

The Desert Oracle



A Member Chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans of America

May-June 2009 Vol. 11 Issue 4

Memorial Day, originally called Decoration Day, is a day of remembrance for those who have died in our nation's service.

There are many stories as to its actual beginnings, with over two dozen cities and towns laying claim to being the birthplace of Memorial Day. There is also evidence that organized women's groups in the South were decorating graves before the end of the Civil War: a hymn published in 1867, "Kneel Where Our Loves are Sleeping" by Nella L. Sweet carried the dedication "To The Ladies of the South who are Decorating the Graves of the Confederate Dead". While Waterloo N.Y. was officially declared the birthplace of Memorial Day by President Lyndon Johnson in May 1966, it's difficult to prove conclusively the origins of the day. It is more likely that it had many separate beginnings; each of those towns and every planned or spontaneous gathering of people to honor the war dead in the 1860's tapped into the general human need to honor our dead, each contributed honorably to the growing movement that culminated in Gen Logan giving his official proclamation in 1868. It is not important who was the very first, what is important is that Memorial Day was established. Memorial Day is not about division. It is about reconciliation; it is about coming together to honor those who gave their all.

Memorial Day was officially proclaimed on 5 May 1868 by General John Logan, national commander of the Grand Army of the Republic, in his General Order No. 11, and was first observed on 30 May 1868, when flowers were placed on the graves of Union and Confederate soldiers at Arlington National Cemetery. The first state to officially recognize the holiday was New York in 1873. By 1890 it was recognized by all of the northern states. The South refused to acknowledge the day, honoring their dead on separate days until after World War I (when the holiday changed from honoring just those who died fighting in the Civil War to honoring Americans who died fighting in any war). It is now celebrated in almost every State on the last Monday in May (passed by Congress with the National Holiday Act of 1971 (P.L. 90 - 363) to ensure a three day weekend for Federal holidays), though several southern states have an additional separate day for honoring the Confederate war dead: January 19 in Texas, April 26 in Alabama, Florida, Georgia, and Mississippi; May 10 in South Carolina; and June 3 (Jefferson Davis' birthday) in Louisiana and Tennessee.

Traditional observance of Memorial day has diminished over the years. Many Americans nowadays have forgotten the meaning and traditions of Memorial Day. At many cemeteries, the graves of the fallen are increasingly ignored, neglected. Most people no longer remember the proper flag etiquette for the day. While there are towns and cities that still hold Memorial Day parades, many have not held a parade in decades. Some people think the day is for honoring any and all dead, and not just those fallen in service to our country.

Arizona Chapter, Paralyzed Veterans of America

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The views expressed in the articles of the Desert Oracle are the opinions of the author and not necessarily the opinion of the AZPVA. Any article not attributed to an individual / group was compiled with available information by APVA staff/members. The Desert Oracle **does** encourage our readers to submit their articles, interests and/or rebuttals.



The Election process has begun and you should have a ballot in your mailbox by the time this newsletter reaches you. A few minutes are all it takes to fill out the ballot and send the Chapter your opinions.

The March BOD Meeting in Marana was a great success and the food was excellent as always. We would like to thank Frank and Jonel from the In Country Vietnam Veterans who not only did all the cooking but provided most of the food. It was great to see the many members who took the time to participate in the meeting and help the Chapter to make this one of our largest events each year. Only the Prescott Barbecue produces as many members at a meeting. The Spring event in Prescott will be held on June 20th at the Prescott VAMC, and we hope you will take the time to come join us for great barbecue provided by Clarence Threatt of Farmers Insurance. We are expecting another terrific day with a large turnout of members to enjoy the weather and some good conversation. A note to those who feel they can cook: we will be having a pie baking contest. There will be gift card prizes for the three best homemade pies. Good Luck!

The Chapter was busy through April as the Office Manager Patricia Beran and the Phoenix NSO Office Administrative Assistant Jackie Berkshire provided a full day on April 15th at the Phoenix VAMC; in celebration of PVA Awareness Week. They ensured a large number of volunteers, free Starbucks coffee, muffins, cookies and many novelty items to give away for those who visited our booth.

The response from the hospital staff and patients was overwhelmingly positive and we would like to extend our thanks to them for all their work.

