

RT '15

Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Nick Koulchar competes in the 2014 Detroit Marathon just weeks prior to acting as the MPVA's 2015 Salute to Veterans Gala Keynote Speaker!





PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA
MICHIGAN CHAPTER



About this Issue:

The MPVA held their 11th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala this past fall to honor all those who serve! For more information, please see the President's Report and in the inside back cover for photos from the Gala!

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Disclaimer:

The Rollin' Times is a publication of the Michigan Chapter of Paralyzed Veterans of America. It is designed to inform the members of the PVA and other interested parties on veterans' issues, legislation, legal decisions, medical technology and other matters deemed to be relevant to the disability community.

The contents of this publication do not always reflect the views or policies of Michigan PVA, and no endorsement or approval is made or should be inferred with respect to products or services advertised herein. Consult an appropriate professional before making use of any product or service mentioned.

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Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is one of 34 member chapters of Washington, D.C.-based Paralyzed Veterans of America. A Congressionally chartered veterans service organization, MPVA has been assisting veterans with spinal cord injuries or diseases, including Multiple Sclerosis and ALS (Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis, better known as Lou Gehrig's Disease), in Michigan since 1961.

MPVA programs include:

- Veterans' Benefits
- Wheelchair Sports and Recreation
- Spinal Cord Injury Research
- Equipment Donation
- Advocacy to eliminate architectural barriers and protect civil rights for persons with disabilities
- Referral Services for assistive devices, housing, employment and transportation
- Literature on a variety of topics including self-care, independent living, and disability rights.
- The Pump Guide: an online directory of gas stations throughout Michigan that will pump gas at the self-serve price for persons with disabilities.
- MPVA is a nonprofit organization and receives no federal funding. MPVA relies on grants, sponsorships, and private and corporate donations to support its programs.

The MPVA headquarters is in Novi, Michigan. Our service officers are based out of the McNamara Federal Building in Downtown Detroit.

The Ad Agency

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President's Report

By Kevin G. Elya, President, MPVA

Reflecting on Veterans Day 2014

On November 14, 2014, the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) celebrated Veterans Day by hosting the 11th Annual "Salute to Veterans" dinner at the Novi Suburban Collection Showplace.

The event was a great success as nearly 275 guests gathered to pay tribute to Michigan's Veterans of the past and present. Guests included Keynote Speaker Nickolas Koulchar, Master of Ceremony WJBK FOX 2 Weatherman Rich Luterman, Brigadier General Carol Ann Fausone, and a wide array of proudly decorated service men and women.

I have always been amazed how Americans confuse Veterans Day with Memorial Day. Both holidays celebrate our veterans service, but with one significant difference. Memorial Day honors servicemen who died in service to their country or as a result of injuries incurred during battle. Veterans Day is set aside to thank and honor living and deceased veterans who served honorably in the military, either during wartime or peacetime.

Most people see Veterans Day as a day off from work. At MPVA we see it as an opportunity to properly thank veterans for their service to their country. We see it as a celebration to honor America's veterans for their patriotism, love of country, and willingness to serve and sacrifice for the common good.

The Keynote speaker at this year's dinner was Nickolas Koulchar. Nick entered the U.S. Army November 2006 as a Combat Engineer. He was a Gunner performing Counter Improvised Explosive Device Route Clearance duties in Sadr City, Iraq, during the Siege of Sadr City in 2008. On August 26, 2008, Koulchar's truck was hit by an Improvised Explosive Device (IED). The IED punctured the side of the truck and struck his

lower body causing catastrophic damage. He spent 2 weeks in a coma before awaking at Walter Reed Army Medical Center and continued to receive surgeries and therapy over the next 2 and a half years.

In April 2011, Nick moved back to Michigan where he continued to donate his time assisting veteran's charities with raising awareness and funds. Through those efforts, he was offered a job with the Disabled American Veterans (DAV) as a National Service Officer assisting and educating veterans on benefits available through the VA. He has gone on to compete in 9 marathons, including Boston and NYC on a hand-cycle. Since April 2013, he has been working with fellow combat wounded amputee and owner Derick Carver of Bayonet Crossfit developing an adaptive Crossfit program for persons with disabilities. In June of 2013, he married his best friend, Dani Koulchar, who continues to support him in all of his adventures.

To his credit he did not let the injury define him. Instead, his life is a portrait of courage in the face of great adversity.

We are truly thankful for the amazing turnout we had at this year's event. The inspirational annual fundraiser is an opportunity to highlight the impact that MPVA programs have played in improving the quality of life for disabled veterans.

I would be remiss if I did not take time out to say thank you to some very special people for making this event possible. Because of the support of the MPVA staff, MPVA Board of Directors, MPVA members, volunteers, and sponsors, this year's dinner exceeded all expectations. Everyone contributions truly made a difference.

Continued on page 6...



Dear Friend of Injured and Disabled Veterans,

Camp Liberty Inc., a 501-c-3, non-profit organization, respectfully requests your support and attendance for Camp Liberty's upcoming Gala. We would love to have your family and friends attend our black-tie formal Gala on February 21st in Livonia, MI. Register on-line at www.camp-liberty.org. We have no paid Board or staff; we are all volunteers.

About Us: Camp Liberty - "Building a Stronger Veteran Community" - Nearly Fifty Thousand U.S. soldiers have been wounded in the wars in Iraq or Afghanistan over the past 12 years. Their full reintegration back into their families, jobs, and communities is often made more difficult with not only their loss of limbs or other serious visible injuries for some, but many more of them are coping with the issues associated with "Invisible Wounds" of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and traumatic brain injury (TBI.) Homelessness, suicide, joblessness, incarceration and divorce are all too often the by-products of their failure to successfully reintegrate. Far too many fail to get the help they need and deserve, and Camp Liberty programs can help.

Camp Liberty's extensive all-volunteer network and support programs help create an environment where the Veterans review the challenges they are facing and get connected with public and private support services. What differentiates Camp Liberty from other national recreation programs is their direct tie-in to the Eisenhower Center's exceptional rehabilitation programs and the Center for Neurological Studies (CNS) TBI screening systems. As the premiere TBI cognitive screening and rehabilitation team, CNS and Eisenhower Center provides Camp Liberty with an option for treatment, education, advocacy, support and awareness for service members and Veterans coping with "Invisible Wounds." No other program in the nation can match our collective team's detection, treatment, and recreation and reintegration programs. To learn more about Camp Liberty and how you can help, please visit www.camp-liberty.org.

Sincerely,

Richard V. Briggs, Jr., Major, USAF (Ret)
Co-Founder / Board Member, Camp Liberty, Inc.



Our newly refitted 1929 year bridge – Before and after.





Executive Director's Report

By Mike Harris, Executive Director, MPVA

MPVA Partners with the Detroit Red Wings on New Arena

Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America (MPVA) is proud to announce that it has been selected by the Detroit Red Wings to assist them in all aspects of the design phase to ensure that the new hockey arena, scheduled for completion by 2017, will be fully accessible to all hockey fans with disabilities.

Through its Advocacy, MPVA shares over 50 years of experience in making the built environment fully accessible to all citizens with mobility disabilities. MPVA has provided expert advice and consultation for a wide variety of projects such as Comerica Ballpark, Ford Field, Cobo Hall Center, Detroit Riverwalk and the University of Michigan Football Stadium.

It was music to my ears when the Detroit Red Wings announced that they were going to build a new arena in Detroit's downtown entertainment and sports district. This announcement was long overdue. If you ever attended an event at Joe Louis Arena your experience was never a positive one because the facility was not designed with a wheelchair in mind!

The Red Wings agreed to allow for the creation of a disability advisory board with representation from a cross section of disabilities groups so their issues will be properly addressed in the design/construction of the new arena. The goal is to ensure that spectators attending events at the new facility have a positive experience.

The America with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires that wheelchair seating be dispersed throughout the seating bowl in all price ranges and be able to view the action on the ice even if spectators are standing in their seats. The ADA states that "Seats for people using wheelchairs need to be *"an integral part of the seating plan."* Facilities with more than 300 seats

are required to provide wheelchair-accessible seating intermingled among other seats throughout the stadium.

MPVA has long realized the importance of accessibility into the community as an essential quality-of-life issue. Over the years, MPVA shared its knowledge on the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance and accessibility with businesses, government entities, architects and project coordinator to ensure that the rights and protections afforded to people with disabilities in the text of the accessibility codes are properly translated into the built environment.

During the construction of Comerica Park and Ford Field, MPVA had the opportunity to work directly with the designers and project coordinators to ensure that the new facilities would provide accessibility to persons with a variety of disabilities. The final outcome resulted in perhaps two of the most accommodating sports venues in the country.

Successful accessibility is often measured in inches, so attention to detail can make the difference between achieving access and excluding or injuring someone. When the ADA's minimum requirements are not met, the results can limit or exclude a person with a disability and can be dangerous. In addition, failure to meet such guidelines can also result in costly reconstruction and renovations after the fact (often more costly than if the guidelines had been met during the initial construction process).

Many people take freedom of movement for granted and are unaware of the accessibility regulations of our built environment. But as soon as one experiences even a temporary injury, using a cane, wheelchair or scooter, for example, this can present unexpected challenges. Navigating transportation, curb ramps,

table height, toilet facilities ... all become acutely important when living with a physical disability.

Accessibility to the built environment make daily living active and productive. Without it, a person's quality of life can be greatly affected. MPVA

understands the importance of accessibility and takes pride in making the built environment welcoming to all.



...President's Report continued

It's amazing that in just eleven years, the Veteran's Dinner has turned into the MPVA's signature event of the year. Because of this, the Chapter has been lifted to a new level in the eyes of our members and guests. This year's success can be contributed to the direction and leadership of Jaclyn Kochis along with the MPVA staff.

All the hard work and attention to detail made this year's "Salute to Veterans" veterans dinner a huge success. At the end of the evening everyone I spoke with commented on how enjoyable and inspirational the dinner had been. In fact, the greatest compliment you can get is when they request not to forget to invite them for next year's event.

To our sponsors, thank you for your continued support! Given the tough economic times sponsors could render their regrets and quietly backed off. They did not, their support this year has been nothing short of magnificent.

On behalf of MPVA and I thank the 620,000 Michigan Veterans for a job well done.

I would like to take a moment to especially thank the following groups and individuals for supporting our 11th Annual Salute to Veterans Gala:

Action Track Wheelchair, Associated Community Services, Bath For All, Bill Helwig, Brain Injury Association of Michigan, Carol Ann Fausone, Clark Shuler, Don Woodworth, DTE Energy, Eisenhower Center, Foundation for American Veterans, George Smith, Health Partners, Indian Trails, Legal Help for Veterans, Mans Lumbar Company, Mocerri Industry, New Horizons, NuStep, Origami, Patty Soma, Providence Hospital, Public Service Credit Union, Quality Home Medical, Rehab Institute of Michigan, Steve Cohen, Strenth Training and Recovery, SWOCC, The Sam Bernstein Law Firm, The Recovery Project, UofM Department of Physical Medicine, Walk the Line to SCI Recovery, Wright and Filippis

God bless our men and women in uniform. God bless our Veterans!

Please see the inside back cover for photos from the Salute to Veterans Gala!





Guest Article

By: Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA)

MVAA expands

Veterans Community Action Teams to 200,000 veterans

The Michigan Veterans Affairs Agency (MVAA) is committed to making Michigan the most veteran-friendly state in the nation, working with private, public and nonprofit groups to accomplish that goal.

Across the state, veterans service organizations like the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Red Cross and county veterans agencies are already helping Michigan veterans connect with health care services, education benefits and more. But imagine what could be done if an entire network of these resources came together to address the problems Michigan veterans face each day.

Now, over 200,000 more veterans will be able to see what that system of organizations would look like, thanks to MVAA's Veterans Community Action Team (VCAT) program. Veterans in 24 counties in and around Lansing, Flint, Saginaw and Ann Arbor will have easier access to comprehensive health, employment, education and quality-of-life opportunities thanks to the VCAT expansion.

The VCAT project was introduced in 2013 with pilots in Metro Detroit and West Michigan, serving more than 300,000 veterans. VCATs in these regions focused on identifying solutions for gaps in veteran services, reducing duplication of efforts and simplifying connections with local resources.

The program was so successful in these areas that MVAA is expanding the VCAT program to four more areas of the state this year, bringing new resources and cooperation to veterans in the Capitol area, Mid-

Michigan and Southeast Michigan as well as the Great Lakes Bay Region and the Thumb.

In total, the VCAT program now serves nearly 523,000 veterans in Michigan – 79 percent of the state's veteran population.

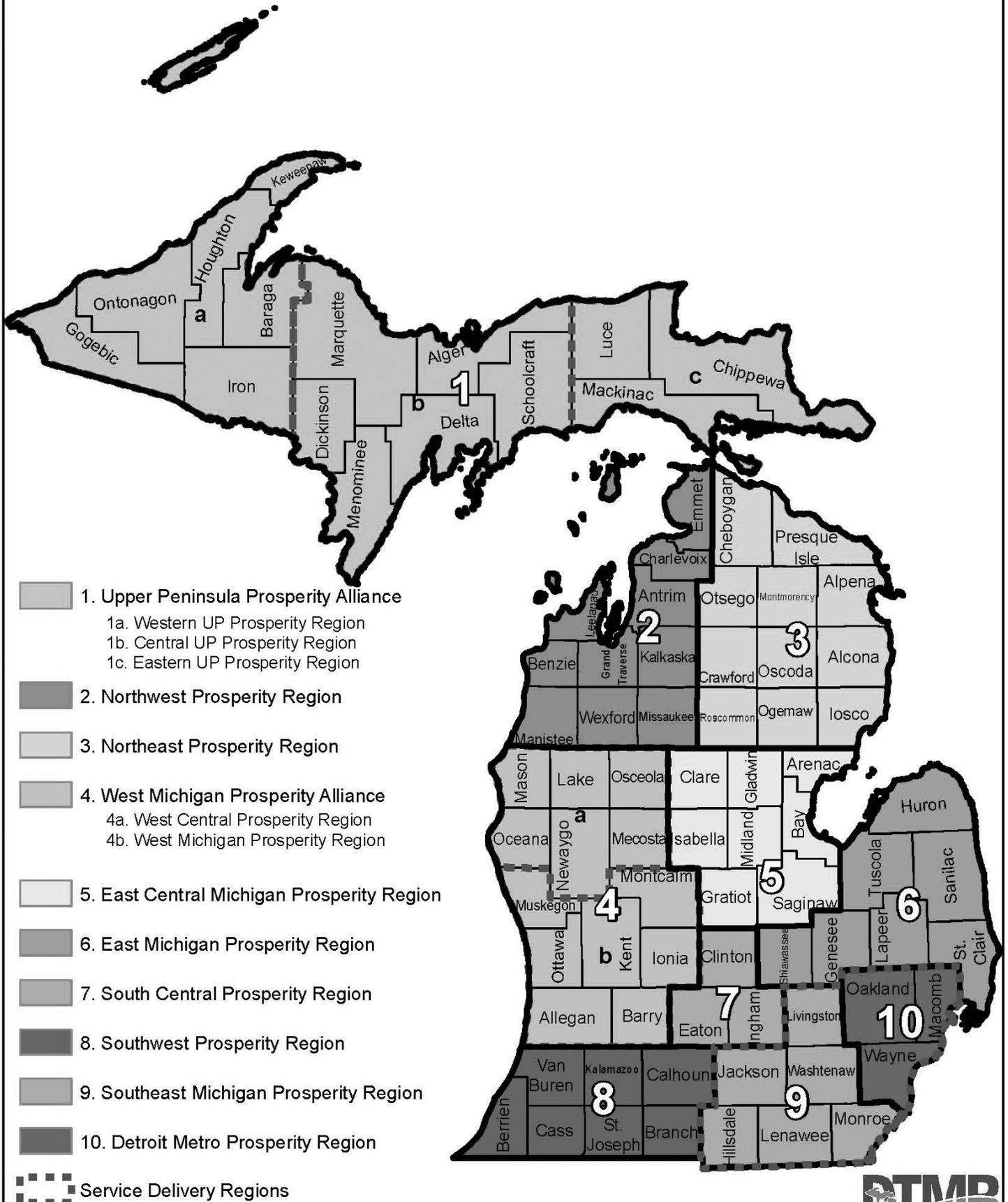
“Each region's VCAT will operate differently, because each region's veterans have their own unique needs,” MVAA Director Jeff Barnes said. “VCATs seek to answer the question, ‘What more can we do to help veterans succeed?’ This program is about finding those opportunities and discovering better solutions through collaboration.”

VCATs also work in conjunction with 800-MICH-VET (800-642-4838) – MVAA's 24/7 hotline that is integrated with Michigan 2-1-1 services – to connect veterans with services at the federal, state and local levels.

The VCAT program is designed to make it easier for veterans to find resources right where they live and work, so that no matter where a veteran starts looking for help, they are able to find the assistance they need and the respect they deserve.



State of Michigan Prosperity Regions





Government Relations & Advocacy

By: Mike Harris

Common Sense Brought to Michigan No-fault

On January 10, 2015, Governor Rick Snyder signed into law House Bill 5636, which prevents auto insurance companies from denying No Fault Personal Injury Protection (PIP) benefits and pain & suffering compensation to people involved in automobile accidents while on wheelchairs and scooters.

The legislation became necessary when State Farm insurance attempted to block payments to a wheelchair user who was involved in an accident with an automobile while crossing the street. The insurance company refusal to pay out benefits was because the person did not have Michigan No-fault auto insurance coverage on his motorized wheelchair.

State Farm's legal position is that the motorized wheelchair is a "motor vehicle," therefore, because the person was uninsured, they are not eligible to receive benefits under Michigan No-fault that someone would normally be entitled to under Michigan law.

State Farm believed that any wheelchair or any motorized scooter should have No-fault insurance just like a car or truck – even though there is presently no insurance company that is even selling such a coverage, including State Farm.

Also, it is State Farm's belief, under Michigan law, treating the person as an "uninsured" motorist would also bar them from suing the at-fault driver (the driver of the car that hit him) for their pain and suffering compensation. But at the same time, it would allow the wheelchair user to be sued by Farm Bureau, the insurance company for the at-fault driver, for his accident related medical costs, lost wages and vehicle damage.

Normally, under the Michigan law, the wheelchair user would be entitled to be covered under the provisions of No-fault because they were struck while crossing the street in their wheelchair. The person would be allowed to file a personal injury protection claim under their No-fault benefits coverage from the at-fault vehicle.

State Farm's legal position in this case was absolutely outrageous. It was good to see that common sense prevails in Lansing.

With the passage of HB 5636, wheelchair users will be eligible for No-fault benefits in the event they are struck by a car or truck while crossing the street. Insurance companies will no longer be able to deny No-fault Personal Injury Protection benefits, medical expense reimbursement and wage loss.

It is disappointing that legislation was necessary in the first place. Insurance companies should be ashamed of themselves for trying to deny coverage to a wheelchair user for an accident that was not their fault. For too long insurance companies have practiced the art of delaying, denying and defending against insurance claims instead of acting in good faith.

This is a victory for many of the most vulnerable members of our society who, because of advanced age or disabilities, must rely on a wheelchair for their mobility and independence. It also stands as a shining example of how lawmakers from both sides of the aisle can come together to fix something that is obviously broken.





The MPVA would like to recognize Woodworth Inc. in support of our 2014 Salute to Veterans Gala!

Woodworth Inc. provides a wide range of heat treatment services through our three facilities. We are currently located in Pontiac and Flint, Michigan, as well as Puebla, Mexico. We will soon be operational in Homer, Michigan.

Woodworth Inc. services include:

- Nanotechnology, specifically Nanowear[®], providing corrosion resistance to the oil and gas industry.
- Ferritic nitrocarburizing (FNC) of brake rotors for the auto industry, resulting in greater performance of the rotor, enhanced durability, noise reduction, and decreased friction. The end result is longer life of the part, allowing extended warranty periods and rust-free brakes.
- Ultrawear[®] is applied to steel components to increase wear resistance. It also increases the material strength properties as well as increasing its resistance to corrosion.

Visit: www.woodworthheattreating.com



By: Bonnie J. Williams, Chapter Service Officer, MPVA

Clothing Allowance Reminder

It is a great time of year to remind veterans about the Annual Clothing Allowance benefits available! Please see the information below for further details:

Who is eligible for an annual clothing allowance?

Veterans who wear or use a qualifying prescribed prosthetic or orthopedic appliance and/or prescription medication for a service-connected disability or skin condition may be eligible for an annual clothing allowance. To be eligible, the appliance must wear or tear clothing, or medication must irreparably damage the veteran's outer garments.

Who is eligible for more than one annual clothing allowance?

Effective December 16, 2011, Veterans who wear or use more than one qualifying prescribed prosthetic or orthopedic appliance and/or prescription medication for more than one service-connected disability or skin condition may be eligible for more than one clothing allowance. To be eligible for more than one clothing allowance, the qualifying appliances must wear or tear more than one type of article of the Veteran's clothing and/ or medications must irreparably damage more than one type of the Veteran's clothing or outer-garment.

What appliances are included?

Appliances such as an artificial limb, rigid brace, wheelchair, crutches or other appliance prescribed for the Veteran's service connected disability. Non-rigid appliances, such as knee, ankle or elbow sleeves are not included. Multiple appliances/devices providing similar compensation for the same disability cause damage to similar clothing items and therefore are considered as one appliance relative to clothing allowance eligibility. Examples include: 1) a hand-

cycle and a wheelchair utilized by a paraplegic; and 2) a running limb and everyday walking limb used by an amputee.

What medications are included?

Any medication prescribed for a service-connected skin condition that causes permanent stains or otherwise damages the Veteran's outer garments.

What types of clothing are included?

Clothing such as shirts, blouses, pants, skirts, shorts and similar garments permanently damaged by qualifying appliances and/or medications are considered in clothing allowance decisions. Shoes, hats, scarves, underwear, socks and similar garments are not included.

Where to file a claim?

If you have previously submitted a claim for disability compensation, send this application (VA Form 10-8678) to the Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service (121) at your local VA Medical Center. If you have not made an application for disability compensation, complete VA Form 21-526 and send to the VA regional office nearest your home.

When should I expect payment of the clothing allowance?

Applications are accepted and processed throughout the year; however, payments for the current annual clothing allowance year are paid out between September 1 and October 31. If you have not received your payment by October 31st, please contact your local Prosthetic and Sensory Aids Service.

*The clothing allowance increase, while effective the date of the law, is not payable until the following August 1st(PL 97-306) \$777.29



Picture Perfect

RT '11
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hubbard and his young daughter join him for the last few steps of a 23 mile march he did with Sgr. First Class Jason Holley and Sgr. First Class Russell Tansey in order to raise funds for the MPVA.

July/August 2011

RT '11
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Michael Harris, MPVA Executive Director, takes a moment to reflect at Oakland Hills Memorial Garden's POW/MIA Memorial site. National POW/MIA Recognition Day is on September 16, 2011.

September/October 2011

RT '14
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



MPVA Vice President, David Peck, takes a moment to test drive an Action Track wheelchair at MPVA's Annual Awareness Day this past spring.

Summer Edition 2014

The Ad Agency

RT '12
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



MPVA Board Director, Teresa Kampfers, gets a golf lesson from Scott Millman of The Simple World of Golf at MPVA's Open House on April 12, 2012.

May/June 2012

RT '12
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hubbard is joined by his daughter, Ali, as he finishes a 23 mile march he completed in support of the MPVA on May 49, 2012.

July/August 2012

RT '12
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Scott Severn, MPVA Sports Director, wins bronze medal in 2012 Paralympic Games

Photo Courtesy of Laura Hobb, Hobb, Conroy Advertising

November/December 2012

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RT '13
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



Melissa Stockwell, 2012 Salute to Veterans Gala Keynote Speaker, shares her compelling story

Photo Courtesy of Bill Lynn

January/February 2013

RT '13
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



This photo was captured by Brenda Wheeler, MPVA Administrative Assistant, while vacationing this past winter at The Horroosassa Springs Wildlife Park in Florida. The park acts as a rehabilitation center for injured or disabled animals that would not be able to survive in the wild.

March/April 2013

RT '13
Rollin' Times from the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America



MPVA Members take time out from playing baseball to present the Plymouth Miracle League with a donation while sharing their outstanding facility during the MPVA's 2013 Membership Picnic

September/October 2013



Sports & Recreation

By: Mike Harris

2014 Detroit Free Press Marathon



The 2014 Detroit Free Press/Talmer Bank Marathon took place on October 19th, 2014 and welcomed 43 hand-cyclists and wheelchair push rim racers to take on the 26.2 mile course that twists through Detroit and Canada. Once again the Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America, along with Level Eleven, were proud sponsors of the Disability Division of the race.

Participants of the wheelchair division were paired with bicycle escorts who were assigned one-to-one with each racer. The addition of the bicyclists seemed to be a hit with the participants who can sometime

encounter problems with their race equipment ranging from flat tires or broken chains that can hinder their race time.

The MPVA had the opportunity once again to greet the Achilles Freedom Team of Wounded Veterans who brought 23 veterans from across the country to participate in this year's marathon.

Tom Davis, who destroyed the course record by almost 10 minutes, was the first hand-cyclists to reach the finish in time of 1:11:47 followed by Alex Hyndman with a time of 1:22:15. Grant Berthiaume

was the first wheelchair racer to reach the finish line with a time of 2:23:59 followed by Andrew Barnhart with a time of 3:36:40.

One of the high-lights at this year's event was the participation Chuck Sketch. Chuck served in the United States Marine Corps, but was discharged because of a brain tumor. In 1997, he lost his sight from brain cancer, and in 1998, his legs were amputated because of blood clots. One doctor told him that he had only three to six months to live. Where have I heard that before only to defy the odds?

He raced in the Marathon with a partner, John Paruch, on a specially designed hand-cycle that is 12 feet long. Dubbed the "Chuck Wagon" after his first name, it has him in the back pedaling with his arms while his partner in front pedals with his legs.

The bike is provided by Ride 2 Recovery, a group based in California that helps veterans ride bicycles across the United States. The Ride 2 Recovery involves wounded veterans of all ages, including many who

served in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. The riders get bicycles that are theirs to keep and participate in cycling tours, which organizers say aid in their healing. Many vets are missing hands, legs or feet, and their cycles have been adapted to suit their needs.

I had the pleasure of serving on the Board of the Detroit Free Press Marathon! I am always impressed by the athletes that participate in this race. Each year, I witness the work that goes into the race from both planning for the event for the dedication and commitment that the athletes go through to complete the marathon.

The Michigan Paralyzed Veterans of America would like to congratulate each and every person who competed in this year's Marathon. We look forward to next year's event and supporting the 2015 Disability Division.



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2015 SALUTE TO VETERANS GALA





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Winter Edition 2015

Valuable Dates for 2015:



Presidents' Day

Office closed February 16, 2015
in observation of holiday



Annual Awareness Day

April 24, 2015
10:30 to 3:30 PM
The Novi Civic Center
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Come and get to know more about the
MPVA's services and the services of our
various sponsors assisting veterans and
people with disabilities this spring! This
event is free to the public! Sponsorships
are available now! To become a sponsor,
contact Jaclyn Kochis at (248) 476-9000
or at jkochis@michiganpva.org for more
details.