



# WHEELS IN MOTION

*September 2022*

*Be Prepared  
Activities*

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**Paralyzed Veterans of America  
Central Florida Chapter  
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Phone (407) 328-7041  
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September Board Meeting is a **Zoom/Hybrid** - September 8th 10:30 AM

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**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.***

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# *Steve Kirk*

## *Chapter President*

We want you to be safe because 40% of all Hurricanes hit Florida, as reported by The Hurricane Research Division of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Since Hurricane data started being recorded in 1851, Florida averages tropical cyclonic activity about once per year.

There have been 97 major hurricanes since then, 88% of which have hit either Florida or Texas. In Florida, 31 hurricanes had hit Miami while Naples, on the opposite coast, has seen its share with the landfall of 20 hurricanes.

Aside from the Bahamas and Cape Hatteras in North Carolina, there is no greater "Hurricane Hub" than Florida. The peninsula makes the Sunshine State prone to hurricanes from east and west. Forecast cones, school, work cancellations, and brave meteorologists are pretty much an annual factor from the Keys to the Panhandle.

To decide on the criteria as to what makes a hurricane one of the worst, there are several factors to be considered. Hurricane deaths are often the first place to go, but loss of life during these events is often attributed to insufficient infrastructure as well as poor preparation.

Wind strength, category and storm surges are other factors, but they don't directly correlate with the worst

in damages. The most damaging and deadly storms of all time have hit Florida, but not at their strongest.

For myself the 2005 hurricane season often overshadows the 2004 season. While nowhere near as deadly or potent as 2005 was for the United States, 2004 was an absolute nightmare for Florida.

Three storms hit Florida in a very short span of 2 months, Charlie, Frances, and Jeanne. It seemed that

each one went to pick up the pieces of where the other's eye missed. Charlie hit Florida as a Category 4, absolutely demolishing the west coast of our state.

The storm just barely missed Tampa Bay, which was in

the center of the cone. Fort Myers, Naples and virtually all Southwest Florida witnessed its worst damage in over 40 years. While it had mostly spared the east coast, Jeanne and Frances picked up where Charley left off.

The other issue with consecutive hurricanes is the challenge it puts on relief efforts. It can take longer to recover from storms and get power back when workers are focusing on the effects of another storm. As we are beginning to see, storms are becoming stronger and larger, so please keep these issues in mind and read John's article that follows.



*Steve Kirk*



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# *John DeMauro*

## *Executive Director*

September is the height of the hurricane season and if past hurricanes and tropical storms have taught us anything it's that no matter the technology we have for predicting them, they will always be unpredictable. However, what is certain is that it would be best to be as prepared as possible for their arrival. As the hurricane season heats up, there are a few things you can do to prepare yourself and your home for the erratic behavior of Mother Nature.

**Create an Emergency Kit:** A basic emergency kit will help you keep you and your family safe and healthy in the event of a disaster. Preparation means just that, prepare now for what may occur later. In doing so, if you have not already, start now collecting the following items:

- **Water-** collect one gallon per day per person for both drinking and sanitation. One good way to help get this done is to fill the bathtub with water to have an extra supply for sanitation. Your collection of drinking water is best stored frozen. It then helps keep perishable food cold, while providing you a source of drinking and cooking water.

Nonperishable food and a manual can opener for canned goods.

Battery-powered or hand-crank NOAA weather radio, with tone alert and extra batteries, if necessary.

Moist towelettes and garbage bags with plastic ties for personal sanitation.

Flashlight and extra batteries.

A fully stocked First-aid kit.

Whistle, to signal for help

Wrench and pliers to turn off utilities.

Cell phone and portable charger.

Fresh gas stored in a cool, well-ventilated area.

Important papers such as property deed, insurance policies, check book, passport in a waterproof container.  
Cash.

Games like cards, books or board games

**Make an Evacuation Plan:**

An evacuation could separate you and your family along the way. It is important to have a plan to reconnect. Discuss the following with your family before a storm hits:

- How are you going to receive emergency alerts and warnings?
- Are you going to evacuate to a shelter? If so, where?
- What evacuation route do you plan to take?
- How will you communicate during and after the evacuation?