The Chapter was invited by the PVA in a pilot project at the Phoenix International Raceway April 17th & 18th. We spent a couple of long days but managed to sell 1600 NASCAR Day Pins. The weather got hot but our volunteers and the good people from MCG Sports, Mindy and Derek put some major effort into selling these pins. If PVA decides to return next Spring, this would be a great fundraiser for the Chapter.

We have been working with a coalition building program that goes by the name Living Well with a Disability. The efforts are to identify the problem and develop feasible programs and educational tools to prevent substance abuse in adults with disabilities. If you would like a chance to win a \$50 grocery gift card, call the office and have us send you a questionnaire. There is also an option to be a part of a study group if you choose to on the survey. The study wants a large veteran input and you do not need prior experience to help out.

Recently we told you that our Chapter Grant from National PVA has been cut. We have been informed that it is very doubtful that we will be getting any additional funding anytime in the near future. So the Chapter will have to expend more effort on a tighter budget to get more done and do fundraising. One idea to cut cost is to send the newsletter via email. If you are willing please send us your current e mail address to azpva@azpva.org. The savings would be about \$1.30 per newsletter on average. Also Mr. Leys wrote a suggestion and you can read it on the top of page 10. Presently we are attempting to explore different options that will provide a regular income to the Chapter.

Summer is coming and so are your ballots;

be careful and please VOTE

.....Peter R Quinn

Protocol for Van Modifications

For Veterans who are in receipt of an approved VA Form 21-4502, Application for Automobile or Other Conveyance and Adaptive Equipment, the VA Regional Office approves the automobile grant for veterans.

Prosthetics processes the documentation for automobile adaptive equipment.

Operational equipment reimbursement e.g., automatic transmission, power brakes, power steering, hand controls, modifications of the driver's area, etc. can only be provided for veterans who are eligible and licensed.

No more than two vehicles can be reimbursed in a 4-year period. The establishment of the four year period begins on the date the adaptive equipment is authorized. If the veteran already has two vehicles of record, the veteran must show proof of disposition for at least one vehicle to be eligible for reimbursement

For another adapted vehicle to be within the two vehicle limitation. These vehicles may not be sold or given to a spouse, family member or other party residing in the same household as the veteran, or transferred to a business owned by the veteran.

Air conditioning may be furnished to eligible beneficiaries (4502 recipients), whether or not they are capable of operating the vehicle, when prescribed by a physician. Air conditioning may be considered for veterans, when prescribed by a physician, who suffer from the following conditions:

1. Spinal cord injuries.
2. Neurological diseases when the condition of the individual is substantially worsened by
3. exposure to heat and humidity.

Amputees who suffer from regulatory dysfunction secondary to a loss of body surface when this equipment is necessary to maintain the body core temperature within the normal range.

Electric Door openers may be furnished to eligible wheelchair-bound veterans who require van modifications provided they are licensed to drive independently.

Veterans who are transported as passengers do not require this modification because an able-bodied driver accompanies them at all times.

A raised roof may be furnished to eligible veterans who use wheelchairs to prevent the danger of head bumping while the vehicle is in motion. In general, Veterans who have a seating height of 52 inches or more will require this modification.

Raised doors may be furnished to eligible wheelchair bound veterans who do not have sufficient head clearance to avoid bumping the bottom of the upper door jam. In general, this would include wheelchair bound veterans who sit higher than 49 inches and who are unable to lean forward to clear the door jam and resume normal sitting position.

This Article was written by Christine Pelland Prosthetics Chief Phoenix VAMC. To contact the Phoenix Prosthetics department call (602)-277-5551 x6714. Note* the term 4502 only refers to Service Connected veterans.

**The Surprise Roadrunners
Wheelchair Basket Ball
Team Representatives
And the Paseo Hills Elementary
School
Team Up!**

The APVA along with The Surprise Roadrunners Wheelchair Basketball Team were ask to put on a limited exhibition for the students at Paseo Hills Elementary School in the Deer Valley School District. "Limited" meaning they had 45 minutes with Coach Richards and his Physical Education class. Diego Suazo, Jared Monroe and Angela, represented the Team. They spoke to the kids answered their questions, explained the different levels of spinal cord injuries, and then got out on the Gym floor and blew them away with their expertise in handling basketballs and chairs at the same time.



The School was promoting a week on Kids with Disabilities, as they have one student, Jordon that uses a chair and is not feeling comfortable being different.

