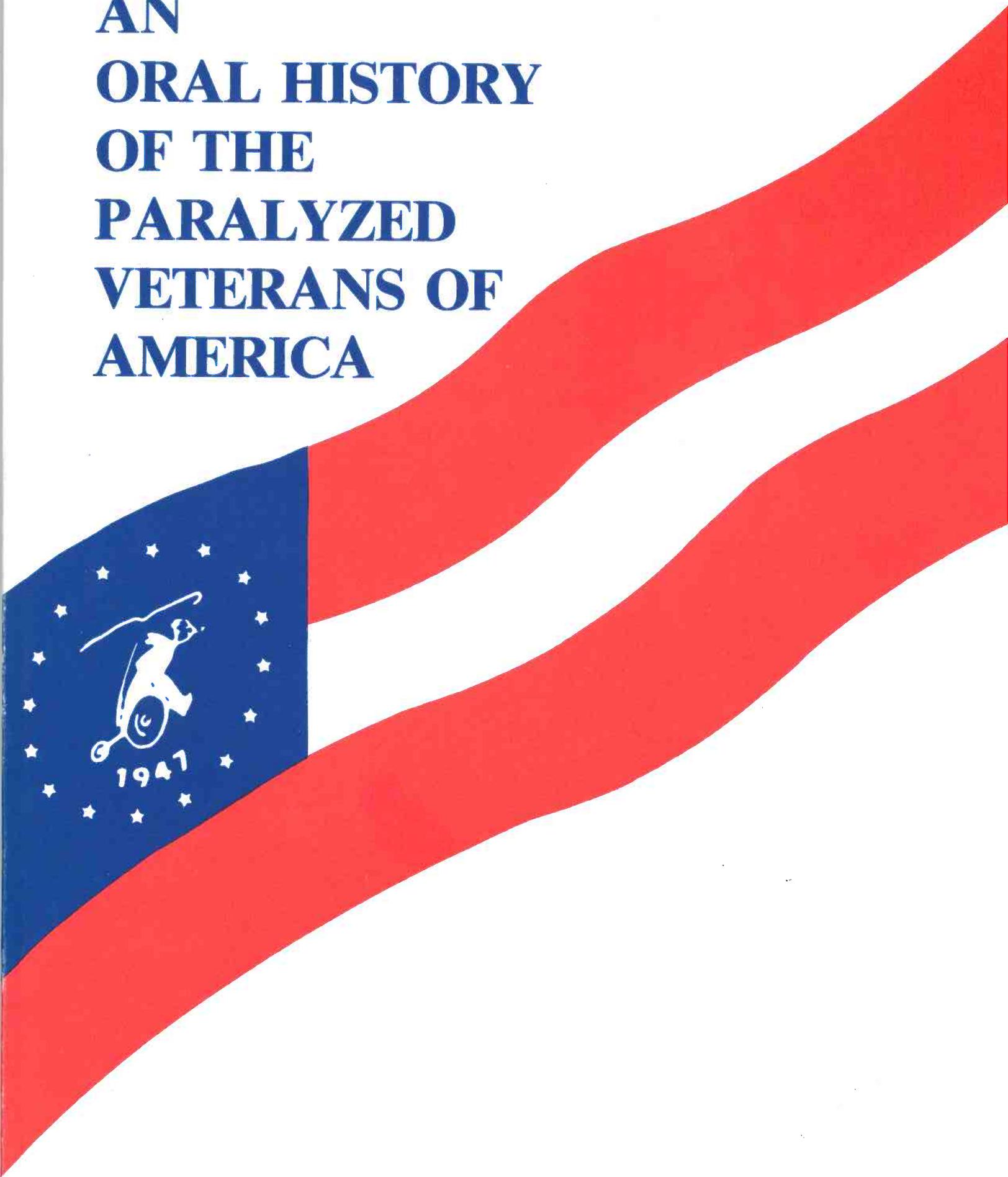


**AN
ORAL HISTORY
OF THE
PARALYZED
VETERANS OF
AMERICA**



**AN ORAL HISTORY OF
THE PARALYZED VETERANS OF AMERICA**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This account of the history of the Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) is based principally on the oral recollections of participants in major events in the life of the national organization. There will, of course, be oversights: people who should have spoken, events that should have been included. But every attempt has been made to present accurately the story of both the PVA and its efforts to improve the quality of life of the spinal cord injured.

