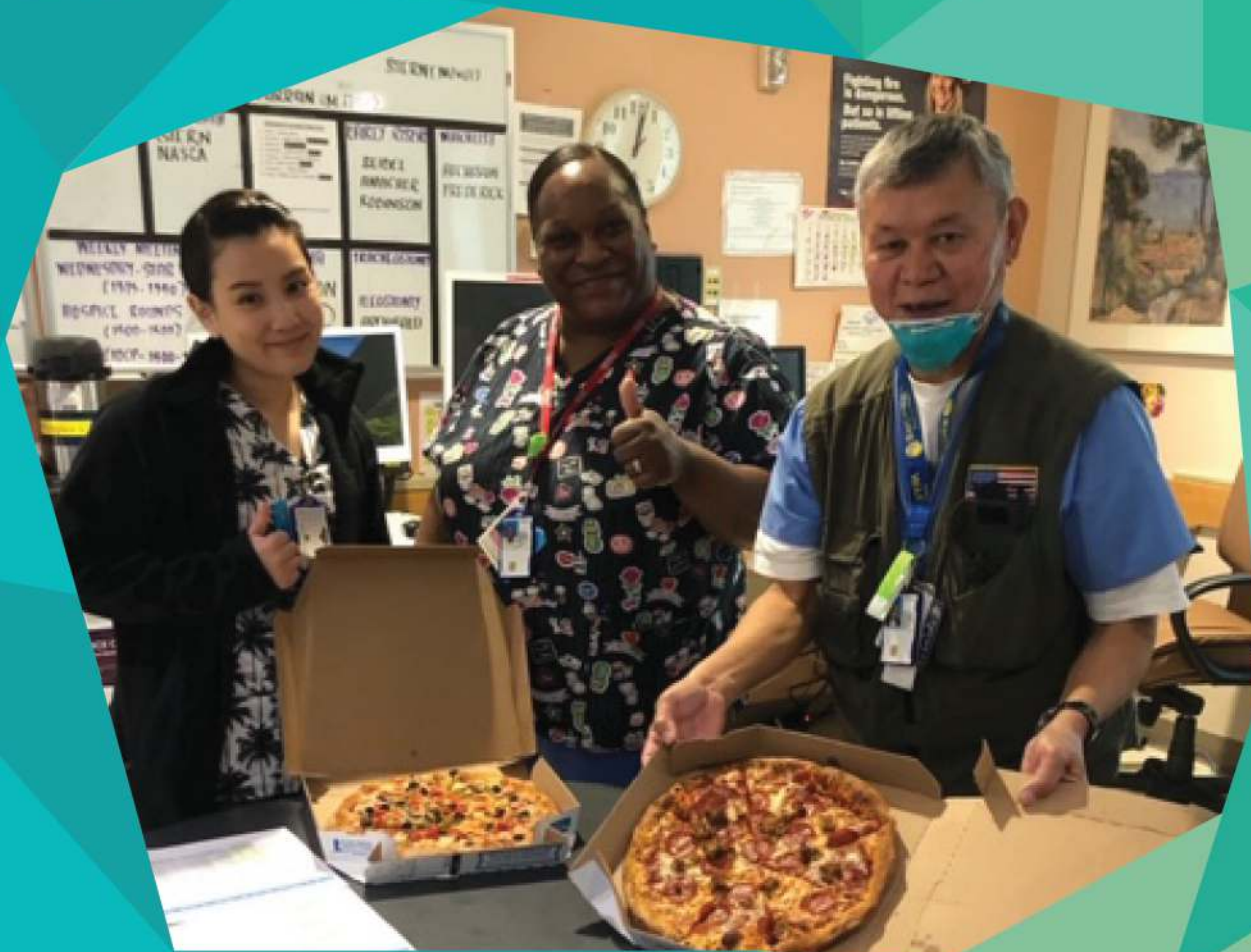




DAV DEPARTMENT OF CALIFORNIA NEWSLETTER SPRING 2020



DAV CHAPTER #21 DELIVERS FOOD
TO VA HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

