



# DAV CALIFORNIA NEWS



*Happy  
Holidays*

**JOIN US!** IN-PERSON FOR  
STATE MIDWINTER  
DETAILS ON PAGE 1

*Join us!*

at DAV Dept. of California

# MIDWINTER

for our first Mid-Year  
Conference and Chapter  
Service Officer Training back  
in-Person!



We're meeting in-person again for our Midwinter Conference and Chapter Service Officer Training! Shake off the winter cobwebs and join us in Laguna Beach at the beautiful Hills Hotel January 19th and 20th.

Located between Los Angeles and San Diego, The Hills Hotel is a short trip away from Lake Mission Viejo, Laguna Niguel Regional Park, Disneyland, Legoland California, Laguna Beach, Newport Beach, and more. It's a great place to bring the family!

The hotel itself boasts great food, a lounge with nightly live music, a pool, fitness center, well-stocked rooms, and more. We hope you will take a little time to connect with us. Sign up for Chapter Service Officer training. Touch base with your DAV family and catch up on the latest from veterans around the state.



**January 19-20, 2024 at The Hills Hotel**

**25205 La Paz Rd.**

**Laguna Hills, CA 92653**

**949-586-5000**



# ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA CEO-ADJUTANT  
NATIONAL 1ST SR. VICE COMMANDER

*Community Engagement Makes an Impact!*

I witnessed a recent example of the benefits that occur for the larger veteran community when we stay engaged with organizations, individuals and policy makers. Chapter #12, headed by Chapter Commander, Jose Mendoza, has been actively fostering these relationships in recent years. During the holiday season, the chapter does their annual turkey giveaway, made possible by the help of organizations like Feeding America Riverside/San Bernardino and Operation Gratitude.

The chapter also has fostered a beneficial relationship with their House Representative, Pete Aguilar, who introduced the Wounded Warrior Access Act. This bill, which recently became a law, requires the VA to allow veterans to receive a copy of their claim file ("C-File") electronically. This will help expedite the claims process and provide veterans with more transparency and protection from unqualified claims consultants. This bill passed through both the House and Senate unanimously and was endorsed by the DAV and advocated for by DAV Chapter #12. Chapter #12 Commander Mendoza said of the bill: *"Our chapter alone serves a large portion of the local veteran community, with 1,500 members. We assist veterans with filing for their benefits and claims and one of the first problems we often run into is requesting a Veterans C-file or submitting VA Form 3288. The response could take months and we'd like to see this process more streamlined. The Wounded Warrior Access Act does exactly that."*

As chapter leaders and members, you should know the changemakers in your community. What other organizations help veterans? What businesses are looking for ways to help? Ask yourself and your chapter members how you can maximize your effort by teaming up with community partners. How can you reach more veterans by engaging with your city in a new way? Part of staying connected is building relationships with our local lawmakers. We have to communicate. How will policy makers know what the veteran community needs if we do not tell them? Our ideas are valuable and can make a difference to the larger community when we make our voices heard to those in positions of power. Happy Holidays and I look forward to seeing you in January!



*DAV California and DAV Chapter 12 recognize Operation Gratitude for their donation to the turkey giveaway & continued partnership. Congressman, Pete Aguilar and other local politicians sent their recognition.*





# SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

DAV CALIFORNIA SR. VICE COMMANDER  
JOSEPH S. SKODA III

About 13 years ago, someone came up to me at the Santa Maria VA clinic and invited me to a DAV meeting. I had never heard of the organization, but before long I was engaged with our chapter and community events. Today I'm Commander of the Santa Maria Chapter #82 and State Sr. Vice Commander. As Sr. Vice Commander, one of my key jobs is membership recruitment.

Many of us have been involved in lots of events the past several months, such as Stand-Downs, Picnics, Fishing Trips and Veterans Day events to name a few. Though we regularly participate and engage with so many other veterans how often do we ask them to join our ranks? In California, we have almost two million veterans and approximately 70,000 DAV members. That's a lot of potential recruits.

