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**TO:** National Executive Committee  
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Department and Chapter Commanders and Adjutants  
All Employees  
Bunny Clos, Auxiliary National Adjutant

**FROM:** Barry Jesinoski, National Adjutant

**DATE:** October 16, 2025

**SUBJECT:** Veterans Day 2025

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As we prepare to honor our nation's sacred tradition of Veterans Day this November, I'd like to thank you for your dedication to recognizing and serving veterans year-round. Your tireless work helps us fulfill DAV's mission and allows us to continue providing a lifetime of support for veterans and their families.

**Here are some things to be aware of and promote this Veterans Day:**

One of the driving forces behind DAV's mission of empowering veterans to lead high-quality lives is **volunteerism**. Veterans Day is the perfect time to promote [volunteerforveterans.org](https://volunteerforveterans.org) to friends, family and fellow veterans. Encourage those in your community to create an account to volunteer, request assistance, or identify a veteran or caregiver who needs help. Please continue to direct people to [DAV's website](https://dav.org) for more information, and be sure to share your efforts with us on social media by tagging @DAVHQ or emailing [feedback@dav.org](mailto:feedback@dav.org).

The **DAV 5K Walk, Roll, Run or Ride to Honor America's Veterans** event will take place in person in Cincinnati on Saturday, **Nov. 8**, and as a virtual challenge **Nov. 8–11**, giving participants a chance to take part from anywhere in the world. The DAV 5K raises awareness of the challenges ill and injured veterans face every day and brings communities together to honor their service and sacrifice. Visit [dav5k.org](https://dav5k.org) for more information on how to register for the race or to volunteer.

A list of **Veterans Day discounts** will be made available on [dav.org/discounts](https://dav.org/discounts) closer to the holiday. Please share this resource with your members and local veterans so they may benefit from the special deals companies are offering in gratitude for their service. This includes **Military Appreciation Night**, hosted by Golden Corral on Veterans Day, with free meals for veterans and active-duty service members. The event also gives DAV members the opportunity to raise money and awareness of the organization. Since 2001, the tradition has helped raise more than \$19 million in donations for DAV. You can find detailed information in the [Military Appreciation Night memo](#) on the Member Leaders page of [dav.org](https://dav.org).

Each year, many of our members are asked to represent DAV in their local communities during Veterans Day events. **A sample speech is attached for your use.** You can use it as is or customize it as appropriate. Additionally, this year we have included **a speech written specifically for an audience that is 18 and younger.** It can be used at schools and youth-oriented events. Also of note is **an informative flyer** that teaches younger Americans about Veterans Day and how they can support those who served. You can find these materials under the News & Media tab at [dav.org](http://dav.org), in the **Speeches** section.

In addition to your participation in events surrounding the holiday, we encourage you to consider submitting **opinion articles, or op-eds**, to local media to mark our special day and spread awareness of DAV's work. We've attached a suggested editorial you can personalize and submit to the leading print or digital publications in your area. If applicable, coordinate with your fellow members to avoid duplicate submissions. Details about where and how to submit the op-ed should be available on each publication's website. In larger media markets, the publication may ask if the op-ed is exclusive to its publication. The answer is no. **Please send copies of submitted op-eds to Assistant National Communications Director Todd Hunter at [thunter@dav.org](mailto:thunter@dav.org).**

Stay tuned to our **website**; **YouTube channel**; and **Facebook**, **Instagram**, **LinkedIn** and **X** social media pages for more information now and throughout the year. Our social platforms are the fastest way to ensure you have the most up-to-date information pertaining to our organization. Also, continue to watch and listen for our public service announcements in print, radio and television, and please **share** them as much as you can. The more awareness we can create for our cause, the more veterans and families we will be able to serve.

Veterans Day is a perfect time for us to demonstrate what DAV is all about. Your efforts as leaders of DAV help ensure the American public remembers and cares for our injured and ill veterans. Thank you in advance for all you do this coming Veterans Day.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barry A. Jesinoski".

