

Gateway Gazette

May/June 2019

Volume 52 Number 3



**Paralyzed Veterans
of America**

Gateway Chapter

Veterans with Spinal Cord Injury or Disease, Living Life to the Fullest

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Kansas City Service Office

4801 Linwood Blvd, Rm. M1-566
Kansas City, MO 64128
(816) 922-2882 or (800) 795-3612
Fax: (816) 922-3369
Brent Follas, National Service Officer III

St. Louis Service Office

9700 Page Blvd. Suite 101, Room 1-114
St. Louis, MO 63132
Office: (314)253-4480 or (800)795-3614
Fax: (314) 253-4170
Jeremy Lile, National Service Officer
Susan White, Accredited Administrator

Jefferson Barracks VA Medical Center

JB SCI, Room 2S25
#1 Jefferson Barracks Drive
St. Louis, MO 63125
Office: (314) 894-6467
or (866) 328-2670
Fax: (314) 894-6465
Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

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Hack Albertson



**Paralyzed Veterans
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Gateway Chapter

Time to update your address or email?

Please email us at info@gatewaypva.org or write or call us at the following:
Gateway Chapter PVA•1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center•St. Louis, MO 63132
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We are offering the option to receive our Chapter's newsletter by email. Members taking advantage of electronic delivery will help to reduce the cost of printing and postage. In turn, this will allow the Chapter to put more funds toward our members and member programs. If you have not done so already, please contact Administrative Assistant Amber Lee at amber@gatewaypva.org, or Executive Director Chris Blanchard at chris@gatewaypva.org, if you would like to start receiving your newsletter electronically.



by Stanley D. Brown

GATEWAY GARNERS 2019 MOST OUTSTANDING CHAPTER AWARD

We have just been notified that we have been named the PVA Most Outstanding Chapter of 2019. We are one of 33 Chapters around the country and Puerto Rico. We have won this award four of the last five years. Our continued success is thanks to our staff Chris Blanchard and Amber Lee, our Board of Directors, and our membership that stay actively involved. Our many programs include: \$10,000 accessible housing grants, generator grants, vehicle modification grants, funding members to participate and travel to sporting events, and monthly catered hospital luncheons; all contribute to programs for members and our 90.4% program expense ratio. Last fiscal year we spent \$506,512 on programs for members, more than any other Chapter.



OUR GATEWAY BROTHERHOOD/SISTERHOOD

The picture above and to the right is moi in May 1971, energetic and a newly Army commissioned Second Lieutenant in the Military Police Corps. You can see the Army's confidence in my commission by issuing me a Daisey BB gun. I'm sure we all have similar pictures of our days in service. That connection and the fact that
MAY/JUN 2019

President's Message

Most Outstanding Chapter Award

Brotherhood/Sisterhood

Chapter Election for FY20

Gateway 5K Race

Barrier Free America Award

we all have a spinal cord injury or disease, brings us together especially in helping and mentoring the newly injured or diagnosed veterans we see and come in contact with during peer counseling, luncheons and events.

GATEWAY 2019 ELECTIONS

Included with this edition is a ballot for three officer positions (you'll have to put up with me for another year) and 7 Board of Directors positions. Please follow the instructions for voting and return your signed ballot in a timely fashion. The ballots will be counted at the June Board of Directors meeting.

GATEWAY WILL SPONSOR ITS FIRST 5K RACE

Gateway sponsors its first 5K walk/run/roll race on October 19, at Tower Grove Park in the City of St. Louis. Please mark your calendars to participate in this event and start looking for race sponsors. Board member Chad Buder is putting this together for us. More details are on page 8 of this newsletter.

PVA HONORS ST. LOUIS SOLDIERS MEMORIAL

Please reserve Tuesday, June 4, 2019, at 2pm, for the PVA Barrier Free America Award presentation to the Missouri Historical Society and Mackey Mitchell Architects for their renovation work on the Soldiers Memorial in downtown St. Louis. The Memorial is located at 1315 Chestnut Street, St. Louis, MO 63103, and is very "accessible."

PVA annually gives a Barrier Free America Award to a new project or renovation for its design and accessible features. The Memorial was built in 1931, before the ADA, and not accessible.



