



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 January, the North Central PVA Chapter has been focused on both completing important organizational tasks and preparing for one of our most anticipated events of the year. We successfully wrapped up several housekeeping activities, including our annual audit, helping to ensure continued transparency and strong financial stewardship within our chapter.

At the same time, we have been hard at work planning our 2026 Gone Fishin' event, which will take place May 21–22, 2026, in Chamberlain, South Dakota. This special event will bring together 32 veterans for two days of fishing, camaraderie, and connection, along with social gatherings off the water to strengthen relationships and build community.

As we finalize preparations, we are actively seeking sponsorship support from local businesses to help offset event costs and ensure we can continue offering this meaningful experience to our veterans. If you know of a business that may be interested in sponsoring a participant, we encourage you to share our sponsorship information with them.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our mission and the veterans we proudly serve.

Terry Paulsen & Tracey Salameh

Upcoming Events

APRIL 2026

- 1: Fishing Applications Due
- 3: Good Friday (Office Closed)
- 5: Easter Sunday
- 9: Membership Meeting @1pm (Lunch @ Noon)
- 15: Tax Day
- 16: Veterans Council Meeting (DAV) Time TBD

MAY 2026

- 5: Cinco de Mayo
- 10: Mother's Day
- 13: VA Stakeholder Meeting 10:00 - SF VA
- 14: No Membership Meeting This Month
- 21-22: 2026 NCPVA Fishing Event
- 25: Memorial Day

JUNE 2026

- 8-12: GRD Legislative Seminar - Washington DC
- 14: Flag Day
- 19: Juneteenth (Office Closed)
- 21: Father's Day



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

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Rodney Melcher
Bonnie Schmidt
Kristine Shaffer

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Gene Murphy
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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

April 2026

David VanHorn
Shaun Rupe
Burge Hoffman
Linn Garber
Frederick Ellwein
Rodney Melcher
Victor Kienitz
Christine Speirs

David Allen
Carl Oleson
Terry Williams
Cliff Koele
John Martin
Jose Rodriquez
Henry Brinkman
Don Latham

May 2026

Roger Holtzman
Dennis McNulty
Gary Hordean
Michael McGinnis
Merle Kjer
Eric Vetter
Sarah Bierman
Perry Grimme
Scott Petersen
Ken Laughlin
Bob Uecker

Larry Johnson
Robert Buchanan
Travis Kasten
Gary Howey
Steve Whitney
John Huntington
Kimberly Hubers
Bob DeJong
Judith Cantrell
Margie Mercado

June 2026

Eugene Murphy
Charles Doom
Duane Biesboer
Steven Wagner
Eileen White
Dean Wilson
Fidell Wadsworth
David Wren
Troy Metzinger
James Arneson

John Myers
Dennis Elfring
Alan Hughart
William Deknikker
Brian Nelson
Raymond Durband
Jon Albers
Cameron Hoverson
Kristi Palmer
Stephen Anderson



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 I-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/>



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 137 members and 105 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! If you have not paid your associate dues, please contact us!

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 1,471 volunteer hours from October 2025-February 2026.

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**



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.



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.



2024 McDonald Diagnostic Criteria

The McDonald Diagnostic Criteria are a set of guidelines that help neurologists diagnose multiple sclerosis as accurately and as quickly as possible. The updated MS diagnostic criteria could allow MS to be diagnosed in days or weeks, rather than months or years. For people with MS symptoms, this means quicker answers, better outcomes and more control over their health.

How the McDonald Criteria Update Came About

First published in 2001, the MS diagnostic criteria are revisited periodically. They are updated to reflect progress in:

- Our understanding of the underlying disease process
- Tools available for testing

The MS diagnostic criteria were updated in 2024 by the International Advisory Committee on Clinical Trials in Multiple Sclerosis [↗](#) and published in The Lancet Neurology in 2025 [↗](#) (access to the article is free, but you may need to register with The Lancet).

