



North Central Chapter



209 N. GARFIELD AVE
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57104
INFO@NCPVA.ORG
605-336-0494



Here's what has happened in the last few months, and what's to come!

Since October 1st, the North Central PVA Chapter has reached several important milestones. Our annual audit was successfully completed in November and December, helping ensure continued transparency and accountability. We also came together on December 11th for our Annual Christmas Luncheon, catered by Tony's Catering. Despite snowy weather, we were grateful to have around 50 members and guests in attendance to celebrate the holidays and the 2024–2025 year with NCPVA.

The luncheon was a wonderful afternoon of connection and celebration, made even more special with over 40 door prizes given away. Thank you to everyone who joined us and helped make the event so enjoyable. Your continued involvement and support truly make our chapter strong.

Looking ahead to the coming months, we will begin accepting applications for our Gone Fishin' event (see the fishing application included in this newsletter). We plan to once again take 32 veterans in May 2026, with a slight change to the Friday breakfast, which will be noted in the application. Please stay safe this winter, reach out if you need anything, and thank you for your continued support—please also consider donating to help us continue offering meaningful events for our veterans.

Terry Paulsen & Tracey Safamch

Upcoming Events

JANUARY 2026

- 1: New Years Day (Office Closed)
- 2: Office Closed
- 8: Membership Meeting: Lunch @12, Meeting @1pm
- 14: SD Veterans Council Mtg/social @12, Social @5:30-7:30pm Pierre, SD Legion Post #8
- 14: Stakeholder Mtg @10, Va Sioux Falls
- 19: Martin Luther King Jr. Day (Office Closed)

FEBRUARY 2026

- 12: Board of Directors Meeting@ 10pm
- 12: Membership Meeting: Lunch @12, Meeting @1pm
- 14: Valentine's Day
- 16: Presidents' Day (Office Closed)

MARCH 2026

- 8: Daylight Savings Time
- 12: Membership Meeting: Lunch @12, Meeting @1pm
- 17: St. Patrick's Day



North Central Chapter

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

209 N. Garfield Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104

OFFICERS

President, Chuck Doom
Vice President, Harlan Schmidt
Secretary, Greg Brandner
Treasurer, Gene Murphy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Duane Biesboer
Rodney Melcher
Bonnie Schmidt
Kristine Shaffer

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Legislation Director: Terry Paulsen/
Gene Murphy
Volunteer Coordinator: Charles Doom
VAVS: Tracey Salameh/Sheri Kloes
Membership Officer: Duane Biesboer
Newsletter Editor: Tracey Salameh /Terry
Paulsen
Sports Director: Charles Doom
P.O.C. Women Veterans Committee: Bonnie
Schmidt
P.O.C. MS Committee: Kristine Shaffer

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Greg Brandner

OFFICE STAFF

Terry Paulsen, Executive Director
Tracey Salameh, Director of Operations
605-336-0494

Office Hours: Monday through Thursday, 7:30 -
3:00

NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER

Brad Friez
VA Dakota Regional Office
2501 West 22nd Street, Room 100
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
605-333-6801
800-795-3632

Sioux Falls VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Kelsi Wilcox, kelsi.wilcox@va.gov
605-336-3230 ext. 6613

Fargo VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Tracy Lamont, tracy.lamont@va.gov
701-239-3700 ext. 2673

Black Hills VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Amber Ness, amber.ness@va.gov
605-745-2000 ext. 17003



Disclaimer: The North Central Chapter PVA newsletter is published four times a year. It serves its members and interested parties by informing them about chapter activities, veterans' issues, SCI related matters, advocacy and legislative developments and other relevant issues concerning disabilities and the disabled community. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of the North Central Chapter, its Officers, Board Members or the Editor. Similarly, appearance of advertising herein does not constitute an endorsement of their products or services. The editor has the right to edit all articles.

Happy Birthday!

PVA North Central Chapter Birthday Roster

January 2026

Thomas Holtey
David Morgan
Lawrence Hogan
Jack Gill
Randy Brown
Lary Marthaller
Eric Kritzmirle
Steve Thompson
Bob Sanchez

Les Hovrud
Kenneth Bassett
Evan Ellis
Colin Olson
Anna Shaffer
Bruce Carter
Thomas Dietz
Bob Schutte
Gary Kipena
Ross Beranek

February 2026

Andrew Watson
Allan Trautman
Gary Reineke
Caron Morris
Ralph Martin
Ernest Milliron
Terry Bacon
Julie Squires
Judy Hauck
Kyle Raasch

Randall Thornburg
Jonathan Englund
Chad Maxon
Saundra Tryner
Eugene Ridenour
Cathy Brandner
Harlan Schmidt
Douglas McCuddin
Mark Johnson
Mark Wolf

