



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Northwest Chapter

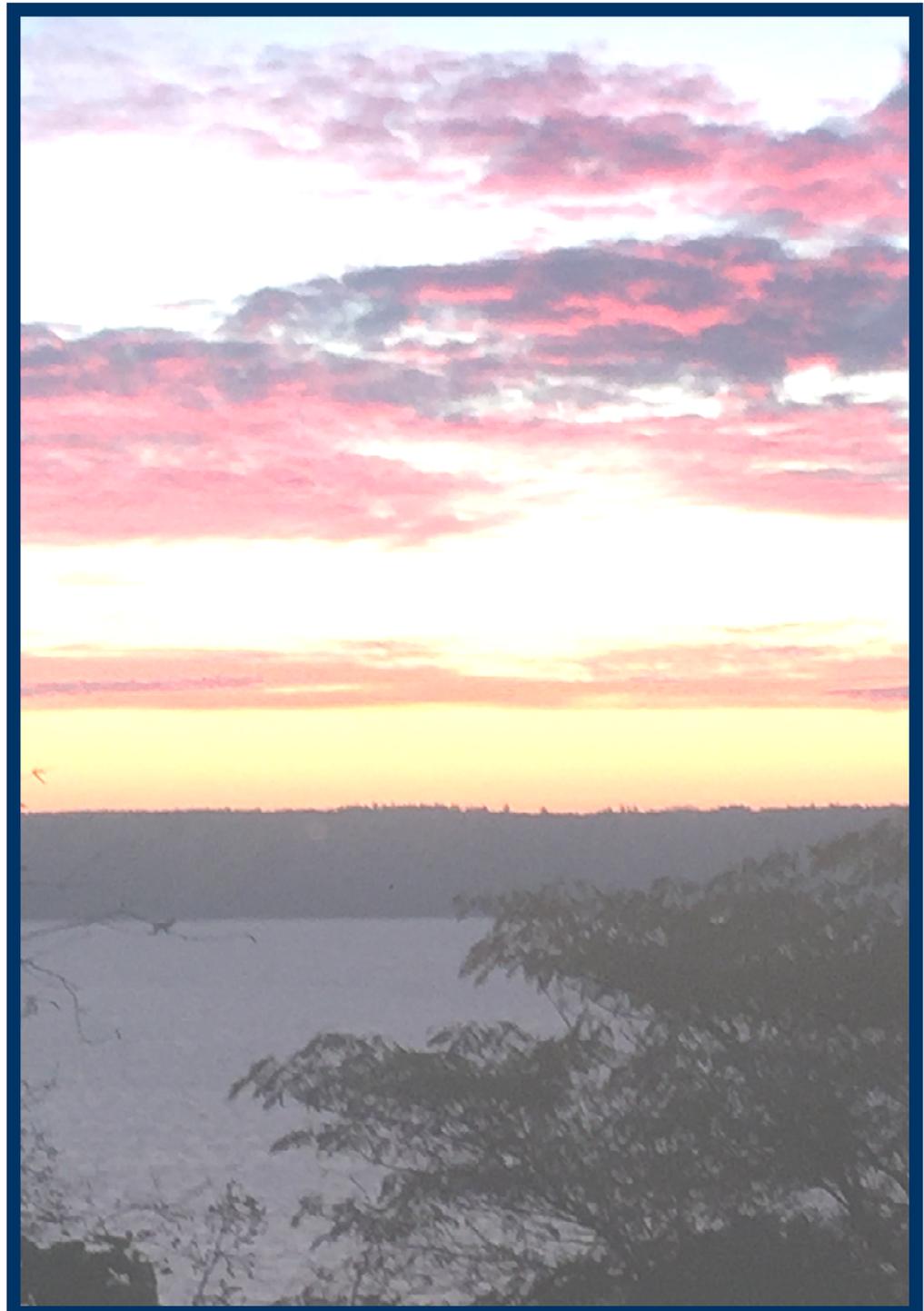
Volume XLIII Issue 3

NORTHWEST OUTPOST

February/March 2020

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The Paralyzed Veterans of America, a congressionally chartered veterans service organization founded in 1946, has developed a unique expertise on a wide variety of issues involving the special needs of our members-veterans of the armed forces who have experienced spinal cord injury or dysfunction.

PVA will use that expertise to be the leading advocate for:

- *Quality health care for our members,*
- *Research and education addressing spinal cord injury and dysfunction,*
- *Benefits available as a result of our members' military service,*
- *Civil rights and opportunities which maximize the independence of our members.*

To enable PVA to continue to honor this commitment, we must recruit and retain members who have the experience, energy, dedication, and passion necessary to manage the organization and ensure adequate resources to sustain the programs essential for PVA to achieve its mission.

The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America (NWPVA) a member chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America accomplishes it's mission by coordinated efforts through programs that:

- *Provide opportunities for health promotion, recreation, employment, sports and recreation, service and camaraderie for paralyzed veterans;*
- *Elevate society's information level about the attitudinal, physical and legal barriers that confront persons with disabilities in order to influence the removal of those barriers;*
- *Advocate for and monitor the delivery of high quality and appropriate health care benefits and service;*
- *Cooperate with and seek the support of other groups and individuals that share NWPVA's objective;*
- *Educate the public with the current and ongoing needs and current and past contributions of America's veterans.*

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Robert Brush

Happy New Year!



Happy New Year and Valentine's Day as we end a new calendar and begin a new month. January was forgettable. It rained, snowed, stormed, and was dark most of the days. The weather caused us to cancel our monthly Board meeting and now we may be faced with scheduling a Board meeting within the next two weeks electronically or by teleconference to authorize funding the for VA Winter Sports Clinic.

