

2023 *Salute to Sacrifice*



DAV[®]

Disabled American Veterans

2023 Salute to Sacrifice

Dear Friend of America's disabled veterans,

There is great power in working together.

When fighting a battle, our service men and women know they must pull together to gain victory. What's true for them is also true for us as we wage a campaign to provide for the most urgent needs of our disabled veterans. If any of us endeavored to fight the battle alone, we would be defeated all too quickly. But by joining forces and pooling our resources, you and I can help America's wounded heroes regain a measure of health, hope, dignity, and purpose.



Thank you for your partnership in assisting the brave men and women who put their lives on the line to uphold our freedoms.

For each veteran whose story is shared in this booklet, there are hundreds of thousands of veterans whose stories have yet to be told. It's an honor for me to share stories of disabled veterans and their families achieving victories ... victories that simply wouldn't have happened if you and others hadn't partnered with DAV in a Salute to Sacrifice for our wounded heroes. As you read these stories, I hope you see yourself in the background — giving, upholding, and cheering our veterans on.

I'm so proud of you and your commitment to our wounded heroes. Thank you again for working together with DAV in transforming the lives of America's finest ... thank you for making these stories possible.

With sincere appreciation,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Barry A. Jesinoski". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Barry A. Jesinoski, National Adjutant/CEO

DAV Benefits Advocacy: ***Critical for America's Disabled Veterans***

DAV has blazed the trail in strengthening and protecting veterans' benefits for more than a century.

Most recently, DAV advocated and testified before Congress in support of the Honoring our PACT ACT, which was signed into law in August 2022. It is the largest piece of veterans toxic exposure legislation to ever be passed. Its signing was the culmination of years of work by DAV members and advocates who lobbied Congress for this outcome for years. Veterans exposed to harmful substances will now find it easier to receive their earned benefits.

In 2008, DAV brought the critical issue of burn pits to the American public's attention. DAV initiated the pilot for a Burn Pit Registry, which the Department of Veterans Affairs adopted in 2014.

Despite this legislative victory, some veterans have been left behind when it comes to toxic exposure. Service members like Mark Jackson were exposed to dangerous toxins while deployed to Karshi-Khanabad Air Base (K2) in Uzbekistan between 2001 and 2005.

Soon after leaving the former Soviet base, Mark's thyroid effectively died at just 27-years old. At 30, he was diagnosed with irritable bowel syndrome. At 43, his doctor told him he had the bones of an 80-year-old.

Mark said that, despite the clear signs of danger, he would do it all over again.

"The basic terms of service when you sign up are that you're going to give all the way up to and including your life, but they're going to take care of you and your family," said Mark. "And they're not honoring their end of the bargain."



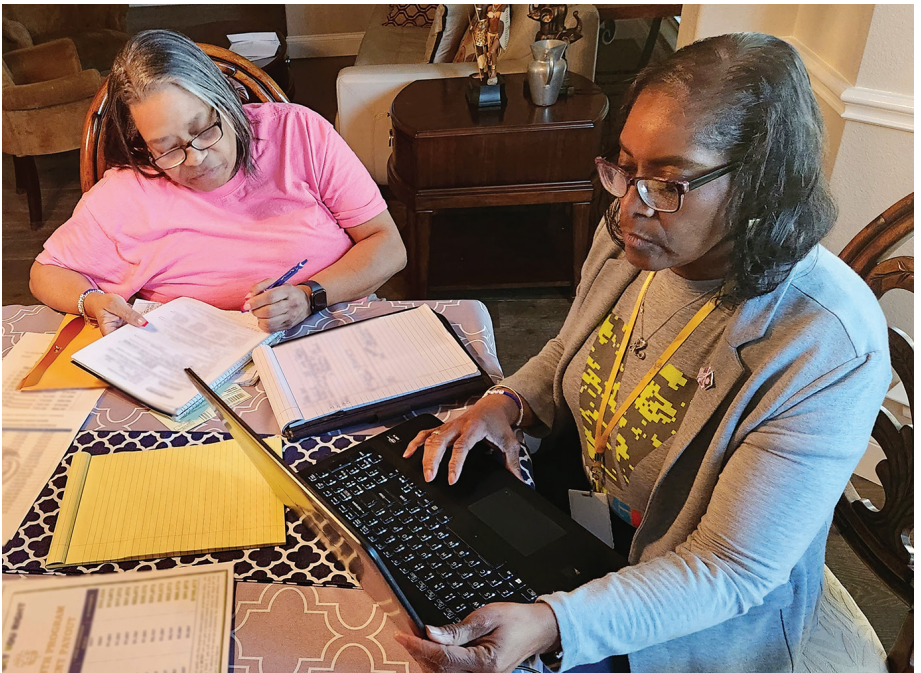
“Toxic exposures — and specifically recognition of the exposures at K2 — will be part of DAV’s critical policy goals in 2023,” said DAV Deputy National Legislative Director Shane Liermann. “We will seek legislation that concedes K2 exposures, orders studies on those exposures and establishes presumptive diseases.”

