August Board Meeting is a Zoom/Hybrid - August 11th 10:30 AM.

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National Service Officers:
Earnest Hill (386) 755-3016
David Ray (407) 631-1835

Mission Statement

Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida, is a congressionally chartered veteran's service organization that provides a platform of advocacy, education and research, communication, adaptive sports and recreation for veterans paralyzed as a result of spinal cord injury or dysfunction, in an effort to afford them with the highest quality of healthcare and life experiences.
It is that time of the year again! Time to nominate and elect officers and board members for the coming PVACF Year. We have two open board positions (two board members will be rotating off the board (Ken Weas and Jimmy Green). However, both can be nominated for re-election and can serve again, if nominated and elected. The two board positions are for three years (from October of 2022 through September of 2025). Nominations will be received no later than June 30, 2022 by email, email or at the June Board of Directors meeting. Only chapter members can make nominations. Ballots will be mailed in the first week of August and must be returned by August 31, 2021. An ad hoc committee will count returned ballots before the September Board of Directors Meeting. Those newly elected will be announced and inducted at the September board meeting and will take office October 1, 2021. Please note the requirements for nominations for board membership as per the Policies and Procedures of the PVA Central Florida Chapter;

“Any voting member running for Chapter Office must be a certified member of PVA through the National PVA Secretary and a member of the Central Florida Chapter, prior to being placed on the official ballot. The certification process includes proof of citizenship, proof of Active Duty Service in the Armed Forces and Character of Discharge other than Dishonorable (DD 214), and medical proof of Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Multiple Scleroses or ALS. Documents are to be submitted to the CFPVA Secretary for review and examination before they are forwarded to the National PVA Secretary for member certification. Member certification may take a long as two or more months. Any prospective Board Member or Officer is required to attend six (6) board meetings prior to submitting his/her name to run for a potential Board membership or officer position. A prospective Board Member/Officer may excuse themselves from two (2) meetings due to serious medical complications. These conditions will apply for each fiscal year. Those desiring office should have a working understanding of the Chapter’s Bylaws, Policies and Procedures, and the mandated programs required by National. The materials will be made available and can be found at www.pvacf.org”
According to PVA’s statistics there are 8,657 of us over the age of 65 so I thought this would be interesting. What age is someone most likely to achieve their peak performance? It’s a good question, and a logical place to start is with cognitive flexibility, or the ease with which one can switch between thinking about two different concepts or think about two different concepts simultaneously. Lots of people call this “sharpness,” and research shows it peaks between the ages of 21 and 30. This aligns with the tech-driven narrative that youth is a key determinant of success. In the words of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg, “Young people are just smarter.”

Not so fast. Zuckerberg wasn’t just being uncouth. He was downright wrong, at least according to the latest science. A study, conducted by MIT in conjunction with the U.S. Census Bureau, analyzed 2.7 million people who started companies between 2007 and 2014 and found that among the fastest growing tech companies, the average founder was 45-years-old at the time of founding. The researchers also found that a 50-year-old is twice as likely to have a massive success—defined as a company that performs in the top 0.1 percent—than a 30-year-old. “These findings strongly reject common hypotheses that emphasize youth as a key trait of successful entrepreneurs,” write the authors of the study. “The view that young people produce the highest-growth companies is in part a rejection of the role of experience.”

In other words: Success in business, even in the fast-paced start-up world, isn’t just about age-related smarts. Wisdom, a deeper kind of knowing that can only be gained through experience, matters too. And apparently, it matters quite a bit.

Might there be a parallel in sports? It’s hard to say for sure, but contemporary performances suggest so. From a physiological sense, research shows that athletes tend to peak in their early to mid-twenties. Yet many recent champions are much older: Des Linden (34), Shalane Flanagan (36), Mob Keflezghi (38), Roger Federer (36), Anthony Ervin (35), Serena Williams (35), Novak Djokovic (31), and Rafael Nadal (32) to name just a few.

“You don’t need to be 25 years old to have your greatest performance,” says seven-time mountain bike world champion Rebecca Rusch, who, at age 47, was part of the third party ever to summit Mount Kilimanjaro via bike. “I’m still improving and having some of the best days of my career. I may not be as strong or have the same VO2 max as when I was younger, but wisdom is the great equalizer. I’m smarter about things like nutrition and race tactics, and I have a special self-knowledge that only results from years of experience.”