In 2001, when MS diagnostic criteria were first introduced, the average time to get an MS diagnosis was 4 years. Over time, this has dropped by 75% — to an average of 1 year. Now, people may get diagnosed even faster.



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Resources for People With Possible MS

If you think you may have MS, these enhanced criteria could help you get the answers you need to move forward. The new criteria could also now give you an MS diagnosis if you have been diagnosed with:

- Clinically isolated syndrome (CIS), which means you've had one episode of MS-like symptoms
- Radiologically isolated syndrome (RIS), in which you have had a lesion(s) on MRI but no MS-like symptoms

If you have one of these diagnoses, talk to your doctor about the new criteria.

Diagnostic Criteria Resources for Healthcare Professionals

The current updates build upon the existing criteria and provide more ways to diagnose MS while reducing the risk of misdiagnosis. The updates include changes to where and how we look for evidence of MS, including new and enhanced tests for diagnosis and specialized criteria for diagnosing children, people over 50 and those with comorbidities.

Revised McDonald Criteria Companion Papers

- 2024 MAGNIMS-CMSC-NAIMS consensus recommendations on the use of MRI for the diagnosis of multiple sclerosis [↗](#) (The Lancet Neurology; free with journal registration)
- Recommendations on the use of optical coherence tomography and visual evoked potentials for fulfilling dissemination in space as part of the 2024 Revised McDonald Diagnostic Criteria for multiple sclerosis [↗](#) (The Lancet Neurology; free with journal registration)
- The positive CSF in the 2024 McDonald criteria [↗](#) (eBioMedicine; open access)



National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Resources & links

**MS Unseen
Toolkit**



IConquerMS



**National PVA
MS Resources**



GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

PVA National President Robert Thomas, Jr. Testifies Before Congress

On March 4, PVA National President Robert Thomas, Jr. testified before a joint session of the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees regarding PVA's 2026 policy priorities. President Thomas stressed the importance of restoring VA's specialized care services, which are in dire need of adequate funding and staffing; expanding access to Home and Community-Based Services (HCBS), like the department's Veteran Directed Care program; and codifying VA's Bowel and Bladder program.

For veterans with spinal cord injuries and disorders (SCI/D), support for neurogenic bowel and bladder dysfunction is a crucial aspect of their care. Unfortunately, VA's current Bowel and Bladder program is fraught with challenges for caregivers. Timely reimbursement and the tax treatment of payments are two of the complaints most often expressed. President Thomas explained how codifying the program could fix many of its problems and urged support for the Disabled Veterans Dignity Act (S. 3647).

President Thomas also spoke about some transportation problems PVA members are experiencing when attempting to access VA care, and the growing need to raise baseline rates for special monthly compensation (SMC) and Dependency and Indemnity Compensation (DIC)

PVA leaders stressed the importance of preserving VA's specialized services; and the need to expand the department's HCBS programs, codify VA's Bowel and Bladder program, and increase rates of SMC and DIC. Members of the Executive Committee also had the chance to visit with the Ranking Member of the House Appropriations Military Construction and VA Subcommittee, Debbie Wasserman-Schultz (D-FL), and urge her to work toward restoring research funding for SCI/D in the Congressionally Directed Medical Research Program.

2026 SD Legislation Bills

HB 1080: - Allow a Business owner who is a Veterans to display military specialty plates on a noncommercial vehicle registered to the veteran's business and to limit personal liability to the business owner and veteran
Passed: **Signed by the Governor**

HB 1193: Require that a county provide a refund of taxes to disabled veterans and surviving spouses under certain property tax relief programs
Passed: **Signed by the Governor**

HB 1255: Require that the Department of Health accept the medical records of a veteran applying for a medical cannabis registry Identification Card
Failed: Deferred to the 41st day

SB 12: Provide for a refund of property taxes in previous years for qualifying veterans and surviving spouses
Passed: **Signed by the governor**

SB 35: Revise the process for requesting a veterans certificate of discharge from a county register of deeds
Passed: **Signed by the Governor**

SB 126: Increase the amount of value exempt from property taxes under a tax relief program for disabled veterans and surviving spouses
Failed:

SB 131: Revise the season in which a nonprofit organization may host a special pheasant hunt for disabled veterans and purple heart recipients
Passed: **Signed by the Governor**

Continued

SB 132: Modify Provisions related to the South Dakota Veterans Council

Passed: **Signed by the Governor**

In 2026, South Dakota will see significant changes to its veterans' legislation, including the amendment of Section 1-46A-5 of the South Dakota law.

