Congratulations to U.S. National Guard veteran Keith Thompson on winning the annual Spirit of the Games award. The award is meant to honor an athlete who has embraced the true spirit and purpose of the NVWG both on and off the field of athletic competition. Keith Thompson, a Sandersville, Ga., native, slammed his motorcycle into a pole in 2006, leaving him paralyzed from the waist down. Six years later, Keith eventually found the National Veterans Wheelchair Games in 2012 and this year earned the competition’s Spirit Award. Anyone that knows Keith knows that he loves to help others and loves to put a smile on your face. Keith also serves on the board of the PVA Southeastern Chapter.
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(866) 545-1760 • www.ildertonvans.com

High Point, Asheville, Charlotte, N. Charleston
PRESIDENT’S REPORT

By: Al Evans

This last year and half has been RUFF. I spent it in the Augusta VA. I miss the outreach meetings and interaction with our members and VA Staff. Thanks to our Board of Directors, past Executive Director Jennifer Windham and Administrative Assistant, Alicia Barber. The Chapter met all challenges and hurdles. I thank you all for making me and the Chapter look good.

Last year the Chapter requested a Chapter Review from National PVA Office. The National staff that came had a few items the Chapter can improve on. Our Vice President and Treasurer went to work correcting and making the small changes. I met with our National Vice President, we discussed the Review Report and a few issues between the Chapters and National PVA.

A concern of mine and National is how to get more members involved in the Chapter. Our Chapter has nearly 1,900 members. Our Board of Directors is made up 10 individuals and can’t do, half the work we would like to do. Holding meetings, running events that promote PVA, all the good we do, visit VA Medical Centers, taking part in community events, and working with veterans and advocating for people with disabilities. We need our members assistance. We need you to volunteer. We need you to take part in events at your Medical Center, let us know when a veteran event is taking place. We have item’s to assist you. We just need you. The PVA has helped us all and now we need to help ourselves.

Volunteer!!!!!!!!!!

In the last two years our Advocacy Director and myself has been updating you on items before Congress. The Care Giver Act, I can now report to you that Congress has acted and PASSED the Bill. Care Givers will now have Benefits and Health Care. Paralyzed Veterans of America took the lead in getting this past.

VOLUNTEER

all that's missing is U!

Please call our chapter office @1-706-796-6301 or toll free @ 1-800-292-9335 and learn about how you can make a difference today.
Helpful Hints from SCI-Homecare

By: Sheron Still, LCSW

Advance Directives are Important to You and Your Family!

If you have not completed an advance directive, please consider doing so!

♦ The VA offers a form to guide you through the steps. In completing the form you will have an opportunity to name a “health care agent.” The health care agent will be able to make decisions on your behalf, if you should become unable to make them or communicate them.

♦ Secondly, you will be given an opportunity to specify preferences related to certain life-sustaining treatments or to list personal preferences.

♦ You will also be given an opportunity to indicate if you want your instructions followed strictly or used as general guides. You can complete one or all of these sections.

♦ You may choose to complete one, two or three parts of the form. In other words, you do not have to name a health care agent but you may choose to indicate your preferences or instructions, only.

Please consider completing an advance directive as it may be important to you and your family if they are asked to make health care decisions on your behalf. A VA social worker can provide you with the form, instructions and assistance.

BoD Chapter Elections in August

By now you all should have received your ballots for our upcoming elections. Remember to mail them out as soon as possible. Ballots will be collected for the final time on September 11, 2018.

"Determination has no disability."

Robert M. Hensel
Becoming Aware of the Americans with Disabilities Act

By: Paul Stewart

Many of us has the general knowledge of the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act). Few of us has gone out of our way to know the ADA. And then there are those that has no knowledge of it. We all need to work together and get the society to understand what it is all about.

