

# ***WHEELS IN MOTION***

*January 2025*



*Rest in Peace*



**1944-2024**

**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** - January 9th 10:30 AM

Chapter Officers 2023-2025

President..... Steve Kirk  
Vice President ..... Roger Sack  
Treasurer..... David Rountree  
Secretary ..... Eddie Hawks  
National Director ..... Tim Wolfe  
Executive Director                      John DeMauro  
Office Manager                              Joanne Poretti

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David Rountree ..... Class of 2027  
Ken Weas ..... Class of 2025  
Jimmy Green ..... Class of 2025  
Tim Wolfe ..... Class of 2026  
Amy Patterson..... Class of 2026

National Liaison Vice President: Ann Robinson

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Membership/Vol Coordinator ..... Brenda Ciccarello  
Government Relations Director ..... Tim Wolfe  
Activities Director..... David & Rosa Rountree  
Sports Director ..... Roger Sack

National Service Officers:

Earnest Hill (386) 755-3016  
David Ray (407) 631-1835

Website: [pvacf.org](http://pvacf.org)  
Email: [office@pvacf.org](mailto:office@pvacf.org)

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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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# *Chapter President*

*Steve Kirk*

Happy New Year! For me, let's hope that 2025 is a better year. I spent two thirds of the year in the hospital but I am thankful that I survived the accident and am on the road to a full recovery. I recently got my new power wheelchair, and I have begun rehab. Thanks to technology, I have been able to participate in the monthly board meetings and speak with Executive Director a couple of times a week. Because of his leadership, Office Manager Joanne and the rest of the board of directors the chapter continues to move forward and keep our programs active and effective for our membership.

Let me remind you of a few things coming in 2025. In February we are hosting an Air-Rifle competition at the chapter. For more information see Sports Director Roger Sack's report in this edition of the Wheels In Motion. In April we will have our 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Jerry Dugan Memorial Golf Tournament at Venetian Bay Golf Club in New Smyrna Beach. Hopefully I will make it to this one as my car accident happened as I was traveling to last year's tournament. In June we will take nominations for officers of the board of directors as well as for two open board of director's positions. July brings the National Veteran's Wheelchair Games to be held in Minneapolis, Minnesota. The 2025 National Veterans Wheelchair Games will take place July 16-23, 2025. Registration for the games will begin in late January. It is the custom of the Central Florida Chapter to pay those expenses that the VA does not pay for its members to attend the games. To qualify for this chapter benefit, a person must have been a member of the chapter for at least one full year, earn 100 points (through various opportunities listed in the Chapter Policy and Procedures), participate in a minimum of three events at the games, inform the chapter ahead of time of their intent to register, attend practices in order to be prepared for their events and attend team meetings. In order for the chapter and the NVWG team leader to effectively manage member participation we will need for you to let us know of your intent to participate no later than **January 31, 2025**. To do so, please contact Jimmy Green at the following email address; meangreen32@gmail.com.

Some time in the next couple of months we hope to have a grand opening ceremony of our new warehouse. Plans are being made now for the celebration.

While in the hospital, I was informed of the passing of Board Secretary Brian Terwilliger. Brian was a faithful member of the Central Florida Chapter of PVA and the last remaining charter member. He will be greatly missed. Rest in Peace my friend.

*Steve Kirk*



*Cares*



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# *Executive Director*

## *John DeMauro*



2024 was bittersweet for our chapter and for me personally. I took a couple of weeks off in late January and my three daughters and I went to San Sebastian Spain to visit the family of Ester. Ester is a woman who, when she was 17, came to the United States as a foreign exchange student and lived with me and my family for a year. We hadn't seen Ester in nearly 35 years and she herself has two teenage daughters now. When we met at the airport, it was as if we were never apart. We spent a week in their home and once again became family. Family is important to all of us and that goes for the Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida Chapter. We are a "family" and although some of us don't see each other often and others of us have never met (after all there are over 370 of us), we are still "family". Synergistic, in that we are each an important part of a whole. Some of the "family" prefer to stay to themselves and that's ok, you're still part of the "family". Others can't be involved in the "family" activities due to health issues or distance (my family is spread out throughout the country) and that is ok also. You're still part of the "family". Some in our "family" are very involved in the work of the chapter. Our Board of Directors, our National Director, our Sports Director, our Activities Director, our Government Relations Director, our Membership/Volunteer Coordinator, our Office Manager, our local National Service Officer and our committee members are those who take on an active role in the chapter's operation to bring to the "family" opportunities throughout the year "in an effort to afford them with the highest quality of healthcare and life experiences" (which is a part of our mission statement).