This amendment mandates that the Department of Veterans Affairs consult with the South Dakota Veterans Council on a quarterly basis regarding matters related to veterans and their dependents.

The council is tasked with providing recommendations to the department on budgets, legislation, policies, and programs affecting veterans and their dependents.

The composition of the South Dakota Veterans Council has been revised to include representatives from several specific organizations, reflecting a broader representation of veterans' organizations within the

These changes aim to enhance the advisory role of the South Dakota Veterans Council and ensure that the needs and concerns of veterans and their dependents are well-informed and addressed.

The legislation is a testament to the ongoing efforts to support and advocate for veterans in South Dakota. The council shall provide recommendations to the department on budgets, legislation, policies, and programs affecting veterans of this state and their dependents.

The South Dakota Veterans Council consists of the following organizations

- Paralyzed Veterans of America - North Central Chapter
- American Legion
- Disabled American Veterans
- Vietnam Veterans of America - Chapters 1054 & 959
- Military Order of the Purple Heart
- Veterans of Foreign Wars
- Native American Indian Veterans

From the Office of Brad Friez

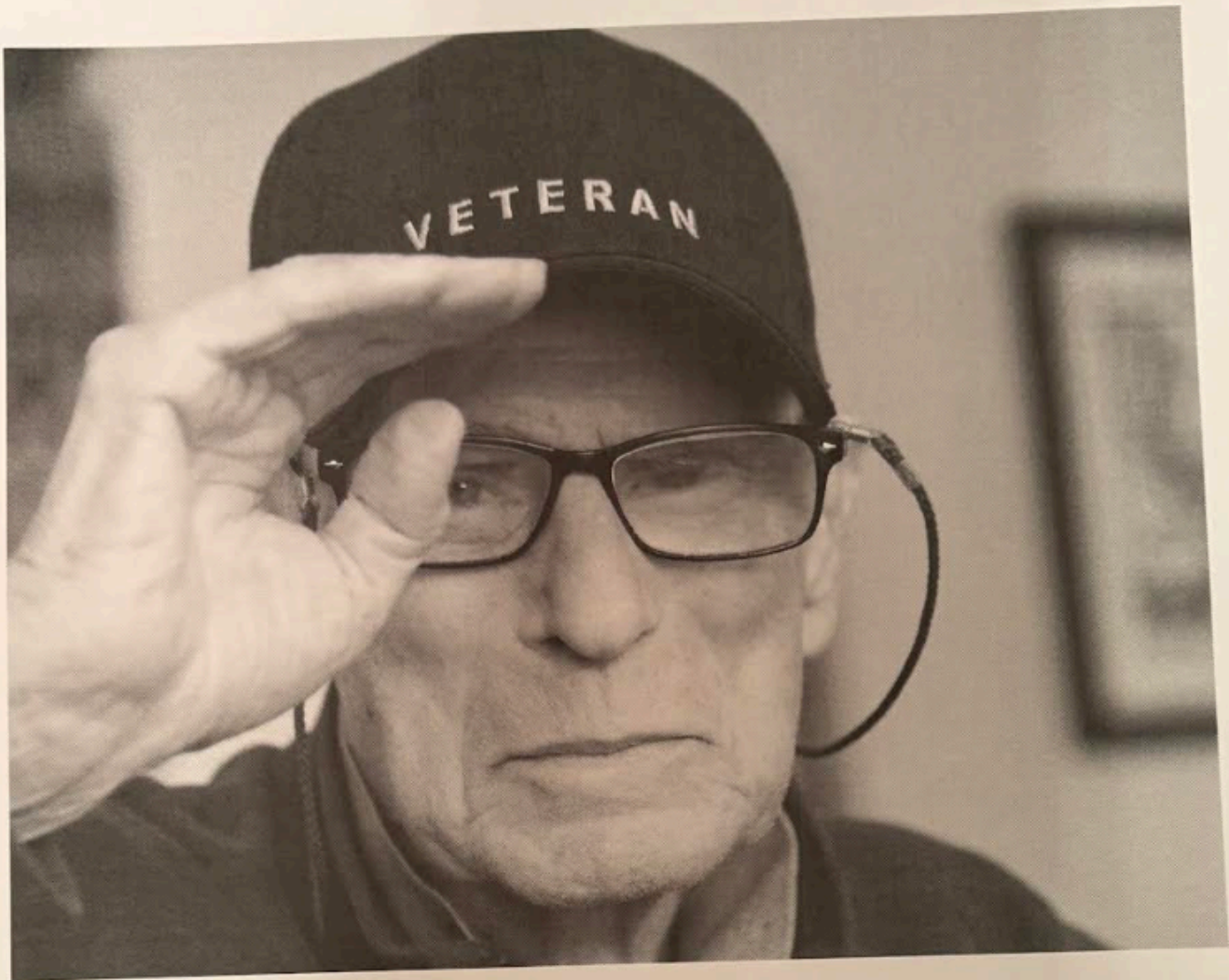
National Service Officer

As I approached the process of composing this article I wasn't exactly sure what to send out in the way of information. Many times in the past I had an idea of what I wanted to convey in these articles. This time around it will be a combination of topics.

First of all, some months ago one of our clients educated me on various illnesses that the child of a female service member who served in Vietnam could be rated for. I had been under the impression that it was only spina bifida that was a condition that could be rated for that child of a Vietnam Veteran. However, this Veteran client was the child of a female Vietnam Veteran along with her dad who also served in Vietnam. So, both of her parents were in country Vietnam Veterans. Because her mother had served in Vietnam she potentially could be rated for several health issues. There are some barriers to being