



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 July, the North Central PVA Chapter has continued to enjoy a busy summer while looking ahead to several important events and changes for the remainder of the year.

Our Annual PVA Picnic took place in July and was a wonderful success! We had a great crowd come out to enjoy some food, fellowship, and time together. The weather was certainly hot, so we spent much of the afternoon inside, but it was still wonderful to see so many familiar faces and spend time with our veterans, families, and supporters. We are grateful to everyone who joined us and helped make the picnic such a great day.

As we look ahead, we have several exciting things happening at the Chapter. In October, we will welcome representatives from PVA National for a visit to our Chapter. We will also be hosting a Dairy Queen fundraiser to help support our continued work serving veterans. Our annual audit will take place in November, followed by our Christmas Luncheon in December. We look forward to gathering together once again to celebrate the holiday season and the wonderful veterans and supporters who make our work possible.

Most importantly, this fall marks a bittersweet transition for our Chapter as Terry will be retiring from the PVA after approximately 13 years of dedicated service. Terry has given so much to our Chapter, our veterans, and our mission, and he will be deeply missed. We are incredibly grateful for everything he has done over the years and wish him all the best in his retirement.

With Terry's retirement, we will also be hiring for a Government Relations position. If you or someone you know would be a good fit for this role, we would love to hear from you! Please reach out to the Chapter office for more information.

Thank you, as always, for your continued support of our mission and the veterans we proudly serve. We look forward to a wonderful fall and holiday season together!

Terry Paulsen & Tracey Salameh

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER 2026

**08: Board Meeting @ 10:30am;
Membership Meeting (Lunch @ Noon, Meeting @1pm)**

08: Dairy Queen Fundraiser 6-9pm (See Flyer)

12: Columbus Day (Office Closed)

15-16: National PVA Visit @ Chapter Office

31: Halloween

NOVEMBER 2026

01: Daylight Savings

02-06: Annual Audit at Chapter Office

03: Election Day

5 -7: Platte Pheasant Hunt

11: Veterans Day

12: No Membership Meeting

26: Thanksgiving (Office Closed)

27: Black Friday (Office Closed)

DECEMBER 2026

10: PVA Christmas Luncheon

24-25: Christmas Holiday (Office Closed)

31-1st: New Year's Holiday (Office Closed)



PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

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

OFFICERS

President, Harlan Schmidt
Vice President, Mario Mercado
Secretary, Greg Brandner
Treasurer, 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

OCTOBER

Charles Olson
Leonard Ellens
Dana Davis
Chad Jacobs
Darrell Craig
Robert Thiss
Jesse Luce
Calvin Plienis
Doug Feltman
Philip Miller
Michael Mahon
Barry Teal
Donald Barrow

Daniel Kernen
Kirk Spell
Ronald Smith
Richard Scepaniak
Lisa Folkerts
Raymond Berlin
Jerry Painter
Steve Stanga
Robert Dietz
Andrew Foss
Richard Branaugh
Ken Murphy
Curtis Bentz
Daryl Schutte

NOVEMBER

Mark Grenfeld
Steven Stewart
Leola Klosterbuer
Michael Needham
Barbara Biesboer
Kevin Weishaar
William Livingston
Rodney Melinsky

Dylan Lesselyoung
Dennis Doherty
George Thorson
Larry Miller
Darell Poss
Thomas Anez
Kristine Shaffer

DECEMBER

Alan Gobczynski
Jon Olson
James Huckabay
Stephen Vogt
John Trautman
Dennis Theel
Robert Johnson

John Pike
Michael Ollerich
Frank Hood
Tony Hylland
Paul Haggar
Dan Francis
David Redd



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/>



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 2026-2027 will be mailed out in October! Please make sure to send your associate dues in!

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 3,498 volunteer hours from October 2025-September 2026.

Platte Pheasant Hunt



Platte Pheasant Hunt will be held November 5-7th, 2026 in Platte, SD. If you are interested, please contact Richard Hoppe at 605-682-1318

NCPVA Mike Olson Trapshoot

The North Central Chapter's annual Trapshoot was held September 11–13 and was a fantastic weekend filled with shooting, fellowship, food, games, and fun. The event brought together 36 shooters for a weekend of friendly competition and camaraderie.

In addition to the trapshooting, participants enjoyed great food, games, raffle prizes, and plenty of time to socialize and enjoy the weekend. The event provided a wonderful opportunity for veterans, families, friends, and supporters of the NCPVA to come together and enjoy the outdoors while supporting our mission.

We are incredibly grateful to everyone who participated, volunteered, donated prizes, provided food, and helped make the weekend a success. Events like this would not be possible without the continued support of our generous community.

Thank you to everyone who helped make the 2026 NCPVA Trapshoot such a memorable weekend. We look forward to seeing everyone again next year!



