

NORTHWEST OUTPOST

Northwest Chapter

Volume XLIV Issue 6

October/November 2022

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Member Speedy Award Recipient Andrew Bechtle



Senior Benefits Advisor Michael Killen

SCI Office 1660 S. Columbian Way Room 1-B-163 206-768-5415

Dan Stewart NSO Candidate

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Staff

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Our Mission

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.

Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

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President's Column Page 4

Matthew Mickunas Presidents Message



f you're in the area, please come and join the Northwest Chapter; We will be wheeling, walking, and riding in the biggest event of the year, the "Auburn Veterans' Day Parade", come join us in Auburn Saturday, November 5th. Participants & Members need to be on-site at 9:45am, just look for the chapter parade car below in the starting line-up.



Did You Know, In History; October & November

October 1, 1908 - Henry Ford's Model T, a "universal car" designed for the masses, went on sale for the first time.

October 2, 1968 - California's Redwood National Park was established. Redwoods are the tallest of all trees, growing up to 400 feet (120 meters) during a lifetime that can span 2,000 years.

October 6, 1927 - The first "talkie" opened in New York. *The Jazz Singer* starring Al Jolson was the first full-length feature film using spoken dialogue.

November 1, 1848 - The first medical school for women opened in Boston. The Boston Female Medical School was founded by Samuel Gregory with just twelve students. In 1874, the school merged with the Boston University School of Medicine, becoming one of the first co-ed medical schools.

November 2, 1947 - The first and only flight of Howard Hughes' "Spruce Goose" flying boat occurred in Long Beach Harbor, California. It flew about a mile at an altitude of 70 feet. Costing \$25 million, the 200-ton plywood eight-engine Hercules was the world's largest airplane, designed, built and flown by Hughes. It later became a tourist attraction alongside the Queen Mary ship at Long Beach and has since been moved to Oregon.

November 9, 1989 - The Berlin Wall was opened up after standing for 28 years as a symbol of the Cold War. The 27.9 mile wall had been constructed in 1961.

Women Veterans' Column Page 5

Tracy Reddick

45th Anniversary



ur Northwest Chapter has just celebrated our 45th Anniversary. I'd like to thank the manager Diego, of Novilhos Brazilian Steakhouse Restaurant, for the wonderful hospitality. The food was amazing and the service was second to none. There was live music during the dinner meal and a comedian for a half hour of entertainment. The Young Marines from the Kent Washington area did a wonderful job presenting the colors. All that participated had a wonderful time and had a full tummy to prove it. I like to take this opportunity to thank everyone that came together to help plan, execute,

and participate with us during our glorious celebration.

The Northwest Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America champions and honors Veterans of the United States of America by taking action to improve the lives of U.S. Military Veterans and all who have experienced Spinal Cord Injury, Disease/Dysfunction, and Disability. We do this through advocacy for proper health care, improving public accessibility, communication, education, and the promotion of special activities, recreations, and sports events. Together we are effective partners for life; ensuring each Veteran receives full benefits earned through their service to our nation.

PVA was originally formed in 1946, the Northwest Chapter was incorporated in Washington State in 1977. The Paralyzed Veterans of America and its Chapters were chartered by the United States Congress in 1971. This Charter entitles Washington State specific rights and responsibilities that we take very seriously and enable us to serve our Veterans daily throughout or great Nation. The Northwest Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization as defined by the Internal Revenue Service. We serve the US Military, -- Veterans who endure Spinal Cord Injury, and Spinal Cord Disease/Dysfunction.

Paralyzed Veterans of America National Vice President and Chair of its Anita Bloom Women Veterans Health Committee Tammy Jones released the following statement applauding the Senate for passage of the Making Advances in Mammography and Medical Options for Veterans Act (also known as the MAMMO Act). "The legislation, which now awaits further action in the House, would expand lifesaving mammograph screenings. The MAMMO Act directs the Department of Veterans Affairs to conduct a study accessing to mammography services for disabled women veterans. It would also ensure community-based providers, who receive VA patients, have accessible mammogram equipment and are informed on best practices for screening paralyzed and disabled veterans".





