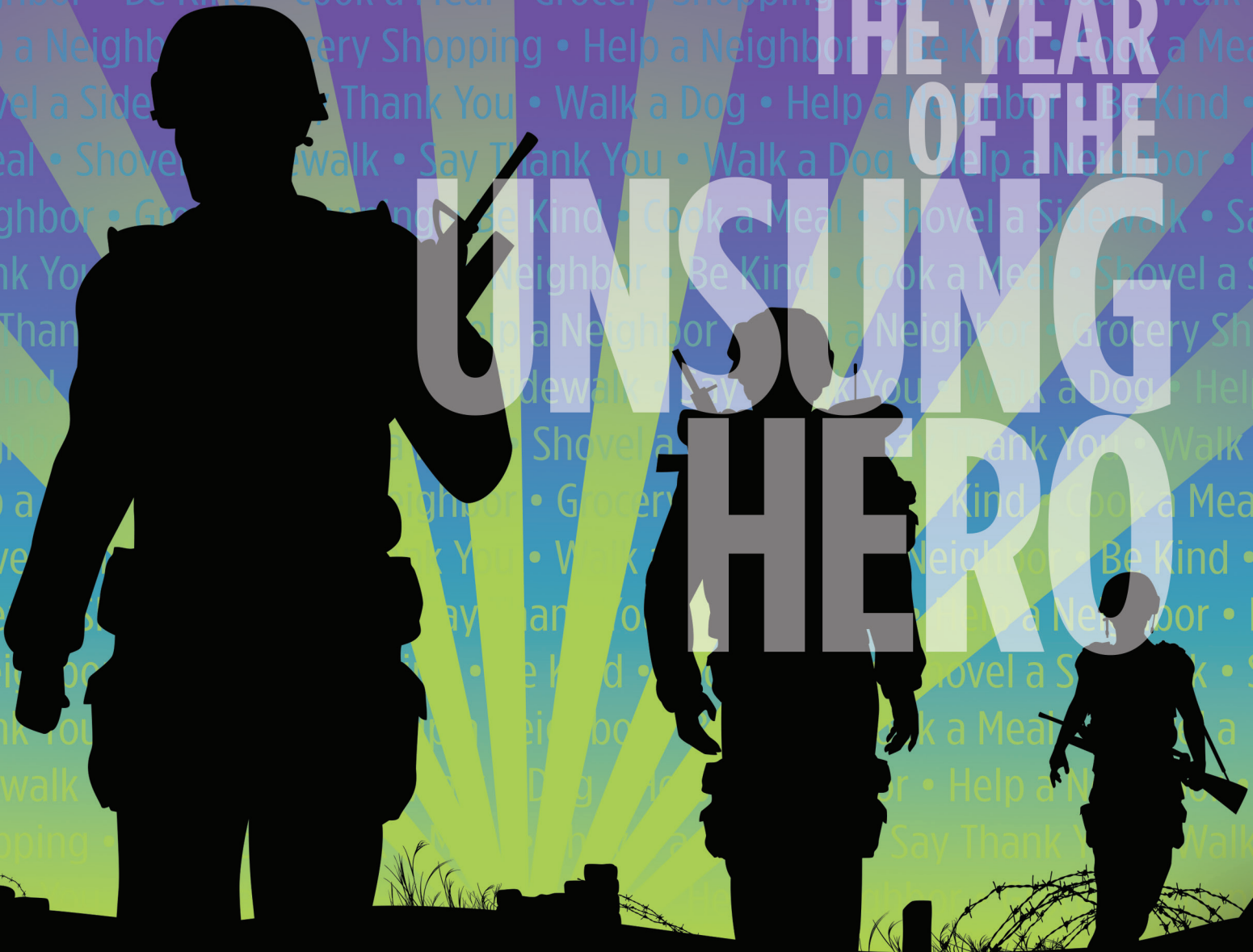




# THE YEAR OF THE UNSUNG HERO



Learn more  
about our  
“Year of the  
Unsung Hero”

**PAGE 4**



# DAV DISABLED AMERICAN VETERANS NEWS

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## IMPORTANT UPCOMING EVENTS

### DAV California 2017 Midwinter

January 13-14, 2017  
Hilton Sacramento Arden  
2200 Harvard St.  
Sacramento, DAV 95815  
800-445-9667  
\$109 Single/ Double  
Reservation Cutoff Date:  
December 26, 2016

### DAV National 2017 Midwinter Conference

February 26-March 1, 2017  
Crystal Gateway Marriott  
1700 Jefferson Davis Hwy.  
Arlington, VA 22202  
703-920-3230  
\$195 Single/Double

### DAV California 2017 Convention

June 7-10, 2017  
Grand Sierra Resort & Casino  
2500 E 2nd St.  
Reno, NV 89595  
775-789-2000  
\$79 Single/Double  
Reservation Cutoff Date:  
May 19, 2017

### DAV National 2017 Convention

July 29-August 1, 2017  
Hilton New Orleans, Riverside  
2 Poydras St.  
New Orleans, LA 70130  
504-561-6500  
\$130 Single/Double

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## ARE YOU MOVING?