The project was directed by Orland Heath under a contract with the Paralyzed Veterans of America. A word of thanks go to the following people who graciously contributed to this PVA oral history project: Capt. Jack Barleon, Howard Bennett, Don Broderick, Les Burghoff, Michael Burns, Wayne Capson, Cliff Crase, Frank DeGeorge, Mike Delaney, Stefan Florescu, Bill Green, Pat Grissom, George Hohmann, Verle Hull, Ed Jasper, John Lancaster, Ralph Markward, Bob Moss, Marc Orr, Larry Ross, Carlos Rodriguez, Jack Sanders, Ed Santillanes, Fred Smead, Jim Smith, and Harold Stone.

The capitalization of nouns and titles in this document, other than those in quotations taken from written sources, conforms to a major style of editing as set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style* of the University of Chicago Press.

Contents

	Page
Acknowledgments	iii
I. The Roots of the National Paralyzed Veterans of America	1
The Spinal Cord Injured Veteran in the Mid-1940s	1
West Coast	2
East Coast	3
First Local Organizations	4
Need for a National Organization	6
II. The First Years	9
Public Law 702	11
<i>Paraplegia News</i>	12
First Annual Convention	13
Formation of the National Paraplegia Foundation	14
Early Conventions	14
III. Years of Survival	17
Eisenhower Years	18
Mid-South Leaves PVA	19
California and Mid-South Rejoin PVA	19
Farkas Affair	20
IV. Years of Growth	21
Improved Funding	22
Governance	23
Restructuring the National Organization	24
V. PVA and the VA	27
The <i>Life</i> Magazine Article	29
The New Relationship	32
National Service Program	33
VI. The Charter Fight	65
First Success in the House of Representatives	65
Outwitting Emanuel Celler	67
Charter Granted	67
VII. PVA Fund Raising	69
Doehla Program	69
PVA/EPVA, Inc.	70
AFRS	71
Successful Fund Raising	71
VIII. Technology and Research Foundation	73
Spinal Cord Research Foundation	76

IX. PVA as Advocate	77
X. PVA's Washington, D.C. Office	81
PVA Today	82
Afterword	85
Major Events in the History of the National PVA	87
Chapter Roster (1947-1984)	89
PVA Presidents	91
Recipients of PVA's Speedy Award	93
<i>Paraplegia News</i> Editors	95
PVA National Conventions	97
Notes	99

I. The Roots of the National Paralyzed Veterans of America

The appeal was made in November 1946 by Gilford S. Moss, secretary of the Paralyzed Veterans Association Vaughan Chapter: For the purpose of promoting the interests of all paraplegic veterans, "each paraplegic center elect one or two delegates to represent it at a meeting at which all centers be represented."¹ The delegates, furthermore, were to be authorized to: "Consider and adopt a set of laws and the Articles of Incorporation for a national organization; determine upon a state in which to incorporate; elect national officers in accordance with the agreed upon bylaws, and; determine upon a token payment of dues to the national organization to permit it to function."² Moss' letter concluded with the observation that a national organization should be established as soon as possible because with the end of the war the plight of the paralyzed veterans was losing the interest of the American people.

Twenty-four years later Gil Moss recalled his additional motivation for a national organization: "Because we were so seriously disabled, we felt that the other Veterans' Organizations could not give us adequate attention. In short, we would be swallowed-up and forgotten. Harold Scharper, Al Gore, Bob Dinsmore, and I, as well as a number of other fellows, felt that we should attempt to get all of the various veteran paraplegics together."³

The Spinal Cord Injured Veteran in the Mid-1940s

The roots of the national Paralyzed Veterans of America extend into the Second World War era. An estimated 2,500 spinal cord injured veterans who survived the initial trauma of their injury returned to the United States to face a life expectancy of from one to five years.⁴ The high mortality rate of the spinal cord injured prior to the war contributed to the limited research and medical understanding of spinal cord injury treatment and stymied the establishment of a uniform system of care.