In one of my recent endeavors of sharing the problem with an access aisle for accessible parking spaces on Facebook, there was a discussion about it. Parties were all for me sharing the information. Then another person questioned the color of the lines of the access aisle. They felt the color should be blue and not yellow. I came back not to make the anyone wrong but, I mention that there is the problem right there. Some of the Accessible Parking is marked blue other are marked yellow. The signs posted for accessible parking are code enforced and others are not. Areas where accessible parking spaces are marked @ the side of a road and there is no space to let down a lift or ramp. So you park the wrong direction, so now you are parking in wrong direction.

Looking at stores (large or small) while shopping, what is truly an accessible aisle for a person with a disability or even for a able body person pushing a cart or stroller, they aren’t. What happens are the racks are getting moved by us, we damage the merchandise or dragged behind us and who knows where they end up. Or shelf with merchandise, items on the shelves get knocked down, broken missing pieces or lost. If these businesses would really take the consideration and making changes There is probably likely to have more business which would lead to more profit and less damaged products. It should be the stores to look at this but also the vendors to that store.

For hospitality type of businesses, this is one of the hardest I think. How do you make it accessible to everyone for different disabilities? There are some businesses that do a good job at it and then there are others. With these businesses people will need to let them know what we need to have done to make it accessible for us. Ex raise or lower a bed, if no accessible bathroom ask to have doors remove, have furniture to be moved around or to see if they could raise a table to make it easier for your wheelchair.

We may have a disability, know someone that does, or who knows you may end up with a disability later on. We should educate or be educated in this area. Share your knowledge to your children all the way up to congress. It is scary to this but Congress create a law over 25 years ago and many of our congress doesn’t understand the law. I am not saying one law is more important than another, but the ADA was created to help make all people be on the same level of rights and quality of life. I ask you not as a board member, but as a person with a disability, or that knows people with disabilities to write to congress on the concerns for ADA. Write to corporations that violate our rights. Take an extra wheelchair with and ask them to get in the wheelchair and let them find out how much different it is.
Charleston VAMC builds a team for the 2019 Winter Sports Clinic

By Erin Curran, MHA, Public Affairs Specialist

The Ralph H. Johnson VA Medical Center is building a team of Veterans to send to the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in April 2019. The clinic gives profoundly disabled Veterans an opportunity for self-development and challenge through education, sports and leisure. It promotes rehabilitation by teaching downhill and cross-country skiing to Veterans with significant physical or visual impairments. At the clinic, Veterans are also introduced to other adaptive activities, such as rock climbing, scuba diving and sled hockey, and they have the opportunity to attend education workshops on such things as hand cycling, self-defense or public speaking.

Charleston VAMC Director Scott Isaacks attended the event in 2018 in Aspen, Colorado. He left inspired by the Veterans who were each eager to tackle new challenges on the slopes.

“As a medical center director, I deal with a lot of the business aspects of running the hospital, which is important, but the week in Colorado allowed me to reconnect with why I work for VA—to serve Veterans, providing them with the best health care anywhere and serving as a support system for them to achieve their goals and live their best life,” said Isaacks.

Last year, Charleston VAMC had four Veterans attend the event. With new efforts to build a larger team in 2019, the medical center is aiming to send a team of 10.

Visually impaired U.S. Air Force Veteran Joe Cooler from Hampton, South Carolina has attended the event four times now.

“I hadn’t skied since 1986 before I went to the Winter Sports Clinic in 2014,” said Cooler. “I can do anything I want to do. Guys with disabilities worse than mine are out there beating their challenges—it’s inspiring.”

Qualifying disabilities include: spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, traumatic brain injury, CVA with residual, orthopedic amputations and visual impairments. Charleston VAMC patients who are interested in attending, please email vhchasports@va.gov or call (843) 789-7773.

**Cutline:** Charleston VAMC Chief of Prosthetics David Bradbury has attended the Winter Sports Clinic several times as an athlete.