Alpine climber Jimmy Chin has said that perhaps his best ever performance was a first ascent up Mount Meru, which he accomplished at age 37 on an expedition with Conrad Anker, who was 48 at the time.

“Youth is wasted on the young,” says Chin. “I’ve had conversations with other climbers about surviving 28. At that age you may think you have enough experience to really go for it, but in reality, you still haven’t seen that much and whatever experience you do have can be easily outweighed by brashness and impatience.”

Chin, now 44, told me he’s realized that with age comes wisdom. “The older you get the more experiences, successes, and failures you have. You have more information to draw from. The more information you have, the more patterns you recognize. The more patterns you recognize, the better you are at making tough decisions and assessing risk,” he says. “You also become more efficient and better at pacing, both of which are important on challenging climbs.”

Maybe the best way to conceptualize age and athletic performance is to imagine two curves: one for physiological fitness, which peaks relatively young and then slowly declines; and another for wisdom, which starts off low and gradually rises over time. When these two curves intersect, you’re primed for your best performance. The slope of these curves varies by task. For example, in sports that rely heavily on physiological fitness—like sprinting 100 meters—the decline of the fitness curve would be steeper than in a sport like alpine climbing or orienteering, where pure fitness matters less and wisdom gained through experience matters more.

Lots of athletes intuitively follow the logic of these curves. It’s quite common for runners and triathletes to go up in distance as they age. This makes sense. A marathon requires a lot more wisdom than a 5K and an Ironman requires a lot more wisdom than a sprint triathlon. A 2013 study published in The Journal of Strength and Conditioning Research found that the median age for a first-time ultra-runner is 37 and the median age of all ultramarathon finishers is 43—seven years older than the median age of all marathon finishers in the same year. All of this points toward a greater theme: Peak performance is complex, and results from a combination of variables. Sometimes the variables that are hardest measure, like experience, matter the most. So try not to sulk at your next birthday—whatever you’re giving away in age you’re gaining in wisdom.

My thanks to Brad Stulberg.
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Purple Heart Day, also known as National Purple Heart Day, Purple Heart Appreciation Day, and Purple Heart Recognition Day is commemorated every year on August 7. The Purple Heart Medal is a decoration awarded by the President of the United States to the soldiers of the U.S. military who were wounded or killed while serving their country, on or after April 5, 1917. Although Purple Heart Day is not a public holiday in the United States, whereby businesses and schools remain open, it is certainly a day all United States Citizens should know of and commemorate in some way. The Purple Heart Medal originates from the Badge for Military Merit, created by George Washington on August 7, 1782. As Commander in Chief of the Continental Army, Washington wanted a decoration to award to soldiers who performed “any singularly meritorious action” while serving in the army. Only three soldiers were awarded this decoration in the Revolutionary War. Sergeant Elijah Churchill: 2nd Regiment, Light Dragoons was awarded the badge for his part in two successful raids behind British lines in Nov. 1780 and in October of 1781. Sergeant William Brown: 5th Connecticut Regiment was awarded the badge for leading an advance party — with only bayonets — penetrating the British lines at Yorktown, VA on 14 October 1781. Sergeant Daniel Bissell: 2nd Connecticut Regiment was awarded the badge for masquerading as a British soldier from August 1781 to September 1782. (The information he gathered helped the Continental Army prepare for an attack on the British at the city of New York.) The award was largely forgotten after the Revolutionary War, until 1931 when General Douglas MacArthur lobbied for the reinstatement of the medal in order to celebrate George Washington’s 200th birthday. General MacArthur was successful and on February 22, 1932, the Order of the Purple Heart was founded. The name, as well as the look of the medal, were changed, as were its requirements for the recipients of the decoration. Now, the medal is awarded to any soldier who is killed or wounded while in battle against an enemy of the United States.