Barry A. Jesinoski  
National Adjutant

BAJ:bb



[Department Name / Chapter Name & Number]

[Dept/Chp Street Address] • [City, State ZIP] • [Dept/Chp Phone] • [Dept/Chp Email and/or Website]

## Veterans Day Op-Ed

**Contact:** [Name, phone number and/or email]

**Date**

### Elaborate on 'thank you' this Veterans Day

Imagine putting your life on the line, in the most literal sense, and saving 17 lives in the process. You're barely an adult, yet you've already done more for others in a single day than most will do in their entire lives.

You did your duty. You fulfilled your obligation, and you paid a steep price for it. And yet, you go on to dedicate your life to selflessly serving others.

For you and me, this is a hypothetical exercise. But for Army veteran Ken David, it's his real-life story. Ken was drafted into service in August 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War. Within months, he was on the ground in the Republic of South Vietnam.

On May 7, 1970, Ken was serving as a radio-telephone operator when his element came under fierce attack from a larger force seeking to overrun the base. The assault fatally wounded his platoon leader in the opening minutes of battle. In response, Ken unleashed a barrage of automatic weapon fire on the enemy.

Ken made himself vulnerable to the enemy in an effort to draw fire away from wounded soldiers as they received medical care. He even refused treatment for his own wounds and remained deliberately exposed to protect medevac helicopters, ensuring the wounded could be rescued.

Earlier this year, Ken was [awarded the Medal of Honor](#) for his actions that day. But arguably, his actions since have been just as noble. Despite battling with the mental and physical wounds of war after he left the Army, Ken carried on, eventually finding a new mission as a veterans advocate.

For 40 years, he's been a tirelessly active and giving member of the congressionally chartered nonprofit [DAV \(Disabled American Veterans\)](#). He's known in his community for being the first to volunteer to help any veteran in need. He helps organize events to support veterans facing food insecurity and has even opened his own wallet to ensure a veteran and their family gets a meal. As a volunteer, he has touched—and perhaps even saved—countless more lives through small but meaningful actions.

And while Ken is an extraordinary human who did extraordinary things, as a veteran, he's not unique in dedicating his life to serving others. Ken's way is the veteran way.

The millions of veterans in this country are proof of that. These men and women, who already sacrificed so much in service—everything from precious years with family to their mental and physical well-being—don't stop serving. They build homes for veterans in need. They mow their lawns and deliver their groceries. They visit veterans in medical facilities and get them to and from their doctor appointments. They run food pantries and clean veterans' gravestones. They build camaraderie and community. They improve and save lives.

On Veterans Day, we don't just recognize what our men and women did while in uniform; we celebrate and honor their continued service and contributions. So when you say thank you to a veteran, consider adding "for all you've done and all you continue to do."

And don't stop there—join them! If you're a veteran yourself and looking for ways to continue your service, seek out organizations like DAV and get involved. If you're a family member or just someone who wants to put "thank you for your service" to action, do the same.

All of us can walk in the footsteps of servants like Ken David.

###

**About DAV:**

*DAV empowers veterans to lead high-quality lives with respect and dignity. It is dedicated to a single purpose: keeping our promise to America's veterans. DAV does 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, providing employment resources to veterans and their families, and educating the public about the great sacrifices and needs of veterans transitioning back to civilian life. DAV, a nonprofit organization with nearly 1 million members, was founded in 1920 and chartered by the U.S. Congress in 1932. Learn more at [dav.org](http://dav.org).*

Good morning/afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.

[Thank any VIPs/special guests/event hosts]

<PAUSE>

I'm honored to be here with you to celebrate those who wore the uniform in service to this country and to ***all*** the men, women and children who call her home.

If you're a veteran and are able, please stand or raise your hand.

<PAUSE>

Look around. These are the heroes we honor today.

<LEAD APPLAUSE>

I also want to thank the families of those who served. Their sacrifices are too often overlooked, but I assure you, they're just as worthy of our appreciation. If you're a spouse or child of a veteran, please raise your hand or stand to be recognized.