**SERVING VETERANS IN
UNPRECEDENTED TIMES**

TAKING CARE OF EACH OTHER DURING CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC



MESSAGE FROM OUR ADJUTANT

We are obviously at a strange time in history. The future is filled with uncertainty and for many of us, it feels as though life has changed overnight. One of those changes is that our ability to meet in groups is temporarily halted. We are sad to announce that the 99th Annual State Convention has been officially cancelled for 2020. We would like to publicly thank Commander, Chad Shipley, and his team from Chapter #66 for all their hard work. We were looking forward to the final product!

So yes, we are disappointed that we will not be seeing any of you this May, but we hope that you can take this opportunity to take care of yourselves and your families, and for those of you who are healthy, check on those who are high-risk. The national convention is still as-scheduled for now. We want all our members to tend to their health and take all necessary precautions, but at this time, we will still plan to see those of you who are able in Dallas in August.

Our Department Service Offices have also, sadly, had to close, for now. We are, however still doing our best to serve veterans. DAV continues to serve veterans through disaster relief and legislative efforts. We are also deeply grateful to our chapters, volunteers, service officers and members who are out there still helping in whatever way they can. If you are a healthy person looking for ways to help, we still need volunteer drivers to transport veterans to and from medical appointments. Additionally, many VA hospitals are accepting donations of Personal Protective Equipment like Masks, Gloves, Hand Sanitizer, Disinfecting Wipes and Disinfectant Spray or food, as with Chapter 21's donation of pizzas, featured on the cover. Part of taking care of each other also includes the sharing of ideas. We want to hear from you how your chapter and community are looking out for our injured and ill veterans during this time.

If you or a veteran you know is in need of assistance during this time, we urge you to reach out through email to your nearest National Service Office which can be found at dav.org.

Additionally, due to the cancellation of our convention, we want to note a couple changes. This means that most things that happen at convention will be put on halt. However, we do want those of you who have ideas for resolutions to continue formulating these for the good of our community, though they will have to be presented next convention. Additionally, please note that our department officers will also carry over into the next year, per the following guidance from our National Adjutant, Marc Burgess.

"In the event that a department convention is canceled or postponed, barring any specific language in your bylaws that addresses cancellation or postponement of the department convention, the current elected and appointed leaders of the department should remain intact until the next convention occurs – whether it is postponed until later this summer or canceled completely at which point it would occur next year. Should any elected or appointed officer not wish to fulfill another term, they may resign their position and the department should fill such vacancy as specifically provided in their department bylaws."

Most importantly, we care deeply about all of our members and want each of you to use the utmost precaution in the coming days. Also, remember that none of us are alone. We're in this together and DAV is continuing to fight for veterans amidst this current crisis.

Daniel Contreras, PSC
National 4th Jr. Vice Commander/ DAV Department of California CEO & Adjutant





MESSAGE FROM THE COMMANDER

Greetings from my living room. Like you, I am spending my spring practicing social distancing and creating divots in my couch cushions because of the COVID-19 pandemic. I understand that many of you are frustrated and eagerly anticipating the end of this crisis. However, as we have learned over the last couple of months, this is a vicious virus that attacks our most-vulnerable people.

As you have likely heard by now, our Department canceled our May Convention. This was not an easy decision to make. However, considering over 80 percent of our membership is in the most vulnerable age group, notwithstanding medical issues, we believed it was in the best interest of our constituency to forgo this-year's convention. I am sure many of you were looking forward to the event and had already booked your reservations. Rest assured, we are doing everything we can to make sure our next convention will be worth waiting 2 years for.

I understand that most of us still need to leave the house for necessities and medical treatment. I do hope, however, that you are taking the necessary precautions such as gloves and masks. Also, do not forget to thoroughly wash your hands and change clothes immediately after getting home if you believe there is any chance you could have been exposed to the virus. As of the time of this writing, there have been over 560,000 reported cases in the U.S. with over 22,000 deaths. Now is not the time to be stubborn. Please follow local, state, and federal mandates regarding stay-at-home orders. It is for your safety.