The Purple Heart medal is different from other decorations in the U.S. Military as it is not awarded based on recommendation, but rather soldiers are entitled to it if they meet the requirements of the medal. The Purple Heart is the oldest military award that is presented to American servicemen and women to this day. The badge of military merit was a simple design, with a purple heart-shaped piece of silk and the word “Merit” stitched in silver. The new medal introduced in 1932 is heart-shaped and purple with a gold border. It has the likeness of George Washington on the front, and on the back, the words “For Military Merit” are engraved. The medal hangs on a ribbon of purple silk. It is estimated that 1.8 million soldiers have been the recipients of the Purple Heart Medal since 1932, some of them have been retroactively awarded the medal, as the award goes back to recognize those who served on and after 1917, in order to decorate those who fought in World War I. Famous recipients include:

- Colin Powell, the former Secretary of State, who received the award for serving in Vietnam War. He injured his foot in a punji-stick trap that had been placed by the Vietnamese army on the border between Laos and Vietnam.
- Former president John F. Kennedy received a Purple Heart Medal for rescuing his navy crew during a battle at sea in 1943. In a collision with an enemy boat JFK’s boat had been sunk, he swam over 4 miles while pulling members of his crew to safety, holding onto a makeshift raft with his teeth. During the incident he sustained injuries to his back and stomach (from imbibing fuel in the water) for which he was presented a Purple Heart Medal.
- The famous actor Charles Bronson, from films such as The Magnificent Seven, also served in the Air Force between 1943 -1946, leaving the military service due to injuries for which he received a Purple Heart.
- Audie Murphy, a little known actor from Texas was 5’5” and weighed 110 lbs. was the most decorated soldier from WWII and received 2 Purple Hearts during WWII and later was wounded 14 times during five tours in Vietnam.

This day is mostly observed by the military services in America, who hold memorials and remembrance meetings for those who have fallen in combat, as well as events in honor of the soldiers and veterans who have been wounded while fighting the enemy. Some events are organized by The Military Order of the Purple Heart, which is active in holding regional meetings and annual conventions as well as publishing a magazine for recipients of the Purple Heart Medal.
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=2.1705649.1607860698.1552920854-258990882.1542139382

Be kind to humankind! You can #GIVE back to PVA members by donating your gently used clothes and household goods. Your donation can help a paralyzed veteran today. To learn more and donate: https://secure.pva.org/default.aspx?tsid=9491&donationAmount=other&mSource=WEQYYDFW2GPG&_ga
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Retired Army Sergeant Terry Vereline crosses the finish line of the 2019 New York City Marathon after walking 26.2 miles in her ReWalk Exoskeleton. She received this device in 2014 and has used it to take nearly 1,000,000 steps in the past five years.
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MARK 9:23 – “IF THOU CANST BELIEVE, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE TO HIM WHO BELIEVETH”

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those in need

GOD, Grant me the serenity to accept the things I can not change.
Courage to change the things I can and the WISDOM to know the difference.

HAPPINESS is thinking of others first, yourself last and GOD always.
All a person is remembered for is what they did for others.

As mankind thinketh in their minds... so they are.

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The National Veterans Wheelchair Games were held in Tempe, Arizona July 6th-12th this year. We had five in Tempe and three participating in at home events.

In Tempe, our Central Florida athletes Tim Wolf, Eddie Hawks, Jimmy Green and Glen Fretz. Team coach was Barbara Van Camp from the Lake Baldwin/Orlando VAMC.

Team Central Florida Tempe Results:  7 Medals

Jimmy Green
Softball  Bronze
Discus    Silver

Eddie Hawks
Softball  Bronze
Bowling   Gold

Tim Wolf
Air Rifle  Gold
Boccia    Gold

Glen Fretz
Basketball Bronze

Team Central Florida AT HOME Results:  1 Medals

Steve Kirk
Air Rifle

Haywood “Charlie” Merritt
eGaming  Bronze

Rick Rettinger
Air Rifle

A Special Thanks to Barbie Van Camp for her first experience as Coach. She did an OUTSTANDING job and got everyone going throughout the games. Thank you, Christina Lafex, for all of your help as well. Orlando VAMC should be proud of their coaches and employees who helped Team Central Florida in this year’s National Veteran’s Wheelchair Games.

Congratulations for our PVACF Athletes for putting your best on the line. You did a wonderful job in representing our chapter, PVA and Team Central Florida.