**<LEAD APPLAUSE>**

To be clear, none of those men and women ask for our applause. Regardless of how or why they got into the military, they served something larger than themselves — certainly larger than any recognition.

Take Ken David, for example.

Ken was drafted into the Army in August 1969 at the height of the Vietnam War. Within months, he was on the ground in the Republic of South Vietnam.

On May 7, 1970, Ken was serving as a radio-telephone operator when his element came under fierce attack from a larger force seeking to overrun the base.

The assault mortally wounded his platoon leader in the opening minutes of battle. In response, Ken unleashed a barrage of automatic weapon fire on the enemy.

He then moved to a position outside the perimeter and continued to fight, firing single shots from his rifle.

Ken made himself vulnerable to the enemy in an effort to draw fire away from wounded soldiers while they received medical care.

He refused treatment for his own wounds and remained deliberately exposed to protect medevac helicopters, ensuring the wounded could be rescued.

**<PAUSE>**

Think about that. A 20-year-old kid, drafted to serve in wartime in a foreign land. Before that day, Ken had already been welcomed to the country by enemy fire as his aircraft circled to land, wounded in combat and hospitalized once. His platoon's previous radio operator had been killed, putting Ken in that position on May 7, 1970.

And when the enemy came for him again, he didn't just fight back. And he didn't fight for *his* life.

He intentionally put himself in death's path to protect his fellow soldiers. The men to his left and to his right. And when the last helo dusted off from the firefight that day, Ken had saved *seventeen* lives.

**<PAUSE>**

For his actions, Ken was awarded the Distinguished Service Cross in 1971. But that honor didn't protect him from the lasting scars of war.



After his discharge from the Army in 1972, Ken struggled to adjust back to civilian life. He felt isolated as he dealt with symptoms of post-traumatic stress. His relationships suffered. He lived in pain from the physical toll of war.

And yet, there was another battle Ken would take on with bravery and selflessness. He found healing and purpose in *helping others*. Today, he remains an active veterans advocate with DAV, helping any veteran in need in his Ohio hometown.

He helps organize free dinners for veterans and has literally opened his own wallet to help hungry veterans and their families with a meal.

He is adjutant of his DAV chapter and a chapter service officer, making himself available for any veteran who needs help securing the benefits they earned through service.

In Ken's 40 years as a DAV member, there's no telling how many lives he's touched or even saved. When asked what he does with his free time, Ken once said, "I'm too old for boating, and I don't fish anymore, so I just help veterans."

**<PAUSE>**

Earlier this year, Ken was awarded the Medal of Honor for his actions on that day in 1970. It was an overdue recognition, but again, veterans like Ken don't expect recognition. It doesn't guide them or define them.

And while Ken is an extraordinary human who did extraordinary things, as a veteran, he is not unusual in dedicating his life to service. *That* is the veteran way.

DAV's nearly one million members are proof of that. These men and women, who already sacrificed so much in service—everything from precious years with family to their mental and physical well-being—don't stop serving.

That includes those dedicated servants here in [local city/state]. [Insert anecdote of local veteran serving the community]

<PAUSE>

On Veterans Day, we don't just recognize what our men and women did while in uniform; we celebrate and honor their *continued* service and contributions.

So when you say thank you to a veteran, consider adding "for all you've done and all you continue to do."

And please, don't stop there. Join them! If you're a veteran yourself and looking for ways to continue your service, seek out your local DAV chapter and get involved.

If you're a family member or just someone who wants to put "thank you for your service" to action, talk to your local DAV chapter or DAV Auxiliary unit. All of us can walk in the footsteps of heroes like Ken David and [insert local anecdote name].

<PAUSE>

To those veterans here today, ***thank you—for all you do and all you continue to do.*** To the mothers, fathers, spouses and children of our military men and women, ***thank you.*** And to all of those who show your gratitude through thoughtfulness and action, ***thank you.***

It is my privilege to celebrate you all today.

<END>



## VETERANS DAY SPEECH 2024 (*young audience*)

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Good morning/afternoon, [name of school/group].