There are a variety of apps available to share locations between friends and family. The Red Cross has a hurricane app available in the Apple App Store and Google Play Store.

**Tidy Up Outside the Home:**

High winds can cause loose items outside the home to act as projectiles, damaging you or your neighbors' homes or causing serious injury to you or others.

- Store furniture and outdoor plants in a garage or other solid structure
- Clean up any debris outside of the home
- Park boats and other vehicles or equipment in a safe location.

If possible, have a portable generator available for your

use: The chapter has six portable generators available on a first come first served basis for members to borrow, in case of a storm in the area. Using portable generators can be dangerous, if not used properly. When using a portable generator, it should be placed a minimum of five feet from your house and not near any doors or windows. Below are some myths about the use of portable generators of which you should be aware.

- Myth: Place the generator on planks of wood if the ground is wet.

This is never a good idea. Even if the wood does not become saturated with water, there is a risk of electrocution when the wires run across the ground.

- Myth: Use a kid's tent or make a box to keep the generator dry from rain.  
Plugs and the interface need to be dry to avoid electrocution. However, most tent and enclosure "solutions" do not factor in the airflow needs for a generator – airflow helps keep the generator cool so the engine can continue to run properly. Additionally, without enough airflow, there may be a buildup of carbon monoxide.
- Myth: If it's windy or wet in the yard, just put the generator a little closer to the house on the patio or porch. Just keep nearby windows and doors shut over there.  
It is recommended that you not put your portable generator within five feet of any living space, including a porch or patio. Carbon monoxide can seep through the windows and doors, even if they are shut.
- Myth: Any extension cord will work  
Indoor extension cords are not made for outdoors – they do not repel moisture. Using an indoor cord outside could result in electrocution.

devastating to homes and communities, which is why it's more important to know how to stay safe and healthy around a flood. If you find yourself in a flood situation, follow these tips.

- Avoid going outside during a flood situation at all costs. However, it may not be always be feasible, so make sure to follow all warnings about water on roadways.
- Always make sure to avoid driving vehicles through water.
- If you must drive, make sure that you are prepared with the proper gear including a life jacket, heavy work gloves, and watertight boots with insoles and steel toes to protect yourself from injury.
- Wear clothing that covers as much of your body as possible to prevent touching potentially contaminated water.
- The largest threat you will face during a flood is water contamination. You should always make sure to wash your hands as well as any other part of your body that comes into contact with floodwaters to reduce the risk of disease.
- If possible, stick to drinking water that is sealed in water bottles. There may come a time that you will need to disinfect water in order to wash your clothes or for personal hygiene. To do this, you simply need to mix 1/8 teaspoon of household bleach for every 1 gallon of water and let the mixture sit for thirty minutes before using.

**BE PREPARED AND STAY SAFE! NOT DOING SO, COULD COST YOU YOUR LIFE!**

*John DeMauro*

Beware of flooding during and after a storm;

Flooding after tropical storms and hurricanes can be





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# Roger Sack Sports Director

Veterans and athletes often ask questions like: Where can I get adaptive equipment? Funding for adaptive programs? Where can I find events?

We at Central Florida Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America are working hard to answer the questions you have by providing adaptive sporting opportunities and information.

This fall we are programs ready for you. If you have a sporting event, activity or are not sure what is going on in your area, reach out by calling us at 407-328-7041. We can help.

Fun events: Hockey, off shore fishing, hunting (deer, turkey, gator, etc), three gun event, handcycling, water sports

Air Rifle: Fall Air Rifle training and National Shooting Matches beginning in September



Bowling: PVACF "UP and Down" Bowling League is beginning the end of September at Boardwalk Bowl and leagues in your home areas.