Therefore, if there is a request for financial support that does not meet the Chapter's Sports Funding Criteria, then it will be necessary to contact the Board and arrange a single issue Board meeting to review the individual and Team request. However, SCI Recreation is working closely with the team and projected funding may be very close to actual cost where a small amendment can be made to the existing budget at the regularly scheduled Board meeting the third Thursday at 12:00 PM (PST) at the Chapter Office, and for the March Board meeting too.

Every year we anticipate when we create an operating budget to fund our programs with a special emphasis on the Winter Sports Clinic and the PVA/VA National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Wheelchair basketball, golf, other sports and recreational activities, like shooting sports, are events that are focused on a member's whole health. This year the Board would have reviewed the request for financial support at the January meeting.

Finally, we are preparing to send our Advocacy/ Legislation Team to Washington, DC in March. Stay tuned to PVA and NWPVA's websites for legislative alerts to help the team if they ask you to contact your member of Congress while we are there. It is an effective means to present our issues to Congress.

Iwant to personally thank the board for their support in financing the flight to Las Vegas for Russ and myself. Our team had a super time challenging each other in wheelchair basketball with a winning outcome. There were some teams that we've played before and some that we haven't.

Thank you,
Matt Mickunas



Picture of the team celebrating while watching the Super Bowl at the Hard Rock Casino

Brent King The Dependable Fred Margiotta



A few years ago, I participated in the Summer Sports Clinic. I met an odd fellow that had a lot of the same interests as me. The clinic was a blast and we picked on each other quite a bit. The normal Army vs Navy type of ribbing and such.

When we returned home hunting season was coming up and he talked me into getting registered to hunt in Idaho. He had a blind we could go utilize that Idaho Fish and Game had placed on a land owners property we could hunt with permission.

The first day we took off early in the morning with a GPS coordinates. I could barely drive without getting ill. Fred had his full-length orange jump suit on that he used to wear for hunting in Missouri. I told him the prison get up had to disappear and soon!! We searched for the blind until mid-morning and we had no luck in finding it. The game warden (a Disabled Army Tanker Vet) had goofed and gave us bad directions. We later found the blind with the correct coordinates and decided to come back the next day and start over fresh.

No deer were coming in close enough the first day, but a few turkeys were curious and came right up to the hunting blind. We nailed a few of them and filled our tags. It was a rough field, so I sent Fred the walking quad out to fetch the birds. He picked up one of the birds to show it to me, stepped in a hole and he flopped on his back almost kneeing himself in the face. Fred ended up crawling 3 feet, throwing the bird, crawling 3 feet and throwing the bird until he used the trailer blind to help himself back to his feet. I was in tears laughing and should have made a video.

We've been great friends ever since! It's a good thing to find a fellow Veteran that is always there. Find that person that will make you get out of the house and stay active.

You can depend on Fred to show up for about anything he commits too and he'll show up about a half an hour early too. He's the N. Idaho DAV Commander, a Spokane VA volunteer several days a week, Knights of Columbus volunteer at church, Inland Northwest Disabled Veterans Sports Association member and one of the NWPVA's newest board of directors.



Matt Mickunas

2020 Advocacy Legislation Seminar



What our Team will be discussing this year:

Summary of Legislative Priorities

Protect Access to VA's Specialized Ser-

vices

Nearly 49,000 VA Staffing positions went unfilled last year. In September 2019, VA's Office of the Inspector General reported that 131 of 140 VA medical facilities had severe shortages for medical officers and 102 of 140 facilities had severe nurse shortages. Additional shortages in Human Resources Management positions were compounding the problem department-wide. However, VA's ability to meet the highest standard of care to our veterans relies on more than just having the right number of physicians and nurses. They also need qualified and well-trained housekeepers. Last year, at some VA medical facilities, staffing levels for environmental (custodial) employees dipped below 50 percent, which heightens the health risks to veteran patients, particularly those with serious illnesses or catastrophic injuries.

Low pay, a cumbersome hiring process and a lack of qualified applicants are all cited as contributing factors to this problem. The VA desperately needs to reform its hiring practices and pay structure to ensure the staff positions they offer are competitive with the private sector. Congress should approve legislation that enables the department to address pay disparities and improve the recruiting and retention of employees overall.

Improving Access to VA's Caregiver Supports

In 2020, PVA will also continue to advocate for improvements to VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers. The VA MISSION Act of 2018 (Public Law 115-182) expanded eligibility for the program to veterans who were injured in service prior to September 11, 2001. Before expanding, however, VA must certify that its IT system will be able to fully support the program. VA failed to meet its legislative deadline of October 2019 to provide that certification. We call on Congress to mandate that VA implement the caregiver expansion for eligible veterans who sustained a serious military-related injury before May 7, 1975, no later than June 2020. And to keep as close as possible with the original intent of the VA MISSION Act, all other eligible veterans should be allowed to apply for the program no later than October 1, 2021. We also support the **TEAM Veteran Caregivers Act (S.2216)** to ensure that future intake, downgrade, or discharge actions pertaining to the comprehensive caregiver program

are executed in a timely and impartial manner and the **S.O.S. Veterans Caregivers Act (H.R. 4451)** to expand caregiver benefits to veterans who have catastrophic illnesses as a result of their military service.

Access to IVF

Public Law 114-223, section 260, authorized VA to provide fertility counseling and treatment using assisted reproductive technology to veterans who have a service-connected disability that results in their inability to procreate without the use of fertility treatment. Currently, In-Vitro Fertilization (IVF) is available through a temporary program that must be reauthorized periodically, complicating efforts by eligible veterans to begin or extend their families. There are many limitations with the present program as well. PVA calls on Congress to pass further services to address the needs of women veterans whose injuries prevent a full-term pregnancy, as well as the needs of veterans whose injuries destroyed their ability to provide genetic material for IVF. PVA strongly supports the **Women Veterans and Families Health Services Act of 2019 (H.R. 955/S. 319)** which would address many of these issues.