Many of the spinal cord injured veterans were first received at military hospitals on the East and West coasts where it was intended for them to be given specialized care. In the East, spinal cord injured veterans were brought to "a string of hotels on the boardwalk at Atlantic City [New Jersey], commandeered by the military and called England General Hospital. . . . England General was phased out in March 1946."⁵

On the West Coast, the injured veterans were brought to McCaw Army Hospital in Walla Walla, Washington; DeWitt Army Hospital in northern California; Hammond Army Hospital in Modesto, California; and Bushnell Army Hospital in Brigham City, Utah. Eventually the spinal cord injured patients at the West Coast army hospitals were transferred either to Birmingham General Hospital in Van Nuys, California or, until it was closed, Corona Naval Hospital in San Diego, California. For many years Birmingham was the only center for paraplegics west of the Mississippi River.

Once the spinal cord injured veteran was stabilized at one of the receiving hospitals, he was sent to a military or Veterans Administration hospital near his home, if possible. In some cases the army hospital was closed and the patients were removed to another military or Veterans Administration hospital. The hospitals to which spinal cord injured veterans were sent included Cushing in Framingham, Massachusetts; Halloran on Staten Island, New York; Kingsbridge in Bronx, New York; St. Albans on Long Island, New York; McGuire in Richmond, Virginia; Vaughan in Hines, Illinois; and Kennedy in Memphis, Tennessee. It was at these hospitals that the spinal cord injured veterans of World War II formed the local organizations that in time became the Paralyzed Veterans of America.

West Coast

George Hohmann, Ph.D., a founding member of the national organization, was a patient at Bushnell Army Hospital in late 1944. In the following narrative he describes some of his experiences in a West Coast army hospital after sustaining his injury and the early attempts to improve the life of the spinal cord injured veteran.

"I had been injured in November '44, in World War II, and was at an army hospital up in Utah, Bushnell Army Hospital. It was mainly an amputee center but in order to handle amputees they had a number of neurologists there. . . . I was about the fourth or fifth one to arrive at Bushnell Hospital who had a spinal cord injury. We ended up staying there until the war was over, in June of '46. By the time we left, there were about sixty of us and the hospital closed.

"There was at Bushnell an organization formed of bilateral amputees who called itself the Bilateral Leg Amputee Club of America. The main thing that came of this organization was that it went on a bond selling tour en masse and they spoke with gatherings. Apparently they had themselves one whee of a time brawling around the country and selling a great number of war bonds.

"The situation in the treatment of spinal cord injury at that hospital was typical of most places. And that was almost total neglect except for the care of the nurses and especially the volunteers from the communities around. Medical staff knew nothing about what could be done for us and made short and sweet of the fact that there wasn't a damn thing that could be done for us but keep us alive until we died. And this is a quote that I was told one day: 'And that wouldn't be very damn long.' The prognosis was about two years.

"About the time the BLACA, as they called themselves, grew (by the way, it disbanded after the drunken national brawl, never heard anymore out of it), we foresaw that the war was going to be over. And the policy at that time was for the army to send patients who could not be discharged to home, which none of us felt we could, with one or two exceptions, or to the VA hospital nearest our home. Which meant that I would have gone to Amarillo, Texas VA Hospital where I probably would have been the only spinal cord injury person there.

"We had developed by that time a good deal of camaraderie and friendship amongst ourselves, and mutual support. [We] felt very strongly that it was important to maintain association with other people who had similar types of problems and that we needed to be in centers where we could do this.

"Now one of the volunteers, a Red Cross Grey Lady, happened to be the daughter of the president of the Utah Medical Society at that time. He was an orthopedic surgeon and so we had his ear. He in turn knew Paul Hawley who was still in the army but became the first chief medical director of the VA right after World War II. [T]his man's name was Dr. Dumke, and his daughter Markie, or Martha, was one of the volunteers.

"So he thought that we should make our views known. And we started writing letters to congressmen advocating for centers and that the VA should establish such centers. [We] wrote letters to *Time* magazine and anywhere else we could just saying we were concerned about what was going to happen to us now that the war was over.

