



**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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After Legal and Public Pressure, and Congressional Action, Government Agrees to Implement Much Needed Protections for Disabled Air Travelers.

Washington, D.C. — Following a lawsuit brought by Democracy Forward on behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America, and subsequent Congressional action in the FAA Reauthorization Act of 2018, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has now reversed course and agreed to stop ...*continued on page 4.*



Vehicle Conversion, Maintenance and Repair Benefits for Non-Service Connected Veterans.

VA prosthetic and sensory aids service (PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. VA provides all clinically appropriate and commercially available, state-of-the-art prosthetic equipment, sensory aids and devices to veterans that cross the full range of patient care. ...*continued on page 9.*



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, President

I attended the Veteran’s Day ceremony held at the New Hampshire State Veterans Cemetery in Boscawen, NH. It was a bit chilly with the wind blowing, but otherwise bright sunny day. There was a crowd of several hundred there to celebrate both Veterans day and the 100th Anniversary of the Armistice ending World War I. NH’s entire Congressional delegation was in attendance – Senators Jeanne Shaheen and Hassan, Congresswoman Kuster and Shea-Porter, as well as, other Veteran and military dignitaries. One of which was Brigadier General David J. Mikolaities, New Hampshire’s Adjutant General. He gave a brief and simple speech, yet very poignant. He spoke about about choices and the freedom we have to make them. As an example, his choice to drop off his son at 6 a.m. hockey practice that morning. He went on to discribe other simple choices people make every day without giving thought to them. Such as, when you want to wake up, what you want do, where you want go, etc. He mentioned this because the irony of it is some had to give up their freedom to protect it for others – the Veteran. Veterans willingly gave up their freedoms for us. Some even giving up more than their freedom, giving their lives. The legacy of this cycle is still perpetuated to this today.

President Ronald Reagan stated it best, saying *“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn’t pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same...”*

So not only on Veterans Day should we honor and say “Thank you” to our Veterans, but we should do so every day for freely sacrificing their own freedom to safeguard the freedom we enjoy today.

To all my brethren, past and present, I want to personally say “Thank you” for your service.

Michael G. Negrete
President and Paralyzed Veteran

From the Director’s Desk

Debra A. Freed, Executive Director



Wow, a whirlwind month of October. As stated in my formal article, I truly and sincerely hope you all had the opportunity to vote. From the news reports it was a banner election for women, veterans, and immigrants.

Now that the holidays are right around the corner, I want to be one of the first to wish everyone a great Thanksgiving. The Chapter is again participating in the Brockton Thanksgiving event on November 15th in Bldg. 8 at the Brockton VAMC. While we provide funds, these funds are used to assist in purchasing some of the food. A lot of other organizations also participate by donating more food, cooking said food, and providing outstanding volunteers.

Please remember those who cannot be home with their families and celebrate well, celebrate wisely!

Debra A. Freed
Executive Director

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PROGRAM DIRECTORS

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Paralyzed Veterans of America Score Victory In Wheelchair Case

Originally posted on www.pva.org



After Legal and Public Pressure, and Congressional Action, Government Agrees to Implement Much Needed Protections for Disabled Air Travelers.

Washington, D.C. — Following a lawsuit brought by Democracy Forward on behalf of Paralyzed Veterans of America, and subsequent Congressional action in the FAA Reauthorization Act of

2018, the Department of Transportation (DOT) has now reversed course and agreed to stop delaying a rule intended to make air travel safer and easier for passengers with disabilities.

In a letter to the court filed late yesterday, DOT announced that it expects industry to comply with the rule's requirement to report data on lost and damaged wheelchairs and scooters. For flights beginning December 4, 2018, "[DOT's] Enforcement Office will expect the airline[s] to accurately report the total number of mishandled wheelchairs and scooters and total number of wheelchair and scooters enplaned."

The rule, which was years in the making and has been the focus of activism by disability rights advocates, was delayed by DOT in March 2017 in response to requests by airline lobbyists. This rule provides valuable information, not previously available, to travelers with disabilities about

an airline's record of handling mobility devices. That information will enable travelers with disabilities to make more informed choices about which airlines to patronize.

DOT's 2017 decision to delay implementation of the rule was made unlawfully, without providing notice or an opportunity for the public to comment on the delay, a clear violation of the Administrative Procedure Act. Rather than follow lawful procedure, DOT simply asserted the delay was necessary due to unspecified implementation "challenges," citing a single email the agency received from an airline lobbyist.