Care of Women Veterans with SCI/D

Women make up 16.2 percent of today's active duty military forces and 19 percent of National Guard and Reserves. More than half a million women veterans are currently using VA health care services and as increasing numbers of women join the individual services, the number of women veterans using VA health care will only rise. VA needs to place a stronger focus on the needs of women veterans with spinal cord injuries or disorders (SCI/D). As Congress develops strategies and policies for VA to follow to improve care for the increasing number of women veterans, there needs to be an equal effort to ensure the needs of women veterans with SCI/D are factored into these decisions.

Improving Access to Adapted Automobiles

PVA supports improvements to the Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) Program and the Automobile Allowance Grant. Specifically, we support legislation allowing veterans to utilize this grant more than once for the purchase of an adapted vehicle. In addition, VA must continue to reimburse for adaptive equipment requirements as stated in statute. Veterans and service members should not have to submit an itemized list of this equipment to qualify for reimbursement. Finally, PVA supports improvements in the AAE program for veterans with non-service-connected disabilities.

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“Remembering Our Veterans”

NEVER FORGET!!!

Remembering our veterans should not be an occurrence on just patriotic holidays, but it should be cherished before and after those occasions. What’s so special about this argument? Mr. McGuire’s article, appropriate back then and years before, but also apropos to the years following.

As a preface to his article, it is safe to say that the sacrifices and contributions of our founding fathers have long been forgotten by some of our older and most of our younger generation. Especially those who have had no military service or unable or unwilling to retain the history and study of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.

Most have forgotten the genesis of our freedoms and liberties. The wars that led to the formation of our freedoms and liberties and those that followed remain significant in history. Those that followed prevented this nation from collapse due to the arrogance of power-hungry dictators who wanted control of the world. And so, please read the article with retaining the spirit in which it was written.

“George Washington once said that ‘a nation is judged by how well it treats its veterans.’

During most military conflicts the civilian population has rallied be-

hind the soldiers, sailors, airmen and marines. However, as the bombs cease, the documents of peace are signed, it is easy to forget the sacrifices of so many. Even fellow veterans sometimes forget the service of others.

As a child, I visited my grandfather's veteran's post, where he hung out with men he fought with in World War II.

On one of my visits, I saw a young man sitting alone. I asked my grandfather who he was, and another veteran said that he fought in a war that didn't count.

Later, I learned the man sitting alone served in Vietnam. I vowed that I would never let veterans be treated that way in my lifetime.

When soldiers take the oath to serve their country, the oath does not state which political party or which conflict they will serve. It simply states, "I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic;... I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and the orders of the officers appointed over me."

I can't imagine what it was like for those brave veterans to come home from an unpopular war only to be treated harshly by people who did not support the war.

When the warriors returned from the global war on terror, crowds awaited them at the airports, and I thought our country had moved

past the days of punishing veterans for political disagreements.

Unfortunately, recent events and budget constraints make veterans the ripe target of those who might forget the sacrifices.

As Washington moved once more into political gridlock, the first to suffer were our veterans. Memorials were closed, and benefits used for burial and supporting the family were denied.

We have a sacred duty to our veterans. Abandoning the families after they have lost a loved one is tragic. The Fisher House Foundation stepped up and fulfilled the obligation by funding the benefits this time, but there should not be a next time.

We are a nation of free because of the brave. I do not write these words to support or condemn any particular group or party. Instead, I believe George Washington's words are just as true today as they were 200 years ago.

Use this Veterans Day to thank a veteran, and never let their service and sacrifice be forgotten.”

Reprint of Mr. Rusty E. McGuire’s article from The Virginia Pilot, Nov. 10, 2013. At the time of writing his article, he was a Louisa County commonwealth's attorney and a major in the Virginia Army National Guard. He served in Opera-

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued from page 6)

tions Iraqi and Enduring Freedom.

And now, we are reminded that history continues to repeat itself,

many times over asking the same question "how will we be judged in history?" Over the next few issues, we shall explore how we, as veterans and members of the

NWPVA can campaign for continued visibility and transparency in support of veteran healthcare and benefit programs.

A Little Talked About Secret in the VA

For those who remembered the 1950's and 1960's, The VA was one of the foremost leaders in medical Research and Development (R&D). R&D plays a vital role in the Department of Veteran Affairs (DVAs) mission. This important program establishes the mainstay of the DVA Healthcare Administration throughout the country.

The Puget Sound Health Care System (PSHCS) affiliation with the University of Washington ensures that the professional staff and quality of care is of the highest caliber.

There are over 600 research projects ongoing. These world-class research projects have principal investigators encompassing virtually every major clinical department. Most of you know that Spinal Cord Injury (SCI) and Rehabilitation Medicine (Rehab) are the ones we at NWPVA are most familiar.

We are attempting to bring more visibility for care to the Spinal Cord Disease (SCD) veterans in our community. E.g. ALS. MS, et al.

At the helm of the R&D community is the Associate Chief of Staff, Dr. William A. Banks who oversees three major Divisions, five Science Core groups and four Compliance officers from the Hospital Directors office. The Divisions are Projects, Human Research Protection Program, and Operations. The Science Core groups and Compliance officers round off the community.

Dr. Banks has consented to be a contributor to writing a series of articles for the NW Outpost. For

those of you who wish to learn more about the R&D Program at the PSHCS, stay with us on future editions or, if your not a member, become either a regular or Associate member. If you wish to send questions in for either Dr, Banks or me, please contact me at my email address:

ghppr1@yahoo.com. Please provide me with your question or comment (s) and an email address where we can respond back to you with an answer.