I'd encourage you to familiarize yourself with what DAV does: Volunteerism, Legislation efforts, Benefits assistance, and more. Click [here](#) to learn more. Also, how has DAV impacted you? This year, I would like to encourage you to share your DAV stories. Make a short video and tell us how DAV has helped you or others. Let's share what we do with the world, and why we are members of this illustrious organization. Send videos, stories or photos to [news@davcal.org](mailto:news@davcal.org) so we can share your experiences. Veterans in California need to hear YOUR story.

Remember- lifetime membership dues go up January 1, 2024, so this holiday season is a great time to recruit and join!



## *Log volunteer hours instantly in the DAV California App!*



**SCAN TO DOWNLOAD!**



Stay Connected with the DAVCalifornia app! Use it to recruit, volunteer, and log your hours. Search your App Store for: "DAV California". Download today and help us keep helping veterans

Save the Date for DAV California's Annual 2024 Convention!

**MAY 15-18, 2024**

Hotel Fera Anaheim  
100 The City Dr.  
Orange, CA 92868  
(714) 648-1177



## CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

DAV CALIFORNIA CHAPLAIN  
CYNTHIA "CEECEE" HIBBS



One of our former presidents once said: "some people live an entire lifetime and wonder if they have ever made a difference, A veteran doesn't have that problem." I believe that every veteran is special.

As we approach the holiday season, I am reminded of some of the amazing things in history that occurred this time of year. In 1776 George Washington crossed the Delaware. In 1864 the first battle of Fort Fisher was fought. In 1972 Operation Linebacker 2 occurred in North Korea and in 1896 Stars and Stripes was written. While you might not cross the Delaware, you can still do something important. I challenge you to unite with me in prayer for our nation's leaders, our DAV family of leaders, members, staff, our veterans here and abroad, and their families.

I wish everyone a prosperous holiday; however, I know that some of you are experiencing loss or pain. Reach out to each other. Call your buddy. We are a family of those who sacrificed time and sweat to honor our country, and we share many experiences. We are built to need one another. Don't be afraid to reach out and grasp your fellow veteran's hand. Greet each other with a smile and a hello. You never know what impact simple kindness can have. If we unite in prayer and communication with our fellow veterans we can start something this holiday season, and we will reap the benefits. If we can continue this throughout the year, then we can all be part of something miraculous in 2024.

This holiday season, let's remember and honor those who have sacrificed so we can live in freedom and celebrate in peace. May Our Supreme Commander Bless You all.



# FROM THE AUXILIARY

DAVA CALIFORNIA ADJUTANT  
JULIE WEISSMAN-STEINBAUGH



Organizations like the DAV Auxiliary do not exist without individuals who are willing to donate their time and talents. It can be daunting to hear our leaders remind us of the importance of recruiting members. As some of our Units struggle with attendance, I know our committed members can feel isolated and discouraged. However, at this year's Midwinter Conference, we hope to address these challenges.

Rather than holding our usual SEC meeting, we will be breaking with tradition. Commander David Bailey, Membership Chair and Sr. Vice Commander Shawn Lewis, and I have planned a weekend dedicated to recruitment. California is a big state and many of us with a passion for the organization may live far apart. However, many of us will be gathering in Laguna Hills, to connect with our fellow members from all around the state. Our first day together will be dedicated to strengthening our community and introducing a statewide approach to rebuilding our membership.

Most prospective members will ask, "what does the Auxiliary do?" The answer is that much of our work is driven by our State Committees. At Midwinter, we will have time set aside for our various committees to set goals, and develop strategies to accomplish them. Not a committee member? No problem. Most of our Chairs are seeking extra help, so come out and get involved.

Day two of the conference will involve a thorough exploration of our guiding document, California's State Standing Rules. At our last State Convention, guest, Susan Miller, PNC, made several suggestions on ways we could improve the efficiency of our committees. The Standing Rules Committee will be addressing these and exploring more potential improvements. We want to address any questions we can about Auxiliary's mission and operations. I look forward to seeing you all in January for a time of revitalizing and strengthening DAVA California.

