



Paralyzed Veterans of America

North Central Chapter

A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America

North Central Chapter

209 N. Garfield Ave., Sioux Falls, SD 57104
1-605-336-0494 * 1-800-505-4782
Email: info@ncpva.org Website: www.ncpva.org
National PVA Website: www.pva.org



North Central Chapter

December 2021/January 2022

Volume 356

Upcoming Events December 2021/January 2022



**Dec 16 . . . Membership Meeting,
Chapter Office, Noon Luncheon and
1:00 PM Meeting**

**Dec 16 . . . Annual PVA Christmas
Luncheon (members only)**

**Dec 18 . . . Wreath Laying Ceremony,
SD Veterans Cemetery, SF, 11:00 AM**

**Dec 23 . . . SF Veterans Council Meet-
ing, Alliance Building, 7:00 PM**

Dec 23-24 . . . Office Closed

Dec 25 . . . Merry Christmas!

Dec 30-31 . . . Office Closed

Jan 1 . . . Happy New Year

**Jan 12 . . . SD Veterans Council
Meeting, Pierre, SD, 3:00 PM**

**Jan 13 . . . Membership Meeting,
Chapter Office, Noon Luncheon and
1:00 PM Meeting**

**Jan 17 . . . Martin Luther King, Jr.
Day - Office Closed**

**Jan 27 . . . SF Veterans Council
Meeting, Alliance Building, 7:00 PM**



Annual PVA Christmas Luncheon

**Thursday, December 16th, at the
Chapter Office**

**NOON LUNCHEON and 1:00 PM
MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

Due to Covid we will be hosting our Christmas Luncheon on Thursday, December 16th, with a noon lunch and 1:00 PM Membership Meeting **for only members (regular and Associate) and their spouses/significant others/caregiver** at the Chapter Office.

Please RSVP by Monday, Dec 13th!

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



Paralyzed Veterans
of America

North Central Chapter



SD State Veterans Cemetery

Endowment Fund

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

The South Dakota State Veterans Cemetery will be located at the 1-90/I-229 area in Sioux Falls, SD and will encompass 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.

If you would like to contribute to the Endowment Fund, please click on the following link:

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



From all of us at PVA North Central Chapter, we wish you and your families a joyous holiday season!

In observance of
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
Monday, January 17, 2022
the Chapter Office
will be closed.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

North Central Chapter Paralyzed Veterans of America

OFFICERS

President, Casey Davidson
Vice President, Chuck Doom
Secretary, Greg Brandner
Treasurer, Gene Murphy

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Duane Biesboer
Rodney Melcher Harlan Schmidt

PROGRAM DIRECTORS

Chapter Hospital Liaison: Chuck Doom
Legislation Director: Terry Paulsen/Gene Murphy
Volunteer Coordinator: Charles Doom
VAVS: Lisa Cummings/Sheri Kloes
Membership Officer: Duane Biesboer
Newsletter Editor: Barbara Priesz
Sports Director: Mike Olson/Charles Doom

NATIONAL DIRECTOR

Michael Olson

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

OFFICE STAFF

Lisa Cummings, Executive Director
Terry Paulsen, Government Relations Director
Barbara Priesz, Administrative Assistant

Office Hours: Monday through Friday, 8 - 4

Sioux Falls VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Rachel Gangle, Social Worker
605-336-3230 ext. 7898

Fargo VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Tracy Lamont, SCI Coordinator
701-239-3765

Black Hills VA Health Care SCI Coordinator

Danielle Reichert, SCI Coordinator
605-720-7003

— Attention Members —

If you are receiving your newsletter by mail and would like to receive this via email, please contact me at the Chapter Office
(LisaC@ncpva.org/605-336-0494) with your email address. This will help save the Chapter on postage and printing costs.



<http://www.facebook.com/ncpva>

Disclaimer: The North Central Chapter PVA newsletter is published six 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.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

Membership-Duane Biesboer

The Chapter currently has a total of 167 members and 86 Associate Members.

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

Beginning October 1st, all Associate Members will be invoiced for Annual Dues. Annual dues are \$30 per year and Life Dues are \$200.00.

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

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

Volunteer Program-Charles Doom

The Chapter had 229 hours for the month of October. Sheri Kloes and Mike Olson were October/November 2021 Volunteers of the Month. Remember to look for your volunteer number in the newsletter and win a \$25 Gift Card! If you see your number, call the Chapter Office!



“Friends Aiming High”

by John Green

Framed and Matted - \$275

Print Only - \$75

To order your print, please contact the
Chapter Office at (605) 336-0494



Installation of Board of Directors for 2021-2022

The installation of Board of Directors for 2021-2022 was held at the membership meeting on October 14th. Pictured above (front row) Mike Olson, National Director, Gene Murphy, Treasurer, (back row) Harlan Schmidt, Member, and Chuck Doom, Vice President.

Other members on the board are Casey Davidson, President; Greg Brandner, Secretary; Duane Biesboer, Member; and Rodney Melcher, Member.

*Congratulations to all of you as we look forward to
another year of leadership!*

POW/MIA Display Dedication Ceremony Reschedule

SDDVA has received word that the POW/MIA Display dedication ceremony at the State Capitol has been moved to Monday, January 10th, at 2:00 PM (CT). The ceremony will be held on the second floor of the west wing of the Capitol.

***MAY THE BEAUTY OF CHRISTMAS
FILL YOUR HEARTS WITH PEACE,
LOVE AND HAPPINESS!***

***A NEW YEAR MARKS A NEW BEGIN-
NING, NEW PEOPLE TO MEET, NEW
ADVENTURES TO ENJOY, NEW MEMO-
RIES TO CREATE!***



PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

Message from SDDVA Secretary Whitlock

Every day, we wake up to the gift of freedom because of the men and women who wore the uniform; that stood guard and protected us. They are the greatest icon of the American spirit.

Their love for this country was so strong, they signed a blank check made payable to the United States of America for an amount of "up to and including their life." They left home and family having no idea where their mission would take them; living in flawed conditions. They gave everything they had to our country for the entire length of their service. They pushed themselves physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually to be able to serve.

Veterans of all ages have greatly contributed to the future of this country. November provides us all a great opportunity to honor and recognize the unique sacrifices that they and their family members made.

On Veterans Day, November 11, and throughout the month of November, we celebrated those who have honored our country with their service and sacrifice. Our courageous men and women in uniform have earned our enduring respect and gratitude.

November was also National Military Family Month, National Family Caregivers Month, and Warrior Care Month. With hundreds of thousands of service members deployed overseas, recognizing the daily sacrifices made by them and their families has never been more important.

My challenge to you was simple – dedication of November to honor these special heroes. There are so many ways to say thank you – write a note of thanks, thank them publicly on social media, offer workplace flexibility, provide job opportunities, perform a random act of kindness, or donate to a charity on their behalf. Our character as a Nation is revealed through the honor we accord them, and measured by the respect with which we care for them. Let us resolve never to stop trying to build that better world for which our veterans and their families have sacrificed. Let us all draw strength from their long legacy of service.

**CAREGIVER
SUPPORT LINE**
1-855-260-3274



U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs
Veterans Health Administration
Health Information Management System

VA Research Study

for

OIF/OEF/OND Veterans

Investigators: Drs. Jeffrey Simons, Raluca Simons, and Pat Ronan



- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What: Study of stress and health behaviors • Where: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sioux Falls VA - University of South Dakota – Vermillion • You need to be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Between the ages of 18 and 60 years old - Have been deployed to Iraq or Afghanistan • The study will involve 22 visits over a period of 2 years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you participate you will receive: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Opportunity to assist future veterans by participating in research aimed at improving veteran health. - Compensation for your time and travel may include \$50 for completing a baseline assessment, \$50 for each of 10 in office assessments, and up to \$135/week for each of 17 self-monitoring weeks completed, depending on number of completed assessments (up to ~2500) |
|---|---|

For more information please contact:

The research team at (605) 658-3730, or email
hbr@usd.edu, raluca.simons@usd.edu, or patrick.ronan@va.gov

Veterans Business Outreach Center (VBOC)

The VBOC program offers resources to veterans who are interested in starting or growing a small business. To visit with contacts at the VBOC of the Dakotas, you can call 701-777-3700 or email dakotas.vboc@und.edu.



TOPEKA, Kan. (WIBW) - The oldest Native American WWII veteran and oldest member of the Prairie Band Potawatomi Nation has passed away.

The Tribe says Julia Kabance, 111, died Tuesday. She had been living at Good Samaritan Valley Vista in Wamego. Kabance also was believed to be the oldest American female WWII veteran at the time of her death.

Kabance [enlisted in the Army in 1942](#) at age 33. Standing five-feet and one-half inch tall, she barely met the Army height and weight requirements of five-feet, 100 lbs. She performed clerical work for more than two years at McChord Air Force Base in Washington state as the war raged on overseas. She later spent 17 years volunteering at the VA in Topeka.

In Facebook post remembering Kabance, the tribe said she was born on the Prairie Band Potawatomi Reservation in August 1910, the 11th of 12 children. She pursued her education at what was then Haskell Institute (now Haskell Indian Nations University) and later attended the University of Kansas, before enlisting in the service. Kabance volunteered for the Catholic Church and built a life in civil service. She also was a life-member of the American Legion We-Ta-Se Post 410.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER



WREATHS across AMERICA

Our Mission: Remember, Honor, Teach

Your donation will help us carry out our Mission to honor our local servicemembers

**Saturday, December 18, 2021, 11:00 AM,
at South Dakota Veterans Cemetery - Sioux Falls**

VA extends Presumptive Period for Persian Gulf War Veterans

WASHINGTON (10-27-2021) — The Department of Veterans Affairs has extended the presumptive period to Dec. 31, 2026 for qualifying chronic disabilities rated 10% or more resulting from undiagnosed illnesses in Persian Gulf War Veterans to ensure benefits established by Congress are fairly administered. If an extension of the current presumptive period was not implemented, service members whose conditions arise after Dec. 31, 2021 would be substantially disadvantaged compared to service members whose conditions manifested at an earlier date.

Limiting entitlement to benefits due to the expiration of the presumptive period would be premature given that current studies remain inconclusive as to the cause and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War Veterans.

VA presumes certain medically unexplained illnesses are related to Persian Gulf War service without regard to cause, including, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, functional gastrointestinal disorders. Also included are undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to abnormal weight loss, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

Persian Gulf War Veterans who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above and other unexplained medical issues are encouraged to [file](#) a claim.

SDDVA Continues to Accept Nominations for Fallen Hero Bridge Dedications

The South Dakota Department of Veterans Affairs continues to accept nominations for the South Dakota "Fallen Heroes Bridge Dedication" program. To date, South Dakota has dedicated eighteen bridges, honoring 21 heroes, since the program started in 2019.

More than 3,000 South Dakotans have made the ultimate sacrifice. SDDVA has a complete list of South Dakota casualties by county that can be viewed at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/War%20Casualties%20by%20County.aspx>

Nominations for 2022 dedications are due by April 1, 2022. The selection committee will meet in April and review the applications received. The online application form can be found at: <https://vetaffairs.sd.gov/resources/Fallen%20Hero%20Bridge%20Dedications/SDDOM%20SDDVA%20Bridge%20Naming%20Application.pdf>.

We encourage all nominators to submit as much supportive documentation with their application as possible. Supportive documentation could include: letters of support, photos, funeral memorial, press releases, letters from Department of Defense or respective military branch, citations, etc.

We also request that nominators identify their preferred bridge for dedication.

Lasagna Love

Need a hand feeding your family? Your neighbors want to help! Request a free lasagna delivery with these 5 steps:

1. Scan the QR code or visit lasagnalove.org
2. Get matched to a local lasagna mama or papa
3. Coordinate a delivery day and time
4. Get a safe, contactless delivery
5. Sign up again the next month!

***Feed Families, Spread Kindness,
Strengthen Communities***

www.lasagnalove.org

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, SPORTS & REC

In Remembrance of Clarence Blunck



26th Annual Platte Pheasant Hunt

Clarence Blunck (PVA Member) originally organized this pheasant hunt in 1994 and continued the tradition until his unfortunate passing in 2021. Jeff Blunck (Clarence's Son) and Richard Hoppe (Commander Legion Post 115) wanted to continue Clarence's vision of extending the opportunity for disabled veterans to experience pheasant hunting and enjoying the outdoors.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter disabled hunters attended the 26th Annual Pheasant Hunt in Platte, SD on 04-06 November 2021. Twenty-five (25) Hunters participated in the two-day hunt. The hunters were welcomed Thursday night at the Legion Post 115 with the Ladies auxiliary providing a social and supper meal. Friday consisted of breakfast at the Community Center and the hunters breaking into two groups for the hunt. The Local community hosted the annual auction and supper at the community center on Friday night. Saturday consisted of breakfast at the community center and another great day of Pheasant hunting.

The Paralyzed Veterans of America North Central Chapter would like to thank the entire Platte Community for another wonderful pheasant hunt. The PVA hunters want to express their sincere appreciation to the Platte Community, American Legion Post 115, Ladies Auxiliary, Volunteers, and Landowners who helped make the 26th Annual PVA Pheasant Hunt a huge success.



PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, FUNDRAISING

We're proud to be a Thrivent Choice®-enrolled organization. Through the Thrivent programs, we are eligible to receive grant dollars, fee-free donations, and support from Thrivent Action Team service projects.

To learn more about Thrivent's membership benefits and generosity programs visit thrivent.com/generosity

Qualified**Charitable****Distributions**

The Pension Protection Act of 2006 first allowed taxpayers age 70½ or older to make tax-free charitable donations directly from their IRAs. Technically, these taxpayers were allowed to exclude from gross income otherwise taxable distributions from their IRA ("qualified charitable distributions," or QCDs), up to \$100,000, that were paid directly to a qualified charity.

These gifts are also known as "Charitable IRA rollovers." The law was originally scheduled to expire in 2007, but was extended periodically through 2014 by subsequent legislation, and finally made permanent by the Protect Americans from Tax Hikes (PATH) Act of 2015.

Newsletter Booster Program Thank you for your support!

Ronald and Darla Shelburg
Alan & Kathryn Gobczynski
Paul Hanson
Dennis Hahnemann
Paul Haggar

Please support your local Chapter!**Newsletter Booster Program**

The North Central Chapter PVA publishes the newsletter 6 times per year. We would like to invite our PVA members, Associate Members, and business associates to help support the Newsletter Booster Program. Your name will be published in each newsletter (unless otherwise specified) for only \$10.00. Please help defray the cost of publishing by supporting **YOUR** Chapter. Thank you!

I wish to make the following donation to the Newsletter Booster Program:

Newsletter _____
Booster Address _____
Program City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Amount of donation \$ _____

Send all remittance payable to:

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

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER, ADVOCACY/LEGISLATION-TERRY PAULSEN**VA extends Presumptive Period for Persian Gulf War Veterans**

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Limiting entitlement to benefits due to the expiration of the presumptive period would be premature given that current studies remain inconclusive as to the cause and time of onset of illnesses suffered by Persian Gulf War Veterans.

VA presumes certain medically unexplained illnesses are related to Persian Gulf War service without regard to cause, including, chronic fatigue syndrome, fibromyalgia, functional gastrointestinal disorders. Also included are undiagnosed illnesses with symptoms that may include but are not limited to abnormal weight loss, cardiovascular disease, muscle and joint pain, headache, menstrual disorders, neurological and psychological problems, skin conditions, respiratory disorders and sleep disturbances.

Persian Gulf War Veterans who are experiencing any of the symptoms listed above and other unexplained medical issues are encouraged to [file](#) a claim.

Presumptive Conditions Related to Environmental Exposures

Over the course of the last six months, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to environmental exposures during military service. We request your help in making more Veterans aware of these newly added presumptive conditions to help them file a claim and obtain any earned benefits.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later VA added asthma,

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rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file a supplemental claim. Be sure to use [VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim](#) when filing. The claim form should include the name of the condition and specify that the condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service.

VA expands Offering of COVID-19 Booster Vaccines

The Department of Veterans Affairs is now offering Moderna and Johnson & Johnson (J&J)/Janssen COVID-19 vaccine booster shots under Emergency Use Authorization, expanding on last month's authorization of the Pfizer-BioNTech booster.

This decision follows this week's Food and Drug Administration's authorization and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's recommendation for a booster dose using the Moderna or J&J vaccines.

"Booster shots are an important step forward in the fight against COVID-19," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "With the authorization of additional COVID-19 vaccine booster options, VA is helping more Veterans maximize their protection, continuing our work to keep people safe and save lives during the COVID-19 pandemic." VA will follow CDC guidance in offering COVID-19 booster shots:

For individuals who completed a Pfizer-BioNTech or Moderna COVID-19 vaccine series, the following groups are eligible for a booster shot at least 6 months after their second dose:

- 65 years and older
- Age 18+ who live in [long-term care settings](#).
- Age 18+ who have [underlying medical conditions](#).
- Age 18+ who work or live in [high-risk settings](#).
- People 18 years and older are eligible to receive a COVID-19 booster shot at least 2 months after their initial J&J vaccine.

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Eligible individuals may choose which vaccine they receive as a booster dose. Some people may have a preference for the vaccine type that they originally received and others, may prefer to get a different booster. CDC's recommendations now allow for this type of mix and match dosing for booster shots.

The safety and care of Veterans is VA's top priority, as well as ensuring the health and welfare of its workforce. Many sites in VA are open for walk-ins during hours when vaccine clinics are operational, and where booster vaccines are available. Booster shots are being offered to Veterans receiving care at VA and employees. VA is also offering the booster to Veterans, their spouses, caregivers and CHAMPVA recipients under the authority of the [SAVE LIVES Act](#), as supply and capacity permits. The Save Lives Act which was signed into law in March 2021 expanded [VA's authority to offer vaccine](#) to include Veterans [not traditionally eligible for VHA care](#), and others including spouses and caregivers of Veterans.

CDC advises that people can get both the COVID-19 vaccine and flu vaccine at the same time. Veterans receiving care at VA who wish to get a booster shot can get both shots together during the same visit.

Veterans who would like additional information can visit the [VA COVID-19 vaccines](#) webpage, visit their [local facility's website](#) or contact their care team. Visit [VA's Questions webpage](#) for questions and answers regarding COVID-19 vaccine.

2022 VA Pay Increase is Biggest in Over a Decade

Veterans receiving VA disability compensation are set to see their monthly VA pay increase by 5.9% in 2022. To put that in dollars, for every \$1,000 a veteran currently receives in benefits payments, they will see an additional \$59 in 2022. Spouses and family members receiving [survivor benefits](#) will see the same increase in their monthly payments. The annual cost of living adjustment has averaged around 1.5% for the last 10 years, so this year's increase of 5.9% is good news for veterans.

Starting this January, veterans will get the same cost of living increase in their benefits payouts that Social Security recipients get. That's thanks to passage of the Veterans' Compensation Cost-of-Living Adjustment Act, a rare bipartisan success story.

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The 2022 compensation bump is no doubt driven by inflation (Inflation was increasing at 5.3% in August, according to the [Consumer Price Index](#)). But it's more than just a rate adjustment tied to inflation. It represents a quality of life guarantee for veterans who served honorably and are now dealing with service-connected disabilities that make it hard to work and provide.

Calculating your 2022 VA Disability Pay Rate

You can calculate your 2022 disability pay rate by multiplying your current rate by 5.9 percent (or 0.059) and then adding that amount to your 2021 rate. The table below reflects the 2022 pay increase for a veteran with no dependents.

VA 2022 Pay Chart

Combined VA Rating	2022 VA Disability Pay Rate	2021 VA Disability Pay Rate
10%	\$153	\$144
20%	\$302	\$285
30%	\$467	\$441
40%	\$673	\$636
50%	\$958	\$905
60%	\$1,214	\$1,146
70%	\$1,530	\$1,445
80%	\$1,778	\$1,679
90%	\$1,999	\$1,887
100%	\$3,332	\$3,146

If you have a 30% to 100% disability rating and you have dependents, including children and dependent parents, your compensation rate goes up. At the 80% disability rating each additional child under 18 adds an additional \$69 a month.

If your spouse is receiving [Aid and Attendance](#) to help out with the caretaking, they would receive an additional \$129. It's important to let the VA know of any changes to your marital status or dependents. If a child turns 18 and moves out of the home this could impact the amount of benefits you receive.

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Are You Eligible to file for Benefits Based on Presumptive Exposure?

Were you exposed to hazardous materials while serving in the military, such as from [Agent Orange](#) or [burn pits](#)? Did you serve in Vietnam, Thailand or Southwest Asia? If so, you may be eligible to file for service-connected benefits based on presumptive exposure.

Over the course of the last six months, VA has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to exposure to hazardous materials.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA), adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later, VA added asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file another claim. Be sure to use [VA Form 20-0995, "Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim"](#) when filing. The claim form should include the name of the medical condition and also specify that the medical condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service.

Be sure to stay plugged in to www.va.gov for the most recent developments around environmental hazards; VA is constantly conducting research and surveillance, as well as reviewing scientific literature for conditions that may be related to exposure during military service.

If you feel you have a chronic condition attributed to an in-service exposure, we highly encourage you to file a claim. For more information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim, Veterans and survivors can visit VA's website at www.va.gov or call toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

Elizabeth Dole Foundation offers Free Help for Caregivers

Are you a spouse, parent, family member, child, loved one, friend or neighbor who helps take care of a Veteran at home? If you answered yes, take a moment to think about what you could do with the gift of time. Caregivers, if you had some extra and free help around the house or someone to knock things off your to-do list, what would you do? In honor of Veterans Day and National Family Caregivers Month, we want to make sure you're aware of a special opportunity exclusively for caregivers like you.

Between caring for your Veteran, managing the household, working, taking care of children or grandchildren, coordinating medical appointments, and everything else on your plate, it can be easy to feel like there are not enough hours in the day. That's why VA and Elizabeth Dole Foundation joined forces to give you the gift of time... for free.

Through the Respite Relief program, you can receive 35 hours of free caregiving support to your Veteran – so you can take care of you. CareLinx home care providers can help with everything from housekeeping, meal prep, medication reminders, organization, grocery shopping, companionship – literally knocking things off your to-do list.

More than 1,600 caregivers have been approved and over 22,000 hours of free respite have been delivered. The online application is super simple – it takes five minutes to complete. Once your application is reviewed, CareLinx will contact you and match you with a care provider who can help with your specific needs.

Take us up on our offer to clean your house, organize your cabinets, prep your meals for the week, do the dishes, provide companionship for your Veteran and so much more. Take advantage of this free resource exclusively for caregivers before the stress of the holiday season kicks in. It's our way of saying thank you for all you do. Learn more and apply today at hiddenheroes.org/respite.

Special thanks to the Elizabeth Dole Foundation, VA, CareLinx, Wounded Warrior Project®, AARP, Tranquility® Incontinence Products, Diana Davis Spencer Foundation, Bob Woodruff Foundation, and USAA for making this program possible. Apply today for free respite in less than five minutes at <https://hiddenheroes.org/respite>. If you have any questions, please contact respiterelief@elizabethdolefoundation.org.

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**Vietnam War Veteran Received Honorary Degree
from Augustana University, 50 Years Later**

Gene Murphy finally got his degree from Augustana University, almost 50 years in the making. Murphy is a Vietnam War Veteran who was paralyzed by gunshot wounds during his service just 30 days before he was sched-

uled to return to the U.S. And he was 16 credits shy of meeting the college's graduation requirements in 1979, when he became more active with Disabled American Veterans (DAV).

"I think it's super of Augustana University and Stephanie Herseth Sandlin" to confer the honorary degree, Murphy said. 'Helping veterans was more important at the time than the degree'

Murphy, a young Army sergeant, was on patrol in the thick jungles of Vietnam on April 21, 1969 when his unit came under fire. He was only 20, and a sergeant and squad leader in charge of 10 men. Six men in his unit were shot by fire from enemy AK-47s.

"I got hit with three bullets, and one of them cut the spinal cord," Murphy said. He laid on the jungle floor, fearing death, as he awaited evacuation for 14 hours after being hit, as Medivac helicopters that attempted to rescue his unit were driven away by fierce enemy fire.

His friend, Lyle Bowes, comforted Murphy through the night. Murphy was born and raised in White, and Bowes was from De Smet; and the two didn't meet until joining the Army together. Bowes and Murphy are still close friends. Gene Murphy and Lyle Bowes formed a lasting friendship in 1967 when the two were shipped off to the Vietnam War.

Murphy spent 14 months in four different hospitals -- Pleiku, South Vietnam; Yokohama, Japan; Fitzsimons General Hospital in Denver, Colorado; and Wood VA Medical Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. On his fifth day at the Pleiku, Murphy learned he wouldn't walk again.

He also lost half his body weight. When Murphy entered the Army, he weighed 165 pounds. In 10 and a half months of service, before the incident, he was down to 135. He blames the Army food for this. When he left his multiple hospital stays, Murphy weighed 83 pounds.

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Gene returned to his hometown of White in a wheelchair by 1970 and credits his close friends, fellow veterans and four brothers for helping him readjust to civilian life in a wheelchair. Murphy briefly attended Dakota State University for business administration, where he met his future wife, Eldine, a nursing student. When she knew she had to move to Sioux Falls in 1972 to continue her studies, the young couple decided to make the move together and get married.

Murphy then continued his studies at Augustana University, where he needed only about three courses to complete requirements for his bachelor's degree. He didn't finish because he became heavily involved with his work at DAV, and "helping veterans was more important at the time than the degree," Murphy said.

Murphy now holds the Purple Heart and Bronze Star with V device for his bravery in South Vietnam, serving with Co.C, 1st Btn, 12th Inf. Regt, 4th Inf. Div.

In addition to the DAV, Murphy is also a member of Paralyzed Veterans of America, Military Order of The Purple Heart, VFW, American Legion and the South Dakota Veterans Council, where he was president 1978-1979.

Murphy's honorary degree ceremony was held Thursday, Nov. 11, 2021 at 1 p.m. in the Hamre Recital Hall in the Fryxell Humanities Center on Augustana University's campus, with a reception immediately following the program.

Are You Eligible?

Dear Veteran, you may be eligible for newly enacted service-connected benefits.

Over the course of the last six months, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) has begun processing service-connected disability claims for six new presumptive conditions related to environmental exposures during military service. We request your help in making more Veterans aware of these newly added presumptive conditions to help them file a claim and obtain any earned benefits.

In May 2021, VA started implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (NDAA),

(continued on Page 13)

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**From the Office of Brad Friez****National Service Officer**

A recent suggestion from an individual in my chain of command asked us to again mention the process of when a Veteran has emergent care outside of their local VA Hospital.

A VA fact sheet that covers these situations states that the Department of Veterans Affairs encourages Veterans to seek immediate medical attention without delay. Veterans do not need to check with VA before calling an ambulance or going to the emergency department of your local hospital.

In most instances eligible Veterans are able to receive VA-authorized emergency care at an in-network facility if VA is notified of the emergent event within 72 hours of the start of care.

It is important that your visit to a community emergency room be reported to VA as soon as possible because it allows VA to assist in coordinating your care or transfer, and it helps ensure that administrative and clinical requirements for VA to pay for the care are met.

Providers should report your emergency treatment through VA's Emergency Care Reporting Portal or by calling 844-724-7842. They also need to contact the local VA medical center to coordinate the follow up care and transfer activities, if necessary.

Veterans, someone acting on the covered Veteran's behalf, or the eligible entity or provider can also report episodes of emergency care to the appropriate VA official at the nearest VA facility. However, VA should only be notified once and ideally that notification is from the community facility staff where the Veteran is being treated.

National Service Officers routinely file a precursor form called an Intent to File a Claim Form to establish an effective date for one year for future claims. Previously this was only for new claims or claims for increase. As of August of 2021 this now includes a review of past denied claims as well.

By the time you read this we will have celebrated Thanksgiving Day and on our way to Christmas. As we do progress in this Christmas Season I would encourage all of us to be thankful for what we have all been blessed with. Some of the most inspirational individuals in my life are those who have many reasons to be bitter or angry and yet they are very thankful; even during this time of Pandemic. May you and your families have a Very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

South Dakota Game, Fish & Parks Shares Important December Dates with Individuals

PIERRE, S.D. – The South Dakota Game Fish and Parks (GFP) today announced several major dates individuals need to be aware of as GFP transitions to a new e-commerce system. The new e-commerce system is called *Go Outdoors South Dakota* and will go live December 15, 2021. This system combines the purchases of hunting and fishing licenses with our state parks camping reservations and other purchases.

The first important date individuals need to be aware of is **December 7**. This is the last day to purchase a park entrance license that may be given as a gift for it to arrive in the mail prior to Christmas.

“Park entrance licenses are a popular gift for the holiday season,” said Parks Business Manager, Jodi Bechard. “As we transition to the new e-commerce system, we will not be able to sell park entrance licenses from December 8-15 and with mail delivery over the holiday season, licenses purchased after December 15 will likely not arrive in time for Christmas.”

GFP will also not be able to accept new camping reservations from **December 8-15**. Reservations made prior to this time will still be honored, but new reservations will not be able to be made during the transition period.

“To ensure everyone's existing reservations transition properly to our new system, we will not be able to accept new reservations for one week,” said Bechard. “If you wish to stay at a state park during this time, please make your reservations prior to December 7 or contact the park directly.”

Hunters will also have an important date to remember. The last day to purchase preference points from the 2021 season will be **December 14**. In past seasons, this deadline had been December 15.

“The deadline for hunters to purchase their preference points will be one day earlier this year,” said Wildlife Administration Section Chief, Heather Villa. “While this is a very small change, we want to make sure all hunters are able to obtain their preference points in 2021.”

(continued on Page 13)

PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

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Once the new e-commerce system goes live on December 15, individuals will be able to log in and view their preference points, upcoming camping reservations and continue to purchase their licenses as they normally would.

“Our new e-commerce system is going to make it much easier for our customers to get outdoors and we’re very excited for December 15,” concluded Villa.

Individuals may purchase a park entrance license, preference points, or make a camping reservation at gfp.sd.gov.

(continued from Page 11) - Are You Eligible?

adding bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism to the list of medical conditions presumptively associated with exposure to Agent Orange. A few months later VA added asthma, rhinitis and sinusitis (to include rhinosinusitis) on a presumptive basis based on particulate matter exposures during military service in Southwest Asia and certain other areas.

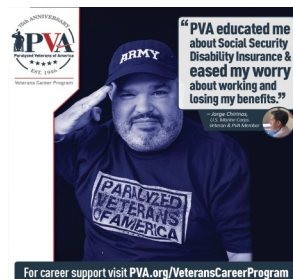
Any Veteran who was previously denied service-connection for any of these six conditions but had symptoms manifest within 10 years of military service would need to file a supplemental claim. Be sure to use [VA Form 20-0995, Decision Review Request: Supplemental Claim](#) when filing. The claim form should include the name of the condition and specify that the condition is being claimed due to in-service exposure to environmental hazards.

VA is committed to assisting Veterans who may have been exposed to hazardous materials during their military service.

Be sure to stay plugged in to www.va.gov for the most recent developments around environmental exposures during military service, as VA is constantly conducting research and surveillance as well as reviewing scientific literature for conditions that may be related to exposure during military service.

For more information about VA benefits and eligibility, or how to file a claim, Veterans and survivors can visit VA’s website at www.va.gov or call toll-free at 1-800-827-1000.

10123

What is PVA Veterans Career Program?

Paralyzed Veterans of America’s Veterans Career Program (formerly PAVE) was launched in 2007 to ensure that PVA members, their spouses, and caregivers, have access to meaningful employment, educational, and volunteer opportunities. Our team of certified vocational rehabilitation counselors and employment analysts provide high-touch, one-on-one assistance to guide Veterans through the process.

Studies have found that there are significant benefits for individuals who are engaged, including improved quality of life, enhanced self-confidence, expanded social network, a sense of community and increased income for those who are employed.

Veterans Career Program staff are specially trained to work with Veterans receiving Social Security Disability Insurance and other government benefits. We work hand in hand with PVA national service officers to take into consideration other benefits a Veteran may be receiving from the VA.

Despite the positive attributes of regular engagement, Veterans with significant service-connected disabilities are not currently seeking employment. More than 62% of Veterans with a service-connected disability rating of 60% or higher either struggle with or opt out of joining the civilian workforce. When layered with the added challenges gainful employment are overwhelming. (continued on Page 15)



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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER

VA Accesses Resources to Increase Housing Assistance for Vulnerable Veterans

WASHINGTON — The Department of Veterans Affairs updated [regulations](#) Nov. 10 governing the [Supportive Services for Veteran Families grant program](#) to provide a more effective subsidy to Veterans in high-cost rental markets and to increase the cap in general housing assistance available to the most vulnerable Veteran families.

Under the new regulations, in certain communities, the SSVF grant will cover up to 50%, an increase from 35%, of eligible Veterans' reasonable rent for two years without need for recertification.

"We know Veterans are increasingly vulnerable to homelessness and housing insecurity," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "The updated regulations give Supportive Services for Veteran Families grantees more flexibility and tools to keep Veterans housed while also helping them increase their income and access permanent affordable housing solutions."

The new rule also expands the maximum stay in emergency housing for unsheltered Veterans.

The original rule authorized placement for a Veteran and his or her spouse with dependents in emergency housing for up to 45 days, which proved often not enough time to locate stable and affordable permanent housing in highly competitive rental markets..

A Veteran and his or her spouse with dependents can now stay in emergency housing for a maximum of 60 days. The 15-day increase in length-of-stay is expected to have the most significant benefit to Veteran families in rental markets with few vacancies, as well as unsheltered homeless Veterans families.

Ending Veteran homelessness is a top priority for VA, aligned with the White House's [priority](#) to promote housing stability by supporting vulnerable tenants.

VA Updates Disability Rating Schedules for Genitourinary and Cardiovascular Systems

WASHINGTON — The U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs announced its update to the genitourinary and cardiovascular regulations in the [VA Schedule for Rating Disabilities at Title 38 Code of Federal Regulations](#).

The changes were made to ensure that these portions of the rating schedule contain current medical terminology and provide detailed and updated criteria for the evaluations related to genitourinary and cardiovascular disabilities. (continued in next column)

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VA renamed conditions, removed obsolete language, clarified ambiguities and added conditions with appropriate diagnostic codes not previously identified in the VASRD. While finalizing the rule-making, VA received, considered and responded to comments from the National Organization of Veterans' Advocates Inc., American Association of Nurse Practitioners, Paralyzed Veterans of America and Veterans.

"These changes are important to the claims processing procedures and are based on scientific and medical information that is vital in making consistent claims decisions for our Veterans," said Acting Under Secretary for Benefits Thomas Murphy. "Claims related to genitourinary and cardiovascular conditions that were pending on Nov. 14, 2021, will be considered under both the old and new rating criteria, and whichever criteria is more favorable to the Veteran will be applied."

The complete list of updates to the VASRD for the genitourinary and cardiovascular systems is now available [online](#). For Veterans already receiving evaluations for the genitourinary and cardiovascular conditions impacted by this change, VA will not reduce the evaluation simply based on the rating schedule change. A reduction in evaluation will only occur if there is improvement in a disability sufficient to warrant a reduction under the former criteria.

VA has issued several VASRD updates since September 2017, including updates for [dental and oral conditions](#), [conditions related to the endocrine system](#), [gynecological conditions and disorders of the breast](#), [diseases of the eye](#), [infectious diseases](#), [conditions of the hemic and lymphatic systems](#), [skin conditions](#), and musculoskeletal and muscle injuries.

Visit [VA benefits](#) for more information.



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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**PVA North Central Chapter****Birthday Roster - December 2021/January 2022**

Leland Olson	Dec 01
Stephen Vogt	Dec 03
David Byrd	Dec 06
Tony Hylland	Dec 06
Alan Gobczynski	Dec 07
Willard Black	Dec 08
James Huckabay Sr	Dec 08
Timothy Doyle	Dec 09
John Pike	Dec 10
Jonathan Olson	Dec 11
Dennis Theel	Dec 11
Lyle Monsees	Dec 14
Frank Hood	Dec 17
Paul Haggar	Dec 20
Michael Ollerich	Dec 21
John Trautman	Dec 26
Jeanne Saunders	Dec 27
Darryl Schock	Dec 29
Gary Sletto	Dec 29
Randy Brown	Jan 01
Mitchell Kostek	Jan 03
Steve Thompson	Jan 03
Colin Olson	Jan 05
Eric Kritzmire	Jan 07
Gary Kipena	Jan 08
Lawrence Hogan	Jan 09
Bob Sanchez	Jan 10
Lary Marthaller	Jan 11

(continued in next column)

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Lester Hovrud	Jan 12
David Morgan	Jan 15
Thomas Holtey	Jan 16
Samuel Terry	Jan 16
Jack Gill	Jan 22
Thomas Dietz	Jan 26
Kenneth Bassett	Jan 27
Bob Schutte	Jan 28
Ross Beranek	Jan 29
Stephen Larson	Jan 31

(continued from Page 13) - Veterans Career Program

Veterans Career Program Counselors and Employment Analysts continue to be leaders in dispelling the myths and challenging stereotypes of those with disabilities. Working with dedicated employment partners, we will continue to create opportunities for quality and sustainable careers for those with significant and catastrophic injuries.

PVA Member Sean Ferry recently found success returning to work through the Veterans Career Program. In late 2018, Sean decided that he was ready to pursue employment opportunities again. He did not have a great deal of success working on his own and reached out to the Veterans Career Program in spring of 2019.

Sean worked one-on-one with Veterans Career Program Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Genia Hachenberg, M.S., CRC, to explore his areas of interest and review the necessary accommodations at work. In September, Sean returned to work for the first time since his injury and shared the following about his experience working with the Veterans Career Program:

"After my injury in 2014, my life was turned upside down. It was not easy to transition from being a Mechanical Engineer, and a rather avid hunter and fisherman, into a wheelchair dependent individual. After five years of unemployment, I turned to the Veterans Career Program and its employees for assistance in getting back into the workforce. They were a great asset to me and a resource that helped me get my job and gain back my independence and self-confidence. Thank you, Veterans Career Program!"

If you, your spouse, or caregiver, are interested in career support including paid employment, education, or volunteer opportunities please visit pva.org/Veteranscareerprogram or email Veteranscareerprogram@pva.org for more information.

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PVA NORTH CENTRAL CHAPTER**Holiday Office Hours***Merry Christmas***Christmas**

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Thursday, December 23rd

Friday, December 24th

**New Year's**

Office Closed

Thursday, December 30th

Friday, December 31st

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Sioux Falls VA Health Care System

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Fax: (605) 333-6878

VA Black Hills Health Care System - Fort Meade Campus

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Fax: (605) 720-7171

VA Black Hills Health Care System

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Minneapolis VA Health Care System

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Minneapolis, MN 55417
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