"We realized that BLACA had an organization that could speak more loudly than individuals for bilateral amputees. So we decided that we should put together an organization for spinal cord injured individuals, and had a number of meetings. By then we were getting up in wheelchairs occasionally and gathering

around and so on.

"We did put together a set of bylaws and in early 1946 several of our comrades who were from the California, Washington, Oregon area were sent to Hammond General Hospital where Dr. Ernest Bors was still in the army. . . . Dr. Bors had a very remarkable program for those days that he had developed just out of ingenuity and interest and dedication. So we figured that most of us being from the western part of the country would end up going to California. But it was not yet decided where in California the VA hospital would be set up. By that time it was decided that there would be centers in response to some of the agitation we had and perhaps Dr. Dumke's contacts amongst which was General Hawley.

"I don't know how the decision came about but by the winter of '45, '46 it was decided that there would be a center set up somewhere. Now there were enclaves of fifty or sixty cord injured people, most of them paras; few quads survived. It was not decided where it would be. Ultimately, it ended up at an army hospital in Van Nuys [California] for the western part of the country called Birmingham General Hospital or Birmingham VA Hospital later. That later became the Long Beach center; it moved in 1950.

"By the time the first emissaries left Bushnell to go there, eventually to Hammond and down to Birmingham, there was a set of bylaws that we had drafted that we felt [we] would do. They were largely patterned after the bylaws of BLACA. So we sent copies of these bylaws with the people who were going to California. It wasn't decided where the rest of us would go yet.

"Early on then, in '46 before I actually arrived in Birmingham, all of the cord injured patients from the West were assembled in Birmingham. There was about two hundred of us and Dr. Bors was made chief of that service. Most of these transfers were made in the army and many of the staff who had been with Bors, including Dr. Bors himself, were discharged on one massive discharge date in April of '46, about then I think.

"When the group arrived there, they found that the people coming from all of the other military hospitals also had similar ideas. I don't know whether any of them had gotten this far in organizing the situation, [it's] possible. . . . My interest was trying to do something to maintain the group support which I considered extremely important all these years in hospital treatment.

"I landed in Birmingham in June off '46. . . . By that time the group who had gone on a month earlier from Bushnell, and those who had been arriving all the previous winter, had begun an organization. They were having formal weekly meetings on Monday nights and they had officers elected. I believe Fred Smead was the first president. Randall Updyke was one of the movers and shakers. The late Ted Anderson sneered at the whole idea and later became a mover and shaker. . . .

"The picture at Birmingham was very very different than it had been in the army hospitals—there was hope. Dr. Bors had an active rehabilitation program. He had everybody up and out. He ran it like a military martinet and was fully, fully supportive of the idea of a patient organization. [He] wrote letters to the commanding officer, while they were still all in the military there, about giving permission for this group to be formally organized in a military installation, which at that time was rather unique. I would suppose that, with variations on the theme, the same process took place at the spinal cord injury centers that were set up in the VA."⁶

East Coast

Bill Green, former national president and national service director of PVA, briefly recalls his experience at an East Coast hospital.

"We had 300 paraplegics at England General Hospital, Atlantic City. It was named after Thomas England; he was a general in the army. It's where the casino is now, right on the boardwalk. . . . We had General Shapell who every Sunday morning would be with us and take all the complaints that we had from the fellows. General Shapell had a heart attack and he was replaced by a Colonel Winn. And Winn was absolutely impossible.

"To make it worse, Glen Spurling came up from the surgeon general's office and he was asked what they were going to do with the paraplegics since they had 300 of them. His remark was, 'We'll put them in a corner of the hospital. They're going to be dead in a year anyway.' Well, at that point we blew our stacks.