45th Annual NWPVA Awards & Banquet



By: Brent King Hunting Season

all is upon on us and some of us enjoy the outdoors and also partake in hunting. I started deer hunting with my dad at age 10 harvesting my first deer with a model 94 open sight lever action 30-30 Winchester rifle with the stock cut down.

I guess I've never lost the bug to get outdoors and hunting. Immediately returning home from rehab I was forced to hunt. My cousins picked me up and made me go. Best thing they could have done. After a paralysis injury you have to find what works for your situation. If you think outside the box, you will find a way to make it work if the desire is there. I find that staying in shape is a game changer. The stronger you are and the lighter you are the better.

I've done deer hunting from behind a tree, utilizing ground blinds or trailer blinds. Patience is the key and getting your set up ready before the season if possible. Most land owners have no problem letting a Disabled Veteran hunt if approach them and just ask. Leaving the land the way you found it will gain respect and possibly a return place to hunt each year.

There are many hunts across the US for Disabled Veterans if you just look for them. I have been out with Hunting With Heroes Wyoming and harvested an antelope and a nice bull elk too. <u>WWW.HUNTINGWITHHEROES</u>
.ORG

The best thing to do if possible is to go with a guide that has no problem with your situation. I utilize a few guides for dove, quail, pheasant, ducks and geese. It isn't always cheap, but your success rate is typically higher.

I have also hunted in Africa. This was a bit higher budget hunt and quite a long-distance travel. I went for 30 days in 2003. The taxidermy bill was like the Jelly of the Month Club.....It was the gift that keeps on giving year round \$\$\$!

Get out there and be safe. Know your game laws, know what is legal to hunt in the area and make sure your season is open. Disability or not, the Game Warden will still give you a citation.







Hunting We Will Go!

Dan Stewart



The NEW PACT Act: Delivering Critical Health Care and Other Benefits

n a major victory for Veterans and their families and caregivers, President Biden signed the Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring Our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 on August 10, 2022.

Named in honor of Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson, a decorated combat medic who died from a rare form of lung cancer, this historic legislation will help deliver more timely benefits and services to more than 5 million Veterans—across all generations—who may have been impacted by toxic exposures while serving our country.

The PACT Act is a comprehensive bill to address the health impacts of those who served overseas and were exposed to toxic hazards, such as burn pits, radiation, and Agent Orange. It offers expanded VA health care eligibility for many Veterans and their survivors who were not previously covered by VA care.

The VA has added more than 20 burn pit and other toxic exposure presumptive conditions based on the PACT Act. This change expands benefits for Vietnam, Gulf War era and post-9/11 Veterans.

To get a VA disability rating, your disability must connect to your military service. For many health conditions, you need to prove that your service caused your condition. But for some conditions, The VA automatically assumes (or "presumes") that your service caused your condition. These are called "presumptive conditions." A condition is presumptive when it's established by law or regulation.

If you have a presumptive condition, you don't need to prove that your service caused the condition. You only need to meet the service requirements for the presumption.

With the passage of the PACT Act these cancers are now presumptive: Brain cancer, Gastrointestinal cancer of any type, Glioblastoma, Head cancer of any type, Kidney cancer, Lymphatic cancer of any type, Lymphoma of any type, Melanoma, Neck cancer of any type, Pancreatic cancer, Reproductive cancer of any type and Respiratory (breathing-related) cancer of any type.

These illnesses are now also presumptive: Asthma that was diagnosed after service, Chronic bronchitis, Chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), Chronic rhinitis, Chronic sinusitis, Constrictive bronchiolitis or obliterative bronchiolitis, Emphysema, Granulomatous disease, Interstitial lung disease (ILD), Pleuritis, Pulmonary fibrosis and Sarcoidosis.