Many of our offices are closed. However, that does not mean that our mission is complete. We understand that many cases are in limbo while we wait out this pandemic. Please know that we are preparing to reopen our offices as soon as it is safe to do so. In the meantime, our leadership team is available to help in any way that we can. But, if you are aware of any of our members who are particularly vulnerable right now, please reach out to him/her and check on them. Just because we are physically distant does not mean that we must be isolated. I

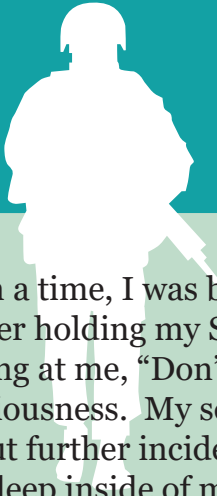
know many people who pick up groceries and other necessities for those who cannot go out. Reach out to your chapter leaders, find out if there are needs within your membership, and develop a plan to safely satisfy those needs.

Many of you have reached out regarding the status of your chapter leadership in the absence of elections because most of us have indefinitely canceled our chapter meetings. If your chapter is among them, the advice we received from our National Headquarters is to keep your current leadership in place for another year and then conduct your elections next spring, in accordance with our bylaws.

Me and our Department leaders are looking forward to getting back on the road as soon as possible to conduct chapter visits and meet with our members. It is unfortunate that we will be unable to gather to celebrate our 100th anniversary. However, with any luck, our National Convention will go on as planned and we will hopefully be able to gather there to celebrate this monumental organizational milestone. Be well. Stay safe. I look forward to seeing you soon.

“Just because we are physically distant does not mean that we must be isolated”

Department Commander, Michael Kerr



SR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE

Once upon a time, I was blown up in Iraq. I think for most of the experience I was in shock, but I do remember holding my SSG's hand while we took on fire from multiple targets. The entire time he was yelling at me, "Don't let go Moseley keep squeezing my hand" and I didn't let go and I didn't lose consciousness. My squad eventually eliminated the threats and we made it back to Valhalla base without further incident. This moment of strength to not give up in the heat of battle was sadly not found deep inside of me but through the courage and love of my SSG and my squad. Their determination to protect me and bring me home is the main reason I feel I am here today. I also think God helped some too, but regardless, there is not a day that goes by that I am not grateful for what they had all done. In my time of need I was saved, Amen.

We as members of the DAV need to be that same inspiration to our nation right now just as my SSG and my squad was to me back then. Our country has been injured from COVID -19 and there are expected to be many losses. I know we are all committed to laying low and self-isolating, but please remember to still take care of one another. Facebook, email, telephone and even post office mail are still all good ways to check in with our fellow members to see if they are alright. Don't be afraid to tell them to hold steady and perhaps be the encouragement and motivation they need right now. As we all know, these moments of uncertainty will pass, just like waiting days on a tarmac for a copter to show up. Please stay safe and secure my fellow disabled veterans and I will see you further on up the road.

Department Sr. Vice Commander, Joe Moseley

JR. VICE COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



How are you all doing? I wish I could report some great stories from my recent chapter visits, but alas, we cannot visit each other for now, and our department calendar has gone dark. But that does not mean we can't still uplift each other.

Our national and department leadership is focused on keeping us all healthy and engaged. For example, we have a DAV COVID Unemployment Relief program granting assistance to disabled veteran's who've lost work. And our Service offices are closed to the public, but our TSO's and NSO's are still at work assisting veterans. Please visit DAV.ORG & DAVCAL.ORG to see all the work still being done.

In that spirit, our National Adjutant Marc Burgess reminds us "Sharing your experiences, struggles and triumphs can help others to achieve their own victories, too." And our National Voluntary Services Director John Kleindienst reminds us, "No act is too small to make a difference in the life of a veteran."