Paralyzed Veterans
of America

WASHINGTON UPDATE

Recent news regarding legislation and regulatory actions affecting veterans and people with disabilities.

Written and produced by Paralyzed Veterans of America - Government Relations Department

December 20, 2019

Volume 25, Number 12

Update On Caregiver Expansion

Under the VA MISSION Act, veterans who sustained a serious military-related injury before May 7, 1975 were supposed to be able to enroll in VA's Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) starting this fall. But, as we have previously reported, VA was unable to launch its new management system for the program so veterans will have to wait until at least June 2020 for entry. The timeline shift also pushes back eligibility for families of veterans who served from 1975 to 2001, from fall 2021 to fall 2022 at the earliest.

Meanwhile, VA is current working on new guidance for the program that could constrain eligibility for the VA's comprehensive caregiver program. Additionally, the current moratorium on discharges from the program and decreases in assistance will eventually be lifted. Thus, Congress needs to take steps now to ensure veterans applying for this program are

evaluated through a process that is systematic and fair.

S.2216, the Transparency and Effective Accountability Measures for Veteran Caregivers Act, would require VA to allow veterans to identify more than one caregiver in their health record and to notify veterans' caregivers of clinical determinations made concerning the veteran's eligibility for caregiver program. Any notification must be by letter and include the following information:

- A summary of the issues adjudicated;
- A summary of the evidence considered by VA;
- A summary of the applicable laws and regulations;
- Identification of findings favorable to the claimant;
- In the case of a denial, identification of elements not satisfied leading to the denial;
- An explanation of how to obtain or access evidence used in making the decision; and
- If applicable, identification of the criteria that must be satisfied to grant service connec-

tion of the next higher level of compensation.

S. 2216 would also require VA to temporarily extend caregiver benefits to any veteran who has been determined not longer clinically eligible for an additional 90 days after the date of notification.

The bill is sponsored by Senator Gary Peters (D-MI) and has 14 cosponsors.
Sen. Blackburn, Marsha [R-TN]*
Sen. Kaine, Tim [D-VA]
Sen. Moran, Jerry [R-KS]
Sen. Sinema, Kyrsten [D-AZ]
Sen. Jones, Doug [D-AL]
Sen. Durbin, Richard J. [D-IL]
Sen. Alexander, Lamar [R-TN]
Sen. McCally, Martha [R-AZ]
Sen. Rosen, Jacky [D-NV]
Sen. Collins, Susan M. [R-ME]
Sen. Murkowski, Lisa [R-AK]
Sen. Klobuchar, Amy [D-MN]
Sen. Merkley, Jeff [D-OR]
Sen. Cortez Masto, Catherine [D-NV]

*** Denotes Original Cosponsor**

PVA has been actively promoting this important legislation. If your senators are not listed here, please contact their offices and urge them to cosponsor S.2216. There is not currently a House companion for this legislation.

Know Your Social Security Act Introduced

PVA has endorsed legislation introduced by House Ways and Means Social Security Subcommittee Chairman John Larson (D-CT), Ways and Committee Member Vern Buchanan (R-FL), Senate Finance Committee Ranking Member Ron Wyden (D-OR), and Finance Committee Member Bill Cassidy, M.D. (R-LA) titled, "Know Your Social Security Act" (H.R. 5306/S.2989). This legislation will clarify the requirement for the Social Security Administration (SSA) to mail an annual Social Security statement to

all workers ages 25 and older with covered earnings, who are not receiving Social Security benefits. Since Fiscal year 2011, SSA has failed to mail annual statements, citing limited operating budgets, even though in 1989 and 1990 Congress enacted requirements for SSA to provide such a statement each year.

In a press release, Chairman Larson said, "Social Security is our nation's foundation to a solid retirement. Americans who contribute to Social Security should receive an update every year so they

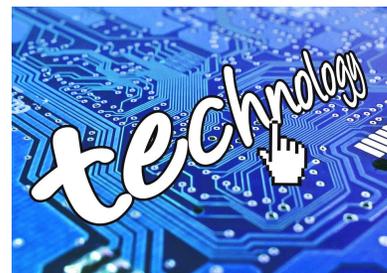
know what benefits they are earning and can plan for their retirements. No matter what happens in the stock market, Social Security will always be there for them. I'm proud to introduce this bipartisan, bicameral legislation alongside Ranking Member Wyden, Senator Cassidy and Congressman Buchanan." The House bill was subsequently marked up by the Ways and Means Committee on December 11, and now awaits a vote in the full House of Representatives.

Subcommittee On VA Technology Modernization Holds Roundtable

On December 11, Roscoe Butler, PVA's Associate Legislative Director, participated in a roundtable discussion with the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, Subcommittee on Technology Modernization titled, "Veterans Engagement in Technology Modernization at the Department of Veterans Affairs." The purpose of the roundtable was to hear from VSOs about how VA has engaged VSOs at the national and local levels on the development, implementation, and impact of technology projects at VA.

Mr. Butler informed the Subcommittee that PVA National staff have attended numerous meetings at VA regarding various technology projects. Unfortunately, many of these meetings lacked sufficient detail to help us understand the current status of program development and implementation. Although some of PVA's field staff have reported receiving briefings from VA at the local level regarding IT modernization projects, mainly regarding telehealth, the majority have indicated they had no engagement with VA regarding many of the key technology modernization initiatives underway at VA today.

Mr. Butler emphasized that IT modernization projects like the new electronic medical record, expansion of the caregiver program, and the new community care program are all important projects. He called on VA to be more transparent at the national and local levels with VSOs about these as well as other important IT modernization projects.