For our Vietnam Era Veterans, there are Two New Agent Orange presumptive conditions: High blood pressure (also called hypertension) and Monoclonal gammopathy of undetermined significance (MGUS). There are also New Presumptive Locations for those Vets: Thailand, Laos, Cambodia at Mimot or Krek, Kampong Cham Province, Guam or American Samoa or in the territorial waters off Guam or American Samoa, Johnston Atoll.

There are New Presumptive Radiation locations as well: Cleanup of Enewetak Atoll, Cleanup of the Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons off the coast of Palomares, Spain and response to a fire on-board an Air Force B-52 bomber carrying nuclear weapons near Thule Air Force Base in Greenland.

If you took part in any of these efforts, the VA will automatically assume (or "presume") that you had exposure to radiation.

The dates for all of the above operations and locations vary and can be confirmed by talking to one of our National Service Officers @ 206-341-8210.

Robert Clinton



ugust was a record month for PVA's Northwest Chapter Volunteer Program with 10 volunteers reporting a total of 339 hours. While not a record number of hours, it was a record number of Volunteers, which in my view is the most important indicator for the long-term success of our program. Since I began keeping records in April of 2020, a small cadre of between six and eight members have kept our Program alive, one who wishes to remain anony-

mous, has volunteered an astounding 5,486 hours since 2020, if you're counting that's way over full time! Another who still works full-time but finds time every month to keep our "financial house in order." Finally, I want to mention Fred Margiotta who lives in the Spokane area and been a member since 2009. Fred reported hours every month since 2020 and DeeAnn Cooper, an Associate Member, takes a picture of her Volunteer Time Sheet and submits it using only her smart phone. So, all those hours you spent working on the 45th Anniversary Awards Dinner, Shooting Range, Tacoma Parade, Budget Committee, and all the things I haven't heard of, or just don't know about, all I ask is, and this goes for all Northwest Chapter members.

What's stopping you from submitting your Volunteer Time Sheet for September due on October 10, 2022? If you're new and want to get started, need help filling out the forms, or anything else Volunteer related, who you going to call? Bob Clinton 202-255-7891 (phone or text), bclinton.va@gmail.com



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lease complete the word search, when completed, attach a cellphone picture copy to the office email to enter a drawing for a \$25 gift card. Office email: pvachnw@mindspring.com



Sports Page 10

Salmon For Soldiers-Day of Honor

he mission of Salmon for Soldiers is to offer a sense of normalcy and relaxation to our nation's Veterans through fishing. Salmon for Soldiers' fishing opportunities are designed to help reduce stress while creating new relationships with others who love fishing. Our events are designed to accommodate Veterans with paralysis, PTSD, TBI and other debilitating challenges.

This all began when two friends decided to take a few veterans fishing. The response was so amazing that first year, we all agreed to do it again. Now after only 8 years we are able to host our Annual Day of Honor with over 800 veterans and quests in attendance. In 2019 alone, we sent over 150 veterans fishing on local charter fishing trips. We also sent 10 veterans to Alaska where they fished with Prince of Wales Sportfishing. We owe a large thank you to our amazing supporters, as well as the many boaters who provide the boats, equipment and know-how to support our Mission.













We Salute You!

special thank you to all our donors who continue to make the programs at Paralyzed Veterans of America, Northwest Chapter thrive and grow stronger.



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SENATE COMMERCE HOLDS HEARING ON NOMINATION OF CAPOZZI TO THE AMTRAK BOARD OF DIRECTORS

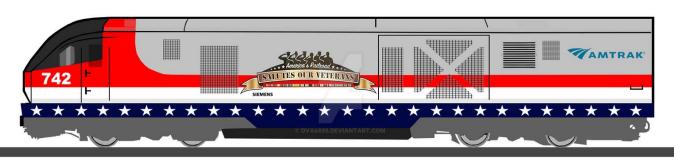
n September 7, the U.S. Senate Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee held a confirmation hearing for David Capozzi to the Amtrak Board of Directors. If confirmed, he will be the first person to fulfill the requirement included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act that Amtrak's Board include at least one person with a disability with expertise in accessible rail service.