To view more photos from the event, please visit
<https://ncpva.org/mike-olson-memorial-trapshoot/>

THE 14TH ANNUAL DOUG BROWN MEMORIAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA PHEASANT HUNT WAS HELD ON 14 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT THE TOP GUN HUNTING LODGE OUTSIDE OF HOWARD, SD. THE HUNT IS A MEMORIAL TO DOUG BROWN WHO SERVED FOR YEARS AS THE VETERANS BENEFITS REPRESENTATIVE AT THE SIOUX FALLS, SOUTH DAKOTA VETERANS ADMINISTRATION. FIFTEEN DISABLED VETERANS FROM SOUTH DAKOTA, MINNESOTA, AND WISCONSIN ALONG WITH NUMEROUS VOLUNTEERS PARTICIPATED IN THE HUNT. THE VETERANS MANAGED TO BAG OVER 73 BIRDS DURING THE HUNT. A SPECIAL THANKS TO KEVIN SCHUMACHER AND EVERYONE AT TOP GUN THAT HELPED MAKE THE HUNT POSSIBLE. ALL THE HUNTERS HAD A GREAT TIME AND ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO ATTENDING AGAIN NEXT YEAR.



THE ANNUAL NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER PVA PHEASANT HUNT WAS HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2026 AT THE TOP GUN HUNTING LODGE LOCATED OUTSIDE OF HOWARD, SD. OVER 20 DISABLED AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS OF THE NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER PARTICIPATED. NUMEROUS VOLUNTEERS TURNED OUT TO ASSIST WITH WALKING THE FIELDS AND ASSISTING THOSE THAT NEEDED SUPPORT. WE WANT TO THANK ALL MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATE MEMBERS THAT MADE THIS A SPECIAL DAY FOR ALL.





YOU ARE INVITED TO THE
PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

ANNUAL
Christmas
LUNCHEON

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 10TH | AT 11.30 AM

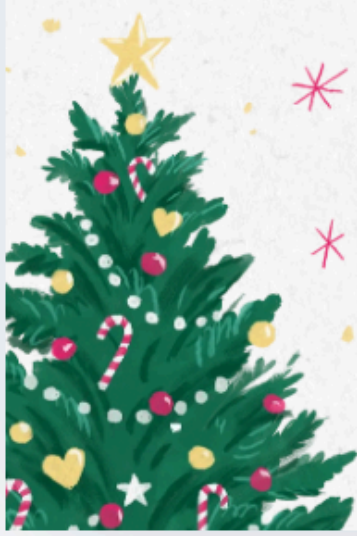
209 N. GARFIELD AVE
SIOUX FALLS, SD 57104
605-336-0494

A Christmas luncheon, hors d'oeuvres and refreshments will
be served along with door prizes to be given away.

Please RSVP on the website below by
clicking the link, scanning the QR Code, or
call in your reservations by Friday,
December 4th, 2026.



[HTTPS://FOR
MS.GLE/JGUV
WQZCSWWA
D6AY9](https://for.ms/gle/jguv/wqzcswwaD6AY9)





Come Support

PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

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6:00 PM TO 9:00 PM**

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National
Multiple Sclerosis
Society

Resources & links

**MS Unseen
Toolkit**



IConquerMS



**National PVA
MS Resources**



YOUR PARAGRAPH TEXT



Several of our Members hosted a booth at the CAVCON event in mid-September, which featured approximately 30 vendor tables. We distributed a large number of magazines and informational pamphlets, and had about eight attendees stop by to learn more, express interest, and take applications. We also provided information bundles to two other organizations to distribute at their upcoming veterans' events, helping extend our outreach to additional veterans.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

VA announces insurance premium holiday that will save Veterans nearly \$150 million

The Department of Veterans Affairs will save Veterans nearly \$150 million in insurance premium payments starting in November, when VA implements the first-ever premium holiday for the Veterans' Group Life Insurance program (VGLI). Under this initiative, VGLI enrollees will not have to pay insurance premiums for three months, starting in November 2026 and ending in January 2027.

VGLI is VA's term life insurance program that lets Veterans pay a monthly premium to maintain life insurance coverage after they leave the military. The self-funded program's financial performance has been incredibly strong under President Trump, making the holiday possible.

More than 457,000 Veterans participate in the VGLI program, and their monthly premiums vary depending on their age and the amount of insurance coverage they choose. On average, Veterans pay about \$110 per month for VGLI coverage and will save an average of \$330 during the premium holiday. Nationwide, the initiative is expected to save Veterans nearly \$150 million in insurance payments.

"VA is all about making life better and more affordable for Veterans, and this premium holiday will help the men and women who served this nation keep more of their hard-earned money," said VA Secretary Doug Collins.

VGLI Veterans are eligible for the premium holiday if they have a current policy that has not lapsed or been cancelled due to non-payment of premiums.

Eligible VGLI policyholders will automatically be exempted from three months of premium payments. Veterans will be notified in the coming weeks by letter or email if they are eligible, and no action is required by any VGLI participant.

Veterans who have paid in advance through the premium holiday period can either receive a credit on their policy for three months or can ask for a refund.

For more information about VGLI and updates about the premium holiday, visit www.va.gov/life-insurance/options-eligibility/vgli/.