So, as your Department Jr. Vice Commander, I ask each of you to visit each other online, via social media and our department website. Let's light up our new Department Online Newsroom and Calendar with events, stories or photos to share inspiration and motivation. Let's show that our flag is still flying. Together, we'll get through this. We are TEAM DAV!

Department Jr. Vice Commander, Nancy Casey





AUXILIARY ADJUTANT'S MESSAGE

The novel coronavirus health crisis has introduced the phrase “social distancing” into our vocabulary. Its intent was to limit exposure to this horrible disease by encouraging people not to come into close contact with one another. However, the unintended consequence of promoting this phrase has left many feeling alone and afraid. The World Health Organization recognized this dilemma and recommended the use of the phrase “physical distancing” instead. We do not have to break contact with our friends and family, but we must be mindful about keeping a physical distance to make sure the disease doesn't spread.

The need for physical distancing forced the cancellation of our state convention. Under normal circumstances we would gather to conduct the business of the organization and socialize with new and long-time friends. Although we understood the necessity to protect the health of our members, many of us experienced a personal sense of loss and isolation. There were also many unknowns about how our department would continue to operate.

I am a witness to how quickly our membership can overcome obstacles and continue to carry on the mission of “making a difference”. Many of us sought out sources of guidance and, perhaps more importantly, comfort. We had to find ways to reach out to our national leadership, our elected and appointed state officers, our unit officers, and our general membership. Communicating without making physical contact required both creativity and determination. We made phone calls, sent emails, learned how to video chat, and even sent letters by the US Postal Service.

The state-elected and most of our appointed officers have agreed to serve another term of office. We recognize that in this time of physical distancing, human connection is more important than ever before. To that end, our State Auxiliary leadership has reached out by phone to every Unit. I have mailed letters to all the SEC Members, with detailed instructions about our plan to move forward. An Auxiliary Department newsletter will be released in early May.

The Auxiliary is here for you! Our Facebook page is Dept of CA DAV Auxiliary, or you can search for my personal profile. You can also email me at Jweiss2015@gmail.com, or by phone at (510) 926-2529. Our Line Officers are also there to help! They can be found at: *Commander*: Caroline Morris, carolinej-morris@outlook.com; *SR. Vice Commander*: Joel Adema, (530) 895-8389, greybeardjoel@yahoo.com; *JR. Vice Commander*: David Bailey, (415) 425-4592, dbailey@californiacompost.com; *Treasurer*: June McJunkin, jmcjunkin@sbcglobal.net; *Judge Advocate*: Mary Lou Caldwell, maryloucaldwell59@gmail.com; *Chaplain*: Betty Quintana, (760) 243-3032. May each of you be blessed with a long and fruitful life!

Auxiliary Adjutant/National 3rd Jr. Vice Commander, Julie Weissman-Steinbaugh

AUXILIARY COMMANDER'S MESSAGE



Due to the aggressive nature of COVID-19 the World Health Organization has declared that we are in a global pandemic and the quarantine has been extended until May 15, 2020 or maybe longer.

The DAV and DAVA share the same concerns for our members, guests, volunteers and employees that we do for our own friends and families. We opt to err on the side of health and wellbeing as we feel it is necessary to protect our members from exposure to any direct or residual contamination of the virus. If anyone has any concerns, please feel free to contact me at carolinej.morris@outlook.com. I will try my best to address any issues and ease your mind. I wish everyone well and please keep yourself and families safe.

Auxiliary Commander, Caroline Morris



CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



As Memorial Day approaches, we take time to reflect and honor those who have gone before us. I have childhood memories of going with my family to the cemetery each Memorial Day to visit my great-grandparents' graves. We would dress up and bring a picnic. It almost felt like Easter. Us kids would be told about who was buried there and how important they were to us. We knew how valuable these people had been, but as we got older and busier, our family visited the cemetery less and less. I know many of you may have similar childhood memories. Why do we allow the wordly rat race to interfere with our traditions and things we hold dear? Maybe these few words will encourage you to keep important memories close.