Boccia: Training and Competition every month



Shooting Sports: Range Day in Seminole County this fall



Resources for Adaptive Sports (equipment, training, etc):

PVACF: <https://pvacf.org>

PVA: <https://pva.org/sports>

Independence Fund: <https://independencefund.org/>

Move United Sports: <https://moveunitedsport.org/>  
<https://moveunitedsport.org/sports/adaptive-equipment/>

Challenge Athletes Foundation: <https://www.challengedathletes.org/grants/>

Kelly Brush Foundation: <https://kellybrushfoundation.org/>

# Todd Jones Jr. NSO

## Don't Make These Mistakes When Filing A VA Disability Claim

At Paralyzed Veterans of America, we know that the VA Disability Claims process can be very confusing and frustrating, so we are here to assist veterans in navigating through the VA Claims process. We specialize in assisting veterans with Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries and veterans with Brain and Spinal Cord Diseases. We are able to assist any veteran who needs help making their way through the claims process with the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. Discussed below are some of the most common mistakes veterans can avoid when filing a VA disability claim.

### Not Filing a VA Claim Right Away

One of the most common mistakes we have seen when filing a claim, is veterans not filing a VA claim right away. There is no statute of limitations for eligible veterans to file a claim for VA Disability Compensation Benefits. If you have been speculating if you are eligible to file a claim or are waiting to see if your symptoms of mental health improve, or perhaps your medical condition has improved, not filing a disability claim right away could potentially reduce your medical benefits and compensation. Therefore, the steps you must take in preparing your claim are to obtain a diagnosis; supporting medical evidence; a Disability

Benefits Questionnaire; a Nexus Statement; and promptly file your claim.

If a veteran receives an award either through their first decision or on appeal, the benefits will be paid to them retroactively from the date the veteran's original claim was filed, or the date of their diagnosis.

### Giving Up on Your Disability Claim

As mentioned above, the VA Claims process is slow and complicated. In addition, some veterans have financial hardships that they may be going through while waiting on a disability rating. Sometimes it may seem like it would just be easier to give up. Most of the time, a finding of service connection is also required to be able to secure other VA benefits such as healthcare. It is best to continue with your disability compensation claim and continue to obtain as much supporting evidence as possible, to improve your chances of receiving a positive decision on your claim. The more compelling and supportive the evidence, the better your chances are of a claim being granted.

### Failing to Learn How The VA Disability Process Works

In many cases, veterans believe that all that is required is

to fill out a VA form, send it to the VA and wait for a check to arrive in the mail. The process that the VA uses to decide new claims is much more complicated. The VA will only award disability benefits when a veteran can prove that they are eligible to receive VA benefits. A veteran must have a current disability, have proof that something happened to them while in service, have medical evidence linking their disability to something that happened while in service and supporting evidence indicating the severity of their condition. It is noteworthy that proving these points is extremely difficult. This is why the VA denies so many claims. If you are relying on the VA to prove and grant your claim, your chance for a grant is greatly diminished. In order to have the best chance of a disability grant, you must fully develop your own claim. Therefore, it is important that you obtain your diagnosis, provide the VA with compelling medical evidence to support your claim and get a strong Nexus Statement to link your disability to your military service.

### **Not Filing For Secondary Conditions**

Many veterans do not realize that they may be entitled to benefits for disabilities that are secondary to their already service-connected disability. This happens when a service-connected injury or illness causes a new disabling condition or aggravates a non-service-connected disability. A great example to help understand this is when a veteran has a service-connected illness of diabetes, that can later lead to other illnesses. Even if the secondary illness does not develop until years later, benefits may still be available if there is medical evidence or a medical opinion to help establish the service-connection. If you need to obtain medical evidence, be sure to schedule an exam with a medical professional. Filing for secondary conditions can increase your overall VA disability rating.

### **Failing to Obtain Compelling Medical**

## **Evidence And A Nexus Statement**

As discussed above, one of the biggest reasons why the VA will deny a claim is the lack of medical records or supporting medical evidence linking a service member's disability to their active-duty military service. Just lay evidence claiming that the issue is related to service on their own, will not suffice. You will need compelling medical treatment records to support your claim as well.

If your disability claim contains a written opinion from a medical expert or professional linking the disability to service, it can make a huge difference in the outcome of the claim.

In conclusion, there are many mistakes that can be made when filing a claim for VA Disability Benefits. There is an abundance of information and knowledge behind these claims and knowing what to do and what not to do will give every veteran a more favorable outcome. It all begins when you decide to file a claim. Remember, you cannot receive benefits if you do not file a claim.

