



# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *Executive Director's Message*

**WRITTEN BY KORY AMARAL**

Happy Veterans Day to all the veterans who have served our country. We have a couple events to celebrate our veterans which includes our Veterans Day Luncheon on Tuesday, November 5, 2025 at 12:00 PM. Please see Page 5 for more details. If you are at VA Palo Alto for an appointment, stop by the PVA office for lunch.

I personally want to thank everyone who attended our Hawaii Membership Meeting and Events last month. We attended a luau, went surfing, rock climbed, hiked, and more. Please see Page 7 for more details and pictures from the event. We look forward to our visit in 2026! Please let us know if you need anything in the meantime.

On the last Friday of the month, the Chapter and the VA Palo Alto Health Care System's SCI/D Center will be continuing our SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch. Each month we have an education topic pertaining to spinal cord injuries or diseases. The next meeting will be in January 2025 due to the holidays. We will also be changing the meeting to the last Thursday of the month in February 2025. This is also a great way to interact with your fellow veterans. Please refer to Page 2 for more information. Outpatients can join us via Zoom. The link is on the flyer.

As always, I am here for you so please either call or text me at (650) 399-5296 or email me at [amaral@bawpva.org](mailto:amaral@bawpva.org) and I will get back to you in a timely manner.

### *In This Issue*

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE**

**SCI PEER MENTORING PROGRAM - EDUCATION & LUNCH**

**GOODS INSPIRING VETERANS EVERYWHERE (GIVE) AND CAR DONATION PROGRAMS**

**NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNMENT RELATIONS WASHINGTON UPDATE**

**VETERANS DAY LUNCHEON**

**WINTER LUNCHEON**

**NATIONAL PVA'S VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM**

**ABOUT US**

# E-BRIDGE

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## SCI Peer Mentoring Program - Education & Lunch

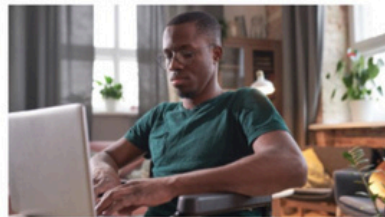
SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. AND SCI/D CENTER AT VA PALO ALTO HEALTH CARE SYSTEM



Please join us the **LAST FRIDAY** of the month in the **SCI Dining Room** at 11:30 AM for a catered lunch and **F-125 Conference Room** at 12:00 PM for education and a peer support activity. This is a monthly program designed for SCI Veterans to gather together and connect in a social and relaxed environment, socially distanced of course!

If you cannot attend in person, or if group is at capacity, you can call into ZOOM from your room or home.

MEETING ID: 835 1426 6166  
PHONE: +1 669 900 9128  
ONLINE: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83514266166>



08/18/210 - 1 of 11/04/2024 10:12:30773

**November Calendar**

- VETERANS DAY LUNCHEON  
NOVEMBER 5
- BARRACUDA GAME  
NOVEMBER 9
- VETERANS DAY  
(OFFICE CLOSED)  
NOVEMBER 11
- NATIONAL SERVICE OFFICER  
(NSO) MONTHLY CHAT  
(VIRTUAL)  
NOVEMBER 12
- BOARD OF DIRECTOR'S  
MEETING  
(VIRTUAL)  
NOVEMBER 12
- FALL BOD MEETING  
(OFFICE CLOSED)  
NOVEMBER 14-19
- BINGO & PIZZA NIGHT  
NOVEMBER 21
- THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY  
(OFFICE CLOSED)  
NOVEMBER 28-29

# E-BRIDGE

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## Goods Inspiring Veterans Everywhere (GIVE) Program

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Chapter is hosting a Clothing Drive in the Palo Alto, CA Office. The Chapter is looking to the community to donate lightly used clothing and other items that will directly benefit a veteran. Through the GIVE Program, we would love to expand the program by bringing in more funds for our veterans.

Clothing Donation Program - GIVE  
<https://www.pva.org/ways-to-give/g-i-v-e-clothing-donation/>

## Car Donation Program

**IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NATIONAL PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA AND THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

Are you tired of having too many cars or is your car getting old and you are looking to donate it? The Car Donation Program is a program in which we accept vehicles and the proceeds go to our veterans. The process is very simple and veterans from Northern California will benefit from the donation.

Car Donation Program  
<https://pva.careasy.org/HOME.html>

**GIVE**

Generosity can be found anywhere. Even the back of your closet.

Donating clothes and other household goods can help improve the lives of injured veterans.

Give GIVE a try and schedule your **FREE** pickup today.  
[www.org/givegoods](http://www.org/givegoods)

**PVA** Paralyzed Veterans of America  
VEHICLE DONATION PROGRAM

Especially now, we need your support.

Donate a car, truck or other vehicle. The process is easy, the pick-up is free, and your gift is tax-deductible.

**Give Today**

# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *National PVA's Washington Update*

**WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S GOVERNEMENT RELATIONS TEAM IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**



### **DOT Levies \$50 Million Fine Against American Airlines for ACAA Violations**

On October 23, the U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT) levied a \$50 million fine against American Airlines for systemic violations of the Air Carrier Access Act (ACAA). The ACAA prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in commercial air travel. The fine was one of the largest ever levied against an airline for ACAA violations. PVA filed three formal DOT complaints alleging violations of the ACAA starting in 2022. DOT cited PVA's complaints as one of the primary reasons for the enforcement action against American.

As a result of the settlement agreement, American will be forced to pay a penalty of \$25 million to the U.S. Treasury. Separately, American must also invest in efforts to improve the safety and dignity of wheelchair users in air travel. Specifically, the airline must: (1) invest in equipment to reduce incidents of wheelchair damage, including wheelchair lifts at 24 or more airports and wheelchair movers at 43 or more airports; (2) invest in a systemwide wheelchair tagging system to reduce incidents of wheelchair delay; and (3) deploy hub control center employees in 2024, 2025, and 2026, to coordinate wheelchair handling on a centralized, systemwide basis at large airports.

In its news release announcing the settlement, DOT stated that it was also reviewing disability-related complaints alleged against other airlines. DOT's actions are a significant victory for passengers with disabilities. We hope that these enforcement efforts will lead to safer and more dignified air travel for passengers with disabilities in the near future.

### **2025 COLA Announced for Veterans and Social Security Benefits**

The Social Security Administration announced on October 10 that Social Security beneficiaries will receive a 2.5 percent cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) increase starting in 2025. The increase is reflective of the effects of inflation. Prior to departing for the current congressional recess, House and Senate lawmakers approved legislation to ensure certain VA compensation programs will receive the same COLA.



# E-BRIDGE

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## Veterans Day Luncheon

SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.



TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5, 2024  
12:00 PM  
BUILDING 7 ROOM E-118



# VETERANS DAY *Luncheon*



For Inpatients and SCI/D Staff

Catered by Armadillo Willys



Sponsored by the PVA



Menu Includes:

- Texas BBQ Ribs
- Texas Lone Star Chicken
- Veggie Burger
- Beans, Salad, and Corn Bread
- Chocolate Cookie
- Drink



Tickets are available from  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
on Tuesday, November 5, 2024  
for SCI/D Staff



VETERANS WHO ARE UNABLE TO LEAVE  
THEIR HOSPITAL ROOM, WILL BE SERVED  
BEDSIDE

### Important Links

[AIR ACCESS 30  
SHARE STORIES ABOUT  
YOUR AIR TRAVEL  
EXPERIENCES AS A  
PASSENGER WITH A  
DISABILITY](#)

[PUBLICATIONS  
VIEW CHAPTER  
NEWSLETTERS,  
ANNUAL REPORTS, PVA  
PUBLICATIONS](#)

[COVID-19 RESOURCES  
VIEW NATIONAL  
PVA'S RESOURCES AND  
UPDATES ON COVID-19](#)

# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *Winter Luncheon*

**SPONSORED BY THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**



Paralyzed Veterans of America,  
Bay Area and Western Chapter's

# WINTER *Luncheon*

**December 10, 2024**  
**12:00 PM**  
**PVA Office**  
**Building 7 Room E-118**  
**For SCI/D Inpatients & Staff**

*Catered by Chipotle*

Tickets are available from  
9:00 AM - 11:00 AM  
on Tuesday, December 10, 2024  
for SCI/D Staff  
Veterans who are unable to leave their hospital  
room, will be served bedside



# E-BRIDGE

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## Veterans Career Program

WRITTEN BY NATIONAL PVA'S VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM TEAM  
IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

### Member Column

THE PARALYED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA AND WESTERN CHAPTER, INC. (BAWPVA) JUST ATTENDED OUR HAWAII MEMBERSHIP MEETING IN OCTOBER 2024.

EVENTS INCLUDED:  
LUAU

ADAPTIVE SURFING  
MOVIE & SNACKS  
ADAPTIVE ROCK CLIMBING  
MEMBERSHIP LUNCH  
ACCESSIBLE HIKE

PLEASE SEE BELOW FOR  
PHOTOS FROM THE EVENT.



## PVA VETERANS CAREER PROGRAM UPDATE

August 2024

### VCP: YOUR PARTNER FOR LIFE



George Thomas is an Air Force veteran and engineer who has been working in the aviation project management field for several years. He first worked with the Veterans Career

Program in September 2021; and was able to reach his goal by securing a career opportunity during that time. George reached out to VCP again in 2024 for assistance in finding a new career and challenge.

George began working on a couple of certification programs while job searching, tailoring resumes, and crafting cover letters. Our Employment Analyst, Rodney Lee, assisted his efforts by sharing resources, discussing courses of action, and conducting networking activities with partnered companies. After securing interviews with both civilian companies and federal agencies, George was offered a role as the Branch Chief Program Manager for the Space Force, National Defense Command. While he has accepted the role, he is currently going through a background process but expects to start his new position in September 2024.

George stated: "Working with VCP has been essential in my career transition to finding a fit in the aviation market which has been daunting. Mr. Lee was instrumental in helping me reframe and set new goals for my career and with continued education along with his support, I was able to win a new role."

### MONTHLY IMPACT

#### 24 Client Placements

- 14 Paid Employment
- 10 Education/Training
- 0 Volunteer
  - 17 Veterans
  - 1 Active Duty
  - 6 Family Members
  - 0 Caregivers
  - 7 PVA Members
- The average salary for the 10 clients in full time employment was \$60,418; and the average income for the 4 clients in part time employment was \$14,720.



### 2024 PVA HEALTHCARE SUMMIT & EXPO



PVA hosted the 12th Annual Healthcare Summit + Expo August 25 – 28 in Anaheim, CA. The Veterans Career Program was honored to attend, assist at the PVA info booth, and learn more about medical and technological advances that improve the quality of life for those with spinal cord injury or disorder.

Summit is an intensive, three-day learning and sharing experience that provides the most updated and vital information, state of the art research, and emerging science, which can be put to immediate use in caring for individuals with spinal cord injury/disease (SCI/D), MS, and ALS. Attendees representing multiple disciplines from the Department of Veterans Affairs as well as private healthcare institutions come together to network, collaborate, and share knowledge. With its collaborative, holistic team approach to improving patient care, Summit is the one "must attend" conference of the year.



[PVA.org/VeteransCareerProgram](https://PVA.org/VeteransCareerProgram)

POWERED BY:



# *E-BRIDGE*

Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area & Western Chapter, INC.



## *About Us*

### **THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA, BAY AREA & WESTERN CHAPTER, INC.**

The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) is a nonprofit, veterans service organization located in Palo Alto, CA. BAWPVA serves spinal cord injured and/or dysfunction veterans located in Northern California, Northern Nevada and the Pacific Islands. BAWPVA is one of 33 chapters of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) located across the United States. Currently, BAWPVA has 533 members, but sees over 1,000 paralyzed veterans at the SCI/D Center at VA Palo Alto Health Care System. The Paralyzed Veterans of America, Bay Area and Western Chapter, INC. (BAWPVA) services provide direct support to the Chapter's programs. BAWPVA sponsors various events and adaptive sports clinics at the VA Palo Alto Health Care System in Palo Alto, CA, VA Northern California Health Care System, VA Central California Health Care System, VA Sierra Nevada Health Care System and VA Pacific Islands Health Care System.

If you are interested in membership, volunteering, or donating please contact us today.

Our office is located at:

3801 Miranda Ave.  
Building 7 Rm. E-118  
Palo Alto, CA 94304

Our Mailing Address is:

P.O. Box 27  
Palo Alto, CA 94304-0027

Phone:

(650) 858-3936 - Office  
(650) 399-5296 - Mobile

Email:

administration@bawpva.org

Website:

bawpva.org