March 2026

Vern Anderson
Kurt Lysne
Fred Nielsen
Ronald Remer
Steve Barrett
Harold Muildenburg
Brad Friez
John North
Colin Reisner
Jim Kasten

Warren Zweifel
Glenn Broski
Anthony Steensgaard
Dennis Adams
Tom Shields
Lance Anderson
Terrance Kohler
Linda LeBorgne
Tim Ruppert
Elizabeth Maisonneuve
Carl Elk Boy



SD State Veterans Cemetery Endowment Fund

With the passing of SB 91, the South Dakota Veterans Council established an Endowment Fund with the South Dakota Community Foundation. This fund will be used for the maintenance and operations of the veterans cemetery in Sioux Falls, SD

The South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery is located at the 1-90/I-229 area in Sioux Falls, SD and encompasses up to 50 acres of land donated by the City of Sioux Falls.

All federally defined veterans, spouses, and dependent children are eligible for burial in the State Veterans Cemetery.

We are proud to be able to give our veterans their final resting place on the eastside and keep them close to their families.

<https://sdcommunityfoundation.org/for-advisors/existing-funds/south-dakota-veterans-cemetery-fund/>

An advertisement for the Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home. The top half features a large American flag. The text "HOME OF THE BRAVE." is prominently displayed in white. Below it, it says "Michael J. Fitzmaurice State Veterans Home" and "Serving Veterans for 130 years!" Below the text is a photograph of the building, which is a modern structure with a large arched entrance and a stone base. The bottom of the ad lists services: "Independent Living • Nursing Home • Large Single Rooms • Recreational Programs • Chaplain • Physio • Library • Canteen • Post Office • Barber Shop • and More!" It also provides the address "2500 Minnehaha Avenue, Hot Springs, SD 57747" and the website "vetaffairs.ad.gov/veteranshome". A small logo for the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs is in the bottom right corner.

Have you considered including PVA North Central Chapter in your will or trust?

This type of donation will serve as an investment in our organization that will reap our members benefits for many years to come.

Membership

Duane Biesboer

The Chapter currently has a total of 139 members and 104 Associate Members.

Regular membership is FREE! If you know of anyone who has a spinal cord injury or disease, please have them contact the Chapter office.

Annual Dues for 2025-2025 have been mailed out! Please keep an eye out for that paperwork!

Thank you to those who have sent in their dues!!

Please notify the Chapter when you have a change of address.



CFC Campaign

If you are a federal government employee or your employer offers a charitable giving campaign through United Way, you can help us to continue our programs and services we offer to our members, veterans, and other individuals with disabilities.

**CONTRIBUTION CODE:
54682**



988- SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

Volunteer Program

Charles Doom

The Chapter has 769 volunteer hours from October 2025-December 2025.

Social Media Update- NEW FACEBOOK PAGE



Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter

[See dashboard](#) [Edit](#) [Advertise](#)

We are in the process of updating our social media pages and we needed to start a new Facebook page. Please follow our NEW Facebook page at

<https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61566417141295>

or by searching Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter and the page will look like the one above with the pheasant hunt picture. We will be posting events, pictures, and other news throughout the year on here to keep our members and community up to date on our chapter!



GONE FISHING TOURNAMENT

**23rd Annual PVA/Firefighters
Joel Niemeyer Memorial
“Gone Fishing” Tournament
Chamberlain, South Dakota**

May 21st-22nd, 2026



**PVA North Central Chapter
209 N. Garfield Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104
(605) 336-0494**


PVA
Paralyzed Veterans of America
North Central Chapter

The PVA North Central Chapter/Firefighters are pleased to announce the 23rd Annual PVA/Firefighters Joel Niemeyer Memorial "Gone Fishing" Walleye Event in Chamberlain/Oacoma, SD on May 21st-22nd, 2026.

This Tournament will be limited to 32 disabled anglers. This is a fun, non-competitive event!

PVA North Central Chapter will cover the cost of lodging on the night of Thursday, May 21st for the PVA members, disabled anglers, Firefighters and volunteers who would like to participate in this event. Any additional nights you wish to stay as well as incidentals will be at your own expense.

Fishing License:

All participants must have a valid South Dakota Fishing License. Anglers must abide by all South Dakota Game Fish and Parks rules and regulations.

Lodging:

Room reservations will be coordinated through the chapter office. Do not call to make your own reservations. The official event hotel is Arrowwood Cedar Shore Resort. Reservation deadline for lodging is April 24th, 2026.