## WANT TO SPARK CHANGE? WRITE A RESOLUTION!



**CLICK  
HERE!**

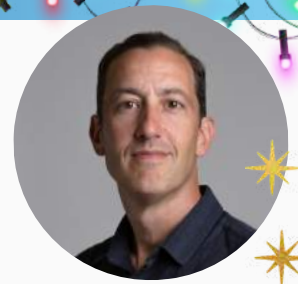
- Have an idea for a new or changed policy?
- Resolutions are due April 15, 2024

*for more on DAV's current legislative issues  
& a Resolution Template.*



# FROM THE AUXILIARY

DAVA CALIFORNIA COMMANDER  
DAVID BAILEY



Today, I want to shed light on an intriguing and noteworthy transformation within the Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary (DAVA) community—one that reflects the evolving landscape of support and camaraderie among those who have served our nation.

Over the years, we've witnessed an interesting and significant shift in the demographics of DAVA membership. Traditionally, spouses have been at the forefront of offering unwavering support to disabled veterans. However, recent trends show there is a growing majority of relatives assuming active roles within the DAVA community. Close family members, such as children, parents, and siblings, are increasingly stepping up to provide support and solidarity. This change challenges the traditional narrative, bringing to light the diverse nature of familial relationships within the veteran community.

One possible explanation for this shift could be the changing dynamics of modern families. As societal structures evolve, so too does the way we define and experience family. In some cases, relatives might be better positioned to offer support due to geographic proximity, shared experiences, or simply the capacity to understand the unique challenges faced by their veteran family members.

This shift in membership dynamics opens up new avenues for connection and understanding within the DAV community. It reinforces the idea that support networks can take various forms, highlighting the importance of embracing and celebrating the diversity of relationships that contribute to the well-being of our disabled veterans.

We encourage you to engage in conversations with fellow DAV members and share your experiences. How has your relationship with your family members influenced your journey within the DAV community? What unique perspectives do relatives bring to the table? By communicating, we can gain a deeper understanding of the varied and evolving nature of support within our communities.

The DAVA is actively looking for the next generation of leaders and volunteers to join us! If you know someone who may be interested, please have them reach out to us.

At DAVA, we remain committed to providing a platform that accommodates the changing needs and dynamics of our members. We look forward to continuing our mission of supporting our DAV members and their families. Happy Holidays!



## ***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)**

# DAV CALIFORNIA 2023 CONVENTION

This past summer, we held the 101st Annual State Convention of DAV Department of California in Sparks, NV. Our Joint Opening was joined by the Sparks Mayor, Ed Lawson, and CEO of the Women Veterans Alliance, Melissa Washington.

We hosted our National Guest, National 4th Jr. Vice Commander, Cynthia Madison and Auxiliary's National Guest, Past National Commander, Susan Miller. It was a great time of reconnecting and getting inspired for the coming year.

Jose Mendoza of Chapter #12 was both our top LVAP (Local Veterans Assistance Program) volunteer and our Veteran of the Year. Lawrence "Larry" Walker was awarded the 2023 George H. Seal Memorial Award for his many hours providing volunteer claims assistance. Elizabeth Townsend was recognized for her work in the Veteran Benefits Administration (VBA), Dr. Mary Roberts for her efforts in the Veteran Health Administration (VHA), VPAN (Veteran Peer Access Network) was our Small Employer of the Year, and high schooler, Ravi Prabhune, was awarded a scholarship for helping design prosthetics for several disabled veterans. Do you know someone who is going above and beyond for veterans and would like to nominate them for a Commander's Award? Click [here](#) for details.

We held our business meetings that allow us to keep serving veterans. We recognized those chapters who met their membership goals and some that far exceeded those goals. Also, shout out to former NSO (current Dept. Director of Operations), Enrique Ramos, and DSO, Richard Randolph for their member recruitment.

Our committee meetings are productive times for members to submit and vote on resolutions regarding a range of veteran issues. If you have ideas on how the DAV or VA could better help veterans, I'd encourage you to get involved in a committee. This year, we had a new committee for women veterans which took off running.