The early part of the year we spent soliciting sponsors and golfers for our 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Jerry Dugan Memorial Charity Golf Tournament. This is the largest fund raiser for our chapter and has many moving parts. It involves nearly 25 volunteers both before, during and after the event. We are extremely thankful for all those who participate each year. The tournament raised over \$71,000. This year's golf tournament will be April 26, 2025 and will once again be held at the Venetian Bay Golf club in New Smyrna Beach. The funds we raise at this event help support the overall program of the chapter. At the event last year, I was informed of our Chapter President's auto accident earlier in the day. Steve has been in the hospital since May 2, 2024 and is hoping to get home soon. It took us a while to get him transferred from the hospital in Sanford to the Tampa VA but by June he was in Tampa. Our "family" needs to remind their family that in the event of finding yourself in a hospital, outside of the VA, to let the chapter know so that we can help get you to the proper place for care. Too often secular hospitals have no idea how to care for people with a spinal cord injury and can cause more damage than help. Particularly, most have no idea what Autonomic Dysreflexia is and how life threatening it is to our "family".

In May the building materials for the chapter's new warehouse were delivered and construction began not long afterwards. Construction and inspections lasted until early November, when we finally received a Certificate of Occupancy. In July the Chapter sent three members of the "family" to the National Veterans Wheelchair Games. In late summer and early fall we dealt with two hurricanes with little or no damage to the property of the "family".

Sadly, in November we lost the last charter member of the Central Florida Chapter when Board Secretary Brian Terwilliger passed on November 30<sup>th</sup>. Brian will be greatly missed. He was in the office almost every day and was always willing to do whatever needed to be done to help the chapter. In early December we celebrated his life with a Remembrance Gathering near the shores of Lake Monroe.

My hope is that 2025 will be a prosperous and fruitful year for all of the "family"



*John DeMauro*

# Paralyzed Veterans of America Central Florida

11th Annual

**Jerry Dugan Memorial Charity Golf Tournament**

**The Club at Venetian Bay**

New Smyrna Beach, Florida



## Save The Date

## April 26, 2025

Registration 7:30 AM Shot Gun Start 9:00 AM

Registration: \$175.00 per golfer (Veterans \$150) Foursomes: \$600

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**M** Marriott  
10:30 AM  
Saturday, December 21  
Next  
**Paralyzed Veterans of America Luncheon 2024**  
Reception  
11:30 AM - 12:30 PM

# HOLIDAY PARTY 2024









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# *Government Relations*

## *Tim Wolfe*

“Improving access to home and community-based services is crucial to the health and well-being of our wounded, ill, and injured veterans and their caregivers.” For months, PVA has been urging Congress to pass the Elizabeth Dole Home Care Act to ensure the protections and resources our catastrophically disabled veterans and their caregivers need are put into place without delay. Late last year, House and Senate leaders decided to roll the measure into a larger omnibus package addressing a wide variety of veterans-related issues. The new bill, the Senator Elizabeth Dole 21st Century Veterans Healthcare and Benefits Improvement Act (H.R. 8371), sought to enhance and reform the delivery of healthcare, benefits, and services at the VA. Normally, creating an omnibus bill enhances chances of passage, but the package stalled quickly when disagreements arose over several provisions in the bill. Last week, the leaders of the House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees worked through the differences which had been holding the bill up since May, allowing for a successful House vote on November 18, 2024. The bill, which easily passed the chamber by a vote of 389 to 9, will make critically needed improvements to VA’s Home and Community Based Services, such as lifting the department’s cap on the amount they can pay for home care from 65 to 100 percent, increasing access to the Veteran Directed Care program, and improving support to caregivers of veterans. In addition to raising the cap to 100 percent, the VA could even exceed the 100 percent rate if the Secretary determines certain factors require the higher cost in the best interest of the veteran or if that veteran has amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, a spinal cord injury, or a similar condition. Any one of these changes would provide severely disabled and aging veterans with more and better options to receive their care at home rather than in a facility. Another section of the bill would allow VA to cover the cost of some veterans’ care at private assisted living facilities. Currently, VA can refer veterans to these facilities, but they can’t pay for it. The bill directs the department to create a three-year pilot program in two Veterans Integrated Service Networks (VISN), with at least one program site in a rural area and another serving a State Veterans Home to test the benefit of having VA pay for this care. Veterans eligible for the pilot would include those already receiving nursing home-level care paid for by the VA and those who are eligible to receive assisted living services or nursing home care. At the conclusion of the pilot program, participating veterans will be given the option to continue receiving assisted living services at their assigned site, paid for by the VA. We believe this would help veterans and the VA alike by giving greater access to assisted living and reducing costs for long-term care, allowing more veterans to receive needed assistance. Other provisions in

H.R. 8371 would streamline VA information sources for veterans and caregivers alike, ensure a warm handoff to other VA programs if a veteran is not eligible for VA’s Program of Comprehensive Assistance for Family Caregivers, and create mental health care grants for certain caregivers who become strained by the demands of assisting veterans with heightened needs. In response to the House’s passage of the omnibus legislation, PVA National President Robert Thomas said, “Improving access to home and community-based services is crucial to the health and well-being of our wounded, ill, and injured veterans and their caregivers.” President Thomas urged the Senate to quickly pass the bill. PVA members are encouraged to use PVA Action Force to urge their two senators to support its swift passage.

*Tim Wolfe*



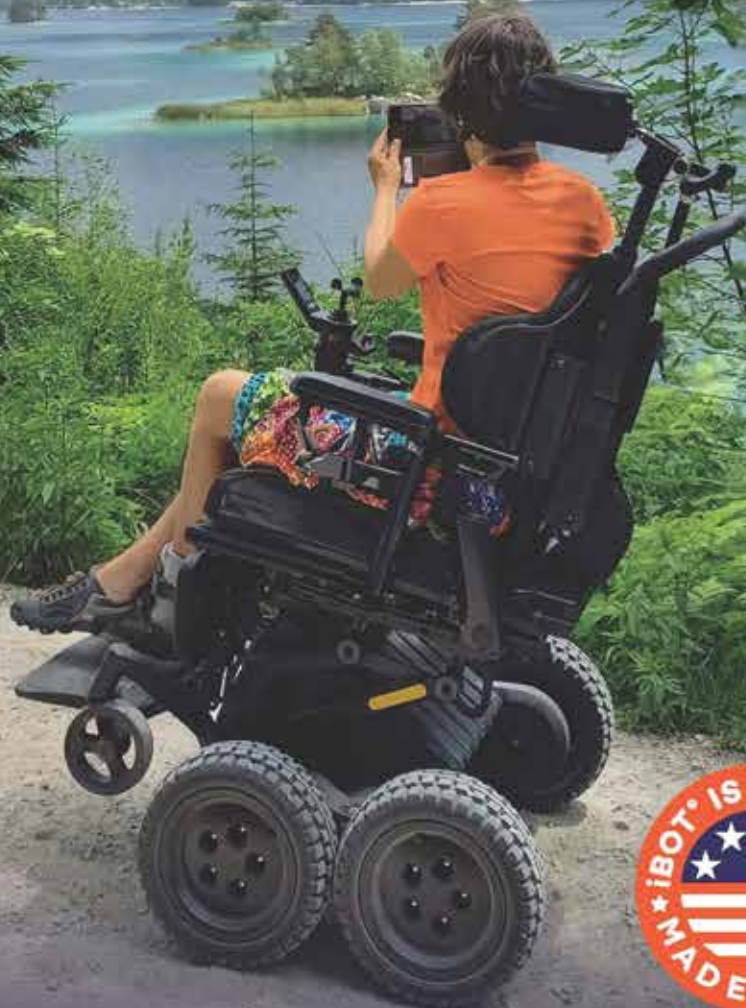
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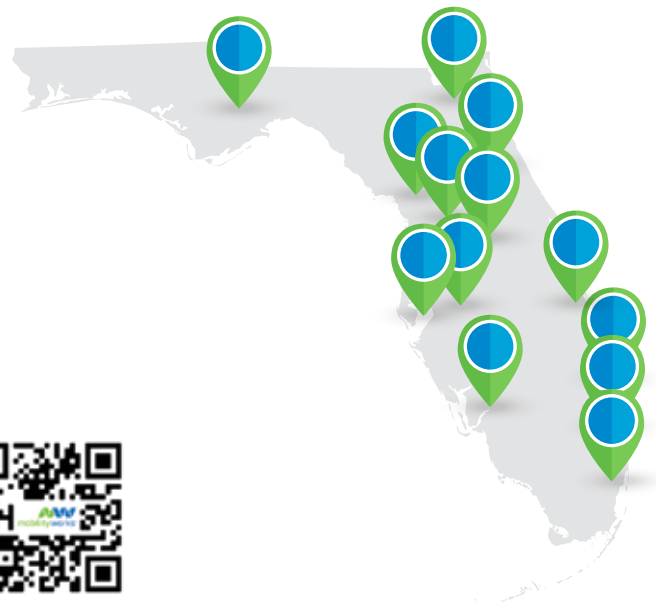


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Courage to change the things I can and the WISDOM to know the difference.

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