IATA Wheelchair Assistance Workshop

On December 3, Senior Associate Advocacy Director, Lee Page, attended the International Air Transport Association's (IATA) workshop on wheelchair and disability assistance at JFK International Airport. The workshop was supported by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey and the JFK Terminal 4 Airlines Consortium. Attendees included representatives from the U.S. Department of Transportation, airlines, airports, travel agents, and disability organizations.

The Air Carrier Access Act of 1986 requires airlines to support disabled passengers in navigating the airport experience. No description or documentation of the disability being accommodated is required. According to the airlines, a significant percentage of per-

sons requesting wheelchair support are not technically disabled. Rather many people are asking for wheelchair support in order to avoid walking long distances, to get through security lines faster, or for help in finding their gate or baggage claim area.

Wheelchair assistance represents a significant and growing cost to airlines. At JFK alone, it is estimated that airlines provide more than 1.4 million wheelchairs pushes each year (out of total of approximately 65 million passengers), with an average cost of \$35 per push (\$70 round trip). Other major U.S. airports are seeing a similar volume of requests.

A 2018 IATA survey found that the number of wheelchair assistance requests increased by 30 percent globally between 2016 and 2017. The survey found that the reasons for request were age (elderly pas-

sengers), distance (unable to walk), language challenges, temporary disabilities (medical conditions), and wayfinding (worried about being lost in the airport).

The main objectives of the workshop were to: 1) assess the magnitude of the wheelchair assistance problem; 2) find ways to reduce the rate of wheelchair assistance by advocating for alternative service to those passengers who are not disabled but need assistance to navigate the airport; 3) promote dialogue between disability associations, policymakers, and industry for a regulatory framework that eliminates operational complexity and increases access to air transport for persons with disabilities; and 4) analyze the results of the workshop and provide recommendations for the ways to address this challenge.

Virtual Appeal Hearings Coming

In the near future, veterans who are challenging decisions made by VA may be able to make their case via virtual hearings. The Board of Veterans' Appeals (BVA) and VA's Office of Information and Technology have been working on a system to provide nationwide availability of virtual hearings that veterans can access using their mobile phone or laptop via the VA Video Connect

app. The virtual hearings are based on the [Veterans Health Administrations Telehealth Platform](#) which eliminates the need for travel and lets veterans participate in their appeals hearings from the comfort of their homes.

PVA endorsed the use of telehearings by the Board in testimony to the House Veterans' Affairs Committee earlier this year. It can be very challenging for many veterans to travel to a VA Regional Of-

fice and the use of telehearings may increase the likelihood of veterans making their BVA hearings as scheduled. It could be particularly advantageous for veterans whose travel options are impeded by catastrophic disabilities.



Helping The Survivors Of ALS Veterans

Senators Chris Coons (D-DE) and Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) along with Representatives Gilbert R. Cisneros, Jr. (D-CA) and Brian Fitzpatrick (R-PA) recently introduced legislation to help ensure surviving spouses and families of veterans who die from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) receive the full benefits they are due.

S. 3091 and H.R. 4747 the Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2019, would entitle Dependency and

Indemnity Compensation (DIC) eligible survivors of veterans who died of service-connected ALS to an additional \$246 per month in DIC. The extra payment is commonly referred to in the veterans community as the “DIC kicker.”

Under current law, the higher rate of DIC is only payable if the veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. VA regulations recognize ALS as a presumptive service-connected disease and, due to its aggressive nature, it is automati-

cally rated at 100 percent once service connected. However, because the average life expectancy for a person with ALS is two to five years, many spouses of deceased veterans with ALS rarely qualify for the additional DIC benefit given the eight-year requirement.

PVA Chapters and members are encouraged to contact their elected officials and ask them to support this important legislation.

Reforming Disaster Recovery Act Moves To Senate

On November 18, in a strong bipartisan vote of 290 to 118, the House of Representatives approved H.R. 3702, the Reforming Disaster Recovery Act of 2019. This measure has been a key focus of the Disaster Housing Recovery Coalition (DHRC), of which PVA is a part. Sponsored by Congressman Al Green (D-TX) and Congresswoman Ann Wagner (R-MO), the bill includes many critical reforms proposed by DHRC members to help ensure that the federal govern-

ment’s long-term disaster recovery program-Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery (CDBG-DR) grants-better serves the most vulnerable survivors and their communities. If enacted, the bill would help target CDBG-DR resources to survivors with the greatest needs, ensure greater data transparency and oversight, protect civil rights and fair housing, and encourage mitigation and resiliency.

With the House bill passed, attention now moves to the Senate, where Senator Brian Schatz (D-HI)

and Senator Todd Young (R-IN) have introduced the Senate version of the bill. That bill, S.2301, has been assigned to the Senate Banking, Housing, and urban Affairs Committee.



Vanity and Charity By: Distinguished Washington General

Skip Dregs

Seldom are these two words ever put together to make sense. But when the opportunity to create a Seattle Seahawks and Sounders FC vanity vehicle license plate and the part of the price for pride was a donation to charities that continue to evolve. Here are the facts:

Q. When can I get my plate?

A. The plates went on sale on January 1, 2014. I have a fun time spotting the highest number plate I see on the road and multiply its donation to charities. I recently saw a #12,000+ number Seahawks plate and a #4,000+ Sounders plate.

Q. How do I order? Can I buy online?

A. You can purchase special license plates by completing a special license plate application available on the Department of Licensing's (DOL) website (www.dol.wa.gov). You may either mail the completed form with a check or money order to the DOL headquarters office in Olympia, or bring it to your local vehicle licensing office. You cannot purchase special license plates online.

Q. How much will the plates cost?

A. Sounders FC or Seahawks license plate will each cost \$67.75 for passenger vehicles, \$49.75 for motorcycles / small trailers, and \$55.75 for a large trailer. This does not include any sub-agent or renewal fees that may be required. This fee represents the standard DOL plate fees plus a \$40 special license plate

fee. Of this \$40, \$28 goes to the organization's charity and is tax-deductible.

Q. Do the Seahawks/Sounders FC make any money from the sale of the plates?

A. No.

Q. Which organizations will benefit from the sale of the Seahawks and Sounders FC license plates?

A. Net proceeds from Seahawks plate sales will go to InvestED (www.invested.org), a Seattle-based non-profit that partners with schools statewide to help students from low-income families pay for clothes, shoes, school activity cards, testing fees and other student needs.

The bulk of the proceeds from Sounders FC plate sales will benefit Washington State Mentors (www.wamentors.org), a public/private partnership based in Issaquah that provides grants and assistance to youth organizations across the state.

A third non-profit, the Association of Washington Generals (www.wagenerals.org), is to receive a smaller portion of the Sounders FC plate sales. The AWG recognizes outstanding individuals and promotes a variety of civic and veterans causes.

The Association of Washington Generals is a service organization founded in 1970 by a group of Seattle-area business leaders in collaboration with then-Lt. Governor John A. Cherberg to recognize individuals who have performed outstanding service to Washing-

ton State. Today, the Association continues its long legacy of recognizing service while also working to cultivate leadership among Washingtonians through educational programs, public service, and international engagement.

In 2005, the State Legislature codified the organization in state law, charging it with a number of important roles: the members of the Association act as "official ambassadors of trade, tourism, and goodwill for the state", and must work to "expand educational, sports, and employment opportunities for youth, **veterans, and people with disabilities.**" The Legislature also linked the Association with the Office of the Lt. Governor, creating a close partnership between the organization and state government.

The Association of Washington Generals is collaborating with the Office of the Lieutenant Governor on a number of efforts aimed at supporting programs and expanding opportunities for underserved students, people with disabilities, and **veterans** in Washington State.

The Board of the Association of Washington Generals is comprised of Washingtonians who have distinguished themselves through exceptional public service, dedication to civic achievement, and high moral character. The Board of Directors of the Association of Washington Generals is comprised of up to 30 individuals who have the honor of being a Washington General. The current Governor, Lieuten-

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(Continued from page 12)

ant Governor, and Secretary of State serve as non-voting, ex-officio board members.

Here are some of the programs AWG supported through the vanity (pride) of Seattle Seahawks and Sounders FC fans who purchased a special license plate:

HERO-CON!

The Association of Washington Generals helped sponsor Hero-Con! 2017, a unique event created and administrated by the Exceptional Family Member Program, serving families with special needs at JBLM. Hero-Con! is a call to adventure in which participants engage in an interactive story that takes them on a hero's quest through recreational arts. Participants engage in a world of wonder by completing a series of hero trainings that include archery, sword play, martial arts, dance, and magic.

COMPASSION 2020

[Compassion 2020](#) is a Washington-based program established by the Association of Washington Generals in partnership with the Office of Lt. Governor Cyrus Habib, which will include an in-person dialogue with the Dalai Lama on the topic of promoting compassionate leadership in the next generation. As part of the program, six Washington-based high school students will travel to India to participate in the conversation, and upon their return home, they will implement "compassion projects" in their communities.

SKIES UNLIMITED

The Association of Washington Generals provides scholarships to

children of military families stationed at Joint Base Lewis McChord to attend [SKIES](#) (Schools of Knowledge, Inspiration, Exploration & Skills) Unlimited classes. These classes are administered through the Morale, Welfare and Recreation Office at JBLM, and provide youth the opportunity to be active in extracurricular activities such as dance, gymnastics, karate and boxing, music and art programs. In 2017, the Generals funded nineteen of these scholarships.

WASHINGTON NATIONAL GUARD FAMILY PROGRAMS

The Association of Washington Generals is proud of its steadfast commitment to attend to the needs of our nation's uniformed service members, veterans, and military families. As such, the Association of Washington Generals provides contributions to the Washington National Guard Family Programs for various initiatives that support the families of our National Guard members. These programs include:

- Holiday Gift Cards for National Guard Families & Youth
- Washington National Guard Youth Camps
- Operation Purple Summer Day Camps
- Month of the Military Child Scholarships to the Russell Wilson Passing Academy

BOUNDLESS WASHINGTON

[Boundless Washington](#) is a statewide program that integrates fun, challenging outdoor activities with leadership development training for young people with disabilities in Washington state. The program, set to launch in the winter of 2020, was established by the Association of Washington

Generals through a partnership with the Office of the Lt. Governor, Outdoors For All, and No Barriers.

THE MISSION CONTINUES

[The Mission Continues](#) is an organization that brings together veterans in the spirit of service and empowerment. Their goal is to engage veterans who are adjusting to life at home, connect them with other service members, and find purpose through community impact. The Association of Washington Generals sponsors service projects that The Mission Continues Service Platoons in the greater Seattle area are working on.

Recently, the Seattle 2nd Platoon completed an AWG-sponsored project at Quil Ceda Tulalip Elementary School, in Marysville, WA. The Platoon created a community space at the elementary school, which included a cultural focal point of a hand-painted Tribal Nations Map and built six beautiful benches, one for each grade to be responsible to maintain.

AWG sponsored supplies for the Seattle 1st Platoon, Martin Luther King (MLK) Day of Service Project at Ebey's Landing, a National Historic Reserve, located on Whidbey Island. The 1st Platoon worked with the National Park Service to clear brush at the site and remodel the space's interpretive site.

As the fan base for the Seahawks and Sounders continues to grow, hopefully, more fans who own a vehicle will purchase a special vanity plate, and help AWG make Washington State and the world a better place to be through charity.

It's All In the Curl - PVA Members And Adaptive Curling Is Ice Cold Fun

By: Robert Clinton

Looking for a recreational sport you can do, have great time, socialize with fellow veterans, and interact with some of the most supportive volunteers anywhere? And did I mention the refreshments provided by the volunteers? Some of the best this side of happy hour! Then the place to go is the Granite Curling Club (GCC) located in North Seattle at 1440 N 128th Street, established way back in 1961 and still going strong!

The 2019-20 Veteran's curling season, hosted by the GCC, started in September and will finish up in May just before the ice is melted. There are 3 more sessions left this year you can take part in. Practices are open to PVA members and other veterans with Spinal Cord injury and Disease who use either a power or manual wheelchair as well as veterans with other disabilities such as blindness. Every practice begins with registration, a presentation for beginners on the basics of the sport of curling, cleaning of your wheels to protect the condition of the ice, and organizing teams of four, then dress warm, take your gloves, it's time to get out on the *curling sheet* (a.k.a. the ice) and have FUN!

According to Wikipedia curling is an ancient sport first played in Scotland in approximately 1511 on shallow frozen ponds using flat bottomed stones of different sizes without any kind of handle, a far cry from the official polished granite *rocks* we use today. The sport is still popular in Scotland and is now played all over the world, especially in English speaking countries such as Canada, New Zealand, and the U.S. where, in the past, large numbers of Scottish immigrants settled. Curling became a Winter Olympic sport in 1998 and as a result has become increasingly popular world-wide. The playing surface of ice is carefully prepared to be as flat and level as possible and is called the *curling sheet*. The Granite Curling club has a rectangular area of ice divided into five side-by-side sheets. Two teams of four players each slide two heavy granite 42-pound *rocks also called stones* down the sheet toward a target called the *house*. Points are scored only by one team for the

rocks that come to rest closest to the center of the house called the *button* at the end of each sheet.

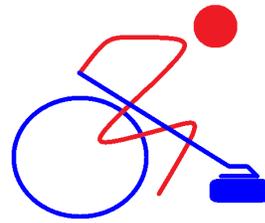
Wheelchair players use a delivery stick to slide the *rock* down the sheet applying a slight rotation right or left to *curl* their rock in a hook-like path down the sheet toward the *button*. GCC volunteer instructors work with participants to teach the basics of delivery and strategy. Fellow participants brace each other's wheelchairs when delivering the rock to allow for stability and maximum delivery accuracy. The Goldilocks" shot must be just right, not too hard, not too soft, just right to come to rest inside the button scoring points for their team. Curling is a game of skill and strategy, as each player tries to score, or block the other team from having a clear path to the button. Players, as they advance beyond the beginner stage, use a designated team member as a sweeper who sweeps the area just in front of the rock attempting to influence its speed and direction.

The next session for the 2019-2020 curling season begins on February 29, 2020, from 1300 to 1600. If you would like more information on attending, or how the game is played, please contact Bob Clinton bclinton.va@gmail.com or Anne Peterson Anne.Peterson2@va.gov We hope to see you there!





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Care System



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Granite Curling Club

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4/11/20

5/23/20



If interested, contact

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vance.pease@va.gov

or 206-277-1648

Availability is Limited

February

- 14th St. Valentine's Day 
- 17th Presidents Day
- 20th Chapter Membership/BOD Meeting
12:00 Noon Chapter Office
SCI Ward Christmas Party
5:00 PM

March

- 8th Daylight Savings Time Begins
- 17th St. Patrick's Day 
- 19th Chapter Membership/BOD Meeting
12:00 Noon Chapter Office
SCI Ward Pizza Party 5:00 PM
Spring Begins

(Continued from page 5)

Increasing Access to Housing Adaptations

VA's Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant program provides home modifications for catastrophically disabled veterans with service-connected disabilities to help them live barrier-free lives. PVA supports legislation to improve VA's specially adaptive housing grant programs. **The Ryan Kules Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act (H.R. 3504)** and the **Paul Benne Specially Adaptive Housing Improvement Act (S. 2022)** would allow VA to prioritize a veteran's SAH grant if he or she has been diagnosed with a terminal illness to include, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Due to the aggressive nature of ALS, it is imperative that veterans are afforded the opportunity for an increased quality of life while they still have the ability to enjoy it. This legislation would also increase the current amount of the SAH grant to better match the cost of construction and moving into a different residence due to not being able to afford to make the necessary modifications, or having to shoulder the burden of paying for the modifications themselves. H.R. 3504 has passed the House of Representatives and we call on the Senate to pass similar legislation.

Helping Surviving Spouses of ALS Veterans

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC) eligible survivors can receive an additional \$284.57 per month in DIC if the veteran was rated totally disabled for a continuous period of at least eight years immediately preceding death. The extra payment is commonly referred to as the "DIC kicker." VA regulations recognize amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS) as a presumptive service-connected disease and, due to its aggressive nature, it is automatically rated at 100 percent once service connected. However, because the average life expectancy for a person with ALS is two to five years, many spouses of deceased veterans with ALS rarely qualify for the additional DIC benefit given the eight-year requirement. PVA supports the **Justice for ALS Veterans Act of 2019 (H.R. 4748/S. 3091)**, which would entitle surviving spouses of veterans who died of Service-connected ALS to the DIC kicker.

Improve Access to Air Travel for Passengers with Disabilities

The Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA) prohibits discrimination based on disability in air travel. Despite progress, too many passengers with disabilities regularly encounter significant barriers. Enforcement of ACAA protections is limited to administrative action and civil fines. PVA supports passage of the **Air Carrier Access Amendments Act (H.R. 1549/S. 669)**. This legislation

(Continued on page 17)

NWPVA Medical Equipment Distribution Program Ends

Effective **immediately**, the NWPVA will no longer receive or distribute hospital/medical equipment and supplies. To those individuals and companies who have donated equipment and/or supplies in the past, we thank you for your wonderful giving spirit. Know that, you have been a godsend to those recipients of your donations.

(Continued from page 16)

would strengthen enforcement of the ACAA by requiring referral of certain passenger-filed complaints to the U.S. Department of Justice and establishment of a private right of action. It would also finally ensure that new airplanes are designed to accommodate the needs of people with disabilities by requiring airlines to meet defined accessibility standards. These standards will address safe and effective boarding and deplaning, visually accessible announcements, seating accommodations, lavatories, and better stowage of options for assistive devices.

Protect and Increase Compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act

This year marks the 30th anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). The ADA stands as the most comprehensive civil rights law affecting people with disabilities ever enacted. In addition to fighting against efforts to require notification of ADA violations prior to seeking legal action, PVA supports legislation that promotes compliance with the ADA by providing additional resources to help businesses comply with the ADA. The **Disability Employment Incentive Act (H.R. 3992/S. 255)** would expand tax credits and deductions that are available for employers who hire and retain employees with disabilities and to make their places of business more accessible, including their internet or telecommunications services. Furthermore, we support the **Disabled Access Credit Expansion Act (H.R. 45/S.290)**. This legislation would also increase the tax incentives that help businesses with ADA compliance. Additionally, it would increase funding for the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) ADA mediation program and require DOJ to make a report to Congress about the types of requests it receives regarding ADA compliance.

Preserve and Strengthen Social Security Disability Insurance

Without timely congressional action, the Social Security trust fund will run dry in 2035. At that time, beneficiaries could see up to a 20 percent reduction in their retirement, disability, or survivor benefits. The only legislative proposal determined by Social Security actuaries to extend the life of this essential social insurance program will into the 21st century without cuts to benefits is the **Social Security 2100 Act (H.R. 860)**. PVA supports this legislation, because it is a balanced package of necessary benefit and revenue improvements.



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- DO YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY?

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Seattle, WA 98122

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www.seattleadaptivesports.org

info@seattleadaptivesports.org

Happy Birthday!

February

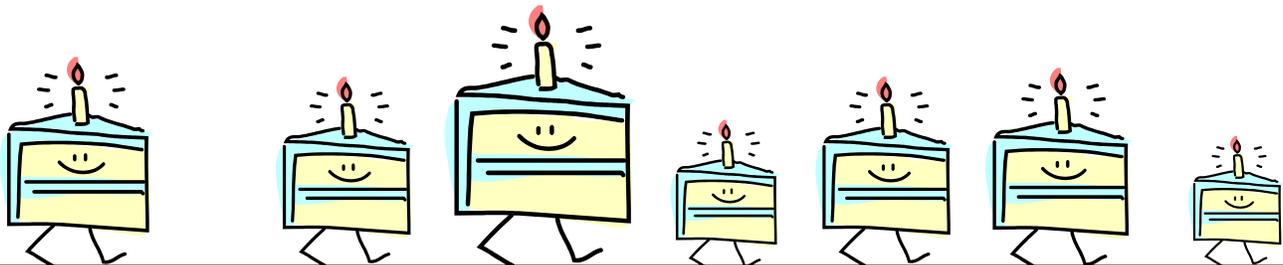
Michael Zirkle.....1st
 David Fried.....3rd
 Kane Basie.....3rd
 Gary Humiston.....3rd
 M. McClanahan.....4th
 Gary Bunch.....5th
 Ralph Caine.....9th
 Jeffrey Brandt.....9th
 Aaron Hastings.....9th
 Patrick Pancoast..10th
 Darrel Reetz.....10th
 Robert King.....10th
 Weldon Lee.....11th
 Jason Hunter.....12th
 Robert Clinton.....14th
 Patrick Mus.....14th
 Russell Elmore.....15th
 William Lowery.....17th
 Donna McKay.....17th
 Craig Dinklage.....17th

A. Mulitauaopele.....17th
 Lenora Stern.....18th
 Ralph Rasmussen...18th
 Clifford Chamberlin.18th
 Joel Knox.....18th
 Debbie Swinyer.....18th
 Randy Reece.....18th
 Richard Grubb.....19th
 Anthony Lier.....21st
 John Lind.....21st
 Patrick Tracy.....21st
 Joe Sapienza.....23rd
 Brian Boucher.....23rd
 Robert Behnke.....25th
 William Devine.....26th
 Richard Koharian....26th
 Andrew Bartkowski.26th
 Karl Hugill.....26th
 Wesley Hixon.....26th
 Timothy Tighe.....28th

March

Robert Cinqmars.....4th
 Rita Shirk.....5th
 Richard Gori.....5th
 Danny Porter.....6th
 Gordon Gilchrist.....7th
 Jim Siburg, Jr.....9th
 Richard Linderman.10th
 Timothy Francis.....10th
 Joe Schwab.....11th
 Robbie Smith.....11th
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 Gregorio Jimenez...12th
 Eugene Powers.....12th
 Sharee Daniels.....13th
 Skip Dreps.....16th
 Edward Locke.....18th

Joseph Brownfield..19th
 Anthony Pasinato....19th
 Dennis Levi.....20th
 Joseph Garshae.....20th
 Paul Trumbull.....22nd
 Shawn Sullivan.....22nd
 George DeWolf.....24th
 Brian Conrad.....25th
 Ignatius Stiffarm....26th
 James Downer.....26th
 Parvin Hallmark.....27th
 Mark Zdeb.....27th
 Benjamin Dodge.....28th
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