A chairlift on a rail was installed in the 70s. I broke their chairlift ride in 2004 and was stuck in the middle of the stairs for about an hour until firemen finally took me to the bottom. Finally, after filing an ADA complaint, the City of St. Louis found private money to build a ramp to access the Memorial in 2007. The Missouri Historical Society assumed operational control of the museum in 2017. They undertook a renovation project that received input from myself and our ED, Chris Blanchard, as well as other disability advocates to comment and make suggestions on the renovation project. It turned out very well with an additional ramp for wheelchairs and stand-alone kick plates that enable us to bump the kick plate to open the doors.

I submitted the project and the architects to receive PVA's award and it was selected. National PVA staff will attend the ceremony on June 4 and I'm trying to get a big turnout of our members. You will be given 10 participation points for coming to this community event. Please let us know by email or calling the office if you think you can make it or need directions.



Who is Eligible for Care from VA's SCI/D System of Care?

by Rodney Harris, Senior Benefits Advocate

I am approached from time to time with questions from veterans and family members on how they can be followed by Spinal Cord Injury Services for their care.

To qualify for care through VA's Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders System of Care you will need to fit VA's parameters for this condition. If you don't qualify for Care through VA's Spinal Cord Injuries and Disorders System of Care, you can still get excellent care through other VA health care services. The policy governing spinal cord injury and disorder care in VA is explained in VHA Handbook 1176.01.

We serve the following population:

1. VHA's SCI/D System of Care provides a full range of care for all enrolled Veterans who have sustained a spinal cord injury or have a stable neurologic impairment of the spinal cord. This includes:
 - a. All traumatic spinal cord injuries due to such events as motor vehicle accidents, falls, and acts of violence; and
 - b. Atraumatic, non-progressive etiologies of spinal cord disorders.
2. The following principles and conditions describe the population served.
 - a. The neurologic condition is stable (i.e., not progressive or deteriorating over time).
 - b. The primary problem is related to a spinal cord disorder as opposed to brain or peripheral nerve disorder.
 - c. The resultant sequelae are clinically and functionally significant, thereby resulting in impairments of mobility, activities of daily living, and/or visceral function (e.g., neurogenic bladder, neurogenic bowel).
 - d. Any level of the spinal cord, conus medullaris, or cauda equina is involved.
3. Illustrative examples of the population served are Veterans who have:
 - a. Benign spinal cord or vertebral column neoplasms that result in significant spinal cord dysfunction.

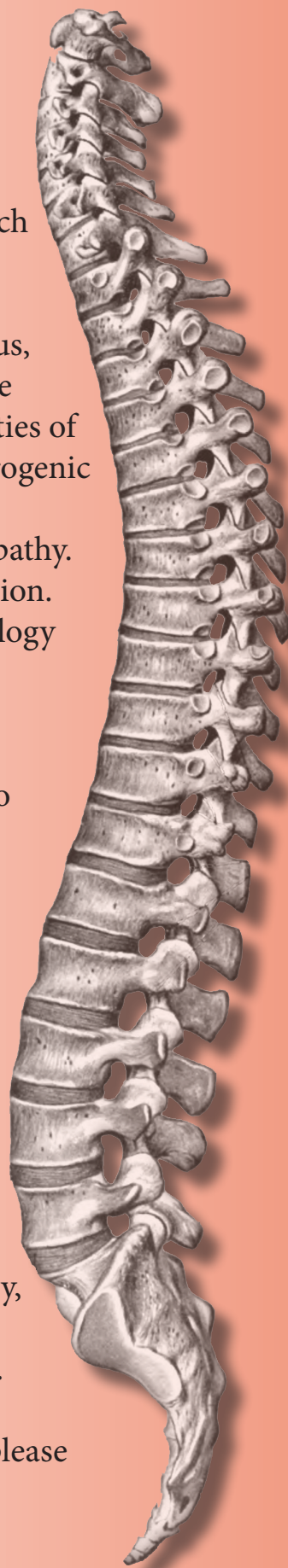
- b. Multiple sclerosis with evidence of primary spinal cord involvement and minimal cognitive, swallowing, movement disorders, and/or visual impairments (which are typically best addressed by the Neurology and Rehabilitation Medicine Services).
- c. Myelopathy secondary to herniated nucleus pulposus, spinal stenosis, or other vertebral column degenerative changes if sequelae include significant mobility, activities of daily living, and visceral autonomic deficits (e.g., neurogenic bladder).
- d. Arterio-venous malformation that results in myelopathy.
- e. Epidural abscess that results in spinal cord dysfunction.
- f. Any other vascular, inflammatory, or infectious etiology that results in significant myelopathy.

