of our Mission*



The central value of our organization is that of Veterans helping Veterans. That is why we must always nurture and fortify our volunteer force. We're proud of our devoted staff, but Veterans in California have a greater need than our staff alone can meet. That is why our organization, and local Veterans and their families in our communities, rely on the help of a devoted volunteer force. As a nonprofit, we are incredibly grateful for these big-hearted and generous individuals that give freely of their time to help Veterans and their families in a wide variety of ways.

Wherever your interests or skills lie, the DAV has opportunities for you to give back. Following, are four separate programs to connect Veterans in need with helpful volunteers:

- **Hospital Volunteering-** The traditional and longstanding hospital volunteer program places volunteers in Department of Veterans Affairs hospitals, nursing homes and clinics where they perform a wide range of duties. Some volunteers work directly with patients, participating in recreational programs and other activities on the wards. Other volunteers assist the VA's professional staff, escort patients, serve coffee or simply provide companionship to Veteran patients.

- **Transportation Program-** Volunteer drivers provide transportation to ensure that every Veteran can make it to their appointments at VA hospitals and that none ever have to go without the treatment they need.

- **Jesse Brown Memorial Youth Scholarship-** Dedicated volunteers under the age of 21, who have contributed a minimum of 100 volunteer hours (credited by through DAV or DAVA), may qualify to apply for

scholarships through the national organization.

- **LVAP Program-** The Local Veterans Assistance Program is open to volunteers who want to give back in a wide variety of ways. Tasks range from running errands, helping with chores and home maintenance, to performing basic tasks or group projects. Any way that you can help a Veteran in the community is an acceptable way to volunteer through the LVAP program. And now, it's easier than ever to connect with local Veterans in need thanks to the national organization. Through their new Volunteer for Veterans database, now Veterans, caregivers of Veterans, and volunteers can register to find assistance or volunteer opportunities in their area. This database can be found at <https://dav.force.com/volunteerforveterans/s/volunteer-job-all>. I would encourage all of you to check it out.

In California, we have nearly 2 million Veterans. The need is great. We hope you will consider volunteering and giving back to Veterans in your community. If you are already volunteering, we are incredibly grateful for you. To our members, chapters and current volunteers, we hope that you will help us recruit more volunteers in this upcoming year. Here in the DAV, to meet the incredible needs of our state's Veterans, we need leaders, mentors, and shepherds to bring in a new generation of dedicated volunteers. Like the saying, "many hands make light work," when we cultivate connection in our communities and team up, we can share the load and work together to make sure that none of our brothers or sisters in arms are left behind.

The need is great. We hope you will consider volunteering and giving back to Veterans in your community.



Daniel Contreras, PSC, CEO/ADJUTANT



SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Before summer hits us, we get to look forward to the wonderful annual event known as spring cleaning. I say this because we have several DAV thrift stores throughout this great state that would gladly accept your donations of useable furniture, household items, and clothes so they can then sell them to the public and use the proceeds to assist in the aide and support of our injured and ill Veterans in California.

Also, regarding spring cleaning, we are in the homestretch for the year regarding our membership goals and I believe that, with help from each of you, we can sweep

This is our opportunity to reach out to our brothers and sisters in arms and encourage them to become members...

the competition this year. This is our opportunity to reach out to our brothers and sisters in arms and encourage them to become members of our fantastic organization. It is only

with your efforts that we can continue to make California the strongest department in the DAV.

Like many of you, I attended the Department Conference in January. It was encouraging to see many familiar faces striving to better the lives of our disabled veterans. As you are aware, our annual Department Convention is just around the corner. I strongly encourage you to consider attending. There will be a wealth of information to take back to your chapters that will make them even stronger than they already are.

Finally, I would like to say that this has been a whirlwind year as your Senior Vice Commander. I have met many incredible Veterans and have heard many stories. Thank you for your trust in electing me to the leadership group of this amazing department. I look forward to seeing many of you again at our annual Convention in Reno, NV.

Michael Kerr , SR. VICE COMMANDER



AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



These past few months have been exciting and full of information. As I visited several Auxiliary units throughout

Southern California, Veterans medical centers and both state and national conferences, I was truly amazed by how much each of these wonderful places had to offer our Veterans.

As an Auxiliary member, and now as your Commander, I have met some really wonderful and knowledgeable people who are truly dedicated to our organization and do so much for our Veterans. They give so much of their time to helping Veterans in need. They provide Veterans with food, money, medical information for services needed, as well as information on where

Veterans and families can reach out for assistance.

Information is key! By keeping informed and sharing that information, we're able to help our younger Veterans and their families more and more. When Veterans know about their rights and benefits, they are more likely to actually reap those benefits they have earned while serving in a time of war and defending our country's freedoms. Thanks to these earned benefits, many of our younger veterans will be able to live comfortable lives and won't have to wait 20+ years to get their benefits like many of our older veterans had to wait.

Join our great DAVA organization. Help us keep moving forward and keep building brighter futures for Veterans. Become a member, stay involved, keep sharing, and keep informing. This is what will make a powerful difference in the lives of our Veterans and their families.

CHRISTINE CASTILLO, AUXILIARY COMMANDER





AUXILIARY ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

This year our DAV Auxiliary is celebrating a milestone! Ninety years ago, a charter was issued by the Women's Auxiliary of the Disabled American Veterans of the World War and signed by the first twelve members of the Department of California's

Auxiliary. It is quite possible that these women simply wanted to form a group so they could help disabled Veterans, participate in patriotic activities, and share comradeship. There is no way to tell whether they hoped that 90 years later, people would still share these interests. However, we would not be gathering together in Reno if it weren't for the founders of our organization. Author Ginny Dye's Bregdan Principle states, "Every life that has lived until today is a part of the woven braid of history. It takes every person's story to create history. Your life will help to determine the course of history." In other words, history is the sum of the lives that people live. A seemingly simple

decision like coming to our State's Convention may become significant to future generations. It is at the Convention that decisions are made about the next year's operating budget, as well as leadership. Our National Bylaws require the approval of delegates from all chartered units in order to ratify these important decisions. Your presence and input will help determine our course for future years. Our Department is singularly lucky enough to have the full support of the State's DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation to encourage Convention attendance. Through a program called the Unit Convention Attendance Program (UCAP), each unit can send one first-time attendee with hotel expenses paid for four nights. In return, we ask for your full participation in all Convention activities. All units should elect one member who will be able to take advantage of all that Convention offers. I am excited about celebrating our Department's 90th anniversary and I am eager to see what excitement is in store when we all meet in Reno this June!

Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, AUXILIARY ADJUTANT



JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Walking through the halls of my local VA, I am reminded of the many sacrifices

we have paid for our country. I see male and female Veterans from WWII, the Korean War, Vietnam, Desert Storm, Desert Shield, Iraq, Afghanistan—and every conflict in-between; all seeking help in the same facility as I am. We have similar traits ingrained within us through our training and deployments, and we are all using the VA Healthcare system to receive help and aide in the recovery from both mental and physical wounds incurred from our time in service. These patients are my brothers and sisters and I feel at home and safe among them.

As members of the DAV, it is our duty to preserve the standards of this great establishment and to encourage all our Veterans to get the help they are entitled to. It is incumbent upon our organization to ensure that our representatives in Washington are reminded of their moral obligations to secure access

to a full range of benefits and healthcare for eligible Veterans and their family members. If these benefits are not in the law, then it's up to each and every one of us to use the DAV's resolution process to bring about necessary change. This democratic procedure begins at the chapter level and works through department and national conventions, where we members establish DAV's legislative program goals and priorities. These goals and priorities then bring about the necessary changes and improvements to an ever-changing environment in Veteran's healthcare, claims processing and benefits.

In closing, if you're not already signed up for the Commander's Action Network, then visit DAV's national website, select "Advocate," and it will take you where you need to go to sign up. As a member you will receive the latest legislative priority action alerts via email. Through legislative action, we can continue to look out for our brothers and sisters-in-arms long after our service is over.

JOSEPH MOSELEY, JR. VICE COMMANDER

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

Lou Williams



G

reetings and salutations to you all from the Chaplain's Corner. It's been a great honor to be your Lay Chaplain for some time now, and one I'm forever grateful for.

Our lives can change so fast, and our families and homes can be suddenly impacted by the unexpected. California's fires and floods have been a recent reminder of this. As a Chaplain, times like those cause me to think of scripture (I can't help it, it's my field); scripture instructs us to be strong in God, and in the power of his might. Scriptures also instruct us not to lean on our own understanding but to seek God always.

In difficult times, I'm also reminded of how blessed we are by the freedoms we have been given. As Veterans—or the people who work with, help, and care for the Veteran community, we know the price of freedom has been costly. At the Veterans' Regional Center in Rohnert Park, California, there's a sign that reads the following quote by an unknown author, "A Veteran is an ordinary and an extraordinary human being. They are soldiers and a savior and a sword against the darkness and nothing more than

the finest and the greatest testimony on behalf of the finest and the greatest nation ever known. We will never be able to repay our debt of gratitude to them."

Also, in my frequent visits to the chapel at the Yountville Veterans Home, the words, "Remembering all Veterans" are written in the large stained-glass window, facing each sunrise.

These quotes stick with me, and I believe they reflect our mission as an organization. In chaotic times, remember to seek out, and find your strength in, God, and let's renew our dedication to remembering and caring for all of our brothers- and sisters-in-arms. This is my goal as your Chaplain.

May this article find you well in spirit and health. Many thanks to our chapter Chaplains for their thoughts and prayers, and dedication to our Veterans and their families. Many thanks to our faithful leaders and members as well. We are all in this together and it will take all of us to master life's adversities. God bless you. In God We Trust, in God we hope, and in God we rely. Amen & Amen.

A Veteran is an ordinary and an extraordinary human being. They are soldiers and a savior and a sword against the darkness.

Women Veterans Update

Hello, My sisters and brothers. As we move forward into 2019, we have the power within us all to create the change that we want to be and see. We want to keep you in the loop on upcoming opportunities in the state of California (and let us know about important events in your community):

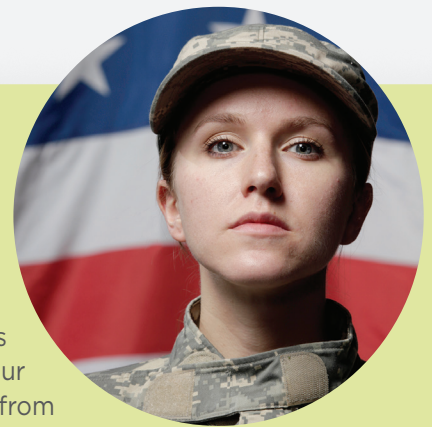
- I am pleased to announce that our DAV Department's Women Veterans Committee will sponsor the high school daughter or granddaughter of a DAV member in California with a gift certificate valued at \$100.00 to David's Bridal for a dress for this year's upcoming prom. Please send an email to WVADAVCAL@gmail.com to request an application. Please include your name, DAV membership number, city, the child's name, high school, the date of prom, and your phone number in the email.

I would also like to thank Ms. Jo Ann Martinez for the exceptional work that she has done on behalf of Women Veterans, as she transitions from serving on the National Interim Women Veterans Committee to becoming a Director of the Charitable Service Trust. Congratulations

and Best Wishes!

I want to leave you all with some steps on purchasing a home in California. My advice is to start by getting your Certificate of Eligibility from www.ebenefits.gov by clicking the "apply" tab and then clicking the "housing" tab, or by calling 1-800-983-0937 between the hours of 8:00 AM and 8:00 PM EST Monday-Friday. This will save you time by letting you know if you are approved to seek a VA Guaranteed Home Loan. Calvet's Loans and Community Structures can be an important resource for Veterans seeking home ownership, and they've recently built new housing communities that are specifically for Veterans. These homes are built to accommodate Veterans with physical disabilities. Go to www.calvet.ca.gov and click on the tab "housing" to learn more about what opportunities are available to Veterans and their families.

Penni L. Brown, *Women's Veterans Advisor*



Come to the

DAV Department of California Convention in Reno!

DAV



Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno, Nevada

We can't wait to return to the Grand Sierra Resort and Casino in Reno, Nevada and share another DAV Department of California Convention with all of you this upcoming June. The convention will be held June 5th-8th, 2019 and this year will have a very special focus on PTSD, and the importance of having a battle buddy. It was a fun and exciting time when we last went to Reno and this year's will be no exception.

We know this will be an especially informative and helpful convention with DAV National Executive Director, Randy Reese, as our national guest. As usual, our convention will offer several opportunities to be proactive and to get involved. We will have our committee meetings, opportunities to write and present resolutions, district meetings, and the election of our new officers. Developing resolutions is a vital part of moving our organization forward and getting engaged with the issues we care about. We hope you will consider getting involved.

We are also excited to host a presentation from the

Center for Post-Traumatic Growth on Friday June 7th. In keeping with our theme—focusing on PTSD and the importance of battle buddies, we'll learn more about healing, the transition process, and resources available for veterans suffering from the after-effects of trauma. We're grateful to the Center for Post-Traumatic Growth for coming out to share with us and we are excited to learn from them.

We'll also be hosting our annual Fun Night on Friday June 7th. This year, put on your Red Carpet best, get ready for some Hollywood glitz and glam, and join us at the Grand Sierra Cinema for A Night at the Movies. The feature film will be "God Bless the Broken Road," immediately followed by the debut premier of a short Public Service Announcement addressing Veteran homelessness, "Lost in the City." Whatever you do—don't leave before the credits are over!

Our convention will close out with our election and Commander's Reception. Help us elect our next line-up of officers and then celebrate with us over dinner. We are excited for what this new era holds for us, and we



Fun Night!
HOLLYWOOD GLITZ & GLAM
A NIGHT AT THE MOVIES
FEATURING: GOD BLESS THE BROKEN ROAD
Put on your Red Carpet best & Join us:
Friday, June 7, 2019
at 6:30 PM in the movie theater at the
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino

FREE REFRESHMENTS!

**ALSO FEATURING!
VETERAN PSA:
LOST IN THE CITY**

hope that you will be there to help us usher it in.

The Grand Sierra Resort and Casino itself also offers several entertainment opportunities. Located at the center of Reno, the Grand Sierra boasts an 80,000-square foot casino, and a large selection of restaurants, bars, cafes and lounges. These establishments frequently feature live shows and entertainment, and you can show off your dance moves in the LEX nightclub. The casino offers table games, slots, video poker, a live poker room, and tournaments offering prizes including cash or free play. There's also live betting in the casino's race and sports book. If you need a little pampering, you should stop by the hotel's full-service spa and salon; or get your physical fitness on with CEO & Adjutant Contreras and Service Officer, Mario Flores, in the fitness center, which includes weightlifting machines, cardio equipment, and regularly-scheduled group classes.

Be sure to bring the family, because the Grand Sierra Resort & Casino offers plenty of fun for everyone. Challenge each other at miniature golf, race toward the checkered flag on the go-karts, skydive at the Grand

NOW SHOWING

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF **GOD'S NOT DEAD**

NO MATTER WHERE LIFE TAKES YOU...
FAITH TAKES YOU FURTHER.

**GOD BLESS THE
BROKEN
ROAD**

Adventure Land, or play in the FunQuest video arcade and laser tag. Stay in your lane at the 50-lane family bowling alley or catch a movie at Grand Sierra Cinema

2019 Conference Schedule

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

8:00 AM-12:00 PM	Registration	CRD1
9:00 AM-10:30 AM	Claims & Service Commission	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
10:45 AM-12:00 PM	Finance Committee	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
1:30 PM-4:00 PM	State Executive Committee	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5

Thursday, June 6, 2019

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration	CRD1
8:30 AM - 10:00 AM	District #1	Nevada 5
	District #2	Nevada 4
	District #3	Nevada 3
	District #4	Nevada 2
	District #5	Nevada 6
	District #6	Nevada 7
10:00 AM - 11:30	District #7	Nevada 5
	District #8	Nevada 4
	District #9	Nevada 3
	District #10	Nevada 2
	District #11	Nevada 6
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	Joint Opening Ceremonies	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
5:00 PM - 6:00 PM	Joint Memorial Service	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
6:30 PM - 8:30 PM	Sr. & Jr. Vice Reception	

Friday, June 7, 2019

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration	CRD1
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COMMITTEE MEETINGS:

8:00 AM - 9:00 AM	Employment	Nevada 6
	Legislation & Veterans Rights	Nevada 5
	General Resolutions & Membership	Nevada 7
	Constitution & Bylaws	Nevada 5
9:00 AM - 10:00 AM	Finance	Nevada 6
	Hospital & Voluntary Services	Nevada 7
	Center for Post Traumatic Growth Presentation	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
1:00 PM - 4:00 PM	1st General Business Session	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
6:30 PM - 10:00 PM	Fun Night	Movie Theatre

Saturday, June 8, 2019

8:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Registration	CRD1
9:00 AM - 12:00 PM	Chapter Leadership Forum	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
1:30 PM - 4:00 PM	2nd General Business Session	Crystal 1/2/3/4/5
	Election of Officers	
	Installation of Officers	
	Convention Adjournment	
6:00 PM - 8:00 PM	Commander's Reception	Reno Room

(where we'll be hosting Fun Night!). Love golf? Test your accuracy at Sierra Bay Aqua Golf, Reno's only over-water driving range; or play on famous golf courses like Pinehurst II, Pebble Beach, and Harbor Town in the indoor-simulated golf course.

As for the city of Reno, also known as the "Biggest Little City in the World," keep busy and happy with the plethora of restaurants, bars, casinos, nightlife, golf courses, and shopping centers at every turn. Nearby, Carson City will be hosting the Nevada State Fair that weekend; or take a drive to Tahoe, where the largest alpine lake provides gorgeous views and an abundance of outdoor activities. We encourage you to look up the local tourism website before your trip for even more information on the activities available to visitors www.visitrenotahoe.com.

We hope you'll come for community, the connections, the information, and of course—the fun. You won't want to miss out this year! We look forward to making history and memories as we share this 2019 convention experience with you all.

Thank you to Theragun for partnering with us for an exciting event!

It's always special when a company gives back to the community and expresses their gratitude for veterans. This past December in an exciting event hosted by DAV Chapter #73, and featuring celebrity guest, Dancing with the Stars Pro, Maksim Chmerkovskiy, Theragun provided each veteran in attendance with one of their original high-frequency high-amplitude neuromuscular-percussive therapy devices. Theraguns provide muscle activation, recovery and pain relief. Theragun representatives demonstrated the product, providing DAV members in attendance with free massages, and the know-how they needed to use the device at home. It was a great time, but if you missed out back in December, don't worry. Theragun has generously offered us more of their devices and those of you who attend our department convention in June will have a chance to win a Theragun of your own! Thank you to everyone who was involved with this event, and thank you, Theragun, for your generosity to our members!



THE 2019

NATIONAL MIDWINTER UPDATE

The Midwinter Conference in Washington D.C. isn't just about catching up on the latest happenings with our DAV counterparts from across the country; it's about learning from our National Legislative Staff what we need to know as Benefits Protection Team Leaders and DAV members regarding the issues we confront as injured and ill Veterans, and then conveying that message to our state representatives in congress. Legislatively our objectives are as follows:

1 Strengthen Veteran Health - by having congress ensure the VA implements the MISSION Act as intended and fully funds both VA health care facilities and the new Veterans Community Care Programs.

2 Improve Care for Women Veterans - Congress must ensure the VA provides women Veterans appropriate gender-specific health care and equitable access to the same services and programs as male Veterans.

3 Establish Benefits Based on Burn Pit Exposure - Congress should enact legislation to concede exposure to all Veterans who served near active burn pits and provide them with health care eligibility for related conditions.

4 Enhance Survivors' Benefits - Congress should enact legislation to increase and index the DIC (Dependency and Indemnity Compensation) benefit, and change eligibility rules for both DIC and Chapter 35 educational benefits.



Left to right: Legislative Director, Richard Valdez, Congresswoman, Katie Porter, and PSC, JR Wilson

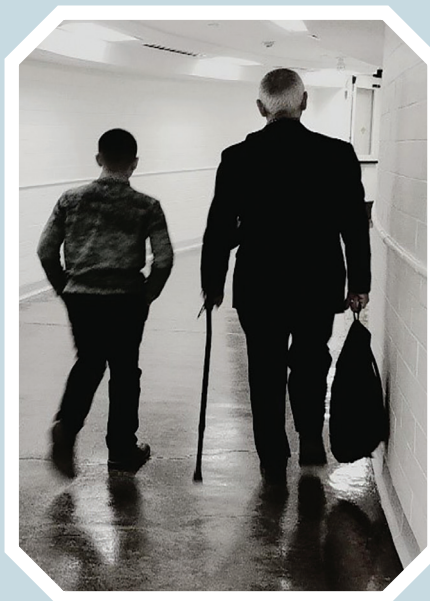
5 Justice for Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans - Congress should pass legislation to codify the Circuit Court decision to ensure Blue Water Navy Veterans receive all the benefits they earned through their service.

6 Ensure a Sufficient VA Budget for Fiscal Year 2020 - Congress must provide the VA with \$103 billion in Fiscal Year 2020 and \$90.8

billion in Fiscal Year 2021 in advance appropriations to meet the needs of ill and injured Veterans, their families and survivors (the Independent Budget provides detailed information on the budget).

California has 54 Representatives in Congress, and we try to schedule as many meetings we can cover while in D.C. This year we sent out 30 requests for meetings, held 20 meetings and made 6 drop-ins over 3-days. We traveled the Halls of Congress, from the Rayburn, Longworth, and Cannon Office buildings; then on to the other side of Capitol Hill to the Russell, Dirksen and Hart Senate buildings. Back and forth to meet with our representatives and their legislative staffers to discuss DAV's 2019 Critical Policy Goals. Our trusty step counter indicated we walked 27 miles to deliver our messages in-person. I know I probably sound like a broken record, but I'll say it again -get involved and stay on top of things by joining the Commander's Action Network. Also, make sure your chapter has a Chapter Benefits Protection Team leader. For more information, go to DAV.org, click on "Help DAV", then click on "Advocate" and you'll find everything you need to know.

DAV Department of California Legislative Director, Richard Valdez



DEPARTMENT MID WINTER TER

Thank you to everyone that came out to our latest Department Midwinter Conference, which was held at the Hilton Sacramento Arden in our state's capitol. Our events are a great time for building community and comradery within our organization, but they're also more than that. Our Department Midwinter Conference has always been a great time for our department to conduct valuable business that keeps us functioning and healthy, as well as a wonderful opportunity for our members to learn more about how we operate. Our department budget and finances remain strong, our service operations continue to touch the lives of large numbers of Veterans in California, and our chapters continue to act as the hands and feet of our organization—reaching out to existing members, future members and Veterans in need, and our State Executive Committee continues to do a fantastic job of keeping our chapters on track.

Additionally, our Midwinter Conference offers an expanded two-session Chapter Service Officer training program for those who have been elected as their chapter's service officer. The first session is open to anyone who is interested in attending and learning more about the complicated VA claims process. We hope that everyone who attended left feeling more aware, informed, and rejuvenated by fellow Veterans and their families to tackle the rest of 2019 with passion

and excitement—and thank you to Adam Barnes, Anthony Simpson, James Galliher, and Michael Wilkins—our National Service Officers who led the charge during the training. We couldn't have done it without your expertise!

We were lucky this year to have an insightful and helpful seminar regarding VAVS, led by our VAVS Chairperson and Past State Commander, Clyde Maddox, who was joined by former Volunteer Director and, Past State Commander, Kirk Johnson. It's a valuable reminder of how many Veterans in this state need our help. As an organization we want to always work to recruit not only members but also volunteers, so that the good work that we're doing in our communities can spread, and so that no Veteran will be left behind to fend for themselves.

The hotel offered great accommodations, and there was plenty to do in the surrounding Sacramento area for those that brought their families. The conference concluded with the Commander's Reception, which included delicious food, and a fantastic time to come together as a DAV and DAV Auxiliary family.

Thank you to all of you who are invested in this organization, and to all of you who attended this conference. Attending our Midwinter Conference signifies taking a deeper dive with this organization and a desire to be a leader and inspiration amongst the Veteran community. We were especially excited to see so many of our women Veterans in attendance this year. Thanks for caring enough about California's Veterans and the DAV to educate yourself so that you may educate others. We are always working to deliver insightful and helpful events to our deserving members. And if you missed out on this year's conference, we hope that you will be able to attend the next one!



NANCY CASEY

Announces Her Run for Jr. Vice Commander!



It would be a privilege to serve as a DAV Department of California line officer. I am ready to take on the responsibility of supporting our Commander, the line officers, and the chapters, and I'm excited to learn more about all the good work being done at your chapters. My DAV legacy began in 2014 when I participated in the DAV 5K in San Diego. That's when I saw Past National Commander, David Riley, on a Segway. I immediately spoke with Jim Galliher, and shortly after—I was all in.

Since then, I was elected to, and still serve as a director on the DAV Industries Board. I also worked as a Transportation Coordinator at the VAMC in La Jolla from 2015 to 2017, where I was blessed to work alongside some of the most dedicated volunteers one could ever know. Since then, I've volunteered for the VA Voluntary Services Committee, proudly representing DAV Chapter #2 at the VA Medical Center. This committee is a collaborative group

of Veteran's organization volunteers who support the VA Medical Center in providing Veterans with greater services and experiences. In 2017, I accepted my current position as a DAV National Service Officer where I assist Veterans every day in obtaining the benefits they've earned.

My military experience included serving as an Army Public Affairs Specialist. I'm excited to use my skills as I visit your chapters. My hope is that you will share your stories and exchange ideas with me, so that we can all build on our achievements and successes together for the good of Veterans in California. I want to thank all of my DAV brothers and sisters for your inspiration and support, and I hope that you will continue to support me as I run for your next Jr. Vice Commander.

Nancy G. Casey

EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT:

Robert Graves our new Department Director of Operations!



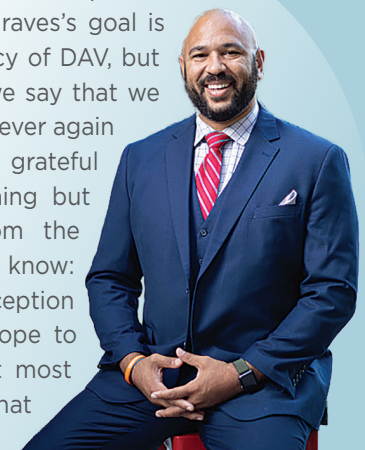
Robert Graves stepped onto the yellow footprints of MCRD San Diego on September 11th, 2000. A year later, everything changed.

Within a week of setting foot in his first duty station on Okinawa, he was immediately on his way to the sandbox. He found himself right at home in the Corps, throwing himself into as many new experiences as possible; including serving as a Range Coach & Marksmanship Instructor, testing the newest technologies before they hit the Fleet Marine Corps, playing on the All-Marine Volleyball team, and many more. These experiences allowed him to embed himself into the lives of Marines of all grades, ranks, and units; which he expressed as one of the most valuable parts of his 10-years as a Marine.

As Graves left the Marine Corps, he first encountered the DAV when he went to the Federal building to enroll in the VA. Instead of jumping into line, his curiosity led him down the hall where he ran into the first open door which read "Disabled American Veterans." He popped in to "see what this was all about," and the bond was created. Still figuring out transition in his own career and social life over those next six years, he worked to help the other Veterans who were watching him use his benefits—gain access to their own benefits. He noticed that there were a lot of Veterans who didn't know about the resources available to them—or

how to tap into them; so he wrote the book "How to Grow a Beard: A Military Transition Guide Back into Civilian Life," and the book led to the creation of the podcast #YearOfTheVet, which highlights other Veterans' journeys in transition. It was through his Veteran advocacy, he met and established a working relationship with DAV Department of California CEO-Adjutant, Daniel Contreras—who challenged Graves to bridge the generation gaps between our Veterans.

The first week on the job, his first mission was to help distribute over \$20K in disaster-relief funds to victims of the Paradise and Camp fires; he quickly realized that his new role with us was the right place for him. Once—having no resources outside of what he had to personally offer, he feels blessed to be able to continue to help Veterans on a larger scale with resources! Graves's goal is to not only continue the legacy of DAV, but strengthen it—so that when we say that we are a part of the DAV, people never again ask... "what's that?" Robert is grateful to have been met with nothing but warmth and acceptance from the organization and wants you to know: "I sincerely appreciate the reception that I have received, and I hope to add value to all of you... but most importantly, to the Veterans that we serve."



Robert Graves

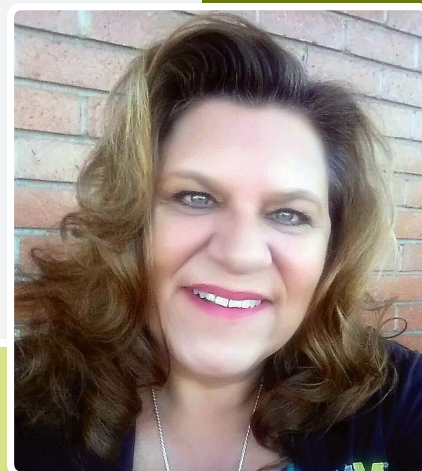
Farewell to Antoinette Sampson:

Director of Operations

Antoinette Sampson began her career serving veterans in 1987—when she became an accredited Veteran’s Representative. She worked filing benefit claims and presenting cases before the board of appeals in Plumas County California for seven years. Then, in July of 1996, she became part of team DAV. With her knowledge and experience, she started out assisting in service and legislative efforts. Later, her role changed and she focused on book-keeping and finances for the next eight years. As she grew in institutional knowledge, she was promoted to the position of Office Manager for seven years. Her dedication and work ethic continued to shine

and in 2013, she became the Director of Operations.

After over 22 years of service to the veterans at the DAV, she moved to Colorado Springs to spend more time with her family. We’re absolutely grateful for her lengthy service to Veterans, her dedication and hard work. With a big heart and a lot of passion for Veterans and their families, she made an important impact on our state. We will miss her here at the Department of California and wish her the best on the journey ahead!



“How can I say “good-bye” to so many veterans who have done so much more for me than I could ever hope to do for them? Each and every one of you are family to me. From you, I have learned the true meaning of sacrifice, service, commitment and dedication. My time at DAV was never just a job to me, but rather a mission to serve those who served; and to do everything possible to provide to you the assistance you deserve. Being a member of team DAV provided that opportunity. I hold you all in high regard for your selfless service and sacrifices that you have made. It has truly been an honor to have had the opportunity to meet and be of assistance to so many amazing veterans. You have lit a fire in my heart that will continue to burn in grateful honor to you all.”

With love and respect, Antoinette

I was asked by a friend the other day if I get paid to drive the DAV transportation van that picks up Veterans from their homes and take them to their VA medical appointments. His question reminded me of an interaction I had in 2017.

I was waiting in a patient’s driveway one morning in the DAV transportation van. It was 6:00 AM—still dark—and I wasn’t in the best part of town. So, I was initially a little nervous when I saw a car pull up behind me and a large man get out and walk toward me. He looked friendly as he walked through the porch light, so I rolled my window down.

He came up and said, “I saw you waiting here and wanted to stop and tell you how much I appreciate what you guys did for my family. I was in middle school when my dad got sick and had to quit his job, so my mom started working to support the family. My dad, a Marine veteran, drove himself to La Jolla for his VA appointments for a couple years until he lost his license. My mom had to start taking off work to take him to appointments which put a lot

of stress on her, and she almost lost her job because she was missing so many days.”

He continued by telling me that he and his mom were praying for a miracle when one of their neighbors gave her the DAV phone number. When the DAV van showed up for the first time to take his dad to his appointment, it was like a great weight was lifted from his mom’s shoulders and he “saw her smile for the first time in over a year.” His dad used the DAV network for many years, always looked forward to the ride, and came home feeling better and in an improved mood. Although his dad passed away while he was in high school, he had always wanted to thank someone from the DAV for what they did for him and his mom. I got out of the van, shook his hand and thanked him before he smiled and turned to leave.