rated for those conditions if the condition is from a family disorder, or if it was a result of a birth-related injury. So the message here is if there is the (adult) child of a female Vietnam Veteran who has a health issue there is an outside chance this health issue might be one of those several issues because of their mother's exposure to Agent Orange in addition to spina bifida for either male or female parents who served in Vietnam.

We still have the need to remind clients to give their contact information when reaching out to us by phone as they leave us a message. Also, if there are changes to a person's contact information to include their phone number, email address, or mailing address we need to be current. At times the VA will reach out to us to verify that information. Sometimes Veterans will tell us they updated that information with the VA but since we are not the VA we don't automatically get that update ourselves. Once the VA went to the National Work Queue some years ago we do not get a physical copy of correspondence they send out to Veterans. However, if a Veteran reaches out to us concerning a document they received from the VA we are able to pull up that document in their electronica file in VBA's software called VBMS.

Lastly, we encourage you to reach out to your Veteran's representative if you wish to file for various benefits; whether that is Paralyzed Veterans of America or some other Veteran Organization. We are professionally trained to file appropriate claims.



DAV Information Fair

May 16, 2026

Rapid City American Legion

818 East St. Patrick Street

9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

30 vendors will be present

A DAV Service Officer will be available to assist with filing FREE
VA claims.

Contact information: Christine Speirs – 605-787-2645



Scan QR Code to Register:



PICKLEBALL TOURNAMENT

April 25-26, 2026

**Midwest Orthopedic Specialty
Hospital Performance Center**
7044 S Ballpark Dr., Franklin, WI 53132

**Join us for PVA's 1st Annual
Wheelchair Pickleball Invitational!**

This tournament will feature three divisions: an adaptive wheelchair division, a hybrid division with one standing and one seated player, and a mixed wheelchair division which allows for one able-bodied seated player and one adaptive seated player.