Because we knew that there was a doctor in Boston who had treated paraplegics successfully since 1935, Dr. Donald Munro. We felt that if he could, why couldn't the army set up programs? We didn't even have OT. And they looked upon PT as being a means of amusing the patients. This was the army hospital. The veterans hospitals in those days were even worse."⁷

First Local Organizations

Seventy paraplegic patients at Birmingham General Hospital in Van Nuys, California, meeting on January 18, 1946 in the recreation hall of the Red Cross, "decided to found the nucleus of an organization to safeguard the interests of all paraplegic patients in the nation."⁸ In a memorandum to the hospital's commanding officer, Dr. Bors, who was the group's medical adviser and liaison officer to the commanding officer, reported that "The patients request permission to send, through channels, all matters pertaining to the new organization to all paraplegic patients in other paraplegic centers of the nation."⁹ To see if there was an interest in establishing organizations similar to theirs among other spinal cord injured veterans, the Birmingham paraplegics considered sending each patient a form, to be returned to Birmingham, "indicating his interest and expressing his feeling as to whether such an organization might be started in his own hospital."¹⁰ The final point in Bors' report was a request by the paraplegic group "as to location of Navy paraplegic centers in order to contact these patients as well as those in Army installations."¹¹

On June 21, 1946, Sergeant Frederick M. Smead was voted chairman of a ten-member committee of the Birmingham Paraplegic Patients' Council which over a two-day period developed a set of tentative bylaws. The organization's first legal advisor, Major Epstein, suggested that a non-profit corporation be formed. Apparently the model for Birmingham's original set of bylaws, tentative though they were, was taken from bylaws prepared by the paraplegic veterans at Bushnell Army Hospital. Patterson Grissom, former PVA national president and former patient at Bushnell, recalls that connection between Bushnell and Birmingham.

"[We] did draw up a set of bylaws [at Bushnell]. We didn't attempt any articles of incorporation. We didn't go much further with it because it [Bushnell] was getting ready to close. You could have a clubby sort of thing but when you're still in the armed services they frowned on organizing a veterans' group . . . in the armed services. We were still in at that time. There really wasn't a need for it [an organization] then.

"After we pretty much got the bylaws down to where we thought they should be for an organization for us, Burt Carlton, I think Ernest Bell, and maybe one or two other fellows were transferred out here. Burt got out here to Birmingham Hospital . . . and by then Fred Smead and Randall Updyke and some of those fellows were talking about an organization.

"Burt wrote back to Bushnell, to George Hohmann, and said they were trying to set up something here and the VA was going to take it over and the fellows were going to be discharged. He asked George to send him a copy of the bylaws and so forth that we'd put together and fixed up at Bushnell. So George sent those to Burt, Burt handed those over to Fred Smead and company, and that was the beginning."¹²

One noteworthy item recorded in the committee minutes of the Birmingham Paraplegic Patients' Council concerned the name of the new organization. "The committee discussed the following names: Paralytic Veterans Association, Transverse Myelitis Association, Myelitis Veterans of America, Paralyzed Veterans of America. By unanimous vote, it was agreed to submit the name of 'Paralyzed Veterans of America'; however, later in the meeting this motion was rescinded in favor of leaving the matter to Capt. Bors for further consideration. Tentative suggestions further included 'Spinal Paralysis Veterans Association' and 'Paraplegic Organization of America.'"¹³

The organization's final set of bylaws and articles of incorporation, as outlined by a well-known Hollywood attorney Jerry Giesler, were approved by the group and the Paralyzed Veterans Association was chartered by the state of California on March 7, 1946.¹⁴ The first official election of officers was held on June 3, 1946. Elected were: Fred Smead, president; Randall Updyke, vice president; Richard Whittle, secretary; Joe Gusmeroli, treasurer; and Lester E. Hansen, public relations officer.¹⁵

The Paralyzed Veterans Association at Birmingham General Hospital wasted little time in spreading the word among other paraplegic centers of the need for organization at the hospital level. Major D.C. Malcolm, chief of the surgical section at Birmingham, reported to the PVA at their March 25, 1946, meeting that he had visited Cushing (Framingham, Massachusetts), Halloran (Staten Island, New York), McGuire (Richmond, Virginia), and Vaughan (Hines, Illinois) general hospitals and found that "in all these hospitals where he discussed the Birmingham PVA, there was a great deal of interest in the organization." Moreover, "each center was anxious to have information on the experience of the PVA with the thought of organizing a similar unit for their hospital."¹⁶

