

HOLIDAY EDITION 2024

THE BULLETIN

Paralyzed Veterans of America
Mid-Atlantic Chapter



Paralyzed Veterans of America

Mid-Atlantic Chapter

FESTIVE FUN

- HOLIDAY BANQUET
- BASS BARGAIN BAZAAR
- ROLLING WITH RANDALL
- MID-ATLANTIC INVITATIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT

Happy Holidays



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Mid-Atlantic Chapter



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OUR PRESIDENT'S WORDS

Jimmy May

It seems like just yesterday we turned the calendar page and rolled into 2024. The holidays signal another turning of the page, and our Mid-Atlantic Chapter is ready to do just that, but not before reflecting on a year of successes and challenges.

Many of us were confronted with health issues, encountered the devastation of a hurricane or were tested by many other challenges throughout the year. Through it all, we reached out to family and friends for support and encouragement. But something else became crystal clear to me this year - the true definition of what it means to be a member of our chapter.

All of us are unified by a common thread, and the strength of that unity can not be broken. I realized that we are family. We are always there for each other. We care about each other and we support each other. Being a PVA member for decades, maybe this was always in the back of my mind. This year it hit me right between the eyes.

Whether you suffered a personal challenge this year or not, I encourage each of you to remember that being a part of the PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter team is meaningful. You are surrounded by more than 800 teammates – an extended family ready to listen, support, assist, share, comfort and encourage.

The holidays are also a time to reflect on what makes us grateful. Being chosen as a leader of our chapter and being surrounded by each of you is very high on my list. What I learned in 2024 will not soon be forgotten. Family, friends, teammates – can never be taken for granted.

Let's roll into 2025, together!

Respectfully,

Jimmy May
President
PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter



Mr. May threw out the first pitch at the Salem Red Sox Military Appreciation Night!



Upcoming Events

DEC. 25	MERRY CHRISTMAS
JAN. 1	HAPPY NEW YEAR
JAN. 8	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEB. 5	BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
FEB. 9	SUPER BOWL PARTY
FEB. 22	BASS BARGAIN BAZAAR
MARCH 14-16	BILLIARDS TOURNAMENT
MAY 1	SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN
JUNE 21	OLD DOMINION BRAWL FISHING TOURNAMENT
JULY 17-22	NATIONAL VETERANS WHEELCHAIR GAMES

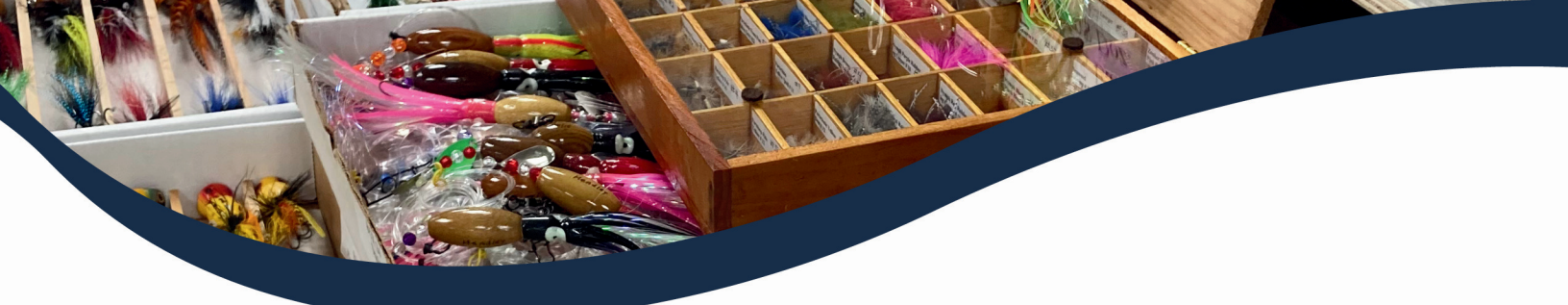


**SAVE
THE DATE**

9th Annual Charles “Chuck” Willis Memorial Wheelchair 9-Ball Championship

Join us from Friday, March 14 – Sunday, March 16 at Diamond Billiards in Midlothian, VA.