Exceptions and Qualifiers to SCI/D Population Served

Although the clinical presentation may be similar in appearance to an SCI/D, Veterans with the following pathologic entities are not routinely admitted to SCI Centers:

1. Quadriparesis or paraparesis due to intracranial or peripheral nerve disorders.
2. Conversion disorder and/or hysteria manifested as paraplegia or tetraplegia.
3. Multiple sclerosis that is progressive, in active relapse, and/or with extensive cognitive, swallowing, and visual impairments. NOTE: The delivery of services for Veterans with multiple sclerosis is the primary responsibility of the National Director of Neurology and shared by the Neurology, Rehabilitation Medicine, Primary Care, and SCI Services.
4. Veterans with diagnoses that do not affect the spinal cord.

If you have questions about treatment at a VA SCI Injury Center please contact your local PVA National Service Office.



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GATEWAY GI

General Information



MAY 2019

May 5-

Meat Shoot
1:00pm @ Legion Post 162
10 pts for members

May 14 -

BOD Meeting
11:30am @ GPVA Office
15 pts for non-BOD mbrs

May 16 -

JB Luncheon
12pm @ JB, Building 52
5 pts for members

May 3 to May 5 -

PVA Bass Tournament
@Kuttawa, KY

May 11 to May 12-

Georgia Aquarium Dive
@ Atlanta, GA

May 17 to May 19-

Lake of Egypt Fishing Trip
@ Marion, IL

JUNE 2019

June 1 to June 8-

Scuba Diving
@Bonaire

June 4 -

Barrier Free Award
2:00pm @ Soldiers Memorial
10 pts for members

June 11 -

BOD Meeting
4:00pm @ GPVA Office
15 pts for non-BOD mbrs

June 20 -

JB Luncheon
12pm @ JB, Building 52
5 pts for members

June 20 -

Qtrly Membership Mtg
Following Luncheon
@ JB, Building 52
15 pts for members

1st Annual GPVA 5K

Mark your calendars for October 19, 2019, and get ready to spread the word about the 1st Annual Gateway PVA 5K/1 Mile Run, Walk, and Roll. It will be held in Tower Grove Park on that date in the morning. Registration starts at 7:30 AM and the race starts at 9 AM. All ages are welcome, medals for the top three in each age group will be awarded, and everyone gets an event T-shirt. Please contact me at chad@gatewaypva.org if you have questions about the race, or go to <https://www.athlinks.com/event/gateway-pva-5k-runwalkroll-307754> to register. We hope to see you there!

Are you aware of the VA Home Modification Grants? Contact us!



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Welcome to Our New Members

Lonnie Dean • Robert Witt

In Memory Of

Daniel Perez of Silex, MO	Unknown
Martin Trim of Vienna, IL	02/23/19
William Gebert of Cedar Hill, MO	03/01/19
Gary Ballowe of St. Louis, MO	03/15/19

Wheelchair/Adaptive Tai Chi Quan

Gateway Administrative Assistant, Amber Lee, is spearheading a **free** Wheelchair/Adaptive Tai Chi Quan class at the Jefferson Barracks SCI Building every Thursday at 2:30pm in the North Dayroom. With the assistance of Matt Luitjohan, Charley Wright, Lars Lifrak, Kat McDonald and Stacey Duncan; this free twelve-week course will provide a history, applications, health and mental benefits, and the Seven Postures of Wheelchair/Adaptive Tai Chi Quan. The course begins with an introduction to the history of Tai Chi and continues to how the principles of Tai Chi can be implemented into every day life. Emphasis will be placed on the Seven Postures, which will be taught in increments throughout the twelve weeks. Veterans will complete this course with knowledge of breathing techniques and the foundation of the Seven Postures.

Each week various subjects of Tai Chi Quan will be briefly discussed and a handout on each subject will be provided if one desires to read more.

All levels of ability are welcome and encouraged. Instructors will work with participants in developing their technique according to their physical capability. Visualization, relaxation and patience with one's self are key factors in succeeding throughout this course.

Drop-ins are welcome.

We proudly support Gateway PVA



If you have a **service-connected disability**, you may qualify for VA funding assistance for wheelchair accessible vehicles or driving modifications. If your current mobility is more than two years old, you may even qualify for a brand new conversion.

St. Louis North

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St. Louis, MO 63134
Local: (314) 989-1010
Toll-Free: 877.501.8267

St. Louis South

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Toll-Free: 877.501.8267



We're here to help!

Call us today or stop by and take a test drive.



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**Paralyzed Veterans
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Government Relations Report

by Stanley D. Brown, Acting Government Relations Director



Long-distance Board member (St. Joseph) Steve McIntosh and I traveled to Washington DC the week of March 3 to March 8 for Advocacy training and then two days on the Hill visiting all eight of Missouri's Congressional representatives and two Senate offices. PVA and our 2019 Policy Priorities for the 116th Congress were:



Oversight of the VA MISSION Act Implementation (P.L. 115-182)

Congress must conduct vigorous oversight to ensure that the new VA community care program and the expansion of VA's comprehensive caregiver program are completed not only within the timelines laid out by the VA MISSION Act but also within the spirit and letter of the law. Access to specialized services within VA, including the spinal cord injury/disorder (SCI/D) system of care, must remain strong.

Expand Eligibility for VA's Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program

Congress must expand eligibility for caregiver services provided through VA's Comprehensive Family Caregiver Program to veterans with service-connected illnesses. Congress must adequately fund these expansion programs that will first include service-connected injuries prior to the end of the Vietnam War (May 1975) and then later service-connected injuries incurred between May 1975 and September 11, 2001. There is currently no provision for this caregiver coverage for veterans diagnosed with spinal cord

disorders during these same time periods. That may be an issue in the future that PVA will pursue.

Air Carrier Access Act (ACA) Improvements

Congress must improve access to air travel for people with disabilities by strengthening ACA, the original Act, enforcement through referral of certain complaints to the US Attorney General, a private right of action, and requiring airlines to ensure that airplanes meet broad accessibility standards. Right now if an airline refuses to board you because you are in a wheelchair, your only remedy is to file a complaint with the Department of Transportation (DOT). Even if the DOT finds that the airlines in their refusal to board you violates the law (ACA) the only response you will receive is that the DOT may pursue fines if they find a pattern of similar behavior. The ACA Amendments (ACAA) would authorize wheelchair users to sue the airline directly for their violation of the law. PVA and I especially am convinced the airlines will not change their behavior without this remedy added to the law.

Additional Priorities

The above three issues were those stressed by the PVA, and Steve and I while visiting Congressional offices. Other issues presented were improving access to VA's long-term services and supports, oversight of the Veterans Appeals Improvement and Modernization Act (P.L. 115-55), benefits improvements for catastrophically disabled veterans, protecting the Americans with Disabilities Act, access to IVF, preserving and strengthening financial and health security for people with disabilities, and implementing policies for disaster response and recovery that meets the needs of people with disabilities.





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of America**

Gateway Chapter

1311 Lindbergh Plaza Center
St. Louis, MO 63132

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**Paralyzed Veterans
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WE WANT TO INVEST IN YOU!

Supporting Education for our Members and their Families

SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM NOW ACCEPTING APPLICANTS

Paralyzed Veterans Educational Scholarship Program assists members and their immediate family members by providing scholarship funds to help with a post-secondary education. We will award scholarships in the amount of **\$1,000 to full-time students** and **\$500 to part-time students** for an academic year.

QUALIFIED APPLICANTS ARE:

- A Paralyzed Veterans' member, spouse of a member, or an unmarried child (under 24 years of age) who is dependent (as defined by the IRS) upon the member for principal support
- A United States citizen
- Accepted and enrolled as a full- or part-time student in an accredited U.S. college or university



Download the Application:
pva.org/scholarship

Contact:

Christi Hillman
202.416.7776
ChristiH@pva.org

Applications must be completed in full and postmarked no later than June 17, 2019.

Previous award recipients may apply.