Register as an individual or as a team.
There is no registration fee for this tournament.
Registration will be open from February 25 to April 1, 2026.

For More Information, Contact:
Katelynn Johnson | 202-416-7637 • KatelynnJ@pva.org



[PVA.org/Sports](https://pva.org/sports)



ParalyzedVeterans



PVA1946

Help Us Grow Our Mission



North Central Chapter

Our chapter provides a variety of critical services, including advocacy, communication, fundraising, and recreational opportunities for all members. Through these efforts, we strive to offer not only support, but also a sense of community and hope.



Member

A full member is free to anyone who is approved by PVA Nationals. The members can serve on our chapter Board and participate in events.

Requirements:

- Veteran
- Spinal cord injury/disease

Associate Member


Associate memberships are \$30/year or \$200 for a lifetime. Associate members cannot serve on the board but all events are open for them to participate in! Anyone in the community can join, veterans and non-veterans! No requirements.


Interested in getting involved in our chapter? Please stop by or call
209 N. Garfield Ave • Sioux Falls • SD • 57104
605-336-0494

Visit ncpva.org for membership applications!

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!



Donate to
North Central Paralyzed Veterans of America 


One-Time **Monthly** Yearly

\$12
USD

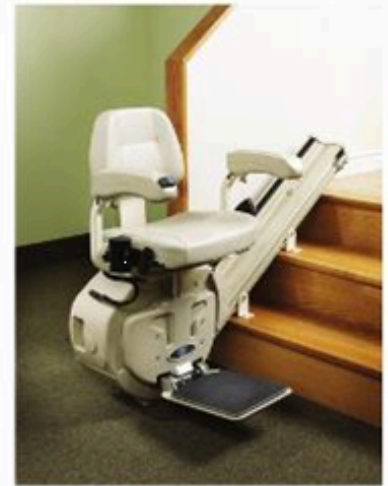
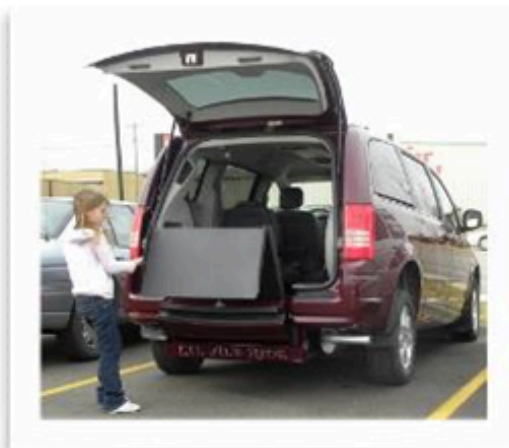
Use this donation for
Chapter Donation 

Add **\$0.74 USD** to help cover the fees.

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.

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Donate with Debit or Credit Card



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MobilityWorks considers it a privilege to help our nation's veterans. Every day we work with local VISNs and service organizations to make the process of securing accessible vehicles, lifts and driving equipment for veterans as easy as possible.

MobilityWorks has more than 90 locations across the country with the largest selection of accessible vehicles and adaptive solutions:

- Converted minivans and full-size vans, and SUVs — Chrysler, Dodge, Ford, Honda and Toyota
- Pre-owned accessible vehicles
- The latest in adaptive technology including transfer and turning seats, scooter lifts and hand controls
- Complete maintenance and service on adaptive driving equipment, lifts and conversions
- Daily, weekly and long term rental vans
- Financing options to fit your personal needs
- 24-hour roadside assistance with wheelchair transportation

MobilityWorks is committed to serving you. Contact us today so we can evaluate your needs and find a solution that best fits your lifestyle.



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National Service Office: (605) 333-6896 NSO Email: www.dav.vbasux@va.gov

www.davsd.org www.dav.org

“DISABLED VETERANS HELPING DISABLED VETERANS”



JOIN THE DAV

“Our government and our people have no greater obligation than to assure that those who have served their country and the cause of freedom will never be forgotten or neglected”

—President Lyndon B. Johnson

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.