[Thank event hosts and any special VIPs]

<PAUSE>

I am honored to be here in celebration of Veterans Day.  
To begin, I'd like anyone here who has a family member  
who was or is in the military to raise their hand.

If your mom or dad, grandma or grandpa, aunts or uncles,  
brothers or sisters, or anyone else in your family served,  
get those hands up.

<PAUSE>

If your hand is raised, ***thank you.*** I, and so many of our fellow Americans, appreciate your family member's service, and we recognize that having a loved one in the military can be difficult. So thank you.

If you don't know whether any of your family members served in the military, I encourage you to ask. If they served, ask them when and where and what they did in the military. I promise you'll be better for it, and it will mean the world to the veteran in your family that you care.

**<PAUSE>**

[Briefly talk about your own military service (branch, era, military occupation) and/or that of a family member]

**Millions** of men and women have served in the military since the founding of our country. All of them had different reasons for joining. They held different jobs and served in different places across the world. Some of them went to war. Many were injured or otherwise changed in service. Whatever their story is, they took a great risk and protected our country and our freedoms.

That's why we celebrate Veterans Day—to recognize and honor their courage, sacrifice and contributions. One simple but meaningful way to do that is to say “thank you for your service” to a veteran you know or meet.

But an even more powerful way to show your gratitude is to help the veterans in your families and your communities. An act of service can change their lives and yours.

Just ask Nihar Kummetha [Knee-har Koo-meh-tha].

The summer after his freshman year of high school, Nihar started volunteering at Department of Veterans Affairs medical facilities in his hometown. These facilities are where veterans go for nearly all of their medical needs, including for injuries and illnesses caused by their military service.

Nihar returned as a volunteer every summer after. He escorted veterans in wheelchairs from surgery and around the hospital. He helped set up a library where veterans could hang out, play games and read. He also helped organize events for homeless veterans and wellness programs.

Nihar said his summers volunteering for veterans and hearing their stories gave him a new appreciation for the men and women who served in the military. It also inspired him to want to work in medicine, specifically with veterans.



“Initially, I thought I was helping the veterans,” Nihar recently said. “But I think the veterans have truly helped give me a deeper sense of purpose.”

This fall, Nihar started his freshman year of college, where he plans to take the pre-med track. He can picture himself one day working at a veterans hospital as a doctor. And it all started as a summer volunteer.

**<PAUSE>**

This Veterans Day, I encourage you to follow Nihar’s lead. You can start by volunteering your time helping a veteran in your family or neighborhood. You can help them with yard work or errands, or you can volunteer at a local event for veterans. There are also opportunities to volunteer at your local medical center for veterans.

If you're 21 years old or younger and log a certain number of hours, you could qualify for one of DAV's college scholarships that recognize those who volunteer their time for veterans in DAV's name, like Nihar did. DAV recently awarded him a \$30,000 scholarship for his volunteering.

**<PAUSE>**

Or you could show your appreciation and raise money to support programs for veterans by participating in DAV's Field of Flags. Based on how much money you raise, you'll be sent a box of flags to display in your yard or anywhere you'd like. Schools and businesses can also participate.

If you like getting outside, consider participating in the annual DAV 5K race where veterans, families and supporters run, walk, ride or roll over 3 miles in support of veterans. The event is an opportunity to raise money and awareness for veterans. You can participate in person in Cincinnati or join the virtual race right here in your hometown. You can even organize your very own running team when you sign up at [DAV5K.org](https://www.DAV5K.org)

**<PAUSE>**

Lastly, if you raised your hand earlier, you can help support veterans like your family members by becoming a junior member of the DAV Auxiliary. The Auxiliary is made up primarily of veterans' family members and supports DAV's larger mission to ensure those who served are cared for. The Auxiliary offers more opportunities to volunteer for veterans and to say thank you with action.

**<PAUSE>**

I want to thank [event host/school/group] again for having me here today. Have a wonderful Veterans Day, and don't forget to reflect on what today is all about and how *you* can help veterans.

Thank you.

**<END>**