Participating in competition gives you challenge, spirit and team unity during events like this. To find out how you can participate in various sporting activities. Check out pvacf.org or contact the Central Florida Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America office at 407-328-7041.
Eddie Hawks Jimmy Green win Bronze Medal in Softball
As a local General Contractor, ALL-IN CONSTRUCTION SERVICES has experience working with disability housing grants for Veterans. Housing grants are offered for Veterans and service members with certain service-connected disabilities so they can buy or change a home to meet their needs and live more independently. **ASK US ABOUT OUR SERVICES**

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Bill to Protect Veterans and Low-Income Families From Housing Discrimination Introduced in Senate

On June 23, Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), introduced S. 4485, the Fair Housing Improvement Act of 2022. PVA has endorsed this legislation that would protect veterans and low-income families from housing discrimination. The Fair Housing Act of 1968 prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, familial status, and disability. S. 4485 would add source of income and veteran status to the list of protected classes. It would prohibit landlords from denying housing to individuals who use Housing Choice Vouchers (Section 8), Housing and Urban Development-Veterans Affairs Supportive Housing (HUD-VASH) vouchers, benefits received through Social Security, income received by a court order, payment from a trust or guardian, or any other lawful source of income. Companion legislation was introduced as H.R. 8213 on the same day by Representative Scott Peters (D-CA).

ABLE Age Adjustment Act Included in EARN Act

In its markup of the Enhancing American Retirement Now (EARN) Act on June 22, the Senate Finance Committee included language from the ABLE Age Adjustment Act. Under current law, ABLE accounts are tax-advantaged savings and retirement instruments that are available to individuals who acquire their disabilities prior to age 26. The bipartisan ABLE Age Adjustment Act, which PVA supports, would allow people who develop their disabilities before age 46 to establish ABLE accounts, allowing them to save for future expenses without placing needed disability services, health care, and income support at risk. The EARN Act, to which the bill was attached, makes enhancements to workplace savings plans and contains some provisions that are the same as or similar to those proposed in the House, which passed the Securing a Strong Retirement Act (H.R. 2954) in late March in a bipartisan 414-5 vote. If passed by the full Senate, differences in the two versions would need to be reconciled before going to the President for his signature.
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Paralyzed Veterans of America
Wow, it’s the end of June already! That’s ok, its summertime year round down here in Central Florida.

I was hoping to be able to talk about my I-Bot from Mobius Mobility, but some type of part is on back order, so maybe in the near future…..

In June we went up to see the Granddaughter graduate high school in Delaware – the usual suspects on the trip, hotel rooms that are ‘sorta’ accessible. But hey, we are quite capable of handling these little inconveniences. The BIG inconvenience is the price of gas, but we are suffering through that. You don’t need to be in a wheelchair for that to hit your wallet.

On June 29th I had the pleasure of going fishing in New Port Richey FL with a couple of Veterans Groups. We were on a boat that is TOTALLY WHEELCHAIR ACCESSIBLE! ! ! It’s a Pontoon Boat, with extra wide doors, so all I had to do was just roll onboard! Bill Rutherfood with “Vetcatch” is the organization that has the boat, also Kelly Andersen of “The Fallen Outdoors – Southern Region” Steve Cone of “X-22 Adventures” Steve also has a wheelchair friendly boat, in Okeechobee FL – Spectrum News, Bay News 9 was also on board to do a human interest story. I caught my 1st Redfish ever, and also my first snook. The redfish was very delicious being baked with some butter and old bay, with fresh lemon squeezed all over it.

I HIGHLY recommend that you all sign up for the following groups on Facebook -

The Fallen Outdoors SOUTHERN ALL VETERAN Community Page Area of Operations INC.

And Like the following pages: Vetcatch, X-22 Adventures

Speaking of these Facebook groups, look up Drew Berg (www.facebook.com/andrew.sandberg.31) he has a once in a lifetime BISON hunt for a mobility impaired hunter. As far as I can tell, less than 5 people have submitted their names for a chance at this hunt. You’ll need to get yourself out to Spokane Washington, where they will pick you up at the airport. Everything else is covered EXCEPT for shipping the meat home. They are even putting $1000 towards taxidermy.

Lastly I was once asked, ‘Rick why don’t you write about the PVA and their activities?’ I look at it this way, we all know what the PVA does, we all can read PN Magazine and see what national is up to, or read this newsletter to see what the chapter is up to. No offense meant to our great organization, but there is so much more out in the world for us Veterans, so many other groups that want to get us veterans outdoors. Yeah, not all of these activities are accessible, but you never know when there is oe :) As Bill Rutherford said ‘It doesn’t matter WHO gets Veterans outdoors, it matters that Veterans GET outdoors.

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