Meals:

Sack lunches and snacks, along with pop and bottled water, will be provided in the boats on Thursday & Friday. A group dinner will be held at the Oacoma Community Center Thursday evening, at 6:30 p.m. **Please join us for a group breakfast on Friday morning from 7:00-8:30 a.m. at Al's Oasis (1000 E South Dakota, W Hwy 16, Oacoma, SD 57365).**

The PVA is happy to provide one breakfast entrée and coffee for each attendee. Any additional food or beverages will be at the individual's expense.

Breakfast options:

- Porker: Two eggs, hashbrowns, and a choice of bacon, sausage links, or ham
- Ham & Cheese Omelet: Includes hashbrowns and choice of toast

Equipment:

Everyone is encouraged to bring their own tackle and necessary gear, including foul weather clothing. Live bait will be available for boat captains on both days.

Partner pairing will be made Thursday morning. NO ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES will be allowed in the boats.

You are encouraged to bring a cooler to bring home any fish you may want to keep.

Please complete the enclosed registration and waiver forms and return to

**PVA North Central Chapter
209 N. Garfield Ave.
Sioux Falls, SD 57104**

**** If selected, a letter will be sent to you to in the mail to confirm your participation. If you do not receive a confirmation letter, the event is full, and you will be put on a standby list. ****

TENTATIVE AGENDA:

Thursday May 21st

9:00 a.m.-11:00 a.m.: Load Boats
11:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m.: Time to Fish
4:30p.m.-5:00 p.m.: Return to docking area
6:30p.m.: Group dinner @ Oacoma Community Center

Friday, May 22nd

7:00 a.m.-8:30a.m.: Breakfast @Al's Oasis
8:30 a.m.: Load Boats/Time to Fish
3:00 p.m.-4:00 p.m.: Return to docking area
4:00 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.: Wrap Up/travel home

Any questions can be directed to Terry or Tracey at the Chapter office (605) 336-0494.

23rd Annual PVA/Firefighters Joel Niemeyer Memorial “Gone Fishing” Event APPLICATION

The Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter/Firefighters are hosting the 23rd Annual Walleye Fishing Event in Chamberlain, SD on May 21st-22nd, 2026. There is no entry fee for Firefighters/Volunteers, PVA North Central Chapter members and disabled anglers who would like to participate in this event. This event will be limited to 32 disabled anglers. All participants must have a valid South Dakota Fishing License.

Name _____ Phone Number () _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Emergency Contact Name _____ Phone () _____

I will be rooming with _____

Application Questions:

BOAT CREW:

Are you a boat captain? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, who is your boat mate? _____

Are you a boat mate? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, who is your captain? _____

VETERANS:

Are you a VETERAN? Yes _____ No _____

If you are a Veteran, do you have a preferred boat captain? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, who? _____

Will a caregiver accompany you on the boat? Yes _____ No _____ If yes, who? _____

Please Specify what size shirt you need (circle one): 4x 3x 2x XL L M S

We will have rooms reserved **only** at the Arrowwood Cedar Shore Resort. Additional rooms will be at the AmericInn. The PVA North Central Chapter will cover the cost of Thursday, May 21st only. **Any Additional nights you wish to stay will be at your own expense.**

Lodging: Please indicate below the nights you plan on staying. **Please do not contact the hotel to make your reservations as we will take care of this.** We have a limited number of wheelchair accessible rooms available. Please be mindful when making your selection below. A confirmation letter will be sent to you with your hotel information.

I will need a room for the night(s) of:

Wednesday, May 20th (individuals pay)
 Thursday, May 21st (PVA pays)

Check One:

Wheelchair Accessible Double Bed
 Double Bed

Partner paring will be made Thursday morning.

Return applications to PVA North Central Chapter, 209 N. Garfield Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104 or for more information call the Chapter office at (605) 336-0494.

Complete Waiver on Reverse Side

**THIS IS A LIMITED PARTICIPANT EVENT. THOSE SELECTED WILL BE NOTIFIED TO ATTEND
AND OTHERS NOT SELECTED WILL BE SENT A WAITLIST LETTER.**

Waiver and Release of Liability and Publicity Release
2026 PVA/Firefighters Fishing Tournament
Read Below Before Signing

In consideration of being allowed to participate in the above-named tournament, related events and activities, the undersigned acknowledges, appreciates and agrees as follows:

I, _____ hereby release, hold harmless, and forever discharge the Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter (PVANCC), National PVA, SD Game, Fish & Parks (SD GF&P), Firefighters, Sioux Falls Fire Rescue, all of their officers, directors, members, agents, and/or all liability, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, property damage, or personal injury, including death, that may be sustained by me or any property belonging to me, whether arising from the negligence of any of the RELEASEES, or otherwise, while participating in the above named tournament.