### **Need Help With Your VA Disability Claim?**

Contact one of your local PVA National Service Officers. Do not wait any longer if your VA disability claim has been denied. From the C&P exam to the appeals process, our team is very knowledgeable about the VA claims process. Although PVA specializes in Brain and Spinal Cord Injuries and Brain and Spinal Cord Diseases, we have experience with all types of other cases such as Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), Agent Orange, MST, Depression and many more. PVA will also assist family members who have lost their veteran spouses with DIC (Death Benefits) claims. We are here to help you throughout the claims process and to obtain the best possible outcome in your quest for VA Disability Benefits.



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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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# *William W. Korfmacher*

## *NSO*

Branch of Service: U.S. Army  
Period of Service: 1969 -1971  
Hometown: St. Louis, Missouri

I am a native of St. Louis, Missouri. I was born



on August 19, 1947, and lived in University City, where I attended Parochial Elementary School. I then attended a Jesuit High School and University, where I received my Bachelor of Arts/ Bachelor of Science degree in 1969.

Following University on November 10, 1969, I was drafted to the United States Army. I was sent to Vietnam in 1970 and worked as a Clerk/Typist for a unit that did safety inspections on airfields and investigated aircraft accidents not caused by hostile fire. In August of 1971, I was honorably discharged.

Following my military discharge, I returned to St. Louis and lived there until I was hired by the American Red Cross. I was then sent to Chicago,

Illinois to work. During my time with the American Red Cross, I assisted veterans represented by Red Cross with their claims as Red Cross did representations before the VA Board of Veterans Appeals. After being with the Red Cross for 17 years, they ultimately stopped veterans claims work.

In July 1990, I transferred over from the American Red Cross to Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA). I worked for PVA in their Chicago office. I remained in Chicago until transferring to St Petersburg, Florida's PVA office in the Summer of 2004. I have remained with the St. Petersburg office from that date to the present. Our St. Petersburg office is known to be the busiest office in PVA, as St. Petersburg does about 10% of the VA work nationwide (estimated). The variety of claims and unique challenges have kept me busy and I am fortunate to work for such a dedicated organization.

### **VA Assistance In Acquiring Specially Adapted Homes**

The Veterans Administration, now the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs dates back to 1930 and was created as an additional structure of support for veterans following their release from active-duty military service. The Department of Veterans Affairs offers an array of benefits to accomplish its mission and these benefits range from health care to compensation and pension, education, insurance, and other benefits among which are Loan Guaranty and Special Adaptive Housing. While Loan Guaranty is offered to most veterans with active-duty service, Special Adaptive Housing is offered to severely disabled veterans to allow them to live in homes adapted to their particular needs. The particular levels of disability needed to qualify for this benefit are as follows:

1. The loss, or loss of use, of both lower extremities such as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair.

2. Blindness in both eyes having only light perception, plus loss or loss of use of one lower extremity.
3. The loss, or loss of use, of one lower extremity together with
  - (1) Residuals of organic disease or injury, or
  - (2) The loss or loss of use of one upper extremity.

Item (1) and item (2) above must so affect the functions of balance or propulsion as to preclude locomotion without the aid of braces, crutches, canes, or a wheelchair.

4. The loss, or loss of use, of both upper extremities, so as to preclude the use of the arms at or above the elbows.
5. The permanent and total disability is due to a severe brain injury (as so determined).
6. Veteran has been diagnosed with ALS.

Other requirements that need to be met are as follows:

1. It must be medically feasible for the veteran or servicemember to reside in the house.
2. The house must be adapted to be suitable to the veteran's or servicemember's needs for living purposes.
3. It must be financially feasible for the veteran or servicemember to acquire the house with the assistance provided by the grant.
4. The available funds for the grant at the time of this article are up to \$101,754.00. Common uses of the grant include:

Construct a home on land to be acquired for that purpose.

Build a home on land already owned if it is suitable for specially adapted housing.

Remodel an existing home if it can be made suitable for specially adapted housing.

If the veteran or service member has already acquired a specially adapted home without using a VA grant, the grant may be applied against the unpaid principal mortgage balance of the home.

The previously mentioned uses are the more common ways the grant may be used, but other possibilities could present themselves and would be considered. The VA Form used to apply for this benefit is VA Form 26-4555 which needs to be signed by the applicant and submitted to the VA. The VA will consider all the relevant evidence and advise the veteran if he or she meets the necessary qualifications. If the determination is favorable, then a Specially Adapted Housing Agent will arrange to visit

the veteran and their options. The issues encountered at this time include finding a suitable contractor or builder to construct or adapt the home and much communication takes place between the Special Adapted Housing Agent and the builder and contractor. Once agreement is reached, the Special Adapted Housing Agent begins the process of issuing the grant as the work moves forward. Even if the original project uses all of the available funds, the veteran can use funds in the future if changes are needed in the home due to their disability becoming worse. As of this date veterans are entitled to up to 6 uses of grant funds as they may be needed.

Issues that we can help with in this process are situations in which information is needed by VA Special Adapted Housing Department and the veteran needing help providing same to the VA. We can also assist if there are disagreements between the VA and the builder/contractor over requirements built into the grant. There have been instances in which contractors have quit a job or done less than quality work which held up completion of a project. While we cannot represent the veteran against the builder/contractor, we can, at times, act as intermediary and help to move the process along. Our relationship with the Special Adapted Housing office in St. Petersburg is good and they work with us to see that our clients get good results from the use of the Special Adapted Housing Grant.

Another benefit that veterans may utilize is called Temporary Residential Assistance in which the veteran stays in the home of a relative or family member. This may be done if the veteran is not ready or able to live independently in his own home. The current available benefit under this program is \$40,983.00 if veteran is otherwise eligible for the Special Adapted Housing Grant or it is \$7,318.00 if veteran is entitled to the Special Home Adaptation program. Once the veteran is ready to relocate from their relative's home, the veteran has the balance of the Special Adapted Housing Grant funds available to be used toward building or adapting their own home. With the six uses of the grant being available to the veteran, the veteran can access the funds as the amount of available funds increases every year.

Another benefit available to veterans for use is the Home Improvement/Structural Alterations (HISA) grant. The amount of this grant is \$6,800.00 and it is mainly used for small home alterations, ramps, or other alterations within the home. Some veterans have used it for air conditioning if that was not covered by the original grant, or if the original air conditioning system needed repair or replacement and veteran's condition was such that they could not stand exposure to intense heat. Others have been allowed to use it for home generators if they are dependent upon power for ventilators or other necessary equipment. The VA may also supply durable medical equipment that the veteran does not need to pay for out of any of his entitlements. Proper use of these benefits can allow veterans many years of a comfortable life in their homes with the help of the VA.



# David Rountree Activities Director

It has been a fun fiscal year. We have enjoyed seeing all our friends and your families at the Holiday Party, karaoke, the Spring Festival, and Movie Night. We have prepared the events below for the remainder of 2022. We hope you can join us.

## DATE AND TIMES

## ACTIVITIES

Tuesday, September 13, 2022, at 1:00 pm –  
 \$18.95 per person for senior/military  
 \$24.95 Adults per person for adults  
 16.95 Child (4-12)  
 Free Under 4 years of age and PVACF  
 Members

**Dezerland Park, 5250 International Drive, Orlando  
 Florida 32819**  
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 – The James Bond Museum – The world’s largest  
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 memorabilia.*

Saturday, October 22, 2022,

**Annual Bike Ride**  
**Champions Ride for Charities, Lake Mary**  
 Come out and support those who support us!

Friday, November 11, 2022, at 10:00 am  
 Free to Veterans  
 Alternative date: Wednesday, November 9, 2022  
 \$86.24 per person

Bowling is scheduled on this date.

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Kennedy Space Center is more than just a theme park. It holds an integral part of the United States’ advancement in space technology throughout history. It is one of the ten field centers of NASA and has been functioning as a primary launch center of human spaceflight. It also happens to be the only place in the United States where visitors can see rocket launches and space shuttle launches.

The Rocket Garden of the Kennedy Space Center houses several NASA’s space rockets and equipment. The Space Shuttle Atlantis Complex holds replicas of the rocket booster and external tank, and it gives you one of the best presentations about the historic missions in space.

Saturday, December 10, 2022,

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