Thank you for standing with America’s wounded, ill and injured veterans as we pursue critical policy issues affecting these deserving heroes.

DAV Service Officers ***Help Wounded Heroes Overcome Barriers***

Navy veteran Ramona Ross-Bacon was a gunner’s mate who handled Tomahawk missiles, surface-to-air missiles, and torpedoes during the Gulf War.

During Operation Desert Storm, she worked in an intense environment preparing armaments on the USS Yellowstone.



“One wrong move in handling or securing these missiles could be detrimental to the safety and security of our ship,” said Ramona. “And, I had a husband and a 2-year-old son to get back to.”



Like many of her fellow brothers and sisters in uniform, Ramona served with honor. But serving as a torpedoman's mate was grueling work. She was both mentally and physically stressed and fatigued.

“The wear and tear on my back and joints was and is indescribable,” she said. “There were many sleepless nights.”

Fortunately, Ross-Bacon connected with DAV for help with her benefits claims for the injuries that she sustained.

“DAV was instrumental in helping me obtain my service-connected disability rating. It was because of them that I chose to pay it forward and become a chapter service officer,” she said. “I’ve been a

member since 2000 and am blessed to volunteer beside the best of the best.”

Ramona has discovered a new mission with her fellow disabled veterans. She also found solidarity and inclusion among others who could relate to her struggles.

“This group of men and women have become extended family to me. There’s just comfort in knowing that you are not alone,” she said.

“Someone else knows and can feel your pain without judgment, ridicule and shame. There’s no better place to be.”

Faithfully and selflessly, DAV benefits advocates like Ramona help their fellow disabled veterans secure their earned benefits.

24,905

transitioning service
members assisted

Disaster Relief Program

Immediate Aid When Disaster Strikes

In 2022, New Mexico experienced its largest series of wildfires in the state's history.

The devastating fires blazed through the region's towns, destroying homes and displacing thousands of residents, including many veterans.

Fortunately, DAV was able to respond quickly, giving immediate aid to those, like Marine veteran Joseph Gurule, who were affected.

"I don't usually get emotional. I'm a pretty tough guy," Joseph said as his voice quivered. "But I got a lump in my throat when DAV showed up to help out. As a Marine, we took care of each other. We did our duty. I never expected nothing in return. I want to thank DAV for this. They are taking care of their own."


Both volunteer firefighters, Joseph and his sister, Gwen Gurule, who also served in the Marine Corps, assisted others in their local communities who were impacted by the raging fires. When asked what support from DAV meant to him, Joseph said, "Even though I evacuated my home, I just could not leave the area. I wanted to stay to help fight the fire. The check from DAV helped me to pay for a couple of motel rooms and get by until I could get back home."

Beyond financial assistance, DAV distributes comfort and hygiene supply kits to veterans affected by natural disasters. The kits — which include backpacks, blankets



Disaster Relief Program
DAV provided a total of **\$2,052,500** emergency relief drafts
and roughly **975 supply kits**
to the disaster relief program.

Since 1968, over
\$19.5 million
has been disbursed to victims.



and hygiene items — afford safety, relief and self-sufficiency in an extended emergency, disaster or evacuation.

Andy Herren, assistant supervisor of the Albuquerque office, shared the full scope of the devastation from the wildfires.

“Most of the veterans we have spoken with lost their homes in the fires and have been homeless for over a month now,” Herren said. “Many people don’t have insurance. Several of our veterans have not only been displaced from their homes, but they have also lost their livestock — their livelihoods.”

In 2022, DAV’s disaster relief fund was depleted due to numerous natural disasters — wildfires, tornadoes, hurricanes and flooding — which left



hundreds of veterans homeless. Your gift ensures that whenever and wherever veterans are in need — DAV is there. And DAV will continue to be there for veterans and their families when the next disaster hits because of faithful supporters like you.

“We want to be ready to jump in and serve those who have served our country,” affirmed DAV CEO and National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski. “We’re grateful to our supporters for making this life-saving assistance possible.”

The DAV Disaster Relief Program provided a total of \$2,052,500 in emergency relief drafts and roughly 975 supply kits in 2022. Thank you for your *Salute to Sacrifice*.