The risk of injury from the activities involved in this tournament could be significant, including the potential for serious bodily injury, including death, and property damage. I am fully aware of the risks and hazards associated with participating in this activity and I voluntarily, without any inducement, elect to participate in the activity. I KNOWLINGLY AND VOLUNTARILY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, BOTH KNOWN AND UNKNOWN, AND ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR ANY PROPERTY DAMAGE, OR ANY PERSONAL INJURY, INCLUDING DEATH, THAT MAY BE SUSTAINED BY ME OR ANY LOSS OR DAMAGE TO PROPERTY OWNED BY ME AS A RESULT OF BEING ENGAGED IN SUCH ACTIVITY.

I willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If however, I observe any unusual, significant hazard during my presence or participation, I will remove myself from participating and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately.

I hear by consent to medical treatment in the case of emergency. I agree to assume full responsibility for payment of any and all fees incurred as a result of such medical treatment.

This release and hold harmless agreement are binding on myself, my heirs, assigns, personal representatives, administrators, and next of kin.

I hear by voluntarily and without compensation authorize pictures and/or voice recording(s) to be made of me by, or on behalf of NCCPVA, National PVA, and SD GF&P during the above-named tournament. I authorize NCCPVA, National PVA & SD GF&P to publicize and/or display such photographs and recording, or to provide such photographs and records to others of their choosing for display, without notice, or payment of any royalty, fee or other compensation of any character to me for the use of my picture and/or voice.

I HAVE READ THIS RELEASE OF LIABILITY AND ASSUMPTION OF RISK AGREEMENT, FULLY UNDERSTAND ITS TERMS, UNDERSTAND THAT I HAVE GIVEN UP SUBSTANTIAL RIGHTS BY SIGNING IT, AND SIGN IT FREELY AND VOLUNTARILY WITHOUT ANY INDUCEMENT.

Participant's Signature

Date

Printed Name

For Participants Under the Age of 18

This is to certify that I, _____ the undersigned, am the _____ (parent and natural guardian or legal guardian) of _____.

I acknowledge that I have read and understand the above document and am fully aware of the legal consequences of signing this instrument. I hear by represent that I am, in fact, acting in such capacity and agree to save and hold harmless and indemnify each of the above RELEASEES from any and all liability, loss, cost, claim or damage whatsoever (including reasonable attorney's fees) that may be imposed upon them because of any defect in or lack of such capacity to so act, on behalf of my child's release as provided above of all the RELEASEES, and for myself, my heirs, assigns, personal representatives and next of kin. I release and agree to indemnify and hold harmless the RELEASEES from any and all liabilities incident to my minor child's involvement or participation in this tournament as provided above, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THEIR NEGLIGENCE.

I here by give permission for the staff of the RELEASEES to seek, during the period of the program, emergency medical attention for my child, and for the medical attention to be given in the event of accident, injury or illness. I agree to bear the full responsibility for the cost of such care.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Emergency Telephone Number _____

Child's Date of Birth _____

Child's Insurance Co. _____

Policy No. _____



Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter

Fishing Event Fundraiser

Support Our Veterans. Strengthen Our Community.

Join us in supporting paralyzed veterans in the North Central region through our annual fishing event. Your sponsorship helps provide adaptive recreation, connection, and unforgettable experiences for the men and women who have served our country.

Boat Sponsor
\$1,000+

Provide a fully sponsored fishing boat experience for our veterans.

Recognition Includes:

- Business name/logo displayed on the sponsor wall at the banquet
- Name announced during the banquet
- Mention on the NCPVA Facebook page and Website as a Boat Sponsor

Veteran Sponsor
\$700

Help sponsor a veteran's participation in this special event.

Recognition Includes:

- Business name/logo displayed on the sponsor wall at the banquet
- Name announced during the banquet
- Mention on the NCPVA Facebook page and Website as a Veteran Sponsor

Gold Sponsor
\$500

A strong show of support for our veterans and their families.

Recognition Includes:

- Business name/logo displayed on the sponsor wall at the banquet
- Name announced during the banquet

Silver Sponsor
\$250

A meaningful way to give back and be recognized.

Recognition Includes:

- Name announced during the banquet

Basic Sponsor
Donation of Your Choice

Every gift makes a difference and directly supports our veterans.



605-336-0494



www.ncpva.org



info@ncpva.org

NORTH CENTRAL CHRISTMAS LUNCHEON

The Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter held its annual Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 11th at 11:30 a.m., with approximately 50 members and guests in attendance, braving snowy weather to come together and celebrate the holiday season. The luncheon began with appetizers including shrimp hors d'oeuvres and a meat and cheese platter, followed by a hearty meal of green beans, mashed potatoes, salad, rolls, ham, and roast beef. Guests enjoyed apple crisp for dessert to round out the meal.