BASS BARGAIN BAZAAR

TO SUPPORT PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICAN MID-ATLANTIC CHAPTER

Hopewell American Legion
Post 146
217 E. City Point Rd
Hopewell, VA 23860

Saturday, February 22, 2025
8:00 am - 1:00 pm

Vendor Set-Up

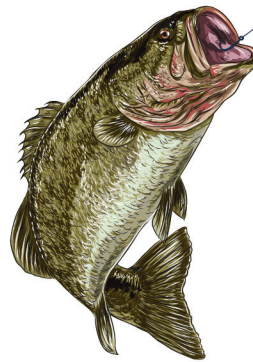
Friday, February 21, 2025
4:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Questions? Give us a call
at 804-378-0017

Admission

Adults - \$3

Kids - Free



Congratulations!

Mid-Atlantic Chapter Member George Holscher has been selected for Para Team USA and will be traveling to Hong Kong to compete in the 2025 IBF Para Bowling World Championships.



HOLIDAY BANQUET

at The Acorn Center in Littleton, NC

The PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter celebrated 2024 with a festive and fun holiday banquet. We experienced a heartwarming performance of Christmas songs from the music students of the Littleton Academy, and their art students designed Holiday cards for our members.

*Thank you to all of the members, partners, family, and friends that attended!
Happy Holidays!*



VIEW THE
HOLIDAY
BANQUET
ALBUM



Mid-Atlantic Chapter

A SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITY FOR CAPABLE HEROES

Board of Directors

Jimmy May - President
Johnny Holland - Vice President
Amy McKee - Secretary
Jeffrey Dolezal - Treasurer
Paul Austin - Director
Arnold Beard - Director
Matthew Cole - Director
Mark Hartney - Director

Staff

Executive Director - Ivan Schwartz
Bookkeeper - Regina Watson-Fields
Communications & Events Coordinator - Julianne Hart

National Service Officers

Chris Custer, Richmond & Hampton 1-804-675-5316
Mike Keba, Roanoke 1-540-897-1707
William Pack, Winston-Salem 1-336-251-0834

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Dedication, passion, and hands-on support. This is what defines the longstanding relationship between ITAC and our Mid-Atlantic Chapter. It is also the heart and soul of what drives ITAC to be a leader in our communities.

The financial support that ITAC provides to drive our chapter programs is invaluable. But it is their family approach that truly stands-out, and this starts at the top with the heartfelt belief of their leadership team – filtering down to each of their team members throughout the Mid-Atlantic and Southeast.

Joined by many ITAC teammates, CEO Jon Loftis is a regular participant in our Up & Down bowling event each fall. His generous commitment to our Veterans is showcased every year, as ITAC has designated our chapter as a fundraising beneficiary of their annual golf tournament, which just celebrated its 30th anniversary.

A special token of our appreciation goes to a trio of passionate members of the ITAC family, Mr. Brian Davis, Ms. Aimee Rhodes and Ms. Tabby Dubuque our points of contact in strengthening our partnership and coordinating ITAC volunteers for our Old Dominion Brawl fishing tournament and many other events.

ITAC is a quite a success story. Started in 1988 with a \$5000 loan, the Industrial Turn Around Corporation began by providing industrial clients with project solutions for their most complex problems. 35 years later, ITAC has developed a nationwide footprint with more than 550 employees operating from 6 offices, with their corporate headquarters right in our backyard in Chester, VA.



Being recognized as PVA's Most Outstanding Chapter in 2024 would not have been possible without the hands-on support of ITAC – a group of wonderful folks who have truly become a part of our family. These words from their mission statement say it all...

“We make life better by loving and serving one another far beyond the walls of our offices and bustling operations of our clients’ sites. We support local charitable organizations and we strive to build a stronger, thriving community together”

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Celebrating Veterans Day



Virginia War Memorial

PVA Mid-Atlantic member Jessie Oliff was honored to represent the U.S. Army and raise its flag celebrating the Veterans Day ceremony at the Virginia War Memorial.

SCAN TO WATCH THE CEREMONY



Virginia Veterans Cemetery Flag Placement

PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Members and other volunteers spent a morning placing flags at the Virginia Veterans Cemetery at Amelia ahead of Veterans Day, honoring those Veterans that we have lost.



Richmond VA Hospital

The PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter delivered “thank you” notes from Virginia students to patients at the Richmond VA hospital in honor of Veterans Day.



8th Annual PVA Mid-Atlantic INVITATIONAL BOWLING TOURNAMENT

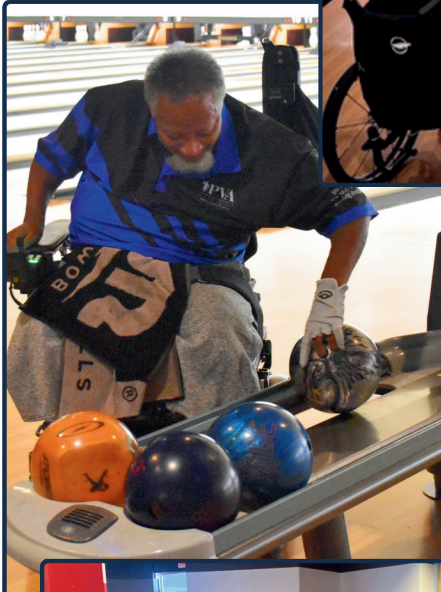
	SCRATCH DIVISION	A DIVISION	B DIVISION
1	David Nelson Jr.	Chris Murphy	Rich Goebel
2	George Holscher	William Ingersoll	Debra Freed
3	Brooks Martin	John St. Andria	Mark Hartney
4	Shawn Beam	Frank Goebel	Anthony Turner
5	Eddy Hutchens	Randall Pope	Chris Bacon
High Game			
	David Nelson Jr.	Chris Murphy	Gary Poole
High Set			
	George Holscher	William Ingersoll	Rich Goebel

Doubles Tournament

- 1st – Shawn Beam and Eddy Hutchens
- 2nd – Jimmy May and Mike Marcheskie
- 3rd – Rich Goebel and Frank Goebel
- 4th – Brooks Martin and Rick Mahaney

Up & Down Tournament

- 1st – John St. Andria
- 2nd – Brad Hughes
- 3rd – Rich Goebel



VIEW ALBUM





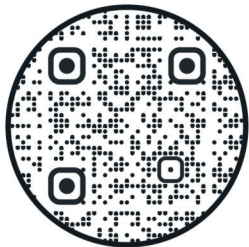
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Eligible veterans can receive an Ekso Indego exoskeleton at NO COST!

Ekso Indego Personal

What is Ekso Indego?

Ekso Indego is an FDA-cleared, powered exoskeleton worn around the waist and legs that enables individuals paralyzed from spinal cord injuries (level T3-L5)* to stand and walk, offering a new level of independence.



Scan with your phone for more information on how you could receive your own Ekso Indego Personal.

Getting Veterans with SCI Back on Their Feet

A recently revised VA policy allows Ekso Indego to be issued to qualified veterans at no cost.**

- Walk at home and in your community
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Enjoy eye-level conversations again



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An evaluation by your provider at a SCI/D center is required to determine eligibility for use of the Ekso Indego Personal device



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* For full indications for use, visit: www.eksobionics.com/indications-for-use/
** A screening process through the VA is required to determine eligibility for use of the Ekso Indego Personal device

IT TAKES COURAGE...

Turning Vulnerability into Strength

by Brenda Guevara - PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Member



In October, I had the incredible opportunity to represent the Mid-Atlantic Chapter at the PVA Women's Empowerment Retreat in Long Beach, California. Joined by Kathy Jones, another Mid-Atlantic member, we embraced the theme of the event – Rosie the Riveter, which represents the empowerment of women during World War II. We discussed many topics including the rich history of PVA, reaching people and making connections through social media, making a difference in our communities through advocacy, and my favorite topic, embracing our vulnerabilities and owning our own personal stories.

Vulnerability can be a subject which many of us are very uncomfortable with. Having a disability on top of the problems of everyday life can make life seem even more challenging. Vulnerability is often interpreted as weakness, but that is definitely a misconception. With the right attitude and mindset, vulnerability can truly be a gateway towards strength, perseverance and courage. Each of us have our own unique story that defines who we are. By taking ownership of our own story, we display pride in who we are and appreciate ourselves for the challenges we have overcome in becoming the person we are today. We need to keep in mind that these challenges are merely a short chapter in our lives, not the entire book. Our stories can inspire others who are dealing with similar situations and could help us to cope by realizing that we are not alone - also providing us with the emotional support to know that it's worth it to keep pushing forward. The delivery of our story can also make a huge impact, by being very open, honest and vulnerable, and acknowledging the good that can come from every situation. This showcases the reality of how one can become stronger and more courageous.

Becoming strong through vulnerability may take some practice. It requires you to be kind to yourself and letting your vulnerability be seen. It allows us to be our authentic self without the constant fear of having to please others. It can work in helping to process our emotions rather than pushing them to the side. Acceptance is an incredible tool, allowing us to embrace ourselves for who we are, not being scared or intimidated by how we are viewed by others.

“You either walk inside your story and own it or you stand outside your story and hustle for your worthiness” is an excellent quote from Brene Brown. By having the confidence in ourselves, fighting for the approval of others is never a thought.



Giving yourself time to recover and heal is also an important factor in developing strength. We have to allow ourselves the time to process our feelings, overcome challenges, and learn from our experiences. It's not something that will automatically happen in a short period of time, so we have to all allow ourselves the time to grow and evolve as individuals as we are coping with our challenges.

Vulnerability allows us to build stronger connections with others, because we are allowing ourselves to be authentic and open, while sharing our experiences with others. We become resilient and brave when we allow ourselves to be seen and heard regardless of the judgment of others. Pushing past these fears is what helps us grow stronger, one step at a time.

I think it's very important that this topic is shared with both men and women of our Mid-Atlantic Chapter because we are all strong individuals who should be proud of ourselves. Our challenges do not define us or make us any less important. With our courage and our accomplishments, we should be proud of how far we have come. By going easy on ourselves and allowing time to heal, we can thrive and persevere, despite suffering through a rough chapter in our lives.



Rolling with Randall



Who is Randall?

Randall Pope is a U.S. Army Veteran and proud member of the Paralyzed Veterans of America - Mid-Atlantic Chapter, who is passionate about helping his fellow Veterans.

Why?

30 years ago, Randall was diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis and wants to promote awareness of MS, while sharing his experience of living a full and active life.

What?

A week-long 250 mile wheelchair journey from Newport News, VA to The Pentagon, with highlighted stops at college campuses throughout Virginia!

How?

You can empower Randall's journey with a tax-deductible donation to support Veterans with spinal cord injury and disease, MS and ALS

Go to: pvamidatlantic.org/rollingwithrandall or SCAN THE QR CODE BELOW.



SCAN TO DONATE



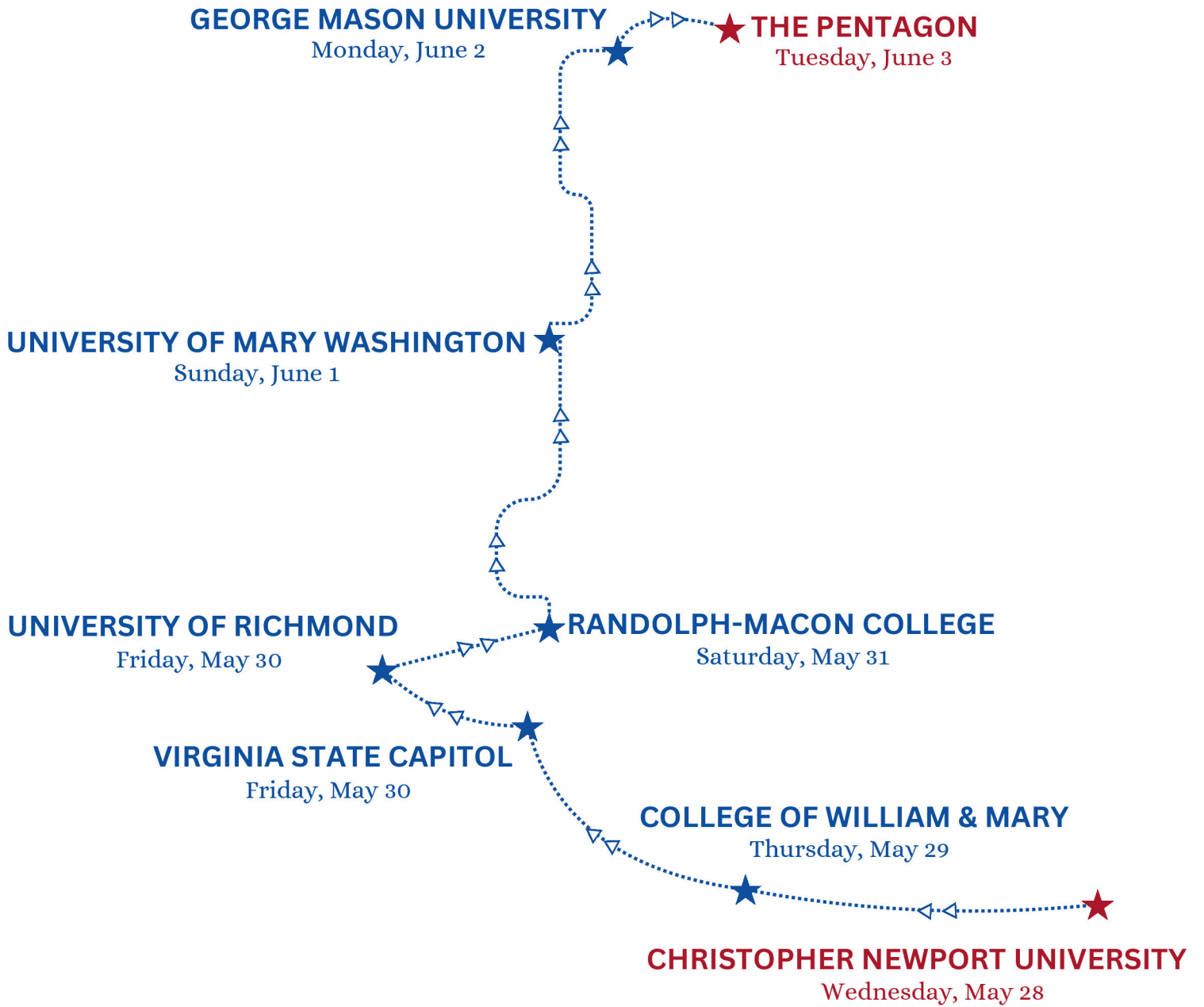
“ I have fought MS for 30 years and nothing will stop me from completing this ride, please get on board, and we will all cross the finish line at The Pentagon together!”

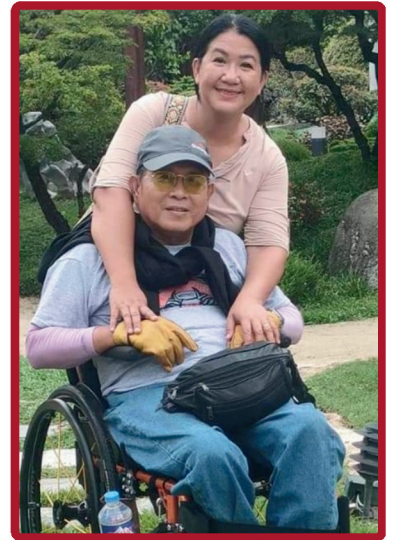
Randall Pope, U.S. Army Veteran



6 day / 250 Mile Wheelchair Journey

to benefit the PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter and raise awareness of Multiple Sclerosis





Out and About Mid-Atlantic Style





A MESSAGE FROM OUR RICHMOND

National Service Officer

Hello PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Members,

As the days darken earlier and the temperatures continue to fall, I hope you are all staying warm & enjoying the holiday season filled with plenty of food, family & friends. It's hard to believe we are approaching the end of 2024 – what an eventful year! I wanted to share with you some recent changes VA has made to the Automobile Adaptive Equipment (AAE) Program & how this may impact you if you have utilized this program.

The Office of General Council reviewed the AAE Program & VHA Handbook 1173.4 and determined changes were necessary. Since policy could not be updated until regulations were updated, the Office of General Council replaced VHA Directive 2011-046 effective July 17, 2024.

This VHA Directive listed adaptive equipment and reimbursable amounts, but was determined to be “inconsistent with the definition of adaptive equipment” because it listed “basic & standard equipment”. *For those seeking clarification, the term “adaptive equipment” refers to devices that are either part of or added to a vehicle to ensure it is safe for use by veterans with disabilities.*

New Rules on Vehicle Adaptations

While veterans who are entitled to the AAE Program can still have 2 vehicles modified in a 4-year period, one of the most notable changes pertains to the ownership of vehicles equipped with adaptive equipment.

Under the new rules, veterans who have prescribed adaptive equipment on their vehicles must maintain that equipment on record for a full four-year period. The veteran cannot trade in or dispose of the adaptive equipment on record unless the date approved meets or exceeds 4 years.

Even if a veteran only has one vehicle on record, this new rule still applies & this four-year timeline is crucial; if a veteran wishes to dispose of or trade in their vehicle, the VA will not approve such actions unless they can demonstrate that the situation was beyond the veteran's control. Situations qualifying for exceptions include instances of fire, theft, damage, or if the cost of repairs is prohibitive. Additionally, changes in a veteran's physical condition that necessitate a change in vehicle or equipment may also be considered.

REMINDER Adaptive equipment **must be prescribed** or VA will not pay or reimburse for the adaptive equipment. VA will now pay or reimburse based on the amount(s) listed on VA's AAE Schedule. It is always best to consult with Prosthetics Department with any questions about eligibility, authorization for reimbursement, eligibility dates, etc. Another key change involves the depreciation of used adaptive equipment. According to 38 CFR 17.158, any adaptive equipment that is more than one year old from its date of manufacture will experience a depreciation rate of 20% per year. This depreciation will be calculated from the time the equipment was installed as new on a vehicle until it is reinstalled for reimbursement or payment purposes, covering a period of up to five years. **It's important to note that, after five years, labor costs associated with the installation or repair of adaptive equipment will not be reimbursed.**

While there are some uncertainties surrounding these new changes such as: the varying costs of parts & labor depending on locality and whether the veteran will now incur costs for items no longer covered, PVA remains an advocate and will be available to assist with issues that may arise. By understanding these new regulations, you can be better prepared to navigate your options and ensure that you receive the benefits you deserve. As always, if you have any questions or need assistance regarding your adaptive equipment needs, please contact your local VA Prosthetics Department and PVA National Service Officer.

Wishing you & your loved ones a Merry Christmas & a happy, healthy New Year!

Chris Custer





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PVA Mid-Atlantic Chapter Member Survey

- ★ We strive to improve, and communication is a big part of that.
- ★ Please take our brief 2-minute survey.
- ★ Your input will be vital and is much appreciated.



SCAN TO TAKE THE SURVEY

or visit www.pvamidatlantic.org/forms and click MEMBER SURVEY