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State

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MAIL TO: DAV NEWS or EMAIL TO:HQ@davcal.org

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## COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



# DAV: *A Community That Serves*

W

hat a great state convention this past June. I was deeply honored to be elected as your commander of the great Disabled American Veterans Department of California. Dan, you and your staff, as always, knocked it out of the park. Our time spent in

Anaheim was enjoyable, and more importantly, we as a department were able to obtain valuable information from a variety of workshops and legislative seminars.

Then, it was off to Atlanta for our national convention. This year's convention took place in our past commander's home state of Georgia, and did not disappoint. This year was a great example of how attending the annual national convention is a great way to connect with other departments and members from different corners of the country. It was also illuminating to hear from President Obama, who came out to speak to our delegates about the current status of veterans' benefits.

Our nation's service men and women put everything on the line in defense of America's freedom. Our public and political leaders need to be kept informed of the challenges they face returning to normal life. DAV's legislative grassroots campaign makes sure these public and political leaders stay informed of their duties.

It is very important that we as disabled veterans stay aware of legislation that affects our community. Together, we can make real changes within our communities. If you have not joined the Commanders Action Network, join today through our national website: DAV.ORG. We have some real issues that veterans are dealing with on a daily basis. There is still room for improvement in the care provided by VA medical centers. We need to make sure our voices are heard on issues that matter to us, such as comprehensive veterans caregiver support for all era veterans and their families, and women veterans' healthcare access. The men's club is over. These women

served their country and deserve their benefits just as much as their brothers-in-arms do. We at the DAV want to make sure that we are fulfilling our promises to women veterans, and welcoming them into chapters with open arms. Fortunately, the VA has made significant progress in reducing the claims backlog, however, now there is a backlog in fully developed appeals. The DAV is working closely with the Department of Veterans Affairs to find ways to cut the backlog by streamlining the process.

If you follow me on Facebook you have seen that veteran suicide is an important issue to me. I have joined in the 22 pushups for 22 days challenge, a campaign to raise awareness for the 22 veterans a day who commit suicide. These are not just our young transitioning veterans, but veterans from all eras. The DAV has taught me the value of providing service to our veteran community by reaching out to those that need the most help. We become veterans as we leave our military service, and, here at DAV we believe that a vital part of being a veteran is helping take care of our veteran community. Service does not stop with our ETS date, it only changes the uniform we wear.

Service is at our backbone, as we are a veteran service organization that assists our veterans and their dependents with the highest respect and dignity that our veterans have earned.

Become active in your chapter and together we can make great change! Hope to see you all this January for our midwinter conference.

**We need to  
make sure our  
voices are heard  
on issues that  
matter to us.**

*J.R. Wilson, COMMANDER*



## ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

# The Year of the *Unsung Hero*



**H**ere at the DAV Department of California, we're celebrating the unsung hero this year. We want to make sure that we're recognizing those in our midst who may be flying under the radar, but are having an important impact nevertheless. We want to recognize those who aren't looking for thanks or praise, but rather are helping veterans in their community out of passion and a kind heart.

There are two programs in particular that we plan on emphasizing this year. First of all, we want to strengthen our LVAP program. The Local Veterans Assistance Program (LVAP), is a program set up to recognize those in our communities who are helping veterans in whatever way they can. The LVAP program is flexible. Whether you

start? Ask around your chapter. We are an organization full of injured and ill veterans. There is always work to be done. If you're ready to register as an LVAP volunteer, go to [dav.org/help-dav/volunteer](http://dav.org/help-dav/volunteer).

Caretakers can also often be unsung heroes. Our Auxiliary is comprised of family members of injured and ill veterans. These loved ones are there to help their veteran navigate the ups and downs of their disabilities and their

transitions back to civilian life. Just as family support is of vital importance to a veteran with a disability, so too is the support and partnership of the Auxiliary vital to the health of the DAV. Because of this, we want to foster the health of our Auxiliary in any way we can. Our DAV chapters know that each year we push them to meet their membership goals. We believe that for an organization like ours to thrive, we constantly need to grow. When our chapters meet their

membership goals, we award the commander with a special DAV membership coin. This is our way of saying thank you and providing that little extra incentive to recruit. This year, we want to begin providing incentives for our chapters that recruit new Auxiliary members. We want to help the Auxiliary prosper in whatever way we can. We hope that this new emphasis on Auxiliary membership will encourage a new spirit of recruitment. Many family members of DAV veterans may not realize there's a place for them to get plugged in. We hope that we will see both DAV and DAV Auxiliary members reaching out and expanding our Auxiliary. A healthy Auxiliary makes us all stronger, and together the DAV and DAVA are bettering the lives of injured and ill veterans and their families in California.

I'm proud to be the Adjutant of this organization, full of so many wonderful people in such a great state. I look forward to joining together with you all to lift up some of our unsung heroes this year.

*Daniel Contreras, PSC, CEO/ADJUTANT*



If you're ready to register as an LVAP volunteer, go to [dav.org/help-dav/volunteer](http://dav.org/help-dav/volunteer).

want to take someone grocery shopping, mow someone's lawn, provide transportation, whatever the case may be, if you are helping a veteran, you can register as a DAV volunteer under the LVAP program. Here in California, we know that our members are giving back. We know that you are passionate, and caring individuals, and we'd like to thank you for it. Show our national organization that California is a state that helps. Do you know someone who is actively providing assistance to veterans in their community? Encourage them to register as an LVAP volunteer. Are you a Chapter Service Officer? Register as an LVAP volunteer. Those of you who participate in Forget-Me-Not drives, or Golden Corral events can also register those activities as LVAP hours. Even if you're not actively involved at the moment, but would like to be, simply find a need in your community and a way you can help. Aren't sure where to



## SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

This year, you all elected me as your Sr. Vice Commander. And, as your Sr. Vice Commander, one of my responsibilities includes membership. With this emphasis on membership, I plan to use this year to share the values of the DAV and its deeply imbedded

traditions, while also sharing our mission of hope and service. Imagine your chapter is the "little engine that could" and your members are the fuel that drives that little engine. A healthy chapter is one that is able to reach deep into its community. Our national organization is powered by the direction and resolutions submitted to the organization from the chapters. If you call me to visit your chapter, I can share our vision and explain the services we offer.

As I travel, I also want to discuss the concept of "Americanism" and how we can spread it in the communities we serve. "Americanism" is defined as a complex ideology that is "an articulation of the nation's rightful place in the world, a set of traditions, and a cultural style imbued with political meaning."

Thirty years after discharge I still feel my deep love of

country when I hear the National Anthem. My chest swells up with pride and my eyes water as I get lost in the song. Veterans who donned the uniform share this feeling, and it's part of what makes us brothers and sisters. In the midst of tensions and protests towards our flag and anthem, I am still reminded of what makes this country great. Veterans made sacrifices so our

**Thirty years after discharge I still feel my deep love of country when I hear the National Anthem.**

nation's citizens can protest and express themselves freely.

As chapter members and veterans, it's important we reach into our communities and share our values of Americanism. It's important to nurture what makes our country great, and take the time to learn from each other. With Veterans Day around the corner, whether you march in a parade, speak at a school, or fly a flag, it's a great time spark a conversation about Americanism and what it means in your community.

God bless our veterans and the flag we defended.

*Guy Anastasia , SR. VICE COMMANDER*



## AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

**D**ear Auxiliary Members, It is my privilege to have been re-elected as your Department of California State Commander. I want to thank

each and every one of you for your support.

I want to share with you some of the highlights from the DAV National Convention for 2016.

In August I was able to attend the DAV/DAVA National Convention in Atlanta, GA, however it was with a very heavy heart. Shortly before the convention we received the news that our DAV Auxiliary National Commander, Linda Stake had passed away. She was a beautiful and caring soul that gave her heart to the DAVA. Linda felt that we, as a part of the Auxiliary, should be involved in our communities and "pull together" to support veterans and their families. The convention was not the same this year without her, and she was truly missed. This convention, I was involved with the Standing Rules Committee. Over the last few years we have made changes to refine our rules to coincide with the DAV, and in doing so, had very little

changes to make this year. Together the DAV and DAVA are becoming a more cohesive unit in the lives of our veterans.

It is once again that time of year when we are nearing the holiday season. I want to encourage each and every one of our members to reach out to a veteran in their community and provide them with a little holiday cheer. No matter what you share, be it a card, help with a meal, or even just a hug and smile, it will make an impact on them and make their day a little better. Just as there is no beginning or ending of a circle, our DAV Auxiliary members will never see the end of their devotion, loyalty, comradeship and service to our veterans and their families.

As your commander, I want you all to stay involved, volunteer, join and carry the DAVA's message to veterans and their families and the communities we live in. You will find that you can and do make a difference.

*Samantha Galliher, AUXILIARY COMMANDER*



## JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

First of all, thank you, from the bottom of my heart for electing me as your Jr. Vice Commander at this year's convention. It is a great honor to be a part of the line. My time as your Jr. Vice Commander is flying by so far. It seems like the moment the state convention ended, we were heading to Atlanta for the national convention. Lots of DAV members were present, and overall, the event was a great success. If you ever want to feel more "in the loop" within this organization, simply attend a national convention. There are so many seminars, and they are full of helpful information on how we can help our veterans in need. I found a seminar by Ed Hartman on how to conduct fundraisers to be especially helpful, as there are anticipated rule changes to be made concerning our Forget-Me-Not drives. As such, be sure to pay special attention when you receive the new bylaws from national, or from the Department of California.

If you ever wish to find more information out about the seminars and classes provided at the national convention, you can learn more at: [dav.org/events](http://dav.org/events).

There are so many seminars, and they are full of helpful information on how we can help our veterans in need.

The goal of the DAV has always been to help all veterans in need. It is very inspiring to be in such a large group of veterans from all around the country who are passionate about helping their fellow veterans.

I was very pleased to be present when California's own Delphine Metcalf-Foster was sworn in as National Senior Vice. Congratulations to her! It was also a highlight for me to be able to see Lee Greenwood perform.

In conclusion, my message to all members is this: always remember we are stronger in large numbers. We should make it our mission in life to make sure that all veterans and their families get the benefits that they are entitled to. Let's never forget what our motto is. Fulfilling our promises to the men and women who served. Hope to see many of you at our Midwinter conference in Sacramento January 13th and 14th, 2017.

Ron Vogel, JR. VICE COMMANDER



## AUXILIARY ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

### *A United Front and A Stronger Future*

Donna Adams, PSC, National Judge Advocate sent me this message after our State Convention last June: "I thoroughly enjoyed my visit to CA, and can't stop bragging about the DAV/DAVA relationship you guys have - it's so terrific."

I wanted to share Donna's kind words with all of you and publicly thank our state's DAV members for supporting our Auxiliary. The UCAP enabled 11 Auxiliary members to participate in our meetings at state convention. In addition, DAV and DAV Auxiliary members raised \$5,395 at convention for Auxiliary programming. I am so proud that our level of mutual respect and cooperation has transformed the state convention into a model for other states.

We must continue working together on a local level. Increased Auxiliary membership is important, not only to our Auxiliary units, but also to our DAV chapters. Every member of

the Auxiliary has a relative by blood or marriage who has been injured or disabled in the line of duty. As newly disabled veterans enter our ranks, it is equally important that their families be included in membership outreach as well. Welcoming the entire family is yet another way to strengthen the relationship between local units and chapters. Families who participate in DAV and

*As newly disabled veterans enter our ranks, it is equally important that their families be included in membership outreach as well.*

Auxiliary activities are more likely to stand up and take on the leadership roles that we so dearly need to move into the future.

It is my hope, as this year moves forward, that we will all be recruiters within our communities, both to veterans and to their families.

Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh, AUXILIARY ADJUTANT

DAV Department  
of California  
Returns to  
**RENO!**

Come to the  
**DAV California 2017  
Convention**  
June 7-10, 2017  
at the  
**Grand Sierra Resort  
& Casino**



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

# Lou Williams



S

ummer passed us by quickly and I've been thinking a lot about what I wanted to say to all of you in my first article. First of all, I'd like to introduce myself. My name is Lou Williams and I've been very blessed to be a DAV Lay Chaplain

for some time now. The road has not always been an easy one to walk and sometimes I've wondered why I entered this field and what difference I could possibly make. However, there have been days and times I'll never forget. Days when I've been able to share in the joy of family and friends joining together, sharing their laughter, their love, their memories, their holidays, their dreams, hopes, fears and especially their prayers. In those moments I realize and remember why I wanted to be in service to God and our veterans who served us all so well. Helping veterans and their families in times of crisis can be very difficult, but when I've seen the miracle of healing and recovery, I remember it's not about me, or us. It's all about God, our helper and our strength during these troubling times. It's about our journey as we walk through the pages of our

We strive to  
do our very best with  
what the good Lord has  
given us individually  
and collectively.

time here on earth, and as we try to make a difference in the life of someone who is struggling, or shut in, or lonely, or isolated. There are many other reasons why we serve as well. We've all had moments when we've felt overwhelmed, or we've faced times of indecision

that very often bring us to doubt, worry and disbelief. This is true for all of us at one time or another in our lives. Sometimes all of these emotions can confront us at once, making an ordinary day seem like an impossible task. We serve a great purpose as we seek to serve our veterans and their families. We strive to do our very best with what the good Lord has given us individually and collectively. He's given us all each other, and the privilege of prayer in which we can call upon his grace. I've heard many times that if we're willing to do the work, God will give us all the bricks we need. I pray he will bless the work of our hands, and the thoughts of our hearts as we seek to be a help in the lives of those we seek to serve—those who fought for freedom and have served us and our country so well. Keep the faith.

*Come out to our next  
Midwinter Conference in Sacramento!*



**W**e are excited to bring our members yet another informational event this upcoming January in Sacramento at the Hilton Sacramento Arden.

We hope that you will join us in our state's capitol. Sacramento is chock full of museums and California history. Local attractions include the Old Sacramento State Historic Park, the California State Railroad Museum, the

Crocker Art Museum, Sutter's Fort, where costumed docents re-enact pioneer life, the California State Capitol Museum, the California Automobile Museum, and the Sleep Train Arena, which is where the Sacramento Kings play. Sacramento is also home to the California Museum, which holds California's Hall of Fame. Other attractions include the California State Indian Museum, and the Eagle Theatre, which was built back in Gold Rush-era Sacramento and is the first permanent theatre built in California. You can also go see a play at the B Street

Theatre or the Crest Theatre.

For those of you who have been to our previous conferences and conventions, you will know that these

are great times to build community and comradery within our organization. We will once again offer our expanded Chapter Service Officer training. If you're interested in signing up, please see page nine for more information.

Our annual department Midwinter conference has always been a great way to learn more about the inner machinations of our department. If you've found yourself wanting to be more in the loop, or wishing you had more in-depth information to share with your chapters, the Midwinter Conference is a great opportunity to educate

*Our annual department Midwinter conference has always been a great way to learn more about the inner machinations of our department.*





yourself. You also won't want to miss out on our Legislation and Resolution Workshop. To be effective members of the veteran community, we need to not only be aware of the issues that impact us, but also be knowledgeable about

the best way to tackle and address those issues. Being a part of a community with numbers and pull like DAV gives us more power to make a real difference, but it's important to be educated.

Those aren't the only reasons to join us for the Midwinter Conference in Sacramento. The Hilton Sacramento Arden West is a full-service Sacramento hotel centrally located in the Sacramento Point West Marketplace. It is conveniently located near the Arden Fair Mall and Cal Expo. The hotel has everything you could possibly need within easy reach with downtown Sacramento only a short four mile drive away. They are the only full-service high rise Hilton Hotel in the Sacramento area. Their accommodations include a pool area, fitness center, on-site dining, over 18,000 square feet of meeting space, and they are 100% non-smoking.

We hope you will consider joining us this year in Sacramento. Meet your DAV brothers and sisters from throughout California, learn more about our organization and the issues affecting veterans, visit the state capitol, and have a good time while doing it!

## Chapter Service Officer Training Certification Program

Our organization is blessed with members who believe in being active and giving back. Once a year we offer our Chapter Service Officer training and (Re)Certification to all those who wish to attend. However, only elected chapter service officers will be able to receive the certification. The training will take place at our upcoming Midwinter Conference, on January 13th and 14th at 8:00 AM. We will, once again, be offering a longer, more expanded training this year. So, whether you are your chapter's elected service officer, are interested in becoming a Chapter Service Officer at some point, or simply want to know more about the process of filing a claim, we hope that you will consider coming out and attending. The training sessions will be taught by one of our own highly-trained National Service Officers, who will help clarify the often-complicated system of VA claims. To register, please mail or fax your registration form to the address or fax number provided by December 22, 2016.



Fax: (562) 404-8044

Mail: 13733 Rosecrans Ave. Santa Fe Springs, CA 90670

### YES!

Please register me for the Chapter Service Officer Training/(Re) Certification Program!

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#### Guest #1

Chapter

Elected Position

Email Address

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#### Guest #2

Chapter

Elected Position

Email Address

## 2017 Midwinter Conference Schedule

### Friday, January 13th

<b>8:00 AM</b>	Membership Committee Meeting	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe
<b>9:00 AM</b>	Claims & Service Commission Meeting	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe
<b>10:00 AM</b>	Finance Committee Meeting	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe
<b>12:00 PM</b>	Chapter Service Officer Training	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe

### Saturday, January 14th

<b>8 AM-12 PM</b>	Chapter Service Officer Training	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe
<b>9 AM-12 PM</b>	Legislation & Resolution Workshop	Zinfandel
<b>1:00 PM</b>	State Executive Committee Meeting	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe
<b>5:00 PM</b>	Commander's Reception	Eagle/Berressa/Tahoe

# California Leads the Way in Streamlining Veteran Transportation Program



**B**ack in January 2015, the Los Angeles Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA) reached out to our national organization to inquire whether DAV had any veteran transportation needs. The MTA, after being awarded a \$285,000 government transportation software development grant, was looking for a worthy outlet. Thus began the lengthy process of developing a software database tool to help our Department Transportation Coordinators with their demanding jobs.

During the MTA's search for a veteran service organization for their program, they discovered through their data search that DAV had an extensive veteran patient transportation network established at VA hospitals and some clinics.

continued efforts to ensure that veterans in California do not go without the care they deserve due to lack of access to, or the ability to operate a vehicle.

Throughout the project, we continued to hold meetings during each phase of development. We discussed the database's requirements, and held on-site interviews with Transportation Coordinators to better understand the work environment this software would be used in, as well as the limitations we could encounter. We had to address whether the VA would allow our Transportation Coordinators to access the database on the internet using the VA system from their desk, and worked with the VA's IT manager at Loma Linda to work out any issues. With their help, Steve Salazar and Liza

*We expect these additional features to make it easier for the veterans using our transportation network to get to their appointments.*

Following the initial call from national, our Department Adjutant and CEO, Daniel Contreras, asked me to initiate a meeting with the principles at MTA to discuss initial details. We wanted to be sure that this step would, in fact, be an improvement to what our Transportation Coordinators were already using on a daily basis.

After this initial meeting and the creation of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with MTA, we began working on the project by assembling some of our Transportation Coordinators to guide us through the process. Their contributions to the ongoing discussion, design, and testing of the database were invaluable. Our team consisted of Steve Salazar, from the Loma Linda VA, Liza Thornton, from the Long Beach VA, Marie Pounds, from the Sepulveda VA Clinic, and Blas Barragan, Sr., from the West LA VA. Volunteer driver, Ernie Hilger, also occasionally came in to share a volunteer's perspective. Many thanks to all of these outstanding individuals for their

Thornton were able to operate the system at their location using a simulated pilot program. The test was successful, and the system worked as expected. As of July 2016, the new system is being used on a limited basis until our other Transportation Coordinators throughout the department can be brought up to speed on it.

We are still in the early phases and have laid out a roadmap of additional features to be added. We expect these additional features to make it easier for the veterans using our transportation network to get to their appointments, and return home via an Uber-like system. It is our hope that this will improve the services we provide our veterans, will help us fulfill our promises to the men and women who served, and will streamline the transportation program. This program could become a model for DAV transportation programs across the country with California leading the way.

*-Richard Valdez, PSC-DAV California Legislative Director*

# Monterey Bay Veterans Launch NEW DIVE PROGRAM

The DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation has had a long-standing partnership with the Monterey Bay Veterans. For years it has been a wonderful organization and we have been proud to contribute to their efforts. Their programs have provided veterans with fun events such as the fishing derbies. This past September held an especially exciting moment in the history of the organization, and one that we were thrilled to be a part of. On September 27, 2016, the Monterey Bay Veterans dedicated a new custom dive boat. The boat which is appropriately named "Freedom" will give veterans with serious mobility issues the opportunity to try scuba diving.

DAV National Commander, Dave Riley, came for the ceremony and had the opportunity to take the inaugural dive. It was clear that Commander Riley, a former Coast Guard rescue swimmer, who is now a quadruple amputee, thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to dive with equipment designed to accommodate veterans with various types of physical limitations.

The "Freedom" features a submerging dive platform. This allows veterans with disabilities the ability to enter and exit the water safely. The "Freedom" is the first boat of its kind, and is sure to be a great resource for veterans. Adaptive sports have long been shown to have a positive impact on veterans, who are given the opportunity to get out and get active in a way they may not have been able to before.

The Monterey Bay Veterans will also be partnering with Cal State Monterey Bay, where

they will be able to use the aquatic facility to teach the veterans how to scuba dive before going into the water.

The DAV was represented at the dedication, with our own state commander, J.R. Wilson in attendance. James Bogan, PSC, and Kirk Johnson, PSC, were also in attendance. A special thanks to Mr. Bogan and Mr. Johnson for their involvement.

According to the VA, veterans who participate in adaptive sports report better health, new friendships, and a better quality of life. Programs like these promote confidence, independence, comradery, and provide experiences that injured and ill veterans might not otherwise be able to have. We here at the DAV believe programs such as these are a great way to fulfill our promises to the men and women who served. It is always exciting to see new and creative ways for veterans to experience rehabilitation, recovery, and enjoyment. Thanks to the Monterey Bay Veterans on their hard work in pursuit of the betterment of disabled veterans, and congrats on this exciting new chapter!



# DEPARTMENT CONVENTION



Our department convention in Anaheim was another great time with great people and great information. First of all, I would like to congratulate all of our chapters this year who reached their membership goals. We are very proud of you all for being such a big part of why this organization continues to grow and thrive. We were also very happy to play host to so many wonderful guests this year. At our Joint Opening Session, we were able to hear from the Secretary of the California Department of Veterans Affairs, Vito Imbasciani, the Assistant Director of the Long Beach VA Medical Center, Jill Dietrich, the VAVS Director for the Long Beach Healthcare System, Thomas Kleczkowski, the VBA Director for the Long Beach Healthcare System, Robert McKenrick, and the mayor of Orange, Teresa Smith. We were also privileged to have DAV's National Legislative Director, Joy Ilem as our national guest, as well as Auxiliary Past National Commander, Donna Adams as Auxiliary's national guest.

Each year, our convention is also a great opportunity for us here at the DAV Department of California to recognize excellence within our organization and within the VA employees that work closely with us. This year, our 2016 Veteran of the Year was Amanda Wirtz. Our Employee



of the Year was Transportation Coordinator from Fresno, Susan Bertolani. From the Veterans Affairs Veteran Benefits Administration. Our 2016 Outstanding Member of the Department of Veterans Affairs: Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) awardee was Danny Rowe out of LA, and our 2016 Outstanding Department of Veterans Affairs Veterans National Cemetery Administration (NCA) Awardee was Antonio Feliciano out of Bakersfield. Congratulations to all these excellent individuals for the fantastic work you do in the service of bettering the lives of injured and ill veterans.

Every year, our chapters do a great job at recruiting new members, and we recognize the top chapter for recruitment in each category. This year, the Harry E. Wentworth Memorial Award, named for the founder of the DAV in California, which recognizes the chapter with the largest percentage gain in life memberships went to Alameda Chapter #8. Chapter #8 was also recognized for having the largest numerical gain in new life members for chapters with 50-300 members. The chapter with the largest numerical gain in new life members for chapters with 301-1000 members was awarded to Dick Bilyeu Chapter #93, the largest numerical gain in new life



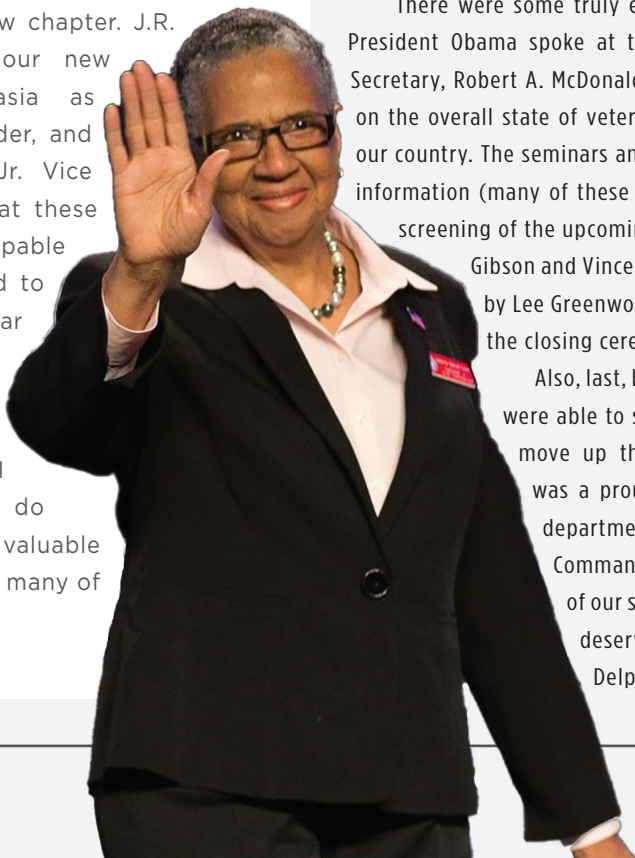
members for chapters with 1001-2000 members went to Birmingham Hospital Chapter #73, and the largest numerical increase for chapters with 2,001, or more, members went to Sacramento Chapter #6. Our DSO with the best recruitment numbers was Leigh Polzin out of the Sepulveda office, and the NSO office with the best membership recruitment was the Los Angeles NSO office.