The celebration also featured a raffle with over 40 prizes, adding excitement and fun to the afternoon. Most importantly, the luncheon provided a wonderful opportunity for fellowship, connection, and holiday cheer as everyone enjoyed each other's company and celebrated the season together. We would like to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who attended the luncheon and for the continued support of our chapter.

In November, Eide Bailly, the chapter's auditors, had submitted the North Central Chapter for a community impact grant, and the chapter was selected to receive the grant, which was presented following the luncheon.



HAPPY
NEW YEAR

2026



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

VA Officials Warn of New Scam Targeting Veterans

VA recently sounded the alarm about a new scam targeting veterans, surviving spouses, and family members who receive VA benefits. The scammers pretend to be VA representatives collecting an overpayment of VA benefits. They are using official looking letters, emails, and texts that often include fake VA logos and letterhead, making it extremely difficult to distinguish from genuine VA communications. If you receive a letter or any communication about a VA benefits overpayment, log into your official [VA.gov account](https://www.veterans.gov) immediately to verify if you truly owe money.

If you find you do owe money, VA's Debt Management Center offers many [repayment options](#). Also, be aware that VA will not call you about potential overpayments unless you initiated the inquiry first.

Veterans COLA Bill Advances in the Senate

On November 9, the Senate passed the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act of 2025 (S. 2392), which will increase certain VA benefits by 2.8 percent, including disability compensation, clothing allowances, and dependency and indemnity compensation for surviving spouses and children. The increase, went into effect on December 1, is reflective of the effects of inflation and is identical to the increase for Social Security recipients announced last month. The legislation passed unanimously and now heads to the House of Representatives for further consideration.

TAX SEASON GUIDANCE FOR VETERANS

- WHETHER A VETERAN FILES THEIR TAXES INDEPENDENTLY OR USES A TAX PROFESSIONAL, VA ENCOURAGES VETERANS AND THEIR LOVED ONES TO REVIEW THE FOLLOWING TIPS AND RESOURCES TO BOTH HELP THEM NAVIGATE THE TAX SEASON WITH CONFIDENCE AND TO AVOID TAX SEASON SCAMS.
- TAX BENEFITS AS A VETERAN: DISABILITY BENEFITS RECEIVED FROM VA SHOULD NOT BE COUNTED AS PART OF A VETERAN'S GROSS INCOME. PAYMENTS FROM COMPENSATION, PENSION, VETERAN READINESS & EMPLOYMENT (VR&E), AND EDUCATION—INCLUDING THE G.I. BILL—ARE EXEMPT FROM TAXATION. ALWAYS REVIEW THE INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE'S WEBPAGE ON VETERANS TAX INFORMATION AND SERVICES BEFORE SUBMITTING A TAX RETURN.
- FOR VETERANS WHO RECEIVE DISABILITY BENEFITS FROM VA, REFER TO INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS) PUBLICATION 525 UNDER "MILITARY AND GOVERNMENT DISABILITY PENSIONS" FOR MORE INFORMATION.
- VETERANS MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO CLAIM A FEDERAL TAX REFUND BASED ON AN INCREASE IN THEIR VA DISABILITY PERCENTAGE (WHICH MAY INCLUDE A RETROACTIVE DETERMINATION).
- COMBAT-DISABLED VETERANS WHO ARE GRANTED COMBAT-RELATED SPECIAL COMPENSATION AFTER AN AWARD FOR CONCURRENT RETIREMENT AND DISABILITY MAY BE ELIGIBLE TO CLAIM A FEDERAL TAX REFUND.
- FREE TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS: VETERANS HAVE ACCESS TO SEVERAL FREE TAX ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS.
- **IRS FREE FILE:** IF A VETERAN'S ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME IS \$79,000 OR LESS, THEY CAN FILE ELECTRONICALLY WITH AN IRS FREE FILE SOFTWARE PROVIDER. IF THEIR INCOME IS HIGHER, THEY CAN USE FREE FILE FILLABLE FORMS.
- **IRS DIRECT FILE:** IF A VETERAN LIVES IN A PARTICIPATING STATE, THEY CAN USE THE FREE IRS DIRECT FILE SERVICE TO E-FILE THEIR FEDERAL TAX RETURN DIRECTLY WITH IRS.
- **IN-PERSON HELP:** IF A VETERAN'S ADJUSTED INCOME IS \$64,000 OR LESS, IF THEY HAVE A DISABILITY AND/OR NEED LANGUAGE SUPPORT, OR IF THEY ARE 60-YEARS OLD OR OLDER, THEY CAN RECEIVE FREE IN-PERSON HELP FROM AN IRS-CERTIFIED VOLUNTEER.
- MILITARY ONESOURCE: USE THE MILITARY ONESOURCE SOFTWARE TO FILE FEDERAL AND STATE RETURNS FOR FREE FOR UP TO 365 DAYS AFTER MILITARY SEPARATION OR RETIREMENT. FOR INFORMATION ON OTHER TOPICS, VISIT MILITARYONESOURCE.MIL OR CALL 800-342-9647.
- ALWAYS VERIFY COMMUNICATIONS: WITH THE INCREASING SOPHISTICATION OF SCAMS TARGETING VETERANS, IT'S IMPORTANT TO DISTINGUISH BETWEEN LEGITIMATE AND FRAUDULENT COMMUNICATIONS FROM VA.

