Adaptive wheelchair sports and recreation were paved by returning soldiers disabled from their service in WWII. These soldiers sought to regain strength and function from recreational activities that were familiar to them from their youth. As a result of these military personnel returning with debilitating injuries and being treated in VA hospitals across the country, wheelchair basketball became a popular daily activity. As interest in wheelchair basketball grew, it sparked interest in other sports and moved from recreational sports to competitive sports.

In 1980, the VA established a Recreation Therapy Service. That VA effort brought about an enhanced awareness of the rehabilitative value of wheelchair athletics. In 1981, the first National Veterans Wheelchair Games (NVWG) where held in Richmond, VA. Since then the NVWG have grown to be recognized as the largest wheelchair sporting event in the world. The NVWG offers 19 different sports to Veterans who use wheelchairs due to spinal cord injuries, amputations and neurological diseases. The Games promote rehabilitation through rigorous competition in such events as basketball, quad rugby, softball, handcycling, power soccer, trapshooting, track & field, softball, bowling, 9 Ball, table tennis, archery, air rifle and pistol, motor rally, slalom, bocce ball, weight lifting swimming and others.

This year’s NVWG were hosted by the Dallas, Texas June 21-26, 2015. The SE PVA and VAMC were represented by a 37 member team. Our team included veterans who are served by the Charlie Norwood VAMC, Dublin VAMC, Atlanta VAMC and the Salisbury VAMC. We had a total of 4 Novice (first time participants) at the games this year. Our mission is to reach veterans who may not be aware of adaptive sports opportunities available to them. We are able to utilize the NVWG as an introductory resource for veterans to seek opportunities in their own communities.

Our SEPVA Team Roster included Twila Adams, Ulysses Albritton, Lee Baker, David Blackmon (N) Jeramiah Butler, Lonnie Burnett, Cecil Highsmith (N), Marvin Brown, Shaun Castle, Rony Carolus, Joanne Dickson-Smith, Al Evans, Fain Grogg, Cleveland Hamilton, Charlie Hay, Jim Lynch, Jessie Hope, Calvin Ingram, James Johnson, Robert Jones, Arthur Lee, Derrick McMillan, Arlene Magee (N), Carl Morgan, Rick Messer, Charles Mays, Kevin Owen, Judy Overholt, Jonathan Tubbs (N), Rodney Roscoe, Mark Sikes, Jacques Swafford, Paul Stewart, Keith Thompson, Harris Walker, Joe Willis, Johnny Underwood (N), and Donald Young.

Recreation Therapists, Valerie McNary & Suzanne Kenrick, from the Charlie Norwood VAMC SCI Rehab team attended as coaches to support our veterans as they competed. Additional coaches were Charlene James, Rec. Therapist representing the Dublin VAMC and Chauncey Rozier, Rec. Therapist representing the Atlanta VAMC and Jane Thomas, RN and Almeta Malory, SCI Spoke Staff from the Salisbury VA. Our team won a total 63 medals; 25 Gold, 23 Silver, 15 Bronze. We are very proud of the way our veteran athletes represented the SEPVA and VAMCs.

For further information about participating in the NVWG, please Contact Valerie McNary, CTRS at 706.733.0188 ext. 3049 or Suzanne Kenrick, CTRS ext. 1947. You may visit the following web sites: www.pva.org or http://www1.va.gov.
Experiment with different pictures and sizes to find the right image, without wasting time. Swap pictures by dragging and dropping one of the pictures onto the other.

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By: Alphonso (Al) Evans

To begin with, I hope all of our members read the PN National Magazine. If you haven’t taken a good look at it lately, please read the July 2015 edition. Editor Richard Hoover’s “Reasons & Remarks” entry is very informative. It covers one of the issues that all veterans need to take to heart and action. As Mr. Hoover states, if we don’t take action to assist the VA, we could lose it. There is another article in the July edition that caught my interest: Page 58, “and finally”, by Scoba Rhodes. As the article states, things in all our lives as SCI/D personnel are changing. I have asked all the Social Workers at the Augusta VA SCI Unit take a look at it. I know that this is one SCI/D veteran’s feelings and experience that many, if not all of us, can relate to in some form.

Here we are in the middle of summer; the Dog Days of August. So it’s a little late to inform you that the heat is no joke for people with SCI/D. Telling you to stay hydrated and as cool as possible is preaching to the choir, I know. But, I say it anyway. When possible, stay out of the heat and drink plenty of fluids.

I have been stopped by many members with questions about the Choice Act of 2015. There are sill many questions that have not been answered by the VA or Congress. The 40 miles as the “Crow Flies” has been changed to 40 mile “Driving Distance” by the most direct route. The VA now has introduced “Choice One,” which is supposed to make it easier to find care if the local VA facility does not provide the service required. The veterans stills needs to check an individual's eligibility in order to use to Choice system. I can’t see were this is any different than the system we currently have. If the VA can’t presently provide the service they fee the service out. Maybe they feel this will speed up the transferring service to the outside. Meaning instead of checking to see if a close VA Medical Center can provide the service they can send us to a local Civilian Medical Facility. We as SCI/D veterans need to keep an eye on this process. We can’t let our care be “farmed out” just to get and keep numbers down and convenience of the VA. We need the VA and must let anyone and everyone know. Another question that keeps coming up, is whether this program covers Visual or Dental issues. The answer is NO, it does not. You will still need to use the VA Medical Facilities for all dental and vision issues.

Congress is trying to correct another short fall bill; The “Care Giver Act”. This correction will make all Care Givers eligible for benefits. At the present time, only care givers of Veterans post 9/11, are eligible for benefits. This has shown not to be fair to those care givers who have taken care of veterans for many years and have aged along with these veterans. Please contact your National Representatives and Senators and urge them to get behind and support this bill.

Please if you have any ideas that will help our Chapter Board of Directors to improve their relationship with our membership, give the office a call. We are here to serve you. When you see that we are having an Outreach Meeting near you, please try and make it and keep in touch. ♦
HLO News:

Infection Control cleared the two patient rooms, nurse’s breakroom, and restrooms in the newly construction area. As of the July 1st the nurse’s breakroom cannot be used. Space utilization will not let them move in. They are holding any additional moving of staff up at this time. It has been stated that they want to use staff space for storage. And still trying to figure out what they will do about moving Prosthetic. The Chapter has made it known that we will fight any effort to move Prosthetic into any SCI space. We are still working on getting SCI Home Care moved into the old office space of Dr. Stincer.

In July, there was problem with the ceiling lift in a patient room over the weekend. The problem started Friday night, somewhere after 4pm, when the lift would not work in this two patient room. Facility engineers are closed during the weekend, so contacting them was out of the question. Both veterans require lifts to get out of bed. When staff went to get both of the Hoyer Lifts, it was found that the batteries were dead in both lifts. Each ward has two backup lifts, however, staff did not think to go to another ward and get one of their lifts, resulting in both veterans remain in bed throughout the entire weekend.

There are still questions as to where Prosthetic will be moving to. Closer to the SCI Unit would be great, but not into the SCI area. The Chapter has and will continue to make it known, that no SCI space will be used for anything but SCI direct care. This has been expressed to the facility leadership.

The SCI Staff has been directed to start the process into getting a Long Term Care Unit for SCI at the Augusta VA. Evidence of this need has been justified, thanks to the SCI Social Workers. They have shown the need for both MS and ALS veterans, along with Spinal Cord veteran placement. The number of beds necessary will depend on the need and staff. The Chapter has addressed the need to the Director. Recent closings of two patients wards at the Uptown Campus that are not currently been used, due to the Warrior Transition Unit being closed on Ft. Gordon, has become a target area for our LTC. Again, facility management wants to use patient space for storage. We hope that justification and a business plan will work in our favor to finally see our LTC unit come to fruition.

A continuing problem remains that of medication refills being filled for SCI patients. The problem has gotten better, however, members are still getting what they feel is the run-around in some cases. We have instructed our members to contact their Service Office with their issues in order to make a case and get this corrected.

The Parking Garage is schedule to be completed in mid-September. The SCI Unit will have assigned parking spaces, all on the first level. We have requested that all SCI parking be Van Accessible.

We have been notified that the PVA National Site Visit is scheduled for September 15, 16, 2015. Any member who has questions about the Site Visit or feel we need to bring an issue to the Site Visit Team please give the Chapter a call. These visits are to assist the Chapter in improving our health care.

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NSO Reaches Milestone

During an outreach meeting in Dublin, GA back in June, we celebrated NSO Mitchell Hinkle’s significant anniversary with PVA. Mitch is a Senior Benefits Advocate from the Atlanta, Regional office.

May 2015 marked 30 years of outstanding, loyal, and dedicated service to the members of the Southeastern PVA and Veterans Nationwide.

Congratulations!
Helpful Hints from SCI-Homecare
By: Donna Bowe, RN, BSN

“Stay Cool/Prevent Heat Related Problems”

In a hot environment, the body sends messages to the brain that it is overheating. The brain then tells the body to cool down by perspiring, which evaporates and cools the skin. Most people with spinal cord injuries do not sweat above their injury, placing them at risk for overheating, especially in temperatures more than 90 degrees.

Symptoms of overheating that Quadriplegics may suffer from are:

1. Nausea
2. Headache
3. Nasal Congestion
4. Tiredness
5. Low blood pressure
6. Decreased ability to concentrate

Cooling down with a Spinal Cord Injury:

1. Stay out of the sun
2. Sit in the shade
3. Cool down with a wet towel around the back of the neck
4. Dampen skin with cold water spray (artificial sweating)
5. Stay hydrated with cold liquids

ADA Celebrates 25 Years
By: Paul Stewart, Board Member

The Americans with Disabilities Act turned 25 years old on July 26, 2015. It was signed into affect by President George Bush. But in actuality, we have been fighting for our rights longer than the bill being in existence.

I had the experience of seeing the America’s Disability Rights Museum on Wheels, while it was in Charlotte, NC. I was amazed of all the information this museum had to offer. How our Veterans and Paralyzed Veterans of America has been involved with ADA. To see how people with mental and physical disabilities were either left to fend for themselves or to be placed in buildings to be hidden from the rest of society. What steps and protest that were made, to get the awareness out, that we are all people and we deserve the same rights as everyone else.

The only problem I had with the event in Charlotte, is the lack of advertisement of this event. I only found out about the event the morning in which it took place. I feel it should have had more coverage. This is a major milestone for people with disabilities.

As we mention at all of our PVA meetings, we need to advocate for our rights. If you notice a problem in your community, retail spaces, restaurants, hotels, etc., be a voice to let the people know what the problems are. Write to your government officials. Use the media, such as Facebook, GooglePlus, Twitter, etc. and share the information. Please keep in mind, that while addressing the issues, to be polite. Try to offer suggestions or solutions. The more people that share/voice concerns, the better chance we have of getting this resolved and to be heard. Have your family and friends get involved with this.

If we don't protect the ADA we have a good chance to lose it. The ADA isn't just out there for you, but you never know when it is going to be so important for someone close to you. ♦
Currently the Chapter has 2,010 voting members. ♦

The Augusta/September Newsletter will have the dates for the 2017/2018 Election Term of Office for Officers and Board of Directors. Please read the Newsletters when they come for more information. Also the upcoming newsletters will giving information for Flu Shots, places and times.

Augusta VAMC

Everything is on schedule to complete the parking garage by mid-September. There will be parking spots on the first level for assessable parking. The SCI Unit will have dedicate parking spots. We have worked with the VA Police to see that they are monitored closely, and ticketed and towed when needed.

North Carolina Governor Signs Bills to Support VETS

Governor Pat McCrory signed bills into law June 24, to support Veterans and military families through in-state tuition at Universities and North Carolina (UNC) system universities and North Carolina Community Colleges by waving the 12-month residency requirement. The law went into effect July 1.

Senate Bill 43 improves job opportunities for Veterans by extending the timed period allowed between a retired or discharged applicant being regularly employed in a qualified position and the date of application for the CDL from 90 days to one year.

The bill also provides an additional method of certification of eligibility for the waiver by allowing an applicant to provide a Form DD-214 and a military-issued driver’s license. Source: Voice of VISN 6 – Nwsltr - June 2015

Community-Based Employment Service for Homeless Veterans

VA announced a new employment program aimed at helping job-ready Veterans exiting homelessness, and those on the brink of homelessness, gain stable and long-term employment.

The new program, Homeless Veteran Community Employment Services relies on Community Employment Coordinators (CEC) who know their communities and can work with local employers to identify suitable jobs based on a Veteran’s skills and abilities.

“Securing long-term, stable and fulfilling employment is important for Veterans who are exiting homelessness or are at-risk of becoming homeless,” said VA Secretary Robert A. McDonald. “We know that finding gainful employment can change the life of a Veteran. This program is a key component of the overall strategy to prevent and end Veteran homelessness.”

Each VA Medical Center will have a dedicated CEC who will be responsible for connecting homeless and at-risk Veterans to appropriate VA and community-based employment services. The goal is to establish relationships with employers who may be able to hire Veterans while VA provides the necessary support services to ensure each Veteran’s transition back into the workforce is successful.

CEC’s also will work with existing VA employment programs and local workforce development organizations to identify other employment-related resources for this subset of the Veteran population. Veterans exiting homelessness offer a diverse skillset that is applicable to many different fields and leadership roles within organizations. VA offers a variety of wraparound services including health care, housing assistance and other VA supports to increase the likelihood of on-the-job success.

Employers interested in hiring a job-ready Veteran exiting homelessness should contact the CEC who can work with them to find local Veteran candidates with applicable skillsets. Visit www.va.gov/homeless/cec/contacts.asp for a list of CEC’s in your local area. More information about VA’s homeless programs is available at www.va.gov/
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Presentation of PVA Slide Boards to CNVAMC SCI/D Center

During PVA’s annual convention in May 2015 in San Diego, PVA President Al Kovach announced that 10 slide boards bearing the PVA logo would be distributed to each of the 25 VA SCI/D Centers. These boards will be gifted to new injury veterans, to show our support for their independence.

On July 15, 2015 Chapter President Al Evans presented the PVA slide boards to Charlie Norwood VAMC Director, Maria R. Andrews and SCI Chief, Dr. Elpidio Stincer, in Augusta, GA. The ten boards for the Augusta SCI/D Unit will be distributed through Vocational Rehabilitation.

homeless. If you know a Veteran who is homeless or at imminent risk of becoming homeless, refer him or her to a local VAMC, where homeless coordinator are ready to help. Veterans and their families can also call 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838) to get connected to VA services. Source: Voice of VISN 6 – Nwsltr - June 2015.

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This research study is funded in full by The Department of Defense, through the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Programs and the Defense Medical Research and Development Program.
VA Claim Forms and Appeal Process

By: William Pack
Senior National Service Officer

On March 24, 2015, The Department of Veterans Affairs initiated a new policy that required that specific claims for benefits be filed using specific forms. If a veteran is filing for service-connected disability compensation, the veteran needs to complete and submit VA Form 21-526 EZ (Application for Disability Compensation and Related Compensation Benefits) updated May 2015. If wartime veterans wish to file for disability pensions then a 21-527 EZ (Application for Pension) should be submitted to the Veterans Affairs. Survivors filing for Dependency and Indemnity Compensation or for survivors pension need to complete and submit VA Form 21-534 EZ (Application for DIC, Death Pension and Accrued Benefits).

Surviving Parents filing for Parents DIC do not have a standardized form and will use VAF 21-535 (Application for DIC by Parents) and 21P 509 (Statement of Dependency of Parents). The standard form for the VA Auto Grant is 21-4502, and the Special Adapted Housing Grant form is 26-4555. The Clothing allowance form 10-8678, and to file for Vocational Rehabilitation, the form 28-1900. This process is necessary because the VA is going electronic, and all claims are going into an “Electronic-file” rather than a “Paper Claim File”. If a claim is filed using a form other than the standardized form the VA may not recognize the submittal as a claim or will treat it as an “Intent to File” Claim.

An “Intent to File” claim is the new form used for Informal claims. A veteran can file a VA Form 21-0966, and the VA will wait up to one year for the veteran to formalize the claim with the proper form and include supporting evidence. If a veteran files using an outdated form and the VA responds stating the veteran filed an “Intent to File” claim, all the veteran needs to do is re-file using the proper form.

The VA Form 21-526 EZ is also used for what the VA refers to as a “Fully Developed Claim”. In a “Fully Developed Claim”, the veteran provides to the VA all the evidence needed to support the claim. This claim should include military treatment records, DD-214, current treatment records, medical letter connecting the in-service injury or illness to the current claimed condition, dependency information for children, spouses and parents if needed. The VA will decide a “Fully Developed Claim” faster than a traditional claim because the VA will not need to send out for evidence or records. If the VA decides to request a “Compensation and Pension Examination”, this will not take the claim out of “Fully Developed” status. A veteran can use the VAF 21-526 EZ instead for the VA to not work the claim as a Fully Developed Claim if further evidence is provided in the future, centralized mail is the way that the VA is now handling claims being filed using paper forms. The VA will send the mail to a central location and scan it into electronic files. The VA will ask veterans to send their evidence to a scanning facility in Georgia or Wisconsin. Mail sent to those locations is scanned and ends up in the veteran’s e-file. We have the capability of searching these e-files in case there is a certain document that the VA claims were not received, but the veteran says he or she mailed in. If we cannot find it, then we can advise the veteran to resubmit it.

There is also a standardized appeal form, the VA Form 21-0958 (Notice of Disagreement). This form is used to initiate appeals of any VA decision that can legally be appealed. Appeal issues usually involve whether a claimed condition is service-connected or not, whether a certain disability is evaluated correctly, whether a certain condition is secondary to or due to a service-connected condition and other issues.

The VA is sending out the new appeal form with almost every decisional document they send out. As we have advised before, appeals are often not the best options when veterans receive denials. Often a certain piece of evidence that the VA needs will allow a denial to be changed to a granted decision. Veterans should remember to contact their Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Officer with questions they may have on subjects discussed in this article.

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We strive to keep our membership address list current:

1. To make sure everyone is receiving their newsletter/magazine and
2. To reduce expenses with return mail service.

Therefore, please make sure that we have your current mailing address on file. Even if you are away for a short period of time, please call the Chapter office and let us know so that we can make the temporary change.

Complete this form and mail in, or call our 800 number. Thank you!

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Address Changed?

Please make sure that if you have MOVED or even away for a short period of time, to change your address with:

1. The VA / Social Worker
2. Your Service Officer
3. Southeastern PVA: 1-800-292-9335

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4&5: Board Meeting/Budget Meeting

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7: Labor Day – Chapter CLOSED
11: Remembrance Day
18: SCI Unit Outing

TO ALL OF OUR MEMBERS
Celebrating birthdays in August and September

PLEASE NOTE:
Any dates/events that are to be included on our calendars are to be submitted to Jennifer Windham by Sept. 15, 2015 to meet publication deadline.

“You’re not disabled by the disabilities you have, you are able by the abilities you have.”

~Oscar Pistorius
SPORTS REPORT

By: Al Evans, Sports Director

23rd Annual Lake Russell Tournament:
The Chapter’s Annual Bass Tournament for the National PVA Bass Trail is scheduled for October 9\textsuperscript{th}, 10\textsuperscript{th}, and 11\textsuperscript{th}. The Open and Team Boating Divisions will be out of Columbia County’s Wild Wood Park. The Bank Divisions will be at Gordon’s Pond, Lincolnton, GA. National PVA advised that the registrations will be on line hopefully early August, for the entire trail. Anyone interested in fishing our tournament please give the Chapter a call.

The 35\textsuperscript{th} National Veterans Wheelchair Games were a great success for the SEPVA Team. Our team consisted of 28 veterans from Alabama, both North and South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and Georgia areas. We all agreed that it was hot (high 90’s – low 100’s) in Dallas, TX. However, the real problem was that Texans keep their buildings cold, really cold. To see people with jackets on indoors when it was so hot outside was strange.

Check out the Chapter’s, Atlanta’s and Dublin’s websites to see some of the photos. National PVA has also posted some. You’ll find several photos in this edition as well.

Next year’s games will be in Salt Lake City, UT, from June 27\textsuperscript{th} – July 2\textsuperscript{nd}. March the 3\textsuperscript{rd} will be the Chapter’s Dead Line for Registration Packets to the Chapter. Any received after that date will be returned to the veteran. Packets will be on-line January 4, 2016. Hard copies will be mailed out on the 5\textsuperscript{th}.

Start preparing now! Everyone should be calling their SCI Coordinator, Primary Care Giver, or Clinic in December, to schedule their appointment in January for their exams, if you wish to participate in the next games.

Remember, it’s not what you do the week of the Games, but rather what you do every week at home! Contact your local VA therapist or Paralyzed Veterans Chapter representative to begin. ♦

Do You Know Of A Sports Event?
If you know of a Sporting Event or Clinic for people with disabilities give me a call or send an email to the Chapter with the details. We can post it on the website and place it in this newsletter, if notified early enough. This is your newsletter and if you’re interested in an event you can bet another veteran may be as well. ♦

Please check out the Chapter’s website SoutheasternPVA.org for the latest activities/events taking place throughout the Chapter and National PVA. You can also go to PVA.org to get updated on Sports & Recreation, Advocacy/Legislation and Research on Spinal Cord Dysfunction.
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SCI COORDINATORS

Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA
SCI Clinic Coordinator: (800)836-5561, ext. 3778 or 3710

Atlanta/Decatur VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Kim Whitmoyer, (404)321-6111, ext. 2475

Birmingham VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Nazaren Hartman, (205)933-8101, ext. 6453

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