

WHEELS IN MOTION

January 2023



Holiday Party

Pages 8-13

**Paralyzed Veterans of America
Central Florida Chapter
2711 S. Design Ct.
Sanford, FL 32773-8120
Phone (407) 328-7041
Fax: (407) 328-7139**

January Board Meeting is a **Zoom/Hybrid** - January 12th 10:30 AM

Website: pvacf.org
Email: office@pvacf.org

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Vice President Roger Sack
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National Service Officers:

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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.

Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida

9th Annual

Jerry Dugan Memorial Charity Golf Tournament

Red Tail Golf Club Sorrento FL

Save The Date

May 6th 2023



Registration 8:00 AM Shot Gun Start 9:00 AM

Registration: \$150.00 per golfer (Veterans \$125) Foursomes: \$540

Cart & Green Fee, Range Balls, unlimited beer, soda and water during play

Goody Bag and Special Gift for each player Hole in One Prizes on all par 3s

Trophies for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place teams, prizes for closest to the pin and center line, raffle/silent auction

Send check to: PVACF 2711 South Design Court Sanford, FL 32773 or register online at pvacf.org

For more information call 407-328-7041 or email joannep@pvacf.org



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Chapter President

Steve Kirk

are, the 6,829 Viet Nam National members of PVA. We have "The Wall" giving solace to those who gave all. My neighborhood sent nearly a dozen. Less than half are still here. Here is a little history about the Wall that most people will never know.

54 soldiers attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia. I wonder why so many from one school.

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized. It is hard to believe it has been 36 years since the last casualties.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth Mass. Listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956. His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.

8,283 were just 19 years old.

The largest age group, 33,103 were 18 years old...12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old. 5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old. One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam. 1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam...

31 sets of brothers are on the Wall. Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.

8 Women are on the Wall. They were there nursing the wounded.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.

Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 71 West Virginians on the Wall.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic Camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam. In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov. 22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.

The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

For most Americans who read this they will only see the numbers that the Vietnam War created. To those of us who survived the war, and to the families of those who did not, we see the faces, we feel the pain that these numbers created. We are, until we too pass away, haunted with these numbers, because they were our friends, fathers, husbands, wives, sons and daughters. There are no noble wars, just noble warriors.



Executive Director

John DeMauro

Happy New Year! Here is a way you can start your new year. Plan to visit a National Paark somewhere in these great United States of America. On Veterans Day 2022, the National Park Service unveiled a lifetime pass providing free entrance to national parks for Veterans and their families. The Interagency Military Lifetime Pass waives entrance fees for the National Park Service and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and standard amenity recreation fees for the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, U.S. Forest Service and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers sites for current military service members and their dependents, Veterans and Gold Star Families. Veterans and their families have free access to approximately 2,000 public locations spread out across more than 400 million acres of public lands, which host activities to fit any lifestyle—from serene to high octane, including hiking, fishing, paddling, biking, hunting, stargazing, camping, and much more. The Military Pass has been expanded to include a pass that does not expire for Veterans and Gold Star Family members. The National Defense Authorization Act of 2022 authorized a free lifetime pass to national parks and other federal recreational lands for eligible Veterans and Gold Star Families. In recent years, they were able to receive annual passes. For purposes of this program, a Veteran is identified as an individual who has served in the United States Armed Forces, including the National Guard and Reserve, and is able to present one of the following forms of valid (unexpired) identification: Department of Defense Identification Card

Veteran Health Identification Card (VHIC)

Veteran ID Card

Veterans designation on a state-issued U.S. driver's license or identification card

The America the Beautiful – the National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass (Interagency Pass)

Program.

The Interagency Pass Program includes a free annual pass for active-duty members of the U.S. Military and their dependents. Current Military service members must show a valid (unexpired) Department of Defense ID. Dependents of current service members must show a valid (unexpired) DD Form 1173 AD or DEC. Other free or discounted passes, including some lifetime passes, are available for persons with permanent disabilities, fourth grade students, volunteers and senior citizens age 62 years or older. Interagency Passes can be obtained in person while visiting a participating site. Visit <https://www.nps.gov/planyourvisit/pickup-pass-locations.htm> for a searchable list and be sure to contact the site before you go, to make sure they are open and have passes in stock. In addition, Military passes, as well as those for seniors and persons with permanent disabilities, are available online through the Online Store (at <https://store.usgs.gov/recreational-passes>) with an additional processing fee. Existing passes remain valid. You do not need to obtain a new pass if you already have a Lifetime Senior or Access Pass. For more information about eligibility and passes, visit <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1207/11-8-2022-lifetime-pass.htm>.

The participating agencies also offer several fee-free days for everyone throughout the year to mark days of celebration and commemoration. Examples of fee-free days include the birthday of Martin Luther King, Jr., National Public Lands Day, Veterans Day and the signing of the Great American Outdoors Act. Fee-free days and fee policies vary among the agencies, so it's best to check the agency website or contact the site you plan to visit in advance of your trip.

John DeMauro

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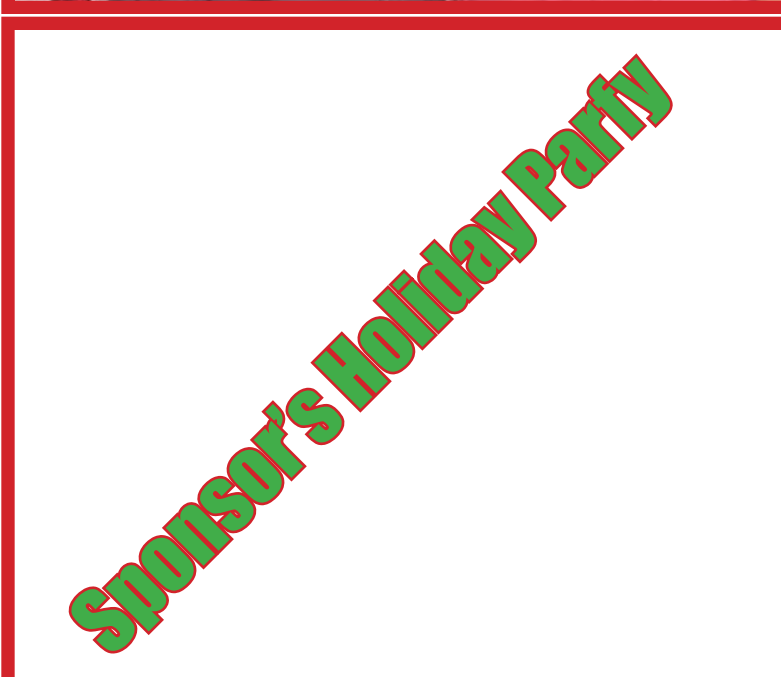
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of America**





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Government Relations

Tim Wolfe

Seminole State PVACF Endowed Scholarship for Veterans

The Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida Chapter Endowed Scholarship awarded its second annual scholarships to veterans to help further their education at Seminole State College. Board member Tim Wolfe (pictured with the scholarship recipients) served on the PVACF Endowed Scholarship Selection Committee, which selected Army Veteran Nicholas Whitaker and Air Force Veteran Colton Ellis each to receive a \$1,000 scholarship for use toward the cost of tuition, fees, textbooks or any other items related to the cost of their education at Seminole State College.

In his application for the scholarship, Nicholas wrote; "My long term educational goal is to complete my Bachelor's Degree in Emergency Medical Service (EMS). My short term educational goal is to get my Associates in Science for EMS. I'm currently enrolled in the Paramedic program. Once I have successfully completed the Paramedic certification I will take the NREMT to continue my education in EMS in order to become a paramedic. The paramedic program is three semesters of going to school full time with other general education courses. I will be taking specific classes for my degree like Human Biology, Anatomy & Physiology one and two. The General Education courses that I will be taking are English one, Speech Communication, Algebra one. There are many others that I will need to take in order to get my AA and to one day reach my goal of having my Bachelors in EMS.

My ultimate goal is to be hired at a Fire Department as a Firefighter/Paramedic and have as much education as possible in my field of work to get as much as I can out of my career. After going through Paramedics I will have to take the Fire Standards course at Seminole State College. I intend on turning that into a degree as well, so I will have two different degrees in both sides of one field.



My current financial situation is living off of my Post 911 GI Bill as a full time student. I have recently separated from the United States Army and have decided to make school my full time job. I would get a job along with being a full time student at SSC in order to have a greater yearly income, but my biggest priority is getting my education as fast as possible with the best grades I could possibly get to strive towards my dream career without failure. With all of this in mind I will be looking back years from now and knowing all of this education was more than worth it and was one of the best decisions I could have possibly made for myself and my family."

After photos were taken, Nicholas took the time to ask questions about the PVA, our chapter, and specifically the history of our organization. He was truly engaged in the conversation and expressed his sincere appreciation for not only being chosen for the scholarship, but for the comradery that we offer it to veterans regardless of injury.

In his application for this scholarship, Colton wrote; “My current educational goals are a bit broad and certainly intimidating, but nonetheless, are fields that I am extremely passionate about and interested in. I am concurrently pursuing two significant goals at the moment: a Bachelor of Science in Aerospace Engineering and a Commercial Pilot’s License. It is the latter goal that contributes the most to my difficult financial situation. I have been enthralled with all things aviation since the age I was able to perceive the world around me. I spent a significant portion of my childhood playing computer flight simulators and educating myself on the history of flight and the fundamental principles that made it possible. Coming from a family of modest means, at 19 years old I decided to enlist in the United States Air Force to serve my country and pay for my college education. I served 6 years as an aircraft maintainer with the 432nd Aircraft Maintenance Squadron at Creech Air Force Base. I was fortunate to have received incredible mentorship from a few key leaders during that time. With their assistance, I finished my time in the Air Force with many proud accomplishments such as top graduate in Basic Military Training, Senior Airman Below the Zone, and an Air Force Achievement Medal. My current career goal is to utilize the Commercial Pilot’s License to pilot commercial airliners, but I believe that my unique history and skillset, having maintained aircraft, piloted aircraft, and having been educated in the principles of engineering aircraft, will potentially provide me with incredibly unique opportunities in the future. My family and friends have asked me why I am simultaneously attempting two extremely difficult goals, so I figure an explanation is in order. My degree choice is a project in passion, a fallback plan

should I encounter medical complications in the future that prohibit me from flying, and a foot in the door to future unforeseen opportunities. The Post-9/11 GI bill has been incredibly helpful throughout this process but unfortunately does not do much for those wishing to make a career as a pilot. This has meant that the incredible expense of funding flight training has fallen squarely upon my own shoulders. I come from an incredibly loving and supportive family who have contributed massively to the person I am today, and for that, I am incredibly grateful. Unfortunately, my family is not in a position to financially support me in my educational goals. It is for that reason that I am fervently applying for every scholarship I am eligible for. I truly hope that I will be considered for this one.

Colton is a very focused young man, we talked for a while after his photos, and he is not short on ambition. He maintains a top percentile in his studies, which certainly attracts sponsors to assist with his flight time, and maintains employment to avoid as much debt as possible. Colton was truly appreciative of the award, and insisted to reach out to him if he could do anything for our organization.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida Chapter Endowed Scholarship will provide a minimum of two \$1,000 scholarships to veterans attending Seminole State College (which is located a few miles from the Chapter offices) perpetually. This is an awesome program

that the chapter leadership hopes can be duplicated at other schools in Central Florida, in the years to come and parlays with the PVACF Membership Scholarship Program the Chapter offers it members, their spouses and children under 23 years old, living at home





National Service Officer

David Ray

VALife

For many years the VA has offered life insurance to veterans with service connected disabilities. This Service Disabled Veterans Life Insurance (RH) is a \$10,000 policy and it was available to veterans under 65 years old with service connected disabilities who were eligible to receive compensation. They would not be eligible if they had any other health conditions that were not service connected. The veteran would have to file for this insurance within 2 years of receiving their rating and would have to pay the premium throughout the life of the policy. If the veteran had a total and permanent disability rating they would be eligible to have the premiums waived and be eligible for an additional \$30,000 supplemental (S-RH) insurance in which the premiums were not waived. They would have to apply for this supplemental insurance within one year of acceptance of the RH waiver and would have to pay the premium for the life of the insurance as well. The veteran would be eligible to receive the full amount of the insurance upon acceptance as long as they continued to pay the premiums. If the veteran does not apply for the coverage within the specified time frame they lose the ability to obtain the insurance.

The RH and S-RH insurance options will be ending starting January 1, 2023. It will be replaced by Veterans Affairs Life Insurance (VALife). This is a Whole Life insurance policy up to \$40,000 which matures after paying the premiums for 2 years.

The veteran can choose coverage from \$10,000 to \$40,000 in increments of \$10,000 and the premiums are determined by the age of the veteran when they apply for the insurance. They will be able to apply for this insurance at any time after their service connected disability rating up until the age of 81. There are specific situations which would allow the veteran to apply for the insurance after 80 but most people will not be able to apply after their 81st birthday. Veterans will not be eligible to receive the full amount of the insurance until the policy matures. If the veteran passes away prior to the maturation of the policy then the beneficiary would receive the premiums paid with interest. There is no waiver offered for any portion of this policy.

Veterans who apply for the RH insurance prior to the last day, December 31, 2022 will have the option of keeping their coverage or converting over to the new program. If the veteran chooses to convert then their RH insurance will remain in effect until their policy reaches maturity at which point they would have no more premiums. Converting may or may not be in the best interest of the veteran and their family. It really would depend upon the veterans individual circumstances. If you would like to know more please contact your PVA National Service Office.

David Ray



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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.

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During the period of March 5, through July 16, 2022, I entered and rode my Lasher Sport ATH-FS (All Terrain Hand-cycle with Full Suspension), 4 of the Off-Road Cycle Events hosted by the Southeast Gravel Series in the locations as indicated below. In all, I drove 4,270 miles just to get to the event sites. I competed and rode my Handcycle a total of 166 miles through some extremely rough terrain that included few hard surface roads but mainly traversed both extremely steep and downhill treacherous gravel roads, many with steep drop offs.

While I participated in the following, I also stayed in the listed Hotel accommodations due to the distance to travel, race day and rest before returning.

The best part of participating in an event such as this, was the privilege and opportunity to compete with other fellow PVA or disabled cyclists, while demonstrating to hundreds of able body 2- Wheel cyclists that a disability is only as limiting as ATTITUDE and DETERMINATION! Thanks to the Veteran's Administration Adaptive equipment

programs assistance, and the manufacture Lasher Sport, I was equipped with one of the most efficient and strongest off-road hand-cycles. But equally important and most worthy to mention is the PVA Adaptive Programs that provide the training, safety and opportunity to learn how to operate adaptive Hand-cycles both RACING hard surface and OFF-Road programs, such as the Southeast Gravel Series and the semi annual OFF-ROAD Handcycle Expo hosted by the Virginia Pocahontas State Park in Chesterfield Virginia.

I'm submitting several photos taken during each of the events where I competed representing the PVA against other PVA and non-PVA off-road hand-cyclists. It was a great event but due to logistical shortfalls I was unable to participate in the two other events not listed below.

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