The kids, the Coach and the Team, all using wheelchairs, participated in relay races, obstacle courses, and a couple of hoop throws. In all, this was a very informative and fun demonstration.

Diego and Jared also talked with the student's father, giving him ideas, suggesting different sports groups to contact that his son can gain strength and more self confidence in his abilities.

**The Arizona Chapter Volunteers
at the
Phoenix NASCAR
Race**

On Saturday and Sunday the April 17th and 18th the City of Avondale sponsor the BIG NASCAR Race at the Phoenix International Raceway. The National PVA also sponsors a car driven by Richard Petty. The Arizona Chapter was asked to come out and sell pins for the Richard Petty Foundation. And we were right on top of that!



Front row: National Director, Art Hardy from Window Rock, AZ. Peter Quinn, APVA Exec. Director, Benjamin Garcia, President, APVA
Back Row: daughter of Star, Star, Art Hardy Jr. Drew Blevins, Rusty Lassiter, Fred Marks, and Dawn Quinn.

In two days the Chapter Volunteers sold over 1600 "NASCAR Day" pins at \$5.00 a piece. Do the math, outstanding job guys.



Paralyzed Veterans Awareness Week 2009

The Arizona Chapter celebrated PVA Awareness Week at the Phoenix VAMC this year. Our usual celebration for PAW week is our annual Barrier Buster Luncheon and Awards Event. Due to the recession and our corporate sponsors not willing or freezing their charitable contributions, we scaled down and took our efforts to the VA close to the SCI Center in a lobby. We set up two tables with the help of the VA people. Starbucks at Park Central Mall donated hot Coffee, Creamer and Cups. Costco donated Muffins and Cookies. We stacked our tables with magazines, pens, and other trinkets donated by the DAV. We held a raffle, We had people fill out info surveys and maybe win \$50.00 in groceries. Five of our Board of Directors volunteered for Event. As you see is some of these pictures



Jackie Berkshire NSO office and Pat Beran APVA Chapter office setting up the information table.



you may recognize most. We served over Twelve dozen muffins, lost count of coffee and over 10 dozen chocolate chip cookies. We are hoping that every one we met had as much fun as we did and took away a little more information about our organization than they have had before. Thanks All!!

Towards the end of the afternoon Michael Wilson of the NSO Office takes time out of his busy schedule to drop by . From left to right are Diego Suazo, Gordon Moye and Peter Quinn.

Congratulations are in order to Michael and wife Guadalupe on their new baby girl Emilia.



Paula Pedene stopped by the table for a chat with John Tuzzolino and Diego Suazo



The Board of Directors Meeting And Marana Barbeque

March 20th 2009, was our annual Board Meeting and BBQ held at the Ora Mae Harn Park in Marana, AZ. Frank and Jonel did the cooking again this year. They are the best cooks! They brought the meat and buns and most of the condiments. Our members brought side dishes and deserts and plenty of great appetites.

Each year at this event we always get to meet new people. This is one of the fastest growing BBQs that we put on. We were also excited about how many people joined in at the BOD meeting and participated in discussions. John Lawrence was welcomed back as a Board Member, and some new event/fundraisers were tossed around.

Marco Rossi of the NSO office presented to the Chapter artwork created by Marie Beilsmith out of quarters representing the 50 States. Mrs. Robert Beilsmith is somewhat famous as she is one of the originals in the book "Quadalajara, The Utopia That Once Was" written by one of our own members Jack Tumidajski. If any of you have not read this book, it should be on your **must read** list.



Karla Tuzzolino and Frank Rigo at the side dish and desert table.



Karen Gialle and the new Tucson Mascot

A few glimpses of our BOD members and guests as people gathered for the meeting



Berkshire's Bits & Pieces -----

1) **Clothing Allowance** is based on certain service connected disability(s). Non-service connected veterans are not eligible for Clothing Allowance. Clothing Allowance is paid annually on August 31 or soon after, sometime in the beginning of September.

RH Insurance of \$10,000 is offered only within a 2-year period after a NEW service connected disability is granted. If you're combined total is under 100%, you'll have to pay premiums; but if you're 100%, you may request waiver of premiums. **Again, this is only available within a 2-year period of being granted a NEW service connection for a particular disability.**

Criteria for a widow to receive burial and plot reimbursement:

veteran must have been in receipt of VA compensation for a service connected disability or was in receipt of VA pension

Note: If veteran's death is caused by his service connected disability, the amount for burial will be \$1200 and \$300 for the plot.

