



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

New England Chapter

CORDWORD

The Monthly News Magazine of the New England Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America



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PVA SUES DOT

38TH NVWG EXPERIENCE



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Paralyzed Veterans of America Sues Department of Transportation For Unlawful Delay of Rule.

DENVER, CO — Today, on behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Democracy Forward challenged the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for its unjustified and unlawful delay in issuing rules intended to make airplane restrooms accessible for travelers with disabilities.

...continued on page 4.



By Wayne Ross, Chapter Board of Director.

This is my story about my time and experiences at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. There were 667 veteran athletes at this monumental event and if you spoke with each one of them individually you would get 667 different stories, this is my story. I broke my neck in October of 1996 and competed at my first games in San Diego California in 1997 and with the exception of Salt Lake City in 2016 (due to hospitalization) I *...continued on page 8.*



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, President

As great a success as the 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games were this year for the Chapter, they unfortunately were overshadowed in closing by the unexpected loss of a Chapter member and friend in Thom Reid. This was a first in the history of the Games and came as a shock to all involved. Thom was an Army Veteran and a proud long-time Chapter member. I hope it brings some comfort to those who knew him, that he spent what would be his last days doing what he loved and with the camaraderie of his friends surrounding him.

I can still remember meeting Thom, as if it was yesterday, just a few weeks before leaving for the Games at the Blue Hills Pavilion in Boston for a Steve Miller concert. He, I and Wayne Ross chatted and exchanged pleasantries before heading in and enjoying the music, then saying our good-byes when leaving. Who could have know that would be the last time I'd ever see Thom. We're all here for just a blink of an eye and then we're gone. I think those of us living with a spinal cord injury or disease are even more acutely aware of this than most able-bodied folks. I myself have been critically hospitalized with septic shock and was fortunate to have survived it.

This reminds me of a quote by Massachusetts native and author Og Mandino who said, "Beginning today, treat everyone you meet as if they were going to be dead by midnight. Extend to them all the care, kindness and understanding you can muster, and do it with no thought of any reward. Your life will never be the same again." As hard as it may be in every circumstance, we should try our earnest best to do so with out regard for who with or why.

I know I've said it before, but its the truth about why I volunteer my time and resources with PVA and the Chapter - "To make a positive difference in someone's life". You never know who that will be, or what the result will be either, but this shouldn't deter us from our mission, our mandates. Think about this next time you pass someone without saying "Hi". It could have been just what they needed in that moment of their life - a simple acknowledge that they were there.

Michael G. Negrete
President and Paralyzed Veteran

From the Director's Desk

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director



This is not an easy note to write: While many did well at the 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games (see article inside), one of our team members did not make it home. Mr. Thom Reid, a long time Chapter member passed away on Sunday August 5th while preparing to head back to Quincy, MA. Thom competed in four events and won medals in three. He was so proud of himself as he should have been. He even managed a helicopter ride before the banquet, something he had so looked forward to. Unfortunately, Thom waited until the events were over to begin to address a medical issue he knew he had. All I can say is it was a first for the Games, a first for the Chapter, and a first for PVA. I can tell you all, it is not, I repeat not anything I want the Games, PVA or the Chapter to go through again.

A sincere Thank You needs to go out to the VA coaching staff and VA nurses who did what they could for Thom before he was rushed off to the hospital. A sincere Thank You to PVA staff and Executive Committee for helping the Chapter work through this. I have been working with his fiancée to bring Thom's remains back to Massachusetts. As soon as I know a date, I will do what I can to share.

Debra A. Freed
Executive Director

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Paralyzed Veterans of America Sues Department of Transportation For Unlawful Delay of Rule

Originally posted on www.pva.org



DENVER, CO — Today, on behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Democracy Forward challenged the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) for its unjustified and unlawful delay in issuing rules intended to make airplane restrooms accessible for travelers with disabilities.

Last year, Congress directed DOT to move forward in issuing a rule concerning access to restrooms on single-aisle aircraft. Despite a 2016 agreement by the members of a DOT negotiated rule making committee to make airplane restrooms accessible, DOT Secretary Elaine Chao ignored the Congressional mandate. The Department also removed the accessible lavatories rule from the Administration's priority agenda.

These unreasoned actions by DOT have left travelers with disabilities subject to severe discomfort and the continued denial of restroom access. The lack of a requirement for accessible lavatories on single-aisle aircraft means that passengers with disabilities are often forced to take extreme measures, including intentionally dehydrating, before long voyages.

"Accessing a restroom on an airplane is something that most Americans take for granted," said PVA National President David Zurfluh, a disabled Air Force veteran. "PVA believes that access to a restroom is a basic human right. We were pleased to serve on the negotiated rule making committee and stand by the consensus agreement reached with stakeholders. We simply want DOT to move forward with the rule making process as

Congress required. We have waited long enough."

The Air Carrier Access Act prohibits airlines from discriminating against travelers on the basis of disability. In July 2016, Congress gave DOT a one-year deadline to promulgate new rules addressing wheelchair accessibility for airplane restrooms. In November 2016, Paralyzed Veterans of America, disability advocates and airline industry representatives presented DOT a negotiated rule to issue for public comment.

Sec. Chao failed to follow Congress's directive to issue a lavatory access rule by July 2017 and has provided no justification for this failure. Furthermore, after shirking DOT's mandatory deadline, Sec. Chao removed the rule from the priority agenda for the Spring of 2018, suggesting that DOT has effectively halted work on this crucial priority for disability rights advocates.

"The lack of wheelchair accessible lavatories on airplanes is part of the Administration's continued lack of concern for the indignities faced by air travelers with disabilities," said Democracy Forward Executive Director Anne Harkavy. "Sadly, the Administration has once again taken unlawful actions to hold back vital travel protections for America's paralyzed veterans."

The new case follows Paralyzed Veterans of America's ongoing lawsuit against the Administration's unlawful rollback of a rule requiring domestic airlines to track and report data on lost and damaged wheelchairs and scooters.

The petition was filed in the 10th Circuit Court on July 31, 2018.

VA Secretary Wilkie Visits VA Boston

Originally posted on boston.va.gov



Friday, August 17, 2018

Ryan McDonald, Inventory Management Specialist is coined by Secretary Wilkie for upholding VA values. Acting VISN Director Franklin (L) and VA Boston Director Vincent Ng (R) were in attendance.

VA Secretary Robert L. Wilkie visited VA Boston Healthcare System recently. He met with leadership, VISN 1, Bedford VA, Central Western Massachusetts VA, Regional Benefits Office and VA National Cemetery.

Secretary Wilkie discussed his vision for the future, strategies needed and listened intently as directors gave him valuable information on operations, the Veterans experience and our visions for the future.

Togus VAMC Fisher House Ground Breaking Ceremony

By Neal Williams, PVA National Director & Chapter Board of Directors



Senator Susan Collins(R-ME)

The Fisher House Foundation has designated the historic Togus VAMC for construction of a new 16 suite Fisher House. The House will provide families with fire star accommodations while a loved one is receiving treatment at the VA Maine Health Care System Togus Campus. Since 1990, the program has served more than 335,000 families, offering over 8 million days of free lodging. This has to date saved military and veterans' families over \$400 million dollars in lodging and transportation costs. One of the last acts by President Lincoln was to create a system of Veterans Homes the very first one at what is now called the Togus VAMC and now Togus will have its first Fisher House. Fisher House is a home away from home for the families and its value to the veterans who are patients and the family the true value cannot be measured in dollars and cents.

It was a great day for the Veterans of Maine with temperatures in the high 80s and bright sun shining dignitaries from government, and private sector as well as representatives of Veterans Service Organizations gathered to break ground for construction to begin. I was privileged to attend on Behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America New England Chapter. The program kicked off with the presentation of the Colors, pledge of

allegiance, national anthem and invocation. Ryan Lilly the Director of VA Maine HCS welcomed all present and spoke briefly. Mr. Lilly was followed by the Honorable Susan M. Collins the ranking senator from Maine followed closely by Congressman Bruce Poliquin. I am happy to report both Senator Collins and Congressman Poliquin have been stalwart supporters of Veterans and active military personnel as the full delegation. Unable to attend Senator Angus King and Congresswoman Pingree sent representatives who read letters from each of them.



The keynote Col Speaker Lawrence B. Connell, US Army Retired, Chief of Staff – Veterans Health Administration spoke of the great benefit that would be realized by the families of veterans who were hospitalized and the incredible contributions that have been made by the Fisher Foundation with nearly 200 Fisher House homes at VA facilities across the Country.

NEW ENGLAND PVA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Volunteers do invaluable work that makes a real difference to Veterans, their communities and the Chapter. Volunteering can change your life, too! Your talents and time are always welcome.

We are looking for Volunteers to help out in the office, attend local awareness events, and assist with event planning. Everyone can help somehow and in some way, at any place and during any time. If you might be too busy or can't get out, think about a financial donation. Even if its only \$5 or \$10, every little bit helps. To learn more about Volunteer opportunities and how you can help please contact the Chapter office at 800-660-1181 or email info@newenglandpva.org.



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Sadness & Celebration!

By Debra A. Freed, Chapter Executive Director

First off, I need to let you all know that many of you should have received two ballots. If you returned the first one, great! However, it will be the 2nd one that will count. You see, there were a couple of errors in the first ballot. So please, send back the 2nd ballot as well. Every vote does count.

The 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games had a couple of new endeavors and of course many favorites. I was appreciative of the fact that they allowed three time slots for Indoor Archery, (a first this year) because handcycle was at the same morning slot. Of the 18 plus events for this year's games, Chapter athletes participated in 15 of which two were new: indoor rowing and team relay. Another new one was a 3-hole round of Golf with accessible carts.

The Chapter sponsored a 26-foot Penske truck (Thank You Penske) to take down Medical Equipment, Medical Supplies, Sporting Equipment, and luggage for those who flew to Florida and only wanted to be responsible for carry-ons. We also helped out two New York athletes in getting their stuff to Florida.

The Chapter also sponsored 22 rooms that held 5 Coaches, 6 nurses, four Chapter Volunteers, 17 athletes, aides, and family members. The events participated in were Air Guns, Archery, Boccia, Bowling, Cycling, Field, Indoor Rowing (new event), Motor Rally, Nine Ball, Quad Rugby, Slalom, Swimming, Table Tennis, Team Relay (new event) and Track.

I am not accurate on the medal count but I know I am very close. The

Chapter comes home with 8 Bronze, 14 Silver, and 28 Gold. I also believe that every-one of our athletes took home at least one medal. I took home 4! We even had two novices this year and they are already looking forward to next year.

A huge shout out to all the VA Coaches, VA Nursing Staff and the four Chapter Volunteers. It must be noted that they all work hard during the year to assist not only long-term care athletes but a number of outpatient athletes as well. Yes, all VA staff get paid but think about it, how many of you, and or your family members would give up 8 days of their home life to support such an endeavor? We also must thank those who did not go, who stayed to care for the veterans who were not going or could not go.

This brings me to my final note but refers to my E.D. report. Our original number of athletes was 23. Of those six were long term care. Unfortunately, two passed away, one became ill and three suffered broken bones. The VA staff recommended they not go and they were wise enough to heed the recommendations. Again, I will be the first one to try and ignore the obvious and probably the not-so-obvious, but we don't want to lose any more Chapter members this way. Many of those that went this year are already preparing for next year in Louisville, Kentucky. Let us make it a safe, healthy, happy event for all.

Why it is so Important for Veterans and Their Families to Get Their Flu Shot and Other Vaccines

By Hans Petersen is senior writer-editor for Digital Media, VHA Office of Communications



Time for our annual Get Your Flu Shot reminders!

Actually, more than just your flu shot. Are you up to date on all the vaccines you should have?

All Veterans and their families should get recommended vaccines to protect their health. Even healthy adults can become ill and pass diseases on to others. Everyone should have their vaccination needs assessed by a health care professional.

Certain vaccines are recommended based on a person's age, occupation or health conditions (such as asthma, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, diabetes or heart disease).

Vaccination is important because it protects the person getting the vaccine and helps prevent the spread of disease.

Seniors and others at high risk for flu complications

All Veterans should get an influenza (flu) vaccine each year to protect

against seasonal flu. Some people are at high risk of serious flu complications, and it is especially important that they get vaccinated. This includes older adults (65 and older), children younger than 5, pregnant women and people with certain long-term medical conditions such as asthma, heart disease and diabetes.

Adults 50 years and older are recommended to receive the shingles vaccine. Adults 65 and older are also recommended to receive both pneumococcal vaccines. Some adults younger than 65 years with certain conditions are also recommended to receive one or more pneumococcal vaccinations.

About the Author - Hans Petersen is senior writer-editor for Digital Media, VHA Office of Communications. An Air Force Veteran, Hans also served two years in the Peace Corps and worked for 20 years in broadcasting before joining VA.

My Experience at the 2018 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games in Orlando, FL

By Wayne Ross, Chapter Board of Directors

This is my story about my time and experiences at the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. There were 667 veteran athletes at this monumental event and if you spoke with each one of them individually you would get 667 different stories, this is my story. I broke my neck in October of 1996 and competed at my first games in San Diego California in 1997 and with the exception of Salt Lake City in 2016 (due to hospitalization) I have been to every Games since. If I rack my brain long enough I can remember great things about them all. So, I have been to 21 games and I feel I have given an honest assessment in the end. Overall considering all aspects of the week in my opinion this was the best year ever.

There were so many outside activities and attractions in the Orlando area you could always find something to do. I never waited more than one minute for an elevator, the variety of shops and restaurants in the hotel and surrounding area was fantastic in quality and price, the most athletes ever which made the competition challenging and a hotel pool that rivals those at the finest resorts. Our team was all on one floor which made it easy for everyone especially the veterans with caregivers staying in separate rooms. I liked my room and after we removed the door to the bathroom it was easily accessible, and my tub bench worked well. The largest convention center in America is in Las Vegas Nevada and the second largest is the Orange County Convention Center where we had most of the events. I spoke with a couple of people who had been to both venues and said Orlando's is nicer. For months before the games I went around telling everyone to bring warm clothing for the venues may be freezing. The rule of thumb was the hotter the city the colder the venue. In 2000 we went to San Antonio Texas at it was cold. The quads were out on the street corner kicking back in the sun trying to warm up I had friends from Louisiana visit me and we ate lunch inside they were wearing t-shirts shorts and flip flops and by the end of the meal they were so cold they wanted to go outside. In 2003 we went to Long Beach California and they sold out of sweatshirts in two hours. On the last day I let a girl wear my favorite NEPVA heavy weight blue sweat shirt because she was shivering, and I never saw it again. In 2012 we went to Richmond Virginia and the last day it was 105 degrees and so hot the afternoon track was cancelled I wore long sleeves to the closing banquet and it was so cold I had to send my coach back to my room for a jacket. Well anyway this year the venue was a nice temperature not too hot not too cold.

In 2015 they totted everything in Dallas as "BIG" and it was, but things this year were much bigger... the hotel was bigger, the convention center was bigger, the gardens and fountains in front of the convention center were bigger and more impressive. I competed in twelve events as I did last year in Cincinnati and in Dallas and collected eleven medals for the third time. I started out bright and early Tuesday morning with air rifles and met with our two expert coaches Jenny McLaughlin and Joanie Lynch they set up the equipment we transported from Brockton and made sure everything was the way I needed it and then turned me over to one of the volunteers. The first thing the volunteer tried to do was insert the pellet and he didn't even know which way to put it in. I called him banana fingers for a couple of reasons. I requested a new volunteer and received a sweet young lady who knew nothing about the sport and also needed a lot of instruction. We managed to get through the targets but didn't have time for all the shots. The most discouraging thing was our coaches were not allowed to instruct anyone including the volunteers. I moved onto field events

and this year had some opponents, I took the silver medal in shot put the man I defeated last year took gold. Shot Put was exciting for myself and another man, who I would face in five more events, tied for second place so they took the next longest throw. On Thursday I went bowling, it took all day that place was so far way, I had a lot of fun and the young man that helped me did a great job. Friday was my big day six swimming events, three gold- three silver, I lost to the same guy three times. However, I defeated him in shot put. I did something in the pool I have never done before I swam, what I thought was 25 yards, in one breath I later found out later it was 25 meters. That evening I competed in my final event boccia and in the first round faced the man I swam against earlier and thought to myself "I am not going to lose to this guy again today" and moved onto the second round. I then faced someone who stated afterwards he had never played so bad. In the last round I was playing for the gold and went up against a man who was trying to intimidate me, and his wife pissed me off. I really wanted to win and for the first time took gold in boccia. I have won silver and bronze a couple times but never gold.

I had a lot of fun and the week went by really fast. I did some alternate activities, a trip to Gatorland with Tim Kelly and my health aid Diane. A ride on the ICON Orlando, giant Ferris wheel, with Tim Kelly, Eileen Craffey and Diane.

It is with a sad heart I mention the passing of my friend Thom Reid for we did quite a few things together over the years. A couple of rock concerts and comedy shows and interactions at the VA hospitals.



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

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Enrollment Categories

By David Ray, National Service Officer

One of the most frequent questions I am asked as a National Service Officer is in regards to getting health care from the Veterans Health Administration. I would like to discuss the enrollment categories in the VHA.

Categories 1, 2, and 3 are for veterans with compensable service connected disabilities. Category 1 is the highest and a veterans do not have a copay for anything.

Category 4 is set for catastrophic disabilities veterans receiving non service connected pension with aid and attendance. These veterans are exempt from all copays except for extended stay care such as the Community Living Centers. This is the enrollment category that impacts a vast majority of non-service connected spinal cord injured veterans. In all likeliness if you have a non-service connected spinal cord injury you will be in this enrollment category unless you qualify for a higher

enrollment category because of other service connected disabilities. For some veterans category 4 is actually advantageous over Categories 2 or 3.

Categories 5, 6, and 7 impact veterans who have non compensable service connected conditions, meet certain service criteria and are below the income limit. There is generally a copay for these veterans

Category 8 is the most complex of the enrollment categories. Many veterans in category 8 can be enrolled if they meet certain criteria. Category 8's simply do not meet any enrollment criteria and their income is too high.

If you have any questions please contact your local Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Office.

Burial Benefits

By Earnest Hill, Sr. National Service Officer

This is a subject that we do not like to touch on that much. I felt that information needs to be sent out so all veterans and family members should know what is available.

For Burial in a National Cemetery

There are 135 National Cemeteries throughout the country that offer burial gravesites with available space, opening and closing of the grave and perpetual care. They offer Government headstone or marker, a burial flag and a Presidential Memorial Certificate, at no cost to the family. Some Veterans may also be eligible for Burial Allowances. Spouses can also be buried at a VA National Cemetery along with the veteran. It does not matter which person dies first.

VA Burial allowance are flat-rate monetary benefits that are generally paid at the maximum amount authorized by law for an eligible Veteran's burial and funeral costs. Eligible surviving spouses of record are paid automatically upon notification of a Veteran's death, without the need to submit a claim. You could be granted additional benefits, including the plot or interment allowance and transportation allowance, if VA receives a claim for these benefits.

There is much more information that pertains to burial benefits and entitlements that you are not aware of. Please contact your local National Service Officer to get all of the rest of the information or make sure that you have advised your spouse if anything happen to you to call the NSO and they will assist.



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Being there makes a difference

Recently the Ride-Away team joined forces with MobilityWorks so that we could provide our veterans with the largest selection of mobility solutions that best fit their physical capabilities and lifestyle. Veterans have unique needs so we treat each of them as individuals. First of all, we listen. Then, we work together find the best solution. Collectively, Ride-Away and MobilityWorks will continue to build on our mission to help veterans connect with who and what matters most.

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Despite Struggles, Veteran finds Solace in Adaptive Sports

By Gary Kunich Public Affairs Officer Milwaukee, Wisconsin VA Medical Center



Air Force Veteran Mike Thomas navigates the Wheelchair Obstacle Course.

The bullet is still in Mike Thomas' back and the wheelchair is a constant reminder of something he'll never forget.

"It's lodged right in the spine, but doctors can't remove it, or it will cause more damage," he said. "It happened in Detroit. Just living in Detroit, big city life."

Thomas, who gets his care at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, was in the wrong place and time when a random, stray bullet left him paralyzed from the waist down almost 20 years ago.

How do you get over that?

"I'll let you know when I get over it," he says.

Thomas is one of more than 600 Veteran-athletes to compete recently in the 38th National Veterans Wheelchair Games, in Orlando, Florida.

He is a fierce and independent competitor, but it hasn't been easy. He says his recovery and attitude is a work in progress.

"I am angry at what happened. How can you not be angry? But a lot of people helped me on that," he said.

"I spent 34 days in rehab in Detroit," said the Army Veteran who served in Germany from 1975 to 1977. "The therapist there was good at his job. I don't think I was an easy guy to get along with before. Set in my ways. And when he brought that chair to me, I wanted to kill the world. He put up with me.

"That rec therapist before I left Detroit, he got under my skin. He dared me to go to the (National Disabled Veterans) Winter Sports Clinic, and I did. Was hooked ever since then."

VA has six adaptive sports events throughout the year. The Winter Sports Clinic gets disabled Veterans involved in sports like downhill skiing, sled hockey, rock climbing and more.

That's where he learned about some of the other adaptive programs

available to Veterans.

"The old-timers used to have tradition, a friendly thing with the staff guys and all the people who worked as instructors. They would play a basketball game against the Vets. That's pretty much the first time I saw basketball.

"I took some coaching. It took me some time but one of the guys told me I was getting pretty good in the chair. Been coming to the Games ever since."

He moved to Wisconsin when he found out the spinal cord-injury care was among the top in the nation, and he met Dr. Ken Lee, who is now the Milwaukee VA Spinal Cord Injury Center director. Lee himself was injured in a roadside bomb in Iraq and tries to get as many Veterans as possible into adaptive sports.

"He's an awesome guy," Thomas said. "I knew him before he deployed and before he was in charge. He's one of the smartest guys I know. He knows his stuff. When he is telling you something, you know it's right."

Lee said the Games help with the anger Thomas feels.

"Mike has come a long way, but still has those dark moments. He still has those strong feelings about his injury, which makes it hard to move on," Lee said. "Because he holds on, he struggles, but what is unique about the Games, and we see this all the time, is if someone is in a funk, they start to prepare and practice for their events and they feel better. And then they get here and it's a real camaraderie and spirit. It's people helping people. It's Veterans helping Veterans.

"That carries on for awhile and we hope that rejuvenates people," Lee added. "We give them the weapons and ammo to get better and to fight. That's what I always tell Mike and all our Veterans."

Thomas has expanded beyond VA's adaptive sports and is part of the National Wheelchair Basketball Association where he plays on a Division II team.

His go-to sports at the Wheelchair Games are softball, basketball and slalom – a grueling, timed obstacle course that puts athletes through a series of challenges, including greased, uneven surfaces and narrow passages.

It's not easy. And that's what Thomas likes.

"I love all these games. I love getting in the other guy's head."

He's also been on the board of the Wisconsin Paralyzed Veterans of America and does what he can to help other, newly injured Veterans.

But if you're looking for someone to sugarcoat or pull punches, look elsewhere. ...continued on Page 12.



NEW ENGLAND PVA NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Volunteers do invaluable work that makes a real difference to Veterans, their communities and the Chapter. Volunteering can change your life, too! Your talents and time are always welcome.

We are looking for Volunteers to help out in the office, attend local awareness events, and assist with event planning. Everyone can help somehow and in some way, at any place and during any time. If you might be too busy or can't get out, think about a financial donation. Even if its only \$5 or \$10, every little bit helps. To learn more about Volunteer opportunities and how you can help please contact the Chapter office at 800-660-1181 or email info@newenglandpva.org.

"You can have a pity party for 30 days," he said. "Then you gotta try. If you want to try, I'll go all the way with you. I'm like an old-timer now. You got some guys, when they first get hurt, I screw with their minds. I intentionally try to piss them off and rile them up and get them motivated.

"I see some of these guys here (at the Wheelchair Games). I remember when they were the new guys, and now they love this. They're my crew. I broke them in. You see them later, and they're doing good, they're taking it good.

"But if people want to feel sorry for themselves, I can't help them."

Thomas wants others to know one thing about him and people like him in a wheelchair – he can help himself.

"The problem is, when people see the chair, that's all they see. They see the chair. They don't see you.

I'm doing my shopping and wanted to get a box of waffles off the shelf. A lady, she was so nice and meant no ill intent. She reaches and grabs it for me. Now, in my brain, that pisses me off. But I know she didn't mean anything. She left and I put them back. I want to get those waffles.

"Another guy, I'm minding my own business, he means nothing bad. He asks, 'Can I help you get the door?' and I think, 'No, can I help you?' I'm capable. I can help myself.

"I'm better. It's just ..."

Thomas looks off and seems lost in his thoughts for a few seconds.

It's been 20 years since a stray bullet put him in a wheelchair. A lot of years. A lot of emotion.

"... It's just, I'm probably always going to be pissed. I'm better at not taking it out on the world."

And he knows there is a lot more to himself than a man in a wheelchair.

"I love this. I love doing this stuff," he said. "If you aren't living, you're dying."

About the Author - Gary Kunich - joined the U.S. Air Force in 1986 and served for 20 years in public affairs. He is now the public affairs officer for the Milwaukee, Wisconsin VA Medical Center.

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Paralyzed Veterans of America

ANNUAL AIR RIFLE & AIR PISTOL PROGRAM

Cal-Diego Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament

January 28-29, 2019
San Diego, CA

Mid-Atlantic Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament

March 6-7, 2019
Richmond, VA

Wisconsin Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament

March 30-31, 2019
Milwaukee, WI

New England Combined Air Rifle and Boccia Tournament*

April 26-28, 2019
Brockton, MA

Buckeye Air Rifle and Pistol Tournament

April 26-27, 2019
Geneva, OH

**indicates combined events*

PARALYZED VETERANS NATIONAL SHOOTING SPORTS CIRCUIT

North Central Trapshoot

September 8-9, 2018
Sioux Falls, SD

Mid-Atlantic Shooting Sports Tournament and Handgun Shoot

November 9-11, 2018
Charles City, VA

Arizona Shooting Sports Tournament

February 8-10, 2019
Phoenix, AZ

Cal-Diego Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament

March 29-31, 2019
Redlands, CA

Pistol Shoot - March 29, 2019

Lytle Creek, CA

Wisconsin Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament

May 17-19, 2019

Rifle/Pistol Shoot - May 17, 2019

Green Bay, WI

Vaughan Shooting Sports Tournament

May 31-June 2, 2019
Elburn, IL

Iowa Shooting Sports Tournament & Pistol Tournament

June 14-16, 2019
Pistol Event - June 14, 2019
Cedar Rapids, IA

Lone Star Shooting Sports Tournament

June 21-23, 2019
Waxahachie, TX

PARALYZED VETERANS BOATING/FISHING TOUR

Mid-America Bass Tournament

September 21-23, 2018

Eufaula, OK

Vaughan Bass Tournament

October 5-7, 2018
Whittington, IL

Florida Gulf Coast Bass Tournament

March 29-31, 2019
Tavares, FL

Kentucky-Indiana Bass Tournament

May 3-5, 2019
Kuttawa, KY

Mid-Atlantic Bass Tournament

June 7-9, 2019
Henrico, VA

ANNUAL PVA/NWPA BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT SERIES

Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament Battle at the Beach

September 14-16, 2018
Virginia Beach, VA

Mid-South Billiards Tournament

October 12-13, 2018
Memphis, TN

Mid-Atlantic Billiards Tournament Chuck Willis Mem

March 22-24, 2019
Midlothian, VA

Mid-America Billiards Tournament

April 5-7, 2019
Oklahoma City, OK

Buckeye Billiards Tournament

June 14-15, 2019
Wickliffe, OH

Mountain States Billiards Tournament

June 21-22, 2019
Fountain, CO

BOCCIA

Mid-Atlantic Boccia Tournament

October 5-6, 2018
Richmond, VA

Gateway Boccia Tournament

October 18-20, 2018
St. Louis, MO

Bayou Boccia Tournament

November 30-December 1, 2018
Biloxi, MS

Cal-Diego Boccia Tournament

February 19-20, 2019
San Diego, CA

Arizona Boccia Tournament

April 6-7, 2019
Phoenix, AZ

New England Combined Air Rifle and Boccia Tournament

April 26-28, 2019
Brockton, MA

ANNUAL PVA/AWBA BOWLING TOURNAMENT SERIES

Great Plains Bowling Tournament

July 12-15, 2018
Council Bluffs, IA

Mountain States Bowling Tournament

August 15-18, 2018
Colorado Springs, CO

Mid-Atlantic Bowling Tournament

September 28-30, 2018
Glen Allen, VA

Nevada Bowling Tournament

November 29-Dec 2, 2018
Las Vegas, NV

Florida Gulf Coast Bowling Tournament

February 21-24, 2019
Tampa, FL

Mid-America Bowling Tournament

April 12-14, 2019
Shawnee, OK

Vaughan Bowling Tournament

June 27-30, 2019
Romeoville, IL

HANDCYCLING RACING

Museum of Aviation Marathon

January 12, 2019
Warner Robins, GA

PVA Racing High Performance Camp

January 26-February 1, 2019
Brooksville, FL

Top End Euro-American HC Championships

February 2-3, 2019
Gainesville, FL

Valley of the Sun

February 16-18, 2019
Phoenix, AZ

One City Marathon

March 2, 2019
Newport News, VA

Off-Road Spring Expo

April 19-21, 2019
Chesterfield, VA

PVA Learn to Race Camp

April 23-26, 2019
Gettysburg, PA

Blue and Gray Half Marathon and Criterium

April 27-28, 2019
Gettysburg, PA

NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES



For more information, visit:
pva.org/sports

Paralyzed Veterans of America
New England Chapter
1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301
West Roxbury, MA 02132

T 800-660-1181
F 857-203-9685

info@newenglandpva.org
www.newenglandpva.org

Office Hours
Mon-Fri, 9:00am - 4:30pm



COMING EVENTS AND IMPORTANT DATES

Aug 31: Bellingham Shooting

Sep 8: Three Notch Century Ride - Durham, NH.
More info at www.NEpassage.org

Sep 7-9: NEPVA Bass Trail Fishing - Lake Winnepesaukee, NH

Sep 15: Veteran Kayak Float - Contoocook River, Concord, NH
More info at www.NEpassage.org

Sep 18: SAVES Bass Tournament Candlewood Lake, CT.
Need to register through Gaylord at sports@gaylord.org 203-284-2772

Sep 18: Veteran Intro to Paddleboarding - Salmon Falls River, Rollinsford, NH. More info at www.NEpassage.org

Sep 20: Cycle Club Ride - 450 Jarvis St., Cheshire, CT
More info at www.gaylord.org/sports

Sep 21: Shawme Gun Club Shoot Sandwich, MA

Sep 26: Brockton SCI Pizza Party

**Oct 5: 71st Annual Chapter Banquet
Moseley's On The Charles
West Roxbury, MA**

Oct 5-7: Maine Bass Trail event at Pine Tree Camp

Oct 12: Bass River Rod and Gun Club Shoot Yarmouth, MA

For more information on upcoming sports events please contact the Chapter office at (800) 660-1181.

Mike Guilbault - Sports Director

Mike Moran - Asst. Sports Director

New England PVA's Official Facebook Page

www.facebook.com/NEPVA1947