"We applaud the DOT for finally implementing the new rule," said Carl Blake, executive director of Paralyzed Veterans of America. "This rule is an important move in our long standing effort to make air travel safer and more convenient for all people with disabilities."

"We are pleased that after legal challenge and congressional action the Department of Transportation appears to be giving up on its unlawful delay of the wheelchair rule, a delay which disadvantaged travelers with disabilities at the behest of the airline industry," said Democracy Forward Counsel Karianne Jones. "We will continue to closely monitor the rule's implementation to guard against future violations of the law."

The original case was filed in July of 2017. In September of this year, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit heard oral argument in the case. On Tuesday, October 23, 2018, DOT made the enforcement notice available on its website.

2018 World Series Champion Red Sox visit Brockton Bldg. 8 LTC Residents.

Contributed by Denise Pease, Chapter Volunteer



I had the pleasure of getting to see the Red Sox World Series trophy at the Brockton VA SCI Building 8 on November 12th. Former Red Sox player Jim Corsini was also there. They had a Veterans day presentation for patients who couldn't get to any parades. Chapter member Larry Berry and Chapter Board member Dan Shaul gave brief speeches about Veterans and Veterans day.

Columbia gas and water was volunteering there, as well. We had Cold Creek ice cream sundaes and Dunkin Donuts donuts, coffee, and brownies.



New England Patriots Visit Brockton Bldg. 8 LTC Residents

Photos provided by Debra Freed, Chapter Executive Director



Indego Exoskeleton Available for Veterans
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- Jim Dahlin, US Army Veteran, first veteran to receive Indego through VA policy

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Personal Responsibilities - It really Is All Of Our Jobs

By Debra Freed, Chapter Executive Director

Well, the Mid-Term Elections are now over. I would truly love to hear any stories you wish to share concerning your endeavors when heading out to vote: when you got to your destination?, did they have sufficient areas to vote?, did they provide accessible accommodations?. For instance, I don't use my wheelchair for short trips, however, this was the first year there was a line. Instead of offering me a seat, the person responsible for the flow of traffic told my partner Joy that I could sit down and wait my turn. Sorry, but I am neither deaf nor blind and most times quite approachable.

The month of October was pretty busy. Of course many of you came out for the Chapter banquet. I always hope for a better turnout and while some grumble a bit at having to pay, we were only short 3 of the 100 we had said we would have (actually it was 150 going by last year) but we had to scale it back a bit. Again, I understand that some were working but I too was working. And if you follow the news, there are very few that offer what we offer for the price we can offer it at. For those who registered online, you received 5 free tickets and in essence paid only \$18 for a \$60 meal. Again, I did not hear any complains about the food. Please check out the October issue, it has some really great photos in there!!!!!!

Now on to other business. I attended the MA Women Veterans Appreciation Day held at the State House on the 1st. It is always an honor to be present for the speakers and the winner of the Deborah Sampson Award. November 2nd, the Chapter hosted a table at the Vets Rock 2018 event at Mohegan Sun. Even PVA sent a couple of folks from P.A.V.E. Thanks to Chapter Board Member Brad Carlson, Chapter President Michael Negrete, and Chapter member Wayne Ross for attending various times throughout the day. It truly does make life easier when there is more than one "holding down the fort." On November 6th, after voting, I went to the Brockton VA where I would assist in taking photos of some of the former New England Patriots, the long snapper, and two new faces currently on the practice squad. Also in attendance were several former Cheerleaders. So, many thanks to all of them for coming out and meeting

with Bldg 8 members and staff.

Now onto a not so pleasant topic: For those who live in Massachusetts, there was an issue that is near and dear to many of us who are able to drive. In 2015, a non-veteran with Multiple Sclerosis (MS) accidentally drove into a restaurant killing two people. The Commonwealth charged him with vehicular homicide. The individual claimed it was his MS and therefore he should not be charged. The State offered this person a plea where he would serve two years and lose his license for life. The non-veteran chose to go to trial. Unfortunately, he lost (his case was decided Monday October 29th, 2018).

This person can never take back the accident. He can never give life to those who were killed because he chose to drive. What does this mean for veterans, probably not a lot. However, I have been hearing that some individuals whether getting a new vehicle with the same type of controls or even new hand controls were required to go through a driver training refresher. They were also required to do the same for their RMV. Otherwise, they were probably not driving legally. Of course, if you aren't a veteran or don't want the VA to assist financially in some of the accessible amenities, then you could try going it on your own. However, I truly doubt that the Commonwealth and/or any other state would waive a driving exam for anyone whether the disability was permanent or temporary.

Trust me when I tell you, I would be the first one to go kicking and screaming that I deserve to keep driving. However, I won't speak for anyone else, but I do know that I would suffer so much more if this were to happen to me or even someone close to me. So please, when you have to deal with driver training or getting extra medical certificates, suck it up and deal. Heed the words of those who are not only tasked with protecting YOU, but also the community as a whole. The Chapter will not be able to assist should such a thing happen to you.

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.

Connect With What Matters



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.

MobilityWorks has more than 50 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

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5C David Drive
Essex Junction, VT 05452
802-222-0265

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104 Pitkin Street
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Vehicle Modifications (Non-Service Connected Veterans NSC)

VA REHABILITATION AND PROSTHETIC SERVICES

VA prosthetic and sensory aids service (PSAS) is the largest and most comprehensive provider of prosthetic devices and sensory aids in the world. VA provides all clinically appropriate and commercially available, state-of-the-art prosthetic equipment, sensory aids and devices to veterans that cross the full range of patient care.

Eligibility for vehicle modifications:

- Veterans who are enrolled in VHA's healthcare system (Note: Vehicle modifications can be provided as medical services).
- Veterans with a non-service connected disability and not eligible for the AAE program.

Eligibility for VA driver's training program

VA has 48 facilities that offer this programming. These programs have over 100 specially adapted vehicles (cars, mini-vans and full sized vans) available to train Veterans / Service members with various disabilities (e.g., Spinal Cord Injury, Amputation, Brain Injury, Stroke, Orthopedic conditions).

- Veterans / Service members may be provided a clinical program of primary services that include:
- Pre-Driving Assessment; Behind-the Wheel Assessment; and equipment evaluation.

What does vehicle modifications include?

- Non-operational equipment (e.g., wheelchair tie downs; vehicle lifts; items to assist with entering / exiting the vehicle.

- Modifications on the drivers or passenger side.

What does vehicle modifications exclude?

- Operational equipment (e.g., low effort power brakes; low effort power steering column; hand controls).
- Benefits greater than those eligible for VBA's AAE program. (Note: No 2 vehicles modified in a 4 year period).

Is pre-authorization required?

Yes. Before any vehicle modifications or equipment for the vehicle is installed, repaired, or replaced, authorization by the VA is required.

Veterans / Service members should consult with VHA when making decisions regarding vehicle selection, modifications, or adaptations specifically required to meet individual needs. Evaluation for proper driving equipment is critical BEFORE purchasing a new vehicle in order to avoid unnecessary personal costs.

To apply for vehicle modifications, please contact your local Prosthetic Service at the nearest VA medical center or visit www.prosthetics.va.gov for more information about Prosthetics.

Frequently asked questions about vehicle modifications and driver training can be found online at: www.prosthetics.va.gov/psas/FAQ-AAE.asp

Vehicle Modification Maintenance After Veteran Privately Purchased - NSC

Contributed by Dave Qualey, MobilityWorks of Londonderry, NH

You might not be aware of this, but even if you privately purchased your vehicle conversion, the VA may be able to assist with its continued maintenance and repairs. Here's a brief overview of what the process involves.

Once determined that the equipment and/or modification that a you purchased is medically necessary and appropriate, you can ask your VA healthcare Provider to have it added to your VA Form 10-2319 (ADP) - Record of Prosthetic Service under Automobile Adaptive Equipment. The VA can then assume the responsibilities for maintaining and repairing it.

To define "Appropriate", means that the equipment is medically necessary AND it's something the VA would have prescribed for you. An example of inappropriate might be a Veteran who buys a wheelchair that is too small or too large. Yes, it's medically necessary, but not appropriate. At that point the VA should offer an appropriate alternative. Another example may be if a Veteran who can ambulate buys a lowered floor wheelchair accessible van. If a non-service connected Veteran has the ability to transfer or

ambulate the VA will typically NOT pay for an accessible van conversion. In the past they would, but now it's typically only when a Veteran cannot safely transfer and needs to stay in his/her wheelchair for transport.

So again, once determined that the van conversion is appropriate and medically necessary your VA healthcare Provider should be able to add it to your prosthetics record and assume responsibility for it.

For more information, please feel free to contact your nearest MobilityWorks dealer or PVA Service Officer. Service Officers are listed on page 3.

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VA Compensation Types

Contributed by Charlie Tocci, PVA East-North Area Manager

Monthly compensation provided by VA is known as VA disability compensation. This benefit is available for veteran with disabilities, diseases, or injuries suffered during active military service. Conditions and disabilities aggravated during active military service will also entitle a veteran to receive the VA disability compensation. Monetary benefits are also extended to surviving spouse, dependent parents and children. The purpose of benefits for surviving spouses and dependents are to compensate the loss of income of a veteran who passed away.

Disability Compensation: Can best be explained as a tax free monthly monetary paid benefit for veterans who suffered or aggravated injuries while in active military service. The amount of money for this benefit is determined by taking into consideration the severity of the disability and how much it is affecting the veteran. VA assigns percentages to service connected disabilities or conditions base on severity and limitations due to the conditions. To received monetary VA benefits a rating between 10 percent and 100 percent is required. The VA assigns percentages to disabilities in increments of 10 percent. It should be noted that veterans can also receive monetary compensation from the VA for disabilities that are secondary to a service connected disability.

Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC): This is also a monetary tax free benefit available only to surviving spouses and dependents of members of the arm forces who died while in active duty or active duty for training. Parents of service members are entitled to parents DIC if they

were financially dependent on a veteran who died of a service connected disability. Survivors of veterans whose death is caused by a serviced connected condition are also entitled to survivors DIC.

Special Monthly Compensation (SMC): SMC is another monetary tax free benefit paid to veterans, surviving spouses and parents. Veterans can received this benefits under special circumstances. SMC could be granted based on the need of Aid and Attendance of another person to accomplish activities of daily living. It can also be granted for the loss of a limb. Spouses and surviving spouses will receive this benefit in the form of Aid and Attendance based on the need of another person to accomplish activities of daily living.

Claims Based on Special Circumstances: After a veteran is granted service connection for a disability, the veteran could then be eligible for special disability benefits. If the veteran meets the criteria he or she can be entitled to benefits such as individual employability, clothing allowance, automobile allowance, convalescence, dental, and birth defects. Each one of these benefits have requirements that will need to be met.

Claimants should seek assistant from an accredited representative such as Paralyzed Veterans of America to file any claims for VA benefits. Service Officers can help determine what benefits to apply for and the needed documentation. New England based Service Officers are listed on page 3.



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

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Your donated vehicle can go far in helping severely injured veterans. Donations are sold at auction with proceeds going toward programs and services for veterans and their families. You may also receive a tax break, too!



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Individual Allotment Policy Reminder

Member Individual Allotment Program

The Individual Allotment (IA) Program's purpose is to improve the quality of life of New England PVA's members by assisting in the expansion of both the quality and quantity of opportunities in sports, recreation, events and entertainment, especially those activities which enhance lifetime health and fitness, both physical and mental.

IA Funding Availability

The Chapter annually budgets for IA requests based on its fiscal funds available. The amount budgeted may vary from year-to-year based on these funds and its availability is not guaranteed. The budgeted amount is drawn down against on a first-come-first-served basis by BOD approved Individual Funding Requests. Once these funds have been depleted, no more Individual Funding Requests will be accepted for the current Fiscal year.

IA Funding Amount(s)

The maximum total amount allowable per individual per fiscal year is \$500. This amount may be drawn against cumulatively, as separate funding requests submitted throughout the year, or entirely through a single funding request. An individual may not request funding above the maximum amount allowable for the fiscal year.

IA Program Minimum Eligibility Participation Requirements

1. Must be a New England Chapter member in Good Standing;
2. Must receive Annual SCI/D physical at the West Roxbury, MA, VAMC SCI Center in accordance with VHA Handbook 1176.01.
3. Must not have any outstanding receipts, funds, materials or equipment due to the Chapter at the time of request.

IA Request Submission Procedure

All (IA) requests shall be submitted in writing a minimum of 30 days prior to the event, function or trip requested for use. The Request should be as detailed as possible, with regard to the activity and intended use of the requested funds. Requests may be either a written letter of request mailed to the Chapter office at 1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301, West Roxbury, MA 02132, Attention: Individual Allotment Request or email to info@newenglandpva.org, with "Individual Allotment Request" in the subject line.

IA requests received after the event, function or trip has occurred will not be accepted or considered for reimbursement.

IA Eligibility Review

Requests will be reviewed by Chapter administration to determine if the applicant is eligible for IA and what level of funding is available to the applicant at the time of request. Those applicants meeting the IA eligibility requirements, with funds available, will have their IA request forwarded to the BOD for review.

IA Funding Approval Process

All IA requests received by the BOD will be individually reviewed and discussed by the BOD for approval consideration. The BOD has sole discretion and authority to approve, deny or modify any IA request, in whole or in part, for any reason they determine to do so.

Receipt of IA Funding

IA Funding is based on the reimbursement of an individual's expenses as detailed in their IA Funding Request. Actual reimbursement(s) will only be provided for expenses submitted with a corresponding receipt. Reimbursement(s) will not exceed the amount initially requested in the Funding Request or the amount approved by the BOD, if the BOD approved an amount less than the initial amount requested.

Under no circumstance will any IA funds be distributed or release to an individual in advance of receiving the required expense receipts or required Newsletter article.

Required Newsletter Article

In addition to submitting the required receipts for reimbursement, the IA recipient is also required to compose and submit a minimum 500 word article, with pictures, about the event or activity the IA funding was use for. This article will be provided to the CordWord Editor for publishing consideration.

IA funding will not be approved for disbursement prior to receiving this required article.

IA Program's usage for Sports Clinics - As long as funding is available, the Chapter will continue to cover the expense of one half the room rate for members participating in the New England Winter Sports Clinic, New England Summer Sports Clinic, and the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Since the Chapter is covering the participant's portion of the room cost, participants may not request IA funding for the purpose of applying it to the other half of the room cost.



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Feel free to reach out to Jack, a mobility specialist on our sales team. Pictured above, Jack has overcome many obstacles after a spinal cord injury 5 years ago. He now advocates for those with disabilities looking for mobility vehicles and equipment.



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VHA Enrollment Categories

Contributed by David Ray, PVA 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 co-pay 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 co-pays 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 likelihood 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 co-pay 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 8g 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.

Veteran Burial Benefits

Contributed by Earnest Hill, PVA 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 grave sites 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.

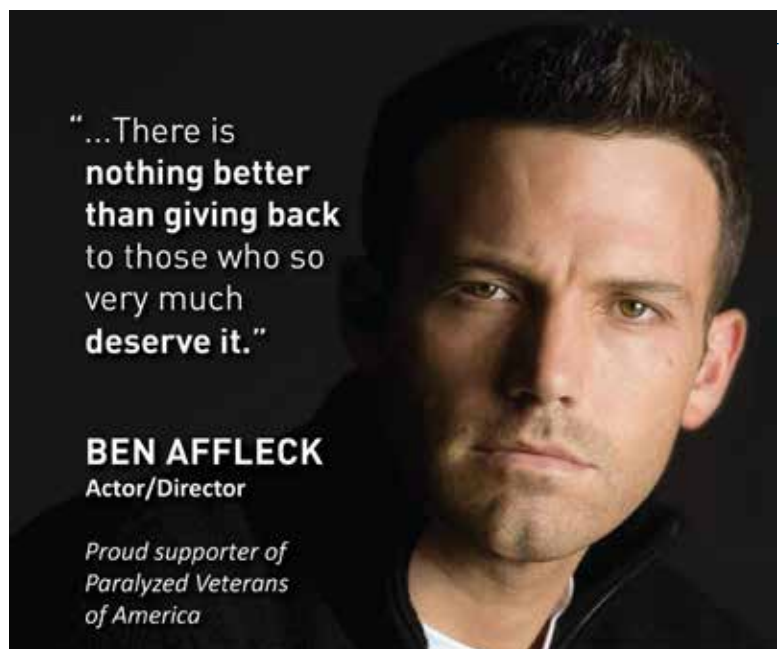


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New England Chapter
Paralyzed Veterans of America
1208 VFW Parkway, Suite 301
West Roxbury, MA 02132

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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



TAI CHI CLASSES FOR VETERANS

- Self awareness & weight shifting
- A state of relaxation of both body & mind
- No experience required & all capabilities are welcome
- Space may be limited & registration is required

BROCKTON

Tuesdays, September 18th - November 27th 10-11 a.m. Standing Tai Chi
Location: Building 5, Mental Health Conference Room C-210-B5

WEST ROXBURY

Thursdays, September 13th - November 29th 1-2 p.m. Standing Tai Chi
Thursdays, September 13th - November 29th 2-3 p.m. Adaptable Seated Tai Chi
Location: Building 3, 1st floor, Canteen Conference Room 1D-104A-3

JAMAICA PLAIN

Fridays, September 14th - November 30th 9-10 a.m. Adaptable Seated Tai Chi
Fridays, September 14th - November 30th 10-11 a.m. WOMEN Veterans Tai Chi
Location: Building 1, Basement Conference Room DB-112L-A

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