CONTINUED

- VA WILL NEVER SEND TEXT MESSAGES TO CONFIRM OR REQUEST PERSONALLY IDENTIFIABLE INFORMATION (PII) FOR BENEFITS OR FEDERAL PAYMENTS.
- DO NOT PROVIDE PERSONAL BANKING OR CREDIT CARD INFORMATION TO ANYONE ALLEGING AFFILIATION WITH VA OR OTHER FEDERAL ENTITIES.
- DO NOT SHARE YOUR VA NATIONAL CALL CENTER (NCC) PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (PIN) WITH ANYONE, INCLUDING FAMILY, FRIENDS OR ANY ENTITY WHO MAKES CONTACT VIA MOBILE COMMUNICATION. THE VA NCC PIN IS A UNIQUE IDENTIFIER WHICH HELPS PROTECT PERSONAL INFORMATION WHEN COMMUNICATING WITH VA.
- GET AN IRS IDENTIFY PROTECTION PERSONAL IDENTIFICATION NUMBER (IP PIN). IP PINS ARE ASSIGNED TO TAXPAYERS TO PREVENT SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER (SSN) FRAUD ON FEDERAL INCOME TAX RETURNS. SCAMMERS CAN USE SSNS TO COMMIT TAX FRAUD BY FILING A FRAUDULENT RETURN OR CLAIMING A REFUND; OBTAINING AN IP PIN WILL KEEP THESE SCAMMERS FROM FILING A TAX RETURN USING VETERANS' SSNS.
- PROTECT YOUR PERSONAL INFORMATION: THE TAX FILING SEASON HAS INCREASINGLY BECOME A PRIME OPPORTUNITY FOR SCAMMERS TO EXPLOIT UNSUSPECTING TAXPAYERS THROUGH VARIOUS COMMUNICATION METHODS.
- REFRAIN FROM SHARING PII, INCLUDING VA.GOV LOGINS, VA NCC PERSONAL PINS, DATES OF BIRTH, MILITARY ENTRANCE/DISCHARGE DETAILS, BRANCHES OF SERVICE OR SSNS.
- LIMIT POSTING PII ONLINE, AND DON'T SHARE RESIDENCE ADDRESSES, DATES OF BIRTH, WORKPLACE LOCATIONS OR KINSHIP DETAILS.
- DELETE OLD SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS, LIMIT ONLINE PRESENCES AND MINIMIZE OR REMOVE AVAILABLE BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION.
- NEVER SEND BANK INFORMATION OR PAYMENTS TO "ONLINE FRIENDS" OR OTHERS. SCAMMERS MAY THREATEN TO DESTROY YOUR FILES OR DATA IF YOU DO NOT SEND PAYMENT OR BANKING INFORMATION. IF YOU ARE A VICTIM OF RANSOMWARE, DO NOT RESPOND TO THESE THREATS AND DO REPORT THE INCIDENT IMMEDIATELY.
- IF VETERANS ENCOUNTER A TAX SCAM, THEY SHOULD REPORT IT TO THE APPROPRIATE AUTHORITIES. REPORTING SCAMS HELPS PROTECT OTHERS FROM BECOMING VICTIMS AND ASSISTS IN THE INVESTIGATION AND PROSECUTION OF BAD ACTORS. FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REPORT AN ABUSIVE TAX SCHEME OR A TAX RETURN PREPARER, VISIT REPORT A TAX SCAM OR FRAUD | INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS.GOV).

From the Office of Brad Friez

National Service Officer

As we approach this Christmas Season I so appreciate our great country with it's many freedoms including the freedom of religion. Whether one is a Christian (like myself) or of another belief we indeed have that freedom to observe our beliefs.

This coming February it will be thirteen years since I became a National Service Officer with the Paralyzed Veterans of America. Over that time there have been enormous changes to the way and paths we take to advocate for our Veterans and by extension; family members of Veterans before the VA.