*State Commander Moseley with Veteran of the Year, Jose Mendoza and National 4th Jr. Vice, Cynthia Madison*



*Commanders of our chapters that met their membership goals*



*State Commander Moseley with DAVA PNC, Susan Miller and DAVA State Commander, Joel Adema*



*New Officers swearing in*



# DAV CALIFORNIA 2023 CONVENTION CONT.

Fun Night was Superhero themed and our membership and families showed up, protected those secret identities, won prizes, danced and had a great time. Thanks, Chapter #12 for the assistance.

Our Commander, Joseph Moseley, led us through a successful convention. Thanks for the leadership and passion, Mr. Moseley. We held elections to end the convention and the torch for Commander was passed on to former Sr. Vice Commander, Nancy Casey. Joseph Skoda became Sr. Vice Commander and Armando Hernandez out of Chapter #1 became our Jr. Vice Commander. Congratulations to you all and we're already appreciating what you bring to the table as leaders. We'll be in Anaheim for our 2024 convention and we hope to see you there!

To see event photos and visit our new Flickr page, [click here!](#)



Commander Nancy Casey



Sr. Vice Joseph Skoda III



Jr. Vice Armando Hernandez

## 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!**



# STATE ADJUTANT BECOMES SR. VICE AT NATIONAL CONVENTION!



In August, our national membership joined forces in Atlantic City for National Convention. For those of you who have never been to a national convention, these are exciting times to connect with passionate members from all around the country. The national VA Secretary, Denis McDonough, addressed the attendees. Many individuals who have gone above and beyond to help veterans were recognized, including comedian, Jon Stewart, for his advocacy on the Pact Act. Ford donated vehicles to help our organization continue to provide veterans with access to healthcare. As usual, Gary Sinise and the Lt. Dan Band showed up to provide everyone with tunes and entertainment.

Lots of meetings were held and information shared, and the convention ended with elections. Our Past State Commander, J.R. Wilson, is serving as NEC (National Executive Committee) for our District (#16) and Past Auxiliary State Commander, Caroline Morris is NEC for Auxiliary's #16th District. Nancy Espinoza was elected National Commander, becoming the first Hispanic woman to hold that position. Also, our own State Adjutant, Daniel Contreras, PSC, went from being National 1st Jr. Vice Commander to being elected as Sr. Vice Commander. Congratulations to Sr. Vice Commander Contreras and thank you to all you California folks who showed up and supported! We hope to see many of you in Phoenix next year for the 2024 National Convention, and best of luck to Adjutant Contreras as he runs for higher office!

For more from the 2023 National Convention, [click here!](#)



# NEWS FROM AROUND THE STATE

## VALLEJO



Past National and Past State Commander, Delphine Metcalf-Foster, volunteers weekly at the VA Mare Island Clinic in Vallejo. She's here recruiting and helping celebrate Nurses Week.



DAV Chapter 21 celebrates the 70th anniversary of the Korean War Armistice at the Yountville CalVet Home. Over 80 Korean War Veterans were honored and presented with certificates of appreciation from the Republic of Korea (ROK), US Representative Mike Thompson, and CA State Senator, Bill Dodd and CA Assemblymember Cecilia Aguiar-Curry.

To watch a recording of this event,

**CLICK**

**HERE**



From left: Commander, Steve Garcia, DAV Chapter 21 in Vallejo (who donated cakes for the event); Sang-soo Yoon, ROK Consul General in San Francisco; and Nestor Aliga, event Co-planner and DAV Chapter 21 Life Member.

## CHAPTER #5



Chapter #5 having its first official meeting back in the Japanese Garden at the VA West Los Angeles Healthcare Center



# CHAPTER #123

NEWS CONT.



Chapter #123 presented with plaques, by the Los Angeles NSO office, in recognition of membership recruitment and the anniversary of their chapter's charter.



# CHAPTER #24



Chapter #24, Commander, Charles Foote, and members showing up to support the Oxnard Family Circle with a donation. These funds will be used for the construction of a sensory room for



wounded veterans with PTSD and traumatic brain injuries. It's expected to be a great benefit to local veterans once complete.