If veteran's death was NOT caused by his service connected disability, the burial amount will be \$300 and \$300 for the plot.

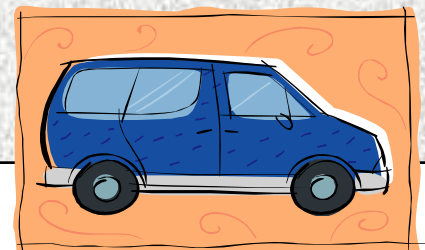
Also, note that **any veteran can be buried at a National Cemetery at no charge** for the plot (in that case, obviously, there would be NO \$300 reimbursement for the plot).

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A LETTER TO ALL MEMBERS..... from Walter Leys

To all APVA Members:

In the last Desert Oracle Newsletter, Chapter Grants we cut, so our Chapter got \$3571.80 less each month.

I went over our budget at home. If we all give \$10.00 per month, it would help the Chapter a great deal. If you can't give \$10 try \$5.00.

We have 541 members. The PVA has helped all of us. Now we can give and help the Chapter

Thank you for your time.

2009 Calendar of Events

When	What	Where	Who
June 20th 2009	BOD Meeting BBQ & Pot Luck "Home made Pie" Contest With Prizes	Prescott VAMC, Prescott, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
July 9th 2009	BOD Meeting Phoenix AZPVA Office	8126 N 23rd Ave, Ste J Phoenix, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
October 2009	BOD Meeting And BBQ & Pot Luck	Marana, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
December 2009	APVA Holiday Party	Phoenix, AZ	Pat 602-244-9168
January 2010	The New Year		

Any questions, or if you would like to add to the calendar please call the office at
602-244-9168

Happy Birthday May - June



Leslie Coulter	Robert Peterson	Benjamin Ortiz, Jr.	Lee Bachman
Catherine Baker	Michael Hudson	Ned Prouse, Sr	Walter Stockton, Jr
Michael Brookhouser	Ed Koziol	Darrin Spies	Gerald Jakimczyk
Ronald Trozzi	Allen Topel	Gerald Maloney	Michael Smyth
Michael Henderson	John Infanti	Dr. Richard Malena	Jimmy Carter
Richard Wall	Edward Hutchison	Jerry Daniel	Paul Martell
John Gerving	Frances Huynh	Larry Lattomus	Ronald Feczko
Pamela Foley	Bernie Sinor	James Barnard	George Banbury
Maurice Valeriano	Christopher Idle	Kenneth Carlson	Benjamin Garcia
Gatano Gabriel	Michael Supulver	Kimberly Eoff	Gordon Woodward
David Janey	Kenneth Bower	Richard Riethmayer	Rodney Thomas
Shelly Powell	George Lovell	George Bohnert	Paula Barns
Frank Bailey	Norma Rodriques	Joseph Thompson	Donna Newberry
Richard Gardner	Joe Finger	Stanley Czerniewski	Jerry Porter
Johnny Minton	Kim Griffith	Kenneth Jones	Ronnie Sill
Brian Perry	George Stewart	Kenneth Hunter	Kenneth Briefer
Roy Button	Stephen Gambetta	Paul Rodriguez	Linda Hixson
Jerry LeClair	Eugene Murphy	Robert Heup	Stephan Turuc
Norman Corpstein	Thomas Stillwell	Arthur Damsky	Charles Howlett
Nancie Scalercio	Mark Leonard	Dale Puhle	Dee Curry
Randall Britton	Stanley Kinard	Joseph Chitty	Colleen Cretsinger
Marian Chavez	Chuck Ameda	Kathryn Glaze	

MEMBERSHIP REPORT from The Arizona Chapter

The Arizona Chapter voting membership stands at **544** as of May 2009.

National and APVA records show our voting membership as:

303- Service Connected 241 - Non-Service Connected

The Arizona Chapter encourages each of our members to contact the Chapter and let us know how you are doing, and if we can help you in any way. If you know of any of our members who have passed away, or if you have an address/phone change, please contact the Chapter as soon as possible. Also, if you would like to receive the Desert Oracle Newsletter by e-mail, please call or e-mail the office with your e-mail address.

Do you know a veteran with spinal cord dysfunction who isn't a member of the APVA?

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