I first began my duties with the Paralyzed Veterans of America back in 2013 we had a large "C" file room in the rear of the Regional Office in Sioux Falls. This room contained the claims files or folders for all of the Veterans in this part of the country who had filed claims at one time or another. But over time that "C" file room went away as VA transitioned to their electronic file system called Veterans Benefits Management System or what we refer to as VBMS.

Another huge change was the National Work Queue which the VA fully implemented in 2016. In 2013 when I first came on board with the Paralyzed Veterans of America all South Dakota Veterans' claims were processed at the Sioux Falls Regional Office. After the National Work Queue was established the local Veterans' claims were scattered among the VA's fifty six Regional Offices.

A third major change was VA's Appeals Modernization Act that took place in 2019. Going forward if a Veteran had concerns about a rating decision (denials, effective date, rating level, etc.) they now had three paths to fighting that decision and those would be a supplemental claim, a higher level review or to file a formal appeal with the notice of disagreement.

From the Office of Brad Friez

National Service Officer

There have also been some major pieces of legislation that became law during this time as well. The Blue Water Navy Vietnam Veterans Act of 2019 was passed and took effect on January 1, 2020 where any Navy Veteran who was on board a vessel within 12 nautical miles of Vietnam from January 9, 1962 to May 7, 1975 was now considered to be exposed to Agent Orange and thus able to submit claims for those presumptive conditions. Another huge piece of legislation was the Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics Act or what we call the PACT act that became law on August 10, 2022. This law covered many health issues for those military service members who were exposed to various toxins during the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts from their service in and around those countries. It also added hypertension and Monoclonal Gammopathy of Undetermined Significance (MGUS) to the presumptive conditions from exposure to Agent Orange. This MGUS is a blood disorder which in rare cases can lead to cancer.

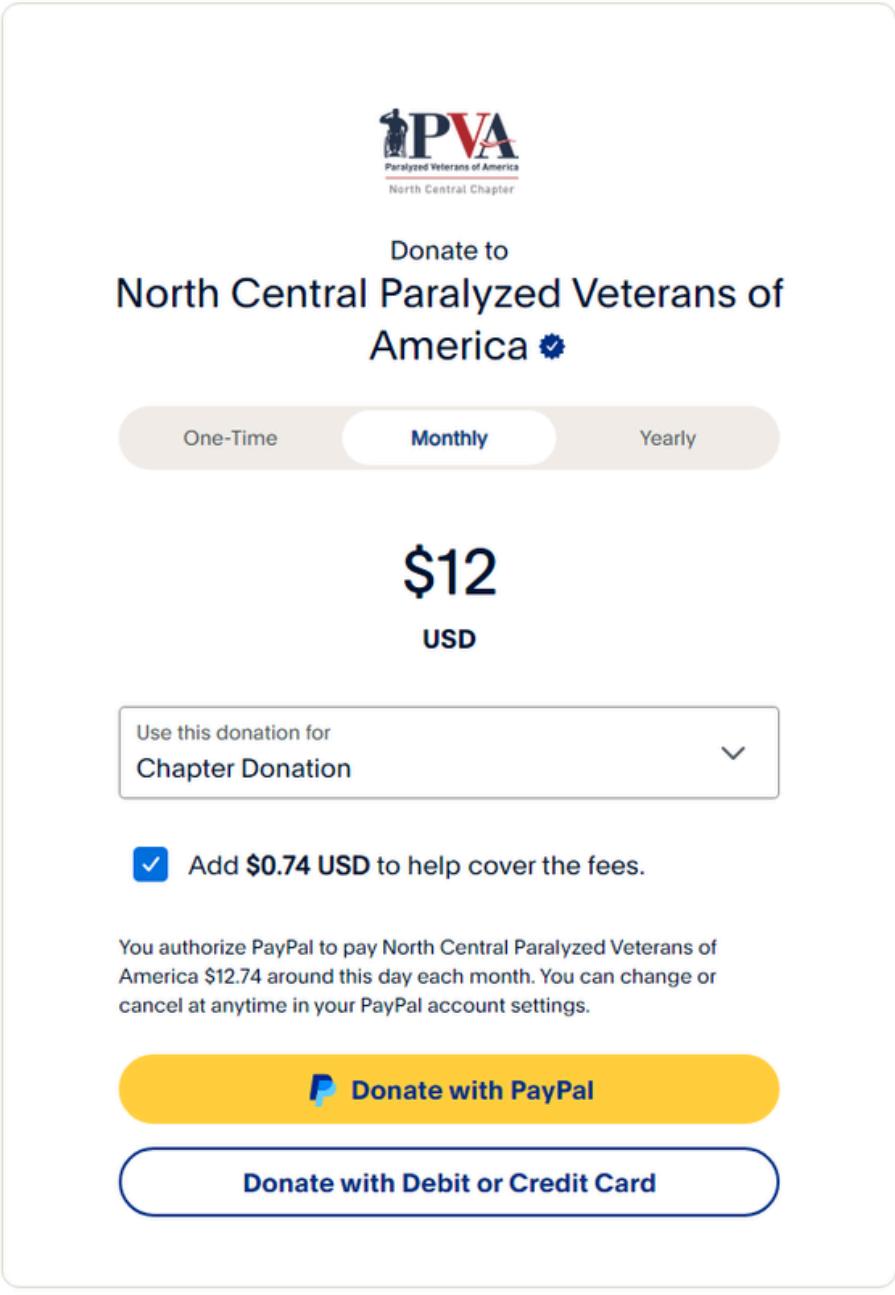
Even many of the forms that we as Veterans' advocates utilize have changed over this time frame. It does make our jobs challenging at times. Finally, I wanted to end this with an encouragement to be an active part of when we file claims or advocate for you or a family member. VA needs an actual diagnosis of potential claimed condition, and an in-service event, injury and illness, and a medical nexus between the current disability and the in-service event, injury or illness. The VA will never grant service connection for a condition that is acute in nature. So it is wise to inform your VA or private provider of that health issue if indeed it is chronic.