**Photo contributed by David Bradbury.**

Applications will be available online at Wintersportsclinic.org by the end of August. If you have questions or would like to attend, please contact Suzanne Kenrick, CTRS, ATP at 706-733-0188 x 1947.
Highlights from NVWG 2018

Southeastern Team
We collected 61 Medals
35 Gold 17 Silver 10 Bronze
Individual Un-employability Claims

By William Korfmacher
Senior National Service Officer
St. Petersburg, Florida

Many veterans find themselves in the situation where they are unable to obtain or retain work but are evaluated for their service-connected disabilities at less than 100%. The Veterans Affairs has a program whereby a veteran can request to be compensated at the 100% rate because his or her service-connected disabilities render them unemployable. To be eligible to apply for this benefit the requirements are that, if you have a single service-connected disability, it must be evaluated at least 60% disabling. If you have multiple disabilities, one of the disabilities needs to be at least 40% disabling and the remaining disabilities need to bring the person’s combined level of disability to at least 70%. The VA will consider claims in where these requirements are not met, but these need to be submitted to the Director of Compensation and Pension service by the Regional Office with the recommendation that un-employability be granted and detailed reasons provided to support the recommendation.

Veterans can improve their chances of having their claims of un-employability granted if they have been granted Social Security Disability or SSI because of their service-connected disabilities. They get this claim granted if they have applied for VA Vocational Rehabilitation, as well. The VA Vocational Rehabilitation has to determine that training them for employment is infeasible and that they are offered a program of Independent Living services instead.

The application (VA Form 21-8940) to file for “Individual Unemployability should be filled out in its entirety. The VA is especially interested in knowing who the veteran worked for and why he or she left that employment. Even if it has been many years since a veteran has worked, he or she needs to provide past employer information to the VA. If this information is difficult to remember for some veterans, they can detail reasons for not being able to provide the information. If a veteran is under treatment in a VA Medical Center he or she can request a medical statement from their care provider which opines whether their service-connected condition(s) impairs their ability to work or even precludes work altogether.

Once the VA receives the veteran’s claim there is a possibility that the VA will ask for a compensation and pension examination. Veterans need to know that whenever they put in a claim, the VA may look into all of their service-connected conditions. If they see that there has been sustained improvement in any of the conditions, the VA may come back with a proposal to reduce the evaluation of that condition. Veterans need to be confident that they are not at risk of this incident occurring.

It is always recommended that any veteran contemplating filing an Individual Unemployability Claim consult with their Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Officer prior to filing the claim. Your Paralyzed Veterans of America National Service Officer will review your situation and provide suggestions to help your claim be granted.

If you are feeling hopeless and overwhelmed, please reach out at the number listed below; you are not alone. NATIONAL CRISIS HOTLINE 1/800-273-8255 VETERANS PRESS 1
Paralyzed Veterans of America's (PVA) primary goal has been to assist its members and their families in improving the quality of their lives. This goal has been addressed through a wide variety of activities, including support of programs designed to provide education and training.

PVA established an Educational Scholarship Program to assist PVA members and their immediate families in gaining a post-secondary education.

Part-Time Student Award Winner: $500 each

Steven Bryant (Jacksonville State University) PVA Member – Southeastern Chapter

Upcoming Hunting and fishing Events

October 12th -13th, 2018 -------------- Southeast Bass Tournament, Augusta, GA

October 26th - 27th, 2018 -------------- Salt Water Tournament, Brunswick, GA (Tentative Dates)

November 5th -6th, 2018 ---------------- Lake Russell Hunt, Elberton, GA

November 9th -11th, 2018 --------------- Bombing Range Hunt, Brunswick, GA

November 16th -18th, 2018 -------------- Moore’s Farm Hunt, Claxton, GA

November 20th, 2018 ------------------ Lake Russell Hunt (Afternoon) Elberton, GA

November 21st, 2018 ------------------- Lake Hartwell Hunt (All Day) Hartwell, GA

November 30th – December 2nd, 2018 ----------- Lagrange Hunt, Lagrange, GA

December 13th – 14th, 2018 ---------------- Lake Russell Hunt, Elberton, GA

Please contact Kurt Glass @ 706-796-6301 if you are interested in participating or need more information.