# CHAPTER #48

Chapter #48 hosted its 2nd Annual Crab Feed, featuring special guest, California Sr. Vice Commander, Joseph Skoda and others. Chapter #117 Sr. Vice Commander, Colin Bergstrom, volunteered with his family and SEC District 7, David Trimmingham, traveled from Vacaville to attend. There were over 330 in attendance! Several businesses donated items for the raffle. Special thanks to everyone who volunteered, sponsored, or donated and to the fundraising committee who planned the event: Rich Krona, Sr. Vice Commander, Richard Steingruber, Jr. Vice Commander, Joe Arenson, Treasurer, Ron Ciarasso, Adjutant, Jamie Fox, Sergeant of Arms, Bill Van Valkenburg, Marie Gibson, and Auxiliary California Commander, David Bailey.

Visit the chapters [Facebook Page](#) for more photos and to find out how you can join for the 3rd Annual Crab feed!



Colin Bergstrom (#117) with family



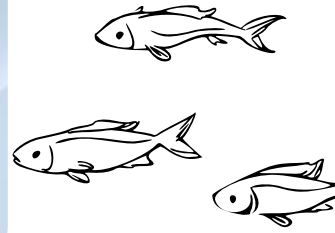
Rich Krona, Bill Van Valkenburg, & volunteer, Heidi Keller



Bill Van Valkenburg's granddaughters volunteering



Twenty-eight disabled veterans from nearby chapters, and 6 Boy Scouts from Ventura Troop 128 participated in a day-long fishing excursion facilitated by our colleagues at Monterey Bay Veterans, with the help of PSC, Mike Kerr. Their captain and crew drove down from Monterey Bay and ensured the group had a great day on the water. They left Channel Islands Harbor early in the morning, and many of the attendees caught their limit. The hope is to make this an annual event!



## CHAPTER #60



Morongo Basin Chapter #60 has been busy! representing DAV in the community, participating in parades, recruiting new members, hosting events and more. Good job staying connected!



Chapter Adjutant and Transition Service Officer, Allen L. Pagdilao, briefs 29 Palms Marine base Chief of Staff, Colonel David Suggs, and Sergeant Major Jason Gillespie on how to help transitioning service members.



DAV Morongo Basin Chapter #60 represents the org at the weekly 29 Palms Farmers Market.

Chapter Jr. Vice Commander Phillip Limon, Judge Advocate General Edward Folts and Commander Michael F. Smith (taking the photo) recognized Deonte McKeever, son of a service-connected disabled Marine veteran, with a scholarship.



DAV DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA  
**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION**

AS OF JUNE 30, 2023 AND 2022

ASSETS	2023	2022
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS	\$ 292,122	\$ 583,546
DUE FROM AUXILIARY	609	3,500
DUE FROM DAV REHAB FOUNDATION INC	-	1,174
PREPAID EXPENSES	27,516	9,286
INVESTMENTS	3,343,325	3,386,669
FIXED ASSETS (PROPERTY & EQUIPMENT)	236,789	239,940
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 3,900,361</b>	<b>\$ 4,224,115</b>

LIABILITIES	2023	2022
ACCRUED EXPENSES & OTHER PAYABLES	\$	\$ 47,824

NET ASSETS	2023	2022
WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	\$ 3,837,994	\$ 4,176,291
WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	-	-
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 3,837,994</b>	<b>\$ 4,176,291</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	<b>\$ 3,900,361</b>	<b>\$ 4,224,115</b>




EMAIL US AT [NEWS@DAVCAL.ORG](mailto:NEWS@DAVCAL.ORG) WITH INFO OR PHOTOS OF CHAPTER EVENTS SO WE CAN SHARE WITH OUR MEMBERSHIP.

# 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](http://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  
[davcharities.com](http://davcharities.com)

## **POMONA AREA**

800-238-8387  
[davpickupservice.org](http://davpickupservice.org)

## **SAN DIEGO AREA**

800-894-2486  
[davyeteransthiftstores.com](http://davyeteransthiftstores.com)