Under the signatures of President Fred Smead and Public Relations Officer Lester E. Hansen, the newly chartered Paralyzed Veterans Association sent a five-page letter to all the paraplegic centers in the United States. The letter invited all paraplegia and quadriplegia patients "to organize a local chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans Association in your own hospital as a collaborating body representing the patients' viewpoints and in addition, to help unify the 2,000 or so of us who are in the same plight."¹⁷ Interestingly enough, the point was made that the organization was not "in competition to existing veteran organizations but rather as a cooperating body to deal with our peculiar problems and conditions."¹⁸

In response to the letter, Smead received word in early June 1946, from Eldred H. Beebe at McGuire Veterans Hospital in Richmond, Virginia, stating that he and a few of the patients were interested in "cooperating with your organization."¹⁹ Beebe went on to say that "At the present time I am gathering a committee, representing each ward and group for the purpose of establishing a formal organization similar to yours."²⁰ On June 26, 1946, Raymond Crigger at Vaughan Hospital in Hines, Illinois, sent a telegram to Smead announcing: "We have decided to join your organization as an Illinois chapter. Please send all necessary information."²¹

On the East Coast a group of paralyzed veterans at Halloran General Hospital on Staten Island met on May 22, 1946, to form an organization similar to the Birmingham General Hospital Paralyzed Veterans Association. The minutes of the meeting explain: "It was stated that the object of this meeting was to organize a group of Paraplegics (such as was organized at Birmingham General Hospital—Van Nuys, California—Paralyzed Veterans Association) which could voice opinions and needs of Paraplegics."²² Robert Moss, a founding member of the national PVA and first executive secretary, tells of the chapter's origin.

"A Red Cross worker, young woman by the name of Kathy Heerman, worked at Halloran Hospital and her home town was Los Angeles, California. Her folks were screen writers and she went home on a visit and while there she stopped at the paraplegic ward at the Birmingham hospital. . . . She brought back to us a set of their bylaws, because they had already formed an organization just a few months prior to that, and we thought it was a good idea and we formed a chapter."²³

Unlike the Birmingham veterans, the Halloran veterans did not immediately envision a national organization. "It was decided that such an organization [of paralyzed veterans] should be set up with the stipulation that later this organization would become affiliated with a larger organization, such as "The American Legion or Veterans Administration, into which [a] Paraplegic could go after discharge from the Army."²⁴

After some discussion concerning the aims and objectives of the organization, it was moved and carried to take the name "Paralyzed Veterans Association—Halloran General Hospital Branch." Three months later, however, when it was announced that the association had made a formal application for a charter, the members were told that the charter "will read 'Paralyzed Veterans Association' not 'Paralyzed Veterans Association, Halloran Chapter.'" ²⁵

Bylaws were voted on at the June 5th meeting and officers chosen on June 12, 1946. Elected to office were: Ralph Zinn, president; Manson Hume, vice president; Vincent Summa, secretary; Ben Heitner, financial secretary; Martin Slitzky, treasurer; Robert Moss, public relations officer.²⁶

In addition to the group of veterans at Halloran Hospital, there were two other groups of paralyzed veterans in the New York City area at Kingsbridge (Bronx) and St. Albans Navy Hospital (Long Island). A meeting of the three groups was held on January 8, 1947, at which time "an immediate merger of the three groups was proposed."²⁷ "Further discussion was held in regard to merging with Kingsbridge . . . in order

to establish the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association (tentative name) which will be backed by the Young Men's Philanthropic League."²⁸ Unanimous approval was given to the proposed merger because it was felt that the three groups together would make a strong organization and that "other cities will follow when the organization gets started."²⁹

Thus, on April 29, 1947, the formation of the Eastern Paralyzed Veterans Association was announced publicly. The officers of the organization were: Alex Mihalchyk of Kingsbridge, president; Harold Peterson of Halloran, vice president; Peter Youakim of St. Albans, treasurer; Walter Suchanoff of Kingsbridge, financial treasurer; Al Wagner of St. Albans, public relations; Robert Moss of Halloran, recording and executive secretary.³⁰

Need for a National Organization

Gil Moss's November, 1946, invitation to a national meeting was the final impetus for creating a national organization. The idