



# DAV CALIFORNIA NEWS



**CALIFORNIA**

in the  
Spotlight  
at National  
Convention

More on Page 6

**Join us for DAV California  
Midwinter in Laguna Hills**

More on Page 2



# ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA CEO-ADJUTANT  
IMMEDIATE PAST NATIONAL COMMANDER

This past national convention was an important milestone for me in a variety of ways. It is truly the end of an era. I've served on the national line for six challenging and fulfilling years. I've learned so much and made more memories than I can count. My appreciation for the work that DAV does has only deepened. It's been one of the greatest honors of my life to be able to represent the DAV to the public, to congress, and to the many veterans we serve. I'm incredibly grateful for the privilege of being involved in an organization with such a far-reaching and powerful impact.

As I reflect on my time in the national line there are two things I know for sure. I could not have served these past few years if not for the support of both my wife, Teresa, and my DAV family here in my home state of California. I'm blessed to be from a beautiful state with a thriving community of veterans who want to help each other.

That's what it's all about at DAV. Helping each other. Filling in the gaps left by the system. This organization started in the wake of WWI, when our government wasn't ready to care for soldiers coming back injured and changed. It was clear we would have to band together, advocate for ourselves, and find new ways to survive and thrive.

And we continue the work today. We continue to fight for every veteran to be able to access the medical care and benefits they've earned. It was a worthy cause in 1921 and continues to be important in 2025. All of us in DAV have the honor of being part of something a century in the making and that is powerful. There is a lot of strength in our numbers and in each of our unique stories.

So as I close out my time as DAV National Commander, and become a Past National Commander, I just want to express my gratitude. To everyone who offered a kind word, hosted or helped me on my travels, or spread the word about DAV. I was able to do my work and share DAV's message with enthusiasm and confidence knowing I had the backing and support of, not only DAV members across the country, but especially of the good people in the DAV (and DAVA!) California. I'm proud of you and proud to call California my home. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.



# Save the Date

**CALIFORNIA 2026 MIDWINTER CONFERENCE**  
at the

**VOCO LAGUNA HILLS HOTEL**  
25205 LA PAZ RD  
LAGUNA HILLS, CA 92653

DATE: JANUARY 22-24, 2026  
RATE: \$ 139.00 / NIGHT  
(Room Rate Available January 20-24)

*Chapter Service Officer Training  
will be held at this event.*

CLICK HERE TO  
BOOK A ROOM





# COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA COMMANDER  
ARMANDO HERNANDEZ

Family and friends!

August brought about another national convention, and with it, new leadership and renewed dedication to our purpose. As our organization celebrates another year of service, I invite us to reflect. Personally, I always come back reinvigorated after seeing the accomplishments of the past year, hanging out with great friends, and welcoming new leaders. Though not all our time in uniform was identical, we all share experiences that shaped our service, lives, minds and bodies. We've laughed together, we've shed tears together, we've embraced misery together, but most importantly, our common experience in service reminds me of something so important: none of us are alone, and we didn't do it alone.

Similarly, we are bound together not just by service, or the uniforms we once wore, but by the battles and challenges we've faced after coming home. Some of those battles are visible, some are

invisible. All of them are real. And the truth is, nobody understands them better than other veterans. Our national convention wasn't just about advocacy, it was about education, and it was about family. I hope all who were able to attend go back to their chapters and communities just as reinvigorated and ready to share what you learned with your chapter members. I encourage everyone to take the lessons and knowledge gained at our national convention and put it to work in your community.

I also want to extend my thanks and appreciation to our newest past national commander, Dan Contreras. Well done sir! You demonstrated the role California plays in leading the DAV. To our members and their families, please continue to share the excellent work you do in the community. Thank you for lifting each other up, and thank you for reminding me that we are stronger together.





# DAVA COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA AUXILIARY COMMANDER  
SHAWN LEWIS

Greetings Members!

It was wonderful to see so many of you at our recent national gathering in Las Vegas. For those who were able to attend, thank you for representing our state with distinction. To those who couldn't make it, you were certainly missed. We had a fantastic time, and the convention was a powerful reminder of the incredible camaraderie and fellowship we share. The opportunity to connect with members from different states was a definite highlight, reinforcing the nationwide strength of our organization.

The convention also marked the election of our new National Leadership. Congratulations to our newly elected National Commander, Coleman Nee, and National Auxiliary Commander, Melissa Pierce. Many of you will remember them both, as they were our distinguished national guests in May. It is wonderful to see familiar friends and leaders take on these important roles. We offer them our full support and wish them a successful term as they guide our organizations forward.

On a personal note, I had the distinct honor of serving on the National Nominating Committee. This position offered a valuable perspective on the procedures that go into selecting our National Leadership. It was also an honor to see our outgoing National Commander, Dan Contreras, host this

spectacular convention and a pleasure to spend time with our Department of California Commander, Armando Hernandez, along with Jose Mendoza and Melissa Souza. It is always a privilege to learn from such dedicated leaders.

Let's carry the energy and enthusiasm from Las Vegas into all we do. As Autumn begins, that energy will be vital as our focus begins to shift from the pace of summer to the active months that lie ahead. The fall and winter seasons are always a significant and busy time for our organization, and this year is no exception. The coming months will be filled with opportunities for service, camaraderie, and community engagement.

Our fall programs are kicking into high gear. Our efforts will then build towards November, a pivotal month where we will come together to honor our nation's heroes on Veterans Day. Before we know it, we will be planning our holiday gatherings and year-end community service projects. This is a call for all of us to get involved. Whether it's volunteering for a committee, attending a meeting, or simply spreading the word about our mission, your contribution is vital to our success. Let's work together to make the remainder of the year our most impactful yet.

Yours in Service,  
Shawn Lewis Commander



## SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA SR. VICE COMMANDER  
JOSE MENDOZA

Hello DAV and DAVA family!

I know that we talk a lot about service and caring for each other around here, but something happened at DAV National Convention this year that really demonstrated to me that it isn't just talk. A valued Auxiliary Unit #12 member, Julie Beehee, wife of Jared Beehee, from my chapter (Chapter #12), had an accident while we were all in Las Vegas for convention, and suffered a head injury. Chapter and Unit #12 members were quick to respond, with Mary Ann Baca, Marco Garrett and Marilyn Stafford providing first aid in the moment. Marco Garrett also helped transport Jared where he needed to be while his wife recovered. The DAVA Department of California also really showed up for one of their own. California Auxiliary Commander, Shawn Lewis, and Adjutant, David Bailey, checked on Julie, and the Auxiliary dipped into their emergency fund, and personal pocketbooks to help the Beehee family cover expenses. I want to commend all of you out there who have assisted Julie and Jared during Julie's recovery. I was touched by the Auxiliary's generosity and am grateful to be a part of an organization that really does care for one another. Thankfully Julie had this support and is doing much better, and we keep her continued health and recovery in our prayers.

Remember to keep looking out for each other and taking care of each other.

Volunteer **DRIVE** to help veterans



**DO YOU HAVE A CURRENT VALID DRIVER'S LICENSE AND ONE DAY PER WEEK AVAILABLE? VETERANS IN CALIFORNIA NEED YOUR HELP!**

*Volunteers use VA-provided vehicles to transport patients from their homes to their VA appointments and back. A background check and physical will be required, at no cost.*

**CALL 562-404-1266  
TO BECOME A VOLUNTEER DRIVER!**



*Click for  
Details*

# DAV CALIFORNIA ADJUTANT LEADS NATIONAL CONVENTION IN LAS VEGAS



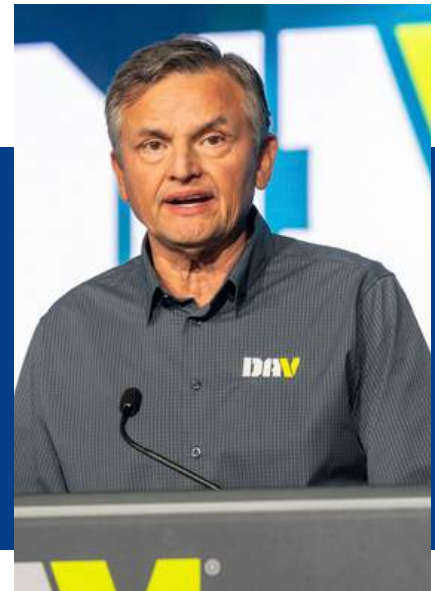
Thank you to all of you who came out to Las Vegas for this past DAV National Convention. Thank you also to all of you who showed support for our Adjutant, Daniel Contreras, as he led the convention as National Commander!

It's always an exciting time at National Convention, but this year was especially exciting with California in the spotlight!

Attendees received a mountain of information on DAV services, programs and outreach efforts, and recognized the exciting work being done all around the country. There was something for everyone!

The 2025 National Convention left us feeling proud to be part of the DAV and proud to be represented by DAV California's own, Daniel Contreras! Congratulations on completing your service as National Commander!

Read more about the convention [HERE](#) and see more photos [HERE](#).



*Adjutant Contreras handing off the National Commander reigns to Coleman Nee*



# DAVA ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA AUXILIARY ADJUTANT  
DAVID BAILEY

Your DAVA has launched a new initiative to bring Refreshment Stations to our communities, offering a simple but meaningful way to serve Veterans, their families, caregivers, and VA staff.

We have successfully tested two stations so far — one at the Mare Island VA Clinic and another at the Travis AFB Medical Clinic. Each station provided iced tea, lemonade, and a variety of snacks, ranging from convenient grab-and-go items to fresh fruit, pita bread, and hummus.

The setup is straightforward, designed for easy arrival, quick serving, and a clean exit. DAVA Commander Shawn Lewis has refined the process to a science. In about two hours at Mare Island, we served approximately 40 visitors, while Travis AFB saw more than 80 Veterans and family members enjoy refreshments and a moment of relaxation. A special thank you DAVA members Barbara and Michael Gregory for being such a huge help at both locations!

These stations not only provide a free snack and a place to recharge but also create a welcoming space for Veterans and caregivers to connect with your DAV and Auxiliary. It's a small gesture with a big impact, reminding our community that they are appreciated and supported.

If your Chapter or Unit would like to host or help sponsor a Refreshment Station, please contact us at [davacommander@davcal.org](mailto:davacommander@davcal.org) or [davaadjutant@davcal.org](mailto:davaadjutant@davcal.org). Volunteers can also earn credit for their service hours by participating. Together, we can make a difference — one Refreshment Station at a time. Also, we are looking for a cool name for this project. If you have an idea, send it to us!



## ***Donate Your Car!***

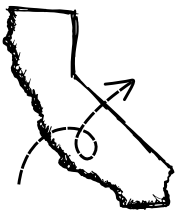


**HAVE AN OLD OR EXTRA CAR?**

**DONATE IT TO DAV & HELP VETERANS IN CALIFORNIA!**

**CALL 833-227-4328 OR VISIT [DAV.CAREASY.ORG](http://DAV.CAREASY.ORG)**





# NEWS

## FROM AROUND THE STATE

### VALLEJO CHAPTER #21 & VACAVILLE CHAPTER #84

On August 22, the Fairfield Veterans Affairs Clinic celebrated the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday of World War II US Navy Veteran Guido David Dollosso. Members of DAV Chapter #21 in Vallejo and Chapter #84 in Vacaville also presented Dollosso with a certificate of appreciation that read in part, “We extend our deepest gratitude for your dedicated service to our country and recognize the lasting impact of your courage and sacrifice.”



## IMPACTED BY FEDERAL DOWNSIZING? LET US KNOW!

The current administration has proposed cuts to the VA. During DAV’s congressional testimony in February, bipartisan members of the House and Senate Veterans Affairs Committees asked us to bring them examples of veterans being adversely impacted as a result of the White House’s efforts to downsize the federal government. The DAV is

collecting stories, so now is the time to make your voice heard! If you are a disabled veteran who lost a federal job or have been impacted by the federal downsizing and VA restructuring, please share your story here. Also, you can read other stories already shared by other veterans at the same link. DAV is dedicated to ensuring that veterans receiving the care they earned through service. Please join us and advocate for veterans!



EMAIL US AT [NEWS@DAVCAL.ORG](mailto:NEWS@DAVCAL.ORG)  
WITH INFO OR PHOTOS OF EVENTS FOR US TO SHARE!



# OAKLAND UNIT #7

In addition to the Refreshment Station initiative (see David Bailey's article on page 7), under the leadership of Commander Shawn Lewis and Adjutant, Dave Bailey, the Auxiliary is also piloting the "Meals for Fisher House" program, providing monthly home-cooked meals to veterans' families at the Travis AFB Fisher House. Thank you to Barbara and Michael Gregory from Unit #7 for your dedicated efforts that have made this program possible.



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# ATWATER/MERCED CHAPTER #31



In August, Atwater/Merced Chapter #31 attended a veterans advisory committee meeting in Merced hosted by Congressman, Adam Gray, 13th District.

Veterans in attendance were able to voice their comments, ideas and concerns about federal policies impacting veterans. Congressman Gray also shared updates about legislation he has introduced this year. Adam Gray is either a lead or cosponsor of the following bills: HR 3812, HR 4398, HR 303, HR 2120. Chapter Commander, Mike Wegner, presented Congressman Gray a DAV challenge coin. Additionally, State Commander Armando Hernandez was also present at the event.

DAV Chapter #31 also participated in a Veteran's Stand Down in Los Banos on August 18, 2025. There were over 22 local community organizations, state resources and other Veteran Service Organizations ready to assist Veterans and their families. The event was a huge success and well received by all.



# MORONGO BASIN CHAPTER #60



Chapter #60 recognizes Ms. Karen E. Kluge of the Fraternal Order of Eagles for her years of service to the DAV and presents a plaque to Order of Eagles Aerie 4092. Treasurer, Dot Cesari, received this plaque on behalf of Aerie 4092. Chapter #60 meets at the Fraternal Order of Eagles Lodge.



Seen here, Chapter Commander and Vietnam war veteran, Mike F. Smith uses his training as a Navy Sea Bee (a Combat Heavy Equipment Tech/Construction Handyman) to fix a fellow veteran's garage.



# SUPPORT DAV'S THRIFT STORES!

*Do you have clothing or household goods to donate? Reach out to your nearest DAV thrift operation and set up a pick up today!*

## **NORTHERN CALIFORNIA**

800-238-8387  
donatedav.org



*Your donations provide injured and ill veterans with rehabilitative services & financial support through the DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation.*

## **FRESNO AREA**

559-237-0273  
valleyveteransthift.org

## **SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA:**

[veteransthiftstores.com](http://veteransthiftstores.com)

Oceanside  
800-894-2486  
1624 South Coast Hwy.  
Oceanside, CA 92054

El Cajon  
800-894-2486  
1130 E Main St.  
El Cajon, CA 92021

Spring Valley  
619-337-9244  
1049 Elkelton Blvd.  
Spring Valley, CA 91977

Chula Vista  
800-894-2486  
881 Broadway  
Chula Vista, CA 91911

## **POMONA AREA**

800-238-8387  
davpickupservice.org