Yes — I told my friend that we get paid — even though we’re volunteers. The feeling of accomplishment and the gratitude coming from a total stranger, feels better than any amount of money. Yes, we get paid and the pay is great.

A Volunteer’s Story

Department Service Offices & Transportation Coordinators

A. MATHER VA MEDICAL CENTER

10535 Hospital Way
Mather, CA 95655
Bldg. 650, Room 1B052
DSO Vacancy
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.
Pam Goto: Transportation Coordinator
Phone: (916) 843-7001
Bldg. 650, Room 1B070

B. SAN FRANCISCO VAMC

4150 Clement St.
San Francisco, CA 94121
Bldg. 7, Room 120
Mon - Fri 9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Transportation Coordinator:
Gary P. Curtaz
Phone: (415) 379-5612

C. FRESNO VAMC

2615 E. Clinton
Fresno, CA 93703
Room E-108A
Mon - Fri 7:00 AM - 3:00PM
Mario Flores - DSO
Phone: (559) 241-6418
Cristina Vaxter - DSO
Phone: (559) 241-6401
Susan Bertolani - Transportation Coordinator
Room 1598
Phone: (559) 241-6424

D. SEPULVEDA VAOPC

16111 Plummer
Sepulveda, CA 91343
Bldg. 22, Room 213
Mon - Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Leigh Polzin-DSO
Phone: (818) 891-7711 Ext. 36176

E. WEST LOS ANGELES VAMC

11301 Wilshire Blvd.
West Los Angeles, CA 90073
Bldg. 500, Room 1613
Mon.-Fri. 4:30 AM-2:30 PM
Transportation Coordinator:
Blas Barragan, Sr.
Phone: (310) 268-3344

F. LOS ANGELES VAOPC

351 E. Temple St.
Los Angeles, CA 90012
Room B-306
Mon - Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Gaudencio Reyno- DSO
Phone: (213) 253-2677 Ext. 24604

G. VA LOMA LINDA ACC

26001 Redlands Blvd.
Redlands, CA 92373
11201 Benton St.
Loma Linda, CA 92357
Room IF-41
DSO Vacancy
Mon - Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
Phone: (909) 583-6016
or (909) 894-7857
Steven Salazar- Transportation Coordinator
Phone: (909) 583-6014



H. LONG BEACH VAMC

5901 E. 7th St.
Long Beach, CA 90822
Bldg. 8, Room 107
Mon - Fri 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM
L. Duke Medeiros- DSO
Phone: (562) 826-5711
Liza Thornton- Transportation Coordinator
Bldg. 8, Room 101A
Phone: (562) 826-5796

I. VA ESCONDIDO CLINIC

230 E. Park Ave.
Escondido, CA 92025
Mon.-Fri. 8:30 AM-3:30 PM
(Closes at 1:00 PM Friday)
Enrique Ramos- DSO
Phone: (760) 741-1746

J. LA JOLLA VAMC

3350 La Jolla Village Dr. Room 1598
San Diego, CA 92161
Mon.-Fri. 8:15 AM- 3:15 PM
Richard Randolph- DSO
Phone: (858) 642-6454
David Strobehn- Transportation
Coordinator
Room 1592
Phone: (858) 552-7470

K. SAN DIEGO MCAS MIRAMAR

"The Hub" Miramar Way Rm. 120
San Diego, CA 92145 Area 5, MCCS Bldg. 5305
PO Box 452005
Mon.-Fri. 7:30 AM-3:00 PM
Tomi
Bruce Hillman-DSO (Fridays)
Phone: (858) 689-9637

David Strobehn-Transportation Coordinator
Andrea Butler-Transportation Coordinator
Room 1592
(858) 552-7470

K. SPRING VALLEY - DAV INDUSTRIES

1049 Elkeltan Blvd.
Spring Valley, CA 91977
Mon.-Thurs. 9:00 AM-3:00 PM
Bruce Hillman-DSO
Phone: (619) 337-9257



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Support DAV's **THRIFT OPERATIONS!**

We would like to give a big shout out to the newest Thrift Shop added to the organization's operations—located in Fresno, California! Feel free to stop in and take something home, or direct those you run into toward:

Address: 5091 N. Fresno St., Suite 145

Phone: (559) 237-0273

Northern California:

800-238-8387 • Donatedav.org

Fresno Area:

559-237-0273 • Davcharities.com

Pomona Area:

800-238-8387 • Donatedav.org

San Diego Area:

800-894-2486 • Davveteransthiftstores.com

When you donate to one of our thrift stores, your contributions provide rehabilitative services and financial support to injured, ill or impoverished Veterans and their families through the DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation!