The theme of this year's convention's Fun Night was Pirate Palooza, and a great time was had by all. A large number of the attendees donned their pirate finest and enjoyed the live music, the photo booth and throwing each other into "Davey Jones' Locker" to raise money for the Auxiliary. The vibe was festive, and it was truly a great evening.

Department conventions are also a wealth of information and insight. Some of the highlights included the committee meetings, which provided opportunities for DAV members to write resolutions for consideration of adoption, the DAV and DAVA Joint Memorial Service, in which we honored those within our midst who passed throughout this past year, and the always-informational Chapter Leadership Forum. It was a pleasure to hear from Veteran of the Year, Amanda Wirtz, who shared with us both her music and her motivational speaking, in which she talked about the idea of living your legacy now.

Finally it came time for elections. These are always an exciting time for our organization, and mark a new year and a new chapter. J.R. Wilson was elected as our new commander, Guy Anastasia as our new Sr. Vice Commander, and Ron Vogel as our new Jr. Vice Commander. We know that these individuals will be capable leaders and we are excited to navigate this upcoming year with them at the helm.

If you've never attended a DAV Department of California convention, I would encourage you to do so. It's always a fun and valuable experience. We hope to see many of you in Reno in 2017!



## DAV National CONVENTION

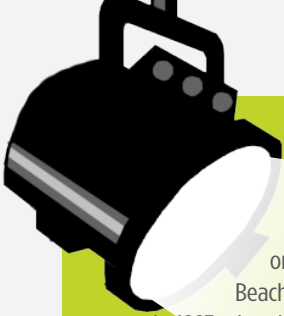
We've always been able to count on our National organization to put on a great event every year at the convention. This year in Atlanta was no exception. Our chapters are important, they keep us grounded and connected to our community. They are our homes, where we interact with our brothers and sisters and work through the issues that affect veterans on our home turf. When we attend a state department convention, we gain context, we learn about DAV services throughout the state, we have the opportunity to learn from each other, and catch up on the state of CalVet and other important topics that pertain to a veteran in California's wellbeing. When we go to National Convention, it broadens our perspective even more. We have the opportunity to learn about the federal legislation and policies that affect our benefits and care, and we connect with our peers on a grander scale.

For our district, which is District #16, Mike Steinbaugh, PSC, was elected as NEC, and Kirk Johnson, PSC, was elected as Alternate NEC. On the Auxiliary side, Melissa Valdez was elected as NEC, and Adrienne Frazer Mack as Alternate NEC.

There were some truly exciting moments from this year's convention. President Obama spoke at the Joint Opening Ceremonies, as did the VA Secretary, Robert A. McDonald. They shared from their wealth of knowledge on the overall state of veterans, and veterans' healthcare and benefits, in our country. The seminars and presentations provided were full of valuable information (many of these can be found at [dav.org](http://dav.org)). There was a special screening of the upcoming film, *Hacksaw Ridge*, presented to us by Mel Gibson and Vince Vaughn. There was also a surprise performance by Lee Greenwood who came out to sing "God Bless the USA" at the closing ceremony.

Also, last, but certainly not least, we as a state Department were able to see our very own Delphine Metcalf-Foster, PSC, move up the line to National Sr. Vice Commander. It was a proud moment. She's been a leader in our department for many years, and is a Past State Commander. She is a great representation of our state, and her position is well-deserved. Congratulations, Delphine!





# Employee Spotlight

This fall, our employee spotlight is shining on our Department Service Officer (DSO) in Long Beach, Joe Palmares. Mr. Palmares began his military career in 1987 when he joined the US Navy through the Delayed Entry Program (DEP) and retired as a US Navy Chief in 2011. During his 24 years of service, he acted as a Surgical Technician, Certified Emergency Medical Technician, Certified Emergency Vehicle Operator Course Instructor, Command Career Counselor, Medical-Dental Officer Recruiter, Senior Enlisted Leader, Deputy to the Medical Logistician of the Marine Corps, and spent 17 of those years with the US Marines as a Fleet Marine Force Corpsman. He was deployed in Somalia for Operation Restore Hope and Iraq for Operation Iraqi Freedom.

Joe Palmares first heard about DAV while attending the Transition Assistance Program (TAP) at Camp Pendleton. Then, three years ago, he met DAV Department of California Field Supervisor, Joel Plante, and several members from Chapter #23 at a DAV Mobile Service Office (MSO) Drive and learned of the open Department Service Officer position.

As a DSO, Mr. Palmares has been honored to be able to help veterans, their families, and survivor spouses navigate the Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) claims process. He describes the job as fun, frus-

trating and challenging at times. Every day represents a new challenge, requiring him to adapt to each veteran's specific needs. This requires him to be always responsive, timely, compassionate, and professional.