I came across this writing that reminded me that even mundane memories can become special (and in our current world climate, some of us may relate to this story quite a bit).

"I grew up in the fifties with practical parents: a mother, God love her, who washed aluminum foil and reused it- she was the original recycle queen. And a father who was happier getting old shoes fixed than buying new ones. Their marriage was good, their dreams focused and their friends nearby. I can see them now, Dad in trousers, tee shirt and a hat and Mom in a housedress, lawn mower in one hand, dishtowel in the other. It was a time for fixing things: a curtain rod, the radio, the screen door, and the hem in a dress. The things we kept were a way of life, and sometimes it made me crazy. All that re-fixing, reheating, renewing. I wanted just once to be wasteful. Waste meant affluence. Throwing things away meant you knew there'd always be more. But then my mother died, and on that summer's night, in the warmth of the hospital room, I felt the pain of learning that sometimes there isn't any 'more.' Sometimes, what we care about most gets all used up and goes away, never to return. So, while we have it it's best we love it, and care for it, and fix it when it's broken, and heal it when it's sick. This is true for marriage, old cars, children with bad report cards, dogs with bad hips, aging parents and grandparents. We keep them because they are worth it. Because we are worth it. Some things we keep. Like a best friend that moved away or a classmate we grew up with. There are just some things that make life important, and so we keep them close!

We can get so caught up with day-to-day life that we forget to "keep" those ties with family and old friends. Many is the mother who longs for a phone call from her son or daughter, be they 20 or 60, whose heart is lifted when she hears the voice on the other end. For those away from home or possibly estranged from loved ones, this could be an open door to reestablish that relationship that is still on your mind (because you are thinking of that person now).

While we are ordered to be in our homes, this is a perfect opportunity to check in on our relationships. Be it with a parent, a brother, a sister or friend, a child, or an old coach or teacher- anyone who made a difference in your life. All of whom are growing older, as we all are, and may wish to know the impact they've had and the important memories they helped create. I think we all would want to know.

If this isn't already a part of your family traditions, it's not too late to start honoring those who are a part of you and contributed to who you are. We are given Memorial Day to jar our memories, but it can be any and all days. Start by keeping a record, a journal, a photo album, etc. Go to the family reunions, high school reunions and for those who go to war together, unit reunions. Maybe we are the ones who start them. We can always start from where we are and appreciate what and who is in our life today.

For most, Memorial Day is a time to remember life's joys and spend time with family and dear friends. "Good friends are like stars...You don't always see them, but you know they are always there." My prayer this week is that we will take and make the time to create those special moments that we look back on with fondness. It is my hope that this message will help you to, "mount up as on eagle's wings", and renew a little of your strength to keep moving forward and find joy (Isaiah 40:31). Until next time, may God bless you and continue to bless our great nation. SEMPER FI

Department Chaplain, Ron Ringo

STATE MIDWINTER 2020 WRAP-UP

It was great to see all of you at the Midwinter conference at the Pacific Palms Resort. It was once again a good opportunity for us to attend to the business that allows us to keep serving veterans as well as to train our wonderful Chapter Service Officers,

But not only that, meeting together at our conferences provides us an excellent chance to see each other, encourage one another and share ideas. The Pacific Palms Resort provided us with spacious rooms overlooking the San Gabriel mountains and had plenty of golfing, entertainment and amenities to keep everyone busy and happy.



These times of connection allow us to arm ourselves with the tools we need to help our fellow veterans in need. One such tool was launched at this Midwinter conference, and that is our new, DAV California App! This app is available for iOS and Google Play and allows the user to log their volunteer hours or sign up a new DAV member. This app lets LVAP volunteers easily log their hours in real time, and delivers that information to the DAV California Headquarters. This offers us at headquarters the chance to streamline this process and to easily receive, track, and report hours to DAV National. The app is listed under **DAV California** in the App stores. We encourage you to download it, use it and share it, because when we are efficient with our time, we are able to do more in service to the veterans we serve.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in January!