We continue to request that if you have a cell phone to please get your voice mail box message system started and when necessary to empty your messages so that we or the VA or their contractors who line up the exams for your claims can connect with you or at the very least leave you a message. Also, please update us with your current contact information to include your mailing address, your email address and that phone number.

Merry Christmas to you all and hope that you have a great New Year as well.

How to Donate to our Organization

Our organization depends on donations throughout the year to host events for our members. Please consider setting up a monthly donation through our website. On our website home page (www.ncpva.org), you will see a “Donate Now” button. When you click that, you can click the checkbox that says “Make this a monthly donation”. We have had a large increase in participation at events, and we would like to continue to take as many people to these activities as possible. Thank you for your future donations!



The screenshot shows a PayPal donation page for the North Central Paralyzed Veterans of America Chapter. At the top, the PVA logo is displayed with the text "Paralyzed Veterans of America" and "North Central Chapter". Below the logo, the text "Donate to" is followed by the organization's name, "North Central Paralyzed Veterans of America", with a blue checkmark icon. A horizontal button bar below the title offers "One-Time", "Monthly" (which is selected and highlighted in blue), and "Yearly" options. The amount "\$12" is prominently displayed in large blue text, with "USD" in smaller blue text below it. A dropdown menu labeled "Use this donation for" with "Chapter Donation" selected is shown. A checked checkbox with the text "Add \$0.74 USD to help cover the fees." is present. A note below states: "You authorize PayPal to pay North Central Paralyzed Veterans of America \$12.74 around this day each month. You can change or cancel at anytime in your PayPal account settings." At the bottom, two buttons are available: a yellow "Donate with PayPal" button and a blue "Donate with Debit or Credit Card" button.

One-Time **Monthly** Yearly

\$12
USD

Use this donation for
Chapter Donation

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VA Health Care Systems Contact Information

Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

2501 West 22nd Street
Sioux Falls, SD 57105
Phone: (605) 336-3230 or (800) 316-8387
Fax: (605) 333-6878

Fargo VA Health Care System

2101 Elm Street
Fargo, ND 58102
Phone: (701)232-3241
Fax: (701)239-3705

VA Black Hills Health Care System - Fort Meade Campus

113 Comanche Road
Fort Meade, SD 57741
Phone: (605) 347-2511 or (800) 743-1070
Fax: (605) 720-7171

VA Montana Health Care System

1892 Williams Street
Fort Harrison, MT 59636
Phone: (406) 442-6410
Fax: (406) 447-7916

VA Black Hills Health Care System

500 North 5th Street
Hot Springs, SD 57747
Phone: 605-745-2000
Fax: 605-745-2091

Cheyenne VA Health Care System

2360 E. Pershing Blvd.
Cheyenne, WY 82001
Phone: (307)778-7550
Fax: (307) 778-7336

Minneapolis VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive
Minneapolis, MN 55417
Phone: (612) 725-2000 or 866-414-5058
Fax: (612) 725-2049

Sheridan VA Health Care System

1898 Fort Road
Sheridan, WY 82801
Phone: (307) 672-3473 or (866) 822-6714
Fax: (307) 672-1900

The PVA North Central Chapter proudly serves the states of North Dakota, South Dakota, Southwest Minnesota, and portions of Montana and Wyoming.