Joe Palmares has done a great job growing into his role, going from seeking help from his nearby Veteran Service Organization (VSO) representatives in his early days, to now being a dependable source of advice for those other VSOs. He says that the highlights of his job have been seeing veterans and their families come by to express their gratitude, and being able to make valuable connections with clients, families, friends, and the staff and resources at the Long Beach VA.

When asked about what he's still hoping to accomplish as a DSO, he said that his goals are to finally gain access to all BVA computer-based programs, in order to serve veterans more promptly, to expand DSO services to younger veterans on college campuses and to continue providing in-service briefings on VSO functions and services to local VA Healthcare staff.

Thanks for all the hard work, Joe!



**Joe Palmares**

## DAV Department of California UNAUDITED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION June 30, 2016

<b>ASSETS</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2015</b>
Cash	\$543,586	\$851,572
Due from Auxiliary	2,440	1,508
Deposit	9,091	5,000
Long-Term Investment	3,858,128	3,900,524
Property & Equipment	263,013	282,071
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>4,676,258</b>	<b>5,040,675</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Accounts Payable	\$68,327	\$52,519
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	4,607,931	4,988,156
Undesignated	-	-
Temporarily restricted	-	-
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>4,607,931</b>	<b>4,988,156</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$4,676,258</b>	<b>\$5,040,675</b>

# Department Service Offices & Transportation Coordinators

## A. MATHER VA MEDICAL CENTER

10535 Hospital Way  
Mather, CA 95655  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Ron Juliana- Dept. Service Officer  
Bldg. 650, Room 1B070  
(916) 843-7002  
Pam Goto- Transportation Coordinator  
Bldg. 650, Room 1B052  
(916) 843-7001

## B. FRESNO VA MEDICAL CENTER

2615 E. Clinton Room E-108A  
Fresno, CA 93703  
Hours: 7:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Mario Flores- Dept. Service Officer  
(559) 241-6418  
Cristina Vaxter- Dept. Service Officer  
(559) 241-6401  
Susan Bertolani- Transportation Coordinator  
Room W110  
(559) 241-6424

## C. SEPULVEDA VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

16111 Plummer  
Sepulveda, CA 91343  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Leigh Polzin- Dept. Service Officer  
Bldg. 22, Room 213  
(818) 891-7711 Ext. 36176  
Marie Pounds- Transportation Coordinator  
Bldg. 22, Room 215  
(818) 895-9408

## D. LOS ANGELES VA OUTPATIENT CLINIC

351 E. Temple St. Room B-306  
Los Angeles, CA 90012  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Audie Reyno- Dept. Service Officer  
(213) 253-2677 Ext. 24604

## E. LOMA LINDA VA MEDICAL CENTER

11201 Benton St. Room IF-41  
Loma Linda, CA 92357  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Eric Porche'- Dept. Service Officer  
(909) 583-6016  
Steven Salazar- Transportation Coordinator  
(909) 583-6014

## F. WEST LA VA MEDICAL CENTER

11301 Wilshire Blvd.  
Bldg. 500, Room 1613  
West Los Angeles, CA 90073  
Hours: 5:00 AM-2:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Blas Barragan, Sr.- Transportation Coordinator  
(310) 268-3344

## G. LONG BEACH VA MEDICAL CENTER

5901 E. 7th St. Bldg. 8, Room 107  
Long Beach, CA 90822  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Joe Palmares- Dept. Service Officer  
(562) 826-5711  
Liza Thornton-Transportation Coordinator  
Bldg. 8, Room 101A  
(562) 826-5796



## H. VA ESCONDIDO CLINIC

230 E. Park Ave.  
Escondido, CA 92025  
Hours: 8:30 AM-3:30 PM Mon.-Fri.  
(Closes at 1:00 PM Friday)  
Carlos Gallardo- Dept. Service Officer  
(760) 741-1746

## I. SAN DIEGO MCAS MIRAMAR

MCAS Miramar, PO Box 452005  
Area 5, MCCS Bldg. 5305,  
"The Hub" Miramar Way Room 120  
San Diego, CA 92145  
Hours: 7:30 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Fri.  
Bruce Hillman-Dept. Service Officer  
(Fridays Only)  
Tomoko Ferguson-Dept. Support Staff  
(858) 689-9637

## J. LA JOLLA VA MEDICAL CENTER

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

## K. SPRING VALLEY - DAV INDUSTRIES

1049 Elkelton Blvd.  
Spring Valley, CA 91977  
Hours: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM Mon.-Thurs.  
Bruce Hillman- Dept. Service Officer  
(619) 337-9257



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**Help DAV help veterans!** California has nearly 22 million veterans. When you donate to one of these thrift operations, you better the lives of injured and ill veterans in California by supporting our program operations.

- Northern California:** 800-238-8387 [Donatedav.org](http://Donatedav.org)
- Fresno Area:** 559-237-0273 [Davcharities.com](http://Davcharities.com)
- Pomona Area:** 800-237-8387 [Donatedav.org](http://Donatedav.org)
- San Diego Area:** 800-894-2486 [Davveteransthiftstores.com](http://Davveteransthiftstores.com)