Is there a VA Staff Member that you think has been going above and beyond, when it comes to providing care and service to you and your family, we want to know so these people can be recognized on our Facebook page or our newsletter. Email me your submissions @aliciab@southeasternPVA.org.
We take pride in listening and working together to find the best solution for your transportation needs.

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SOME VETERANS CAN NOW CLAIM REFUND OF TAXES PAID ON

DISABILITY SEVERANCE PAYMENTS

The Internal Revenue Service announced on July 9th, that certain veterans who received disability severance payments after January 17, 1991, and included that payment as income should file Form 1040X, Amended U.S. Individual Income Tax Return, to claim a credit or refund of the overpayment attributable to the disability severance payment. This is a result of the Combat-Injured Veterans Tax Fairness Act passed in 2016.

Most veterans who received a one-time lump-sum disability severance payment when they separated from their military service will receive a letter from the Department of Defense (DoD) with information explaining how to claim these tax refunds. The letters will include an explanation of a simplified method for making the claim. Veterans eligible for a refund who did not get a letter from DoD should visit the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) and IRS websites for more information.

Statute of Limitations

The amount of time for claiming these tax refunds is limited. However, the law grants veterans an alternative timeframe - one year from the date of the letter from DoD. Veterans making these claims have the normal limitations period for claiming a refund or one year from the date of their letter from the DoD, whichever expires later. As taxpayers can usually only claim tax refunds within three years from the due date of the return, this alternative time frame is especially important since some of the claims may be for refunds of taxes paid as far back as 1991.

Amount to Claim

Veterans can submit a claim based on the actual amount of their disability severance payment by completing Form 1040X, carefully following the instructions. However, there is a simplified method. Veterans can choose instead to claim a standard refund amount based on the calendar year (an individual's tax year) in which they received the severance payment. Write "Disability Severance Payment" on line 15 of Form 1040X and enter on lines 15 and 22 the standard refund amount listed below that applies:

- $1,750 for tax years 1991 - 2005
- $2,400 for tax years 2006 - 2010
- $3,200 for tax years 2011 - 2016

Claiming the standard refund amount is the easiest way for veterans to claim a refund, because they do not need to access the original tax return from the year of their lump-sum disability severance payment.

Special Instructions

All veterans claiming refunds for overpayments attributable to their lump-sum disability severance payments should write either "Veteran Disability Severance" or "St. Clair Claim" across the top of the front page of the Form 1040X that they file. Because all amended returns are filed on paper, veterans should mail their completed Form 1040X, with a copy of the DoD letter, to:

Internal Revenue Service
333 W. Pershing Street, Stop 6503, P5
Kansas City, MO 64108

Veterans eligible for a refund who did not receive a letter from DoD may still file Form 1040X to claim a refund but must include both of the following to verify the disability severance payment:

- A copy of documentation showing the exact amount of and reason for the disability severance payment, such as a letter from the DFAS explaining the severance payment at the time of the payment or a Form DD-214, and

A copy of either the VA determination letter confirming the veteran's disability or a determination that the veteran's injury or sickness was either incurred as a direct result of armed conflict, while in extra-hazardous service, or in simulated war exercises, or was caused by an instrumentality of war.

Veterans who did not receive the DoD letter and who do not have the required documentation showing the exact amount of and reason for their disability severance payment will need to obtain the necessary proof by contacting the DFAS.
MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

An individual is eligible for membership by meeting the following criteria: (1) is a citizen of the United States; (2) was regularly enlisted, inducted or commissioned for active duty service in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Air Force, or Coast Guard of the United States, or our allies as evidenced by other-than-dishonorable character of service documented by a verifiable DD-214 or DD-215 (entry-level separation not acceptable); (3A) was separated from the service in the Armed Forces under conditions other than dishonorable; or (3B) is on active duty or must continue to serve after the cessation of hostilities; and (4) has suffered a spinal cord injury or disease (such as MS, ALS), whether or not service connected in origin. Membership is free. Complete and return application to the chapter or by mail, email, or fax to: Paralyzed Veterans of America Membership Department, 801 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, DC 20006; (E) ChristiH@pva.org; (F) 202.466.6549. Providing the requested information is entirely voluntary but required for membership with Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Chapter Name: 

First Name: ___________________________ Middle Initial: ____ Last Name: ___________________________

Date of Birth: ___ / ___ / ______ Social Security Number: ________________________ ☐ Male ☐ Female

Race/Ethnicity:
☐ Asian/Pacific Islander ☐ African American/Descent ☐ Hispanic/Latino
☐ Native American/Alaskan Native ☐ Caucasian

Address: ____________________________ City: ____________________________

State: ____________________________ Zip: ______________ Email: ____________________________

Home Phone: ____________________________ Other Phone: ____________________________

VETERAN STATUS INFORMATION

Please submit the following with application:

• Proof of U.S. or U.S. Territorial Citizenship (Birth Certificate, Passport, INS Form, or Voter's Registration Form).
• DD214 showing character of discharge.
• Medical evidence of spinal cord injury or involvement (medical records or physician's statement).

Proof of active duty status must be verified prior to membership approval.

Have you been discharged under conditions that are less than honorable? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If yes, please explain: ________________________________________________________________

Is your spinal cord injury or spinal cord disease service connected? ☐ Yes ☐ No

DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION

Injury or diseases involving the brain but not the spinal cord do not qualify.

SPINAL CORD INJURY

Complete only if you have a traumatic spinal cord injury.

Date of Injury: ___ / ___ / ______

Cause of Spinal Cord Injury:
☐ Vehicular (car, motorcycle, aircraft, etc.)
☐ Violence (gunshot, explosion, etc.)
☐ Flying/Falling object
☐ Sport/Recreation (swimming, diving, etc.)
☐ Pedestrian (car accident, etc.)
☐ Unknown
☐ Other traumatic injury: ____________________________

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<td>Complete only if there is no spinal cord injury.</td>
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<td>Date of Diagnosis/Onset of Condition: ___ / ___ / ______</td>
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<td>Specific Disease Involving Spinal Cord:</td>
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MEMBERSHIP/CERTIFICATION APPLICATION

The Veterans Benefits Department advocates for quality health care for our members and can assist you to obtain the appropriate benefits available as a result of your military service.

Is Paralyzed Veterans of America presently your accredited representative? □ Yes □ No

If yes, I hereby request that my eligibility for membership in the Paralyzed Veterans of America be certified. I consent to process my submitted medical documentation to a confidential review by a member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America National Medical Staff, to validate that my condition presents as having spinal cord involvement and to allow official Certification by the Paralyzed Veterans of America National Secretary. I have no objection and hereby permit Paralyzed Veterans of America Service Officers to provide information to the Paralyzed Veterans of America National Membership Department that pertains to my qualifications for membership/certification.

I declare that I have read and meet the qualifications. I understand that my membership/certification could be denied or revoked if any information provided is inaccurate.

Applicant Signature: ______________________________ Date: __/___/____

□ I do not wish to become a certified member

________________________________________________________________________

OFFICE USE ONLY

CAUTION TO ANYONE HAVING ACCESS TO THESE DOCUMENTS
The documents provided by the requester are personal in nature and are for membership eligibility and certification only. Information contained within these documents shall be treated with extreme confidentiality and released only to those employees of Paralyzed Veterans of America authorized to access.

I certify that I have personally examined the documents provided by the requester and find him/her to be eligible for membership/certification.

National Secretary’s Signature: ______________________________

Date Received: __/___/______ Date Acted Upon: __/___/______

Member ID Number: ______________________________

Date Received: __/___/______ Date Processed: __/___/______
August /September 2018

HOUSE VA SUBCOMMITTEE ON HEALTH ADVANCES LEGISLATION

On June 27th, the House Veterans’ Affairs Health Subcommittee held a markup and advanced seven bills by voice vote to the full committee. These provisions were considered in a subcommittee hearing in early June where PVA offered a statement for the record. Committee members modified the bills based on that feedback. Of particular interest to PVA, was H.R. 5693, the Long-Term Care Veterans Choice Act. This bill would allow VA to contract with non-VA adult foster homes for certain veterans who would otherwise require institutional care. Sponsored by Congressman Clay Higgins (R-LA) and co-sponsored by Congresswoman Julia Brownley (D-CA) the bill received praise and swift support.

Another bill of note was H.R. 5974, the Department of Veterans Affairs Creation of On-Site Treatment Systems Affording Veterans Improvements and Numerous General Safety (VA COST SAVINGS) Enhancements Act. This legislation would require VA to use on-site regulated medical waste treatment systems at VA facilities. Currently, most VA facilities dispose of hazardous waste by contracting for removal by truck. This is both costly and potentially dangerous. On-site systems would mitigate such factors.

Subsequent to the subcommittee’s action, on July 12th, the full committee approved and sent to the House floor several bills for further action, including H.R. 5693 and H.R. 5974. Other bills from the June 27th markup that were approved by the full committee include H.R. 2787, the Veterans-Specific Education for Tomorrow’s Medical Doctors (VET MD Act); H.R. 5938, the Veterans Serving Veterans Act of 2018; H.R. 6066, to improve the productivity of the management of Department of Veterans Affairs health care; and H.R. 5864, the VA Hospitals Establishing Leadership Performance (VA HELP) Act.
SEPVA Calendar

August 2018

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Aug 13 – 15 | SCI Site Visit
Aug 21      | BOD meeting
Aug 22      | BOD Budget Meeting
Aug 29      | Bingo @1pm in SCI Dayroom

To all of our members and volunteers celebrating birthdays in August and September

September 2018

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September 3 | Labor Day
September 12| August Membership Meeting (Ballot Count)

"My doctor told me to avoid any unnecessary stress, so I didn’t open his bill."
Here we go the start of a new sporting year for the Chapter. Once National PVA release their sport schedule we will post it in this Newsletter.

The Chapter is working on getting the hunts for our area. We will not be on National's Bass Trail this year. We will be holding a one day Bass Tournament the second Saturday in October, please come out and support the Chapter. Our Hunting and Fishing Director is finalizing the dates for our deer and turkey hunts. He is working on a couple of Salt Water Fishing Tournaments. Keep checking your Newsletter for dates.

The 38th National Veteran Wheelchair Games (Orlando, FL), is the books. Everyone enjoyed themselves. I need to give a big Thanks to our four Couches for the team. They began working back in October to train and assist our veterans in getting ready for the games. If you are thinking of trying the 39th National Veteran Wheelchair Games, they will be held in Louisville, KY, July 11 - 16, 2019. Start training. More information to come once the VA and National PVA release them.

We understand everyone doesn’t fish or hunt. Please give us a call if you would like to try something. Always you can contact the Chapter if you have questions. Remember stay Healthy and keep Pushing.

SEPVA and the Charlie Norwood VAMC SCI Unit are in the early planning stages of our bi-annual sports, outdoor adventure and recreation camp. The tentative dates are 4/30-5/3/19. Camp will be held at Ft. Yargo State Park in Winder, GA. If you are interested in participating, please contact Valerie McNary, CTRS, or Suzanne Kenrick, CTRS, ATP, at 706-733-0188 x3049 or 1947 respectively.

Wanted: Deer hunters who are licensed and have deer tags. Cimarron Outdoors is a sportsman organization for mobility impaired hunters. Founded a few years back, we have managed to build and distribute 24 wheelchair accessible ground blinds for hunters to use. There is no cost for these hunts, only your spirit to enjoy yourself during your experience. The hunts are located in North, South Carolina just north of Orangeburg. For more information about hunting, go to www.cimarronoutdoors.org or call David at (843) 364-1412. This year’s hunts are scheduled for the following:

August 24-25
October 5-6
October 19-20 (Sponsor hunt only)
November 9-10
December 7-8
December 21-22 (Marines only hunt)
OFFICERS

PRESIDENT
Al Evans

VICE PRESIDENT
Alan Washington

SECRETARY
Lee Baker

TREASURER
Lonnie Burnett

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Twila Adams
Kurt Glass
Michael Steward
Paul Stewart
Keith Thompson
Joe Willis

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

SPORTS DIRECTOR
Al Evans

HOSPITAL LIAISON
"Team"

SC/NC ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION
Paul Stewart

GA/AL ADVOCACY & LEGISLATION
Paul Stewart/Lee Baker

NATIONAL DIRECTOR
Paul Stewart

VICE PRESIDENT LIAISON
Robert Thomas

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
Alicia Barber

SOUTHEASTERN PARALYZED VETERANS of AMERICA
4010 Deans Bridge Road
Hephzibah, GA 30815
1-800-292-9335
706-796-6301
www.SoutheasternPVA.org

SCI COORDINATORS

Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center, Augusta, GA
SCI Clinic Coordinator: (800)836-5561, ext. 3778 or 3710
SCI Outpatient Clinic Nurse Mgr.: Tishon Creswell, (800)836-5561, ext. 2245

SCI Home Care Coordinator
SCI Fee B&R: Shavondria Davis, (800)836-5561, ext. 2242

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

Birmingham VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Nazaren Hartman, (205)953-8101, ext. 6453

Montgomery/Tuskegee VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Karen Smith, (334)727-0550, ext. 3219

Charleston VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Elizabeth Carboneau, (843)789-7252

Columbia VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Tonya Hamilton, (803)776-4000, ext. 6402

Dublin VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Debbie Mullis, (478)-272-1210, ext. 5459

Tuscaloosa VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Joyce McCollum, (205)554-3542

Asheville VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Laura White, (828)298-7911, ext. 5384

Mountain Home VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Christopher Martin, (423)926-1171, ext. 2647

Salisbury VA Medical Center
SCI/D Coordinator: Alice Gatewood, (704)638-9000, ext. 3144

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AUGUSTA VAMC
Jennifer Ammons, National Service Officer
Lorna Jefferson, Secretary
Augusta-Downtown VAMC, 2C-100, Augusta, GA 30904
(800)795-3597, (706)823-2219, FAX: (706)823-2295

GEORGIA VA REGIONAL OFFICE
Mitchell Hinkle, SNSO, National Service Officer
Shirley B. Bryant, Secretary
1700 Clairmont Rd., C/O PVA, Decatur, GA 30033-4032
(800)795-3596, (404)929-5333, FAX: (404)929-5337

SOUTH CAROLINA VA REGIONAL OFFICE
Tony Timmons, SNSO, National Service Officer
Val Brown, Secretary
6437 Garners Ferry Rd., Rm. 1121, Columbia, SC 29209
(800)795-3631, (803)647-2423, FAX: (803)647-2311

NORTH CAROLINA VA REGIONAL OFFICE
Bill Pack, SNSO, National Service Officer
Linda Paquet, Secretary
251 N. Main St., Rm. 424, Winston Salem, NC 27155
(800)795-3622, (336)251-0836, FAX: (336)251-0837

ALABAMA VA REGIONAL OFFICE
Anthony Steele, SNSO, Senior National Service Officer
Lakisha Anderson, Secretary
45 Perry Hill Rd., Rm. 1-123, Montgomery, Alabama 36109
(800)795-3581, (334)213-3433/3435, FAX: (334)279-1590

TENNESSEE VA REGIONAL OFFICE
Nichelle Edwards, NSO, National Service Officer
Cassandra Davis, Secretary
110 9th Ave. South, Rm. A-302, Nashville, TN 37203
(800)795-3569, (615)695-6383, FAX: (615) 695-6290

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