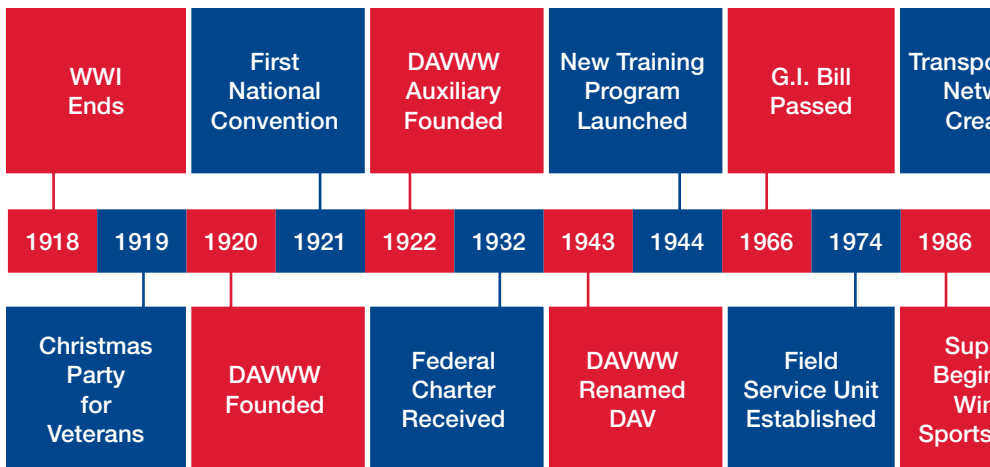
DAV BY THE NUMBERS: 2022

DAV provided over \$2 million to veterans affected by natural disasters, including hurricanes, tornados, floods and fires in 2022. Since 1968, over \$19.5 million in emergency relief has been disbursed to victims.

3,740 trained benefits experts in over 100 offices throughout the nation helped disabled veterans successfully transition to civilian life and receive the benefits they earned.

Over 179,000 pending benefits claims represented by DAV before the Veterans Benefits Administration.

Nearly 25,000 transitioning, active-duty, reserve and guard members, veterans and spouses attended 85 traditional and virtual DAV job fairs. Since 2014, there have been over 284,400 attendees and over 170,500 job offers.



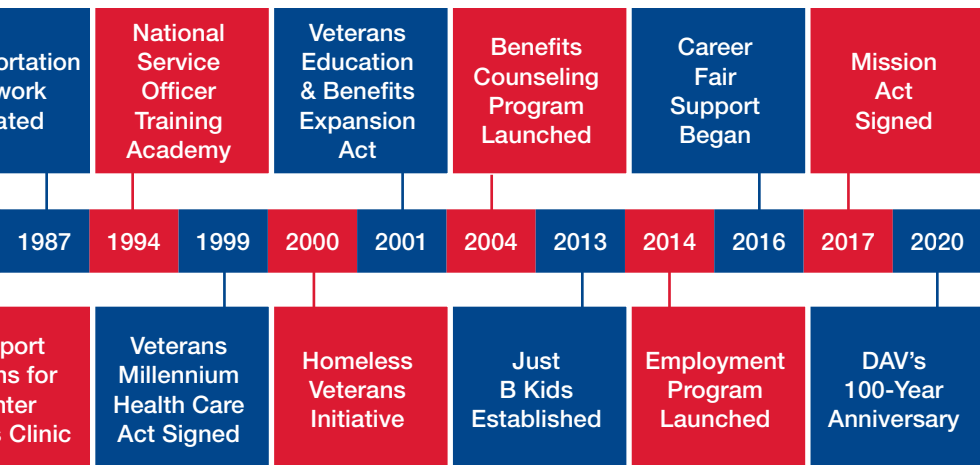


Volunteers logged 555,975 hours and 9.2 million miles offering no-cost rides to and from VA medical facilities for ill and injured veterans. Since the program's inception in 1987:

- Nearly 20 million veterans have been transported over 741 million miles.
- DAV has donated 3,665 vehicles, and
- Ford Motor Company has donated 256 vehicles at a cost of over \$92 million.

\$1 donated equals \$179 in direct benefits for veterans.

We help send 1,000 kids to camp each year. Since the inception of the program, we have helped more than 5,600 children of injured and fallen veterans attend camp for free.



DAV Job Fairs: Meaningful Employment for Successful Transition

After her service in the Marine Corps, Arella Aleman wasn't sure what her next steps should be. She was interested in technology, so she began searching for information on a career in cyber security. Arella soon learned that she would need to take some classes to qualify for a job in that particular field.

"I started online coursework, completing the required hours. Then, the job search began," she said.

For nearly eight months, Arella sent out her resume with no callbacks for an interview.

"I was starting to feel defeated. 'Imposter syndrome' kicked into high gear," said Arella. "I felt as though I might never get a cybersecurity position, or maybe I just wasn't meant to be in this field."

But, she told herself "Don't quit!"

"Shortly after renewing my resolve, I heard about the DAV job fair," said Arella. "There I found an amazing opportunity for me to begin a systems engineer position with Raytheon Technologies."

At the job fair, Arella identified that networking was key to launching into a new career.

"DAV offered the tremendous connections that I was looking for. I am beyond grateful and I feel blessed to have started with Raytheon Technologies," she said. "I couldn't have asked for a better company or team of people to work with."

With your support, transitioning active duty, Guard and Reserve members, veterans and their spouses have free access to a host of vital employment resources, including DAV job fairs.



EMPLOYMENT

DAV hosted **85** traditional
and virtual career fairs with RecruitMilitary
and had **16,083** attendees.



Since 2014, there have been over
284,400 attendees with over
170,500 job offers.

DAV Transportation Network: More Than Just a Ride

During his senior year at Vanderbilt University, John Ang wanted to find a way to give back to those who have served the country he loves. So, John decided to become a driver for the DAV Transportation Network.

“He walked in, he said, ‘I want to volunteer,’” said VA Voluntary Services Specialist Reggie Rogers. “He said, ‘But I only want to do one thing. I want to drive veterans to their appointments.’”

“Great! We need that,” Reggie replied.

After graduation, John continued to volunteer while waiting to be accepted into medical school.



“I think it’s wonderful,” said Air Force veteran Christina Messina, as John drove her to an appointment. “He’s doing a service, especially to take his own time out. He never went into the military, but he wants to still help the veterans.”

“So I think it’s a great, great thing that he’s doing.”

“Lack of reliable transportation is a major barrier for many veterans to access the health care they earned in service. Generous gifts from supporters like you help the DAV Transportation Network offer disabled veterans 200,000 free rides every year,” said DAV CEO and National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski. “Our donor’s ongoing support ensures many veterans will get the care they deserve. You’re joining us in keeping the promise to those who served.”

VOLUNTARY SERVICES

Transportation Network

DAV volunteer drivers spent **555,975** hours logging over **9.2 million** miles, providing no-cost rides for ill and injured veterans to VA medical facilities.



Since 1987, drivers have traveled over **741 million** miles transporting more than **19.7 million** veterans.

Since 1987, at a cost more than **\$92 million**



has donated **3,665** vehicles

+



donated **256** vehicles

Just B Kids

Salute the Sacrifice of Children

Brave. Resilient. Strong.

This describes the children of fallen military heroes who attend Camp Corral to build peer networks and develop coping skills through outdoor recreation.

Through DAV's Just B Kids scholarship program, Catrina Vaden's children benefitted from a week at camp with other children who have similar experiences.

"It was really cool to have them go. To get out and be average kids was amazing," she said. "My oldest daughter is in their counselor-in-training program. She came back with more confidence. The change in her was amazing."

To date more than 5,600 kids have made forever memories during the summer at no cost to their families due to DAV's Just B Kids scholarship program.

"We understand that the children of military members face unique hardships and sacrifices beyond their years," said DAV CEO and National Adjutant Barry Jesinoski. "We prioritize giving kids a chance to be kids and have fun. These kids deserve the joy a week away in the great outdoors provides."

To learn more about the Just B Kids scholarships visit justbkids.org.

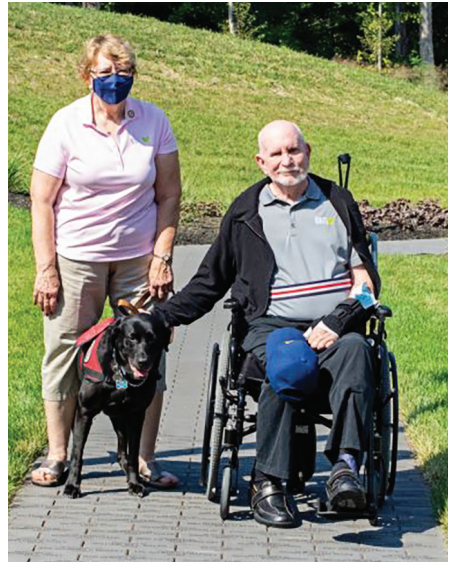


Historic Honor Garden

Commemorating Lives of Service

After suffering a massive stroke, Vietnam veteran and DAV member Charles Welch struggled for a week from his hospital bed to write the letters “D-A-V” on a dry-erase board. Finally, his family recognized his request to contact DAV benefits advocate Don Inns.

Charles had previously used DAV for help filing a claim for an Agent Orange service-connected illness. He was thoroughly impressed with DAV’s services. Thereafter, Charles brought his fellow veterans to DAV when they needed help.



From the hospital, Charles was desperate to get a message to Don. But it wasn’t to get help for himself.

“My concern was not about me,” Charles said. “It’s the mission of DAV to help veterans, but I couldn’t assist at this point.”

However, Charles and his family found another way to help his fellow veterans by purchasing three commemorative bricks in memory and in honor of their loved ones as part of DAV’s Historic Honor Garden Monument.

Join fellow DAV supporters, like Charles, today and make a powerful, lasting symbol of your gratitude to the men and women who have sacrificed so much for our country.



You are invited to join our DAV community in creating a sacred sanctuary of remembrance for the courageous men and women who have served our country with honor. By purchasing a brick, you can honor a loved one and offer your personal *Salute to Sacrifice*. Simply visit dav.org/bricks.

Donation Programs: *Handing Over the Keys to a Bright Future*



“The idea of donating the property for the benefit of DAV was an easy decision”

*– Army Veteran
Mark Nehls*

After Army veteran Mark Nehls’s discharge from the military, he received help from a couple of DAV benefits advocates in filing his benefits claim.

In honor of Mark’s fellow disabled veterans, he and his wife donated a piece of property so that our nation’s heroes can receive the support they need through our no-cost programs and services.

“The idea of donating the property for the benefit of DAV was an easy decision,” Mark said. “We hope the sale of our property helps those programs continue.”

Did you know that donating real estate to support DAV and veterans is fast and easy?

Our program takes any property type (land, homes and commercial) in any location so long as there is equity. If you have a real estate asset that is costing you money or not being used, donating it is a great way to give back. The proceeds from your property donation allow DAV to continue providing lifetime support for veterans of all generations and their families.

Did you know you can donate all types of vehicles to DAV? We strive to accept any vehicle – cars, trucks, motorcycles, RVs, boats, airplanes and more. It’s fast and easy! For more information, call 844-440-4267 or visit dav.careasy.org/prospectus.

A Legacy of Care Planning for a Future Gift

Rae Weisbruch joined the ranks of the Women's Army Corps along with over 150,000 other women during World War II. She felt the need to support America's war efforts.

"Everybody wanted to do something. I thought that was a good thing for me to do since I was single and had no other obligations," said Rae.

Ultimately, she became an assistant to an Army Air Corps flight instructor. That's how she met Stanley Weisbruch — a young pilot who was required to take the course before his next overseas mission—flying "the hump" of the Himalayas.

"They married in September of 1944. Then dad left to fly missions from India to Burma in the area that is modern-day Bangladesh," said John Weisbruch, Rae and Stanley's son. "My mom and dad were both proud to serve."

In helping to care for his mom — who just celebrated her 100th birthday — John discovered DAV's charitable gift annuity and began considering the opportunity. As the executor of his mother's estate, John wanted to find a reputable veterans organization to support.

"As far as choosing DAV, the fact that you steward donations efficiently is important to me and my mother," said John.

Because Rae only receives a portion of her late husband Stanley's pension, John appreciates the fact that the annuity benefits disabled veterans and also provides his mother with supplemental income.

"Investing in the annuity gave me a chance to give her a current income and help do what she ultimately wanted to be done with her estate," said John. "We are both pleased to support other veterans and their families with the resources they need."



DAV Mission Statement

We are dedicated to a single purpose: empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. We accomplish this by ensuring that veterans and their families can access the full range of benefits available to them; fighting for the interests of America's injured heroes on Capitol Hill; and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life.

This mission is carried forward by:

- Providing free, professional assistance to veterans and their families in obtaining benefits and services earned through military service;
- Providing outreach concerning DAV program services to the American people generally, and to disabled veterans and their families specifically;
- Representing the interests of disabled veterans, their families, their widowed spouses and their orphans before Congress, the White House and the Judicial Branch, as well as state and local government;
- Extending DAV's mission of hope into the communities where these veterans and their families live.
- Providing a structure through which disabled veterans can express their compassion for their fellow veterans through a variety of volunteer programs.

Of course, none of this is possible without your generous support. So please, make a generous gift today and help us achieve our "2023 Salute to Sacrifice" campaign goal!

Give now at www.dav.org/salute

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