2020's
ALL-STARS

**TOP
MEMBERSHIP
RECRUITER**

Juan C. Gallardo

**TOP
RECRUITING
CHAPTER (by %)**

Indio #78

**TOP
LVAP VOLUNTEER**

Mickey Ganitch

NATIONAL MIDWINTER 2020 WRAP-UP



California joined every Department during our National DAV Midwinter Conference this past February in Washington, D.C. Our state has a lot of legislators to reach, but we were proud to have a team of go-getters there to represent our department's Benefit Protection Team who made sure that all of this year's critical policy goals were heard and understood by our lawmakers. The benefit protection team, led by J.R. Wilson, PSC & Legislative Director, focused on advocating for the following points this year:

1. Toxic exposures,
2. Enhanced survivor benefits,
3. A fully and faithfully implemented VA MISSION Act of 2018
4. Strengthened Veterans' Mental Health Care and Suicide Prevention Programs
5. VA's Women Veterans Health Care Program

Our team divided up duties with Mike Kerr, Department Commander, advocating for Toxic Exposure to be recognized, and for additional disabilities and issues to be added to the current regulations regarding exposure to certain herbicides. Penni Brown, Women Veteran's Advisor, focused her advocacy on veterans' suicide prevention and women veterans' equality in healthcare and homeless veteran outreach. Joel Adema; Department of California DAV Auxiliary Sr. Vice Commander, focused his advocacy efforts on the concerns of veterans' caregivers and survivors.

For a century, the DAV has advocated for better federal veterans programs, benefits, healthcare and transition services for the men and women who served, their families and survivors. DAV's National Legislative Department takes the resolutions adopted by DAV members at our annual National Conventions to Congress to advocate for improved federal laws, regulations and policies, both for the VA as well as for other federal agencies whose programs support the veteran population.

Legislative Resolutions are typically due in April, however, since they need to be presented at a convention they will have to be held until next year. However, we don't want this to stop you from putting your good ideas into this simple action item that can make a big difference in the lives of veterans. For more information on how to format a resolution, visit DAV.org and you can still send these to department headquarters and we will hold them for next year.

Also, as we just closed out March, which is International Women's Month, we want to encourage you all to follow the DAV California Women's Facebook page in order to stay connected with what our Women Veterans' Committee, led by Penni Brown, is doing all around the state. In these days of isolation, it's important to remember the power of connection and the power we have as veterans in California when we operate as a unit.

-Contributing Writers: Penni Lo'Vette Brown, Women Veterans Advisor & J.R. Wilson, PSC

100 CANDLES: CELEBRATING PEARL HARBOR SURVIVOR, MICKEY GANITCH

If turning 100 years old isn't enough, what about having a birthday celebration for your 100th birthday, full of 400 people that you have made an impact on—simply by waking up everyday to do the things you love?

Well that is how Michael “Mickey” Ganitch spent his 100 year celebration this last November. On November 16th 2019, 400 people from various parts of Mickey's life gathered at the USS Hornet, to celebrate this 100-year-old Pearl Harbor survivor in Alameda, California. Honors were thrown for Oakland Chapter #7's Adjutant, by the Orinda Masonic Lodge Post #122 in order to present him with various awards such as The Golden Veteran's award presented by the Mason's Most Worshipful John E. Turner, and a shadowbox with an American flag flown over the USS Arizona, presented by DAV California's National 4th Junior Vice Commander & Adjutant, Daniel Contreras.

To begin the celebration, social hour brought guests into the world of the Boogie-Woogie Bugle Boy, as the *Swingin' Blue Stars* created the USO tour feel in the ship with tunes from the 40's. DAV and DAVA leadership spanning generations of Past to Current State Commanders, rejoiced as they got to find another reason to come together to celebrate. Once the ceremony commenced, welcoming remarks were given by the Masonic Lodge Past Master, Gary Pearce; followed by the posting of the Colors, presented by the VFW Post 9601. After the formalities were over, the celebration continued!

What is it about Mickey that 400 people wanted to celebrate? We already mentioned that he is a Pearl Harbor survivor. He also continues to volunteer at his chapter, five days a week, seven hours a day-for the last 18 years! And true to the image we hold of the greatest generation that lived, Mickey has held every leadership position possible in his chapter. Chapter #7 Commander, Jo Ann Martinez, says that, “he does it because he wants our chapter to be known for its availability to fellow veterans in need of assistance.”

If you needed another reason to celebrate this hero, how about this? Mickey has accumulated over 9,000 lifetime volunteer hours through the Veterans Transportation Network, as he made it his point to get our veterans to their medical appointments and back home. Oh, and one more thing. Mickey is an ambassador for not only the VA, the Masonic Lodge, and the DAV, but also an Ambassador for America as he often travels the globe to speak at various events for Americanism with other WWII survivors.

The effect on the lives Mickey has touched, simply by waking up to volunteer his time back to the veteran community of heroes that followed in his footsteps, is immeasurable. There is a special air that you share when you're in the presence of Michael “Mickey” Ganitch. I know I speak for anyone who has shared moments with Mickey, no matter how brief, but it's truly an honor to be in his presence as Mickey Ganitch is one of the last American Heroes from the Greatest Generation that lived.



AFRICAN-AMERICAN HISTORY MONTH: SPOTLIGHT on DELPHINE METCALF-FOSTER



With February being African-American History Month, we wanted to spotlight someone who is always worthy of a bit of limelight in our spring newsletter. Our pride in our very own California-born and bred leader, Delphine Metcalf-Foster goes way back. The past DAV National Commander began her career in the medical field before enlisting in the army. She retired as a first sergeant after 21 years of service following her medical evacuation from the Persian Gulf in 1991 while serving in Desert Shield/Desert storm. DAV NSO, John Parker, assisted her while she was on medical hold and she joined Chapter #21 in Vallejo shortly after.

During her time with her chapter, our department and as National Commander, she has proven herself as a great leader. Delphine Metcalf-Foster has served veterans on both a national and local scale, taking on such roles as chapter adjutant, member of the Department Claims and Service Commission, Department Commander and chair of our state's Resolutions Committee and VAVS Committee.

Statewide, she has been an asset to her fellow women veterans by serving on California's

Secretary of Veterans Affairs Women's Advisory Board and acting as an advocate for Stand Downs and Women's Summits. She has touched the lives of veterans in her community by volunteering at the local VA clinic, attending veterans' town hall meetings and getting involved in the Women Veterans Health Committee meetings at the VA Medical Center in San Francisco.

As DAV national commander, she represented millions of veterans in this country and used her voice to bring attention to the stigma and access issues faced by veterans with PTSD and to advocate for caregiver benefits for veterans of all eras as well as for better access to health-care for women veterans. As Commander, Ms. Metcalf-Foster, became not only the first woman veteran to serve as a national commander of a big three congressionally-chartered VSO, but also the first African-American woman to do so.

Overall, she has been one of the most respected and approachable leaders in our department. She's been a mentor to many and exemplifies the spirit of "veterans helping veterans" that drives our organization. Those who interact with her find that she listens closely to, and cares for, her fellow veterans. Her perspective is one that is both important and underrepresented, and as a leader, she has made her voice heard as an advocate for the rights of all veterans. As another African-American History Month came and went, we wanted to share some of DAV's history by highlighting one of our favorite trailblazers.

“As a leader, she has made her voice heard as an advocate for the rights of ALL veterans”

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Spring Cleaning in Quarantine?

Do you have clothing or household items to clear out? **Let us know!** Pickups will be resuming as soon as it is safe to do so, and the veterans who benefit from the rehabilitative services and financial support our DAV California Rehabilitation Foundation provides continue to need your help!



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