DISABILITY CLAIMS PROCESSED

The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs processed more than three million disability benefits claims for Veterans in fiscal year 2026 as of Sept. 18, 2026, faster than ever before.

The prior record was set by the second Trump Administration in FY 2025, when VA completed a record high 3.001 million claims at the very end of the fiscal year — a record VA has already surpassed this year.

With just a week left before FY 2026 ends, VA has already awarded more than \$207 billion in compensation and pension benefits to Veterans and survivors.

VA also cut disability claim processing times nearly in half. The average time to complete a decision was 75.6 days in September 2026, compared to 141.5 days on Jan. 20, 2025. VA has achieved this reduction even as it's processing more claims than it did under the Biden Administration.

Claims processing accuracy has improved despite the increased workload and is currently 94% — the highest rate in two years. Additionally, VBA continues to grant more than 60% of the claims submitted by Veterans, and only about 3% of VBA's decisions are reviewed by the Board of Veterans' Appeals.

“Putting Veterans first means making VA benefits faster, better and more convenient said VA Secretary Doug Collins.

The timely processing of Veteran benefits claims is just one of several ways the VA works better for Veterans.

VA has:

- Enrolled more than 270,000 new Veterans in VA healthcare in 2026.
- Opened 41 new VA healthcare facilities since Jan. 20, 2025, expanding healthcare access for Veterans around the country.
- Completed a record high 82,083,918 direct care appointments in FY 2025, up 4.1% from FY 2024.
- Completed a record high 59,989,662 community care appointments in FY 2025, up 12% from FY 2024.
- Offered Veterans more than 3.2 million appointments outside of normal operating hours since Jan. 20, 2025, giving Veterans more timely and convenient options for care.

From the Office of Brad Friez

National Service Officer

This is the time of year that we remind Veterans who plan to head South for the Winter to reach out to your PACT (Patient Aligned Care Team) Team at your local VA to inform them of your plans. Typically, this is done 4-6 weeks before beginning your domestic travel. Please provide your PACT Team with the address of your destination, phone number, and dates of departure and return.

As a result, the Traveling Veteran Coordinator will ensure that your care is coordinated per your provider's request, appointments scheduled, and eligibility is transferred to the alternate VA medical center. Prescriptions during travel should also be discussed with your care team prior to your travel. Lastly, ensure that if traveling by car that your vehicle is in good working condition along with your adaptive equipment.

For the past few years we have been expressing concern to the VA that there are transportation needs for our paraplegic and quadriplegic members which are not for medical appointments. Examples would be updating a VA ID with a State Government issued ID by venturing to the local DMV or retrieving your wheelchair upon discharge from the VA as a result of a trip to the hospital by ambulance. Perhaps it could also be for the transportation to and from a C&P (Compensation and Pension) Exam. In all of these situations we feel that the VA should provide that transportation for that paralyzed or quadriplegic Veteran.

However, the local solution for providing that specific type of transportation did not come from the VA but from our friends at the DAV (Disabled American Veterans). It is our understanding that the DAV in South Dakota will purchase the former PVA handicapped accessible van and utilize it for those above-mentioned transportation needs along with several others that will present themselves over time. We are so very appreciative of their generosity in providing this service for those Veterans. It is also our understanding that this will be the very first DAV handicapped accessible van in the country. How

fitting this is happening in South Dakota as the original idea for the DAV Transportation Program also began in South Dakota under the former DAV National Commander, Eugene Murphy. Many thanks to the DAV and their State Adjutant Marty Pennock.

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 

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Monthly

Yearly

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USD

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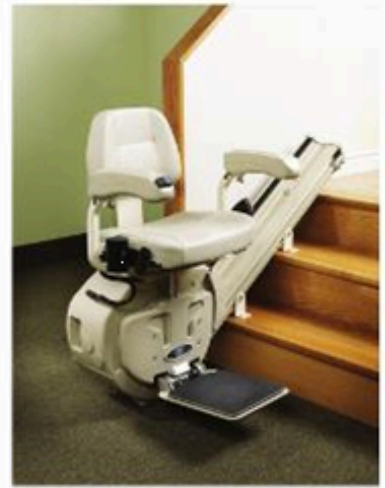
Chapter Donation 

☒ 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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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

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 Black Hills Health Care System

500 North 5th Street

Hot Springs, SD 57747

Phone: 605-745-2000

Fax: 605-745-2091

Minneapolis VA Health Care System

One Veterans Drive

Minneapolis, MN 55417

Phone: (612) 725-2000 or 866-414-5058

Fax: (612) 725-2049

Fargo VA Health Care System

2101 Elm Street

Fargo, ND 58102

Phone: (701) 232-3241

Fax: (701) 239-3705

VA Montana Health Care System

1892 Williams Street

Fort Harrison, MT 59636

Phone: (406) 442-6410

Fax: (406) 447-7916

Cheyenne VA Health Care System

2360 E. Pershing Blvd.

Cheyenne, WY 82001

Phone: (307) 778-7550

Fax: (307) 778-7336

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.