In his testimony Capozzi said, "I am the right person for the job. I have worked to make rail transportation more accessible to individuals with disabilities for over 35 years. I was a member of the legal team for the disability com-

munity that helped Congress craft the Americans with Disabilities Act, or ADA, and testified in support of its passage before the House Committee on Public Works and Transportation, Following the ADA's enactment, I chaired the committee formed by the Urban Mass Transit Administration, the predecessor of today's Federal Transit Administration, which developed the Department of Transportation's proposed rule to implement the ADA. I served as National Advocacy Director for the Paralyzed Veterans of America and Vice President of Advocacy for Easterseals. While at Easterseals. I managed Project ACTION, a congressionally created program to promote cooperation between the disability community and the transportation industry to improve

access to transportation for people with disabilities."

In 1992, he joined the U.S. Access Board and later served as its Executive Director until his retirement in 2020. During Capozzi's time at the Access Board, he led the development of guidelines and standards to implement the ADA and other federal laws. This included updating accessibility guidelines that apply to fixed guideway systems, including rapid, light, commuter, intercity, and high-speed rail. He will bring to the Amtrak Board many years of experience, both outside and within the federal government, of working with the disability community and transit industry as a whole. His nomination will need to be confirmed by the full Senate.



PVA MEETS WITH HOUSE WOMEN VETERAN TASK FORCE

ate last month, PVA joined other veterans service organizations (VSOs) in a discussion with Representatives Julia Brownley (D-CA) and Amata Radewagen (R-American Samoa) to discuss their legislative priorities for women veterans. The pair of House lawmakers will co-chair the recently reconvened Women Veteran Task Force.

PVA stressed the importance of access to equitable and accessi-

ble comprehensive, gender specific care for our women members. We also stated that VA employees working within the SCI/D system of care must be adequately trained to understand the complex needs of women veterans with SCI/D. As for our remaining legislative priorities, PVA and several other VSOs pressed upon the Chairs the importance and urgency of getting several pieces of legislation across the finish line that are related to military sexual trauma (MST), such as the Servicemember and Veterans Empowerment and Support Act of 2021 (H.R. 5666/S. 3025).

The Task Force plans to meet regularly to discuss the dynamic needs of women veterans seeking care and benefits from the VA. And with bipartisan leadership, PVA is hopeful it will continue into the next Congress. Representatives Brownley and Radewagen listened intently to our issues and assured attendees that women veterans will not be ignored and they are eager to work with us all.

DOJ INTERVENES IN CASE ON SAN JUAN'S INACCESSIBLE SIDEWALKS

n September 6, 2019. in the case of Betancourt-Colon et al v. City of San Juan, individuals with mobility disabilities sued the city of San Juan, Puerto Rico, alleging the city violated Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 by failing to install and maintain curb ramps on its sidewalks. The complaint alleged the city's curb ramps are cracked. too steep, or nonexistent, and the walkways are uneven, too narrow, or obstructed. The plaintiffs argued that the city discriminates against individuals with disabilities by failing to provide equal access to the city's sidewalk system.

Title II of the ADA covers state and local governments, and provides that no qualified individual with a disability should be excluded from participation in or be denied the benefits of public services, programs, and activities. The city initially argued that the plaintiffs were not excluded from any service and requested that the case be dismissed. The plaintiffs amended their complaint, arguing the insufficient sidewalks prevented them from accessing public facilities or attending public functions, which are services, programs, or activities. On September 1, 2020, the court denied the city's motion to dismiss. In response, on November 9, 2020,

the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) filed a statement of interest, supporting that maintenance of sidewalks are covered under Title II of the ADA. The case continued and on September 12, 2022, DOJ intervened in the case. DOJ has committed to ensuring that necessary steps are taken to make the city's sidewalks, curb ramps, and crosswalks accessible to all city residents and visitors.



VETERANS COLA BILL APPROVED BY HOUSE

n September 14, the House approved H.R. 7846, the Veterans' Compensation Cost of Living Adjustment Act,

which authorizes cost-of-living increases in VA disability compensation and dependency and indemcalendar year 2023. The bill is headed to the Senate which is expected to approve it soon. The actual rate of the increase, which has not yet been determined, will be the same as recipients of Social Security and military pension payments. Traditionally, Social Security announces any increase in mid-to-late October.



STATUS OF APPROPRIATIONS BILLS

he federal government's fiscal year ends on September 30. Congress has yet to pass any of the 12 annual spending bills. Once again, lawmakers will be resorting to a continuing resolution (CR) to keep the government funded beyond the end of the month. As of now, we understand that Congress is consid-

ering a measure which would run through mid-December.

Most CRs extend funding based on the previous year's rates and rarely authorize spending for new programs. This time around Congress will be considering the Administration's request for additional funding to combat the spread of Monkeypox, address disaster relief here in the U.S., and provide additional support to Ukraine. They may also use the CR to address a number of expiring authorities including some that address VA programs, grants, and advisory committees. Reaching a deal on the CR won't be easy and it is likely to consume much of the remaining legislative time Congress has left in September.

UPDATES ON VA'S FAMILY CAREGIVER PROGRAM

A officials say that they are ready to begin the Phase II expansion of the Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers (PCAFC) on October 1. As a reminder, this phase will finally open the PCAFC to veterans of all eras.

The VA has also <u>announced</u> that it will extend the eligibility for the PCAFC for all veterans and family caregivers that were participating in the program or applied for the program before October 1, 2020. The extension is slated to continue until September 30, 2025. VA is currently working with PVA and other veterans groups to address issues with program eligibility that have resulted in many current par-

ticipants being found to be no longer eligible for the program.



Paralyzed Veterans of America Honors Rep. Jim Langevin with 2022 Gordon H. Mansfield Congressional Leadership Award

ASHINGTON, DC (Sept. 15, 2022)Paralyzed Veterans of America honored Rep. Jim Langevin of Rhode Island with the Gordon H. Mansfield Congressional Leadership Award. Established in 2015, the award is presented to elected officials who demonstrate strong leadership and unwavering support for PVA's priorities in the areas of veterans health care and benefits and disability civil rights.

"PVA is proud to present the 2022 Gordon H. Mansfield Congressional Leadership Award to Rep. Langevin, who is a proven champion for people with disabilities," said Charles Brown, National President of PVA. "Rep. Langevin has demonstrated a steadfast commitment to disability civil rights and we continue to be inspired by

the barriers he has broken throughout his career. We look forward to our continued partnership with Rep. Langevin as we work together to strengthen and protect the rights of people with disabilities."

At an award presentation in Rep. Langevin's office, PVA thanked him for his dedication to supporting the disability community. Rep. Langevin spearheaded numerous pieces of legislation on behalf of people with disabilities, including the historic Air Carrier Access Amendments Act to improve air travel for passengers with disabilities. Rep. Langevin also established and serves as co-chair of the Bipartisan Disabilities Caucus.

"Paralyzed Veterans of America are among the most passionate,

effective advocates I've ever had the pleasure of working with, so it is an honor to receive PVA's Gordon H. Mansfield Congressional Leadership Award," said Rep. Langevin. "I am immensely grateful for the important work done by PVA each and every day, and I am proud of our ongoing partnership to secure protections for people with disabilities. By working together, we will continue to ensure that the voices of people with disabilities are heard across the country."

A lifelong resident of Warwick, Rhode Island, Rep. Langevin is the first quadriplegic to service in Congress and was the first quadriplegic Speaker Pro Tempore of the U.S. House of Representatives in 2010.

About Paralyzed Veterans of America

aralyzed Veterans of America is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and the only congressionally chartered veterans service organization dedicated solely for the benefit and representation of veterans with spinal cord injury or diseases. The organization ensures veterans receive the benefits earned through service to our nation; monitors their care in VA spinal cord injury units; andfunds research and education in the search for a cure and improved care for individuals with paralysis.

As a life-long partner and advocate for veterans and all people with disabilities, PVA also develops training and career services, works to ensure accessibility in public buildings and spaces, and provides health and rehabilitation opportunities through sports and recreation. With more than 70 offices and 33 chapters, Paralyzed Veterans of America serves veterans, their families, and their caregivers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. Learn more at PVA.org.

Events Calendar Page 16

October

10th Indigenous Peoples' Day

13th Navy Birthday

13th BOD/General Membership Meeting

Chapter Office 11:30 AM

29th Boo in Burien

Chapter Office 12:00 PM-4:00 PM

31st Happy Halloween!

November

5th Auburn Veterans Day Parade 9:45 AM

At Auburn Start Point

6th Daylight Savings Time Ends

Fall Back One Hour

8th Election Day

10th Marine Corps Birthday

11th Veterans Day

17th BOD/General Membership Meeting

Chapter Office 11:30 AM

SCI Recreation Therapist's Column



Vance Pease

reetings Northwest PVA membership! I wanted to provide an update on the Recreation Therapy department on the Spinal Cord Injury Unit at VA Puget Sound. I am very pleased to announce that we will be at full staff again beginning November 7, as a new SCI Recreation Therapist Mia Mortensen, will be joining our team! She is moving here from Utah, and comes to us with experience coaching at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, teaching a variety of adaptive sports, and a passion for serving Veterans. We have had numerous conversations about how the SCI Recreation Therapy program will move forward from the COVID-19 pandemic. With tremendous support from the SCI Unit and the Northwest PVA, we plan to continue the successful programs we have in place and add some exciting new ones: including ongoing cycling training rides, shooting clinics, kayaking/rafting, fishing, camping, para fencing, curling, ongoing practices/training for the National Veterans Wheelchair Games, scuba, softball, community relay races, etc. We want the recreation therapy opportunities to reflect the goals and interests of the Veterans we serve. With that in mind, please reach out to me personally with ideas/requests, or to Russ Norris, your Northwest PVA Sports Director.

Thank you, Vance Pease, CTRS 206-277-1648

Victor Tran



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lease help us keep our Membership list updated. Contact the office if you have recently moved, updated your phone number or email address. This ensures our ability to pass on the latest news to our Members. Remember any updates you may make with the VA or your Service Officer are not shared with us.

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Place: Northwest Paralyzed Veterans of America when you search for a charity.



Birthdays Page 18

Happy Birthday!

October

Anthony Chiodo Louis Perkins Henry Burton Larry Howard Anton Riksem Richard Zelinsky James Bledsoe Harry Hansen John Parker Charles Thibodeau

Fredrick Margiotta

Owen Day
Wayne Tripp
Duane Caseday
Ellis McVea
Ranulf Muir
Victor Searles
Mathew Harbin
Peter Laserinko
Thomas Bungert
Brent King
Kevin McMains

November

Thomas Myers Caesar Fittante Glen Foster Charles Ingalls Pat Bean Kenneth Hartz **Anthony Popp** Dale Schinman Michael Hunter Hank Hom **Anthony Orofino** Rafael Rramirez Patrick Ball Glenn Haley Fredrick Morris **Enest Hume** Fredrick Brooking Robert Royal

Charles Salley Daniel Schultz Lora Sprague **Robert Owens** William Lambirth Jon Rubin Steven Larsen Robert Critchfield Juliana Schroeder Victor Tran **Brett Hilke** Ronald "Sean" Halsted Cassandra Anctil-Taylor Stephen Morris Steven Loduha Jacob Lietz Andrew Bechtle





aralyzed Veterans of America has been on a mission to change lives and build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes—to empower these brave men and women build brighter futures for our seriously injured heroes-to empower these brave men and women with what they need to achieve the things they fought for: freedom and independence. They returned to a grateful nation, but also to a world with few solutions to challenges they faced. They made a decision not just to live, but to live with dignity as contributors to society. They created Paralyzed Veterans of America, an organization dedicated to veterans service, medical research and civil rights for people with disabilities.

Have an old car taking up space in your driveway? Donate it to Paralyzed Veterans of America! Call us: 877-900-8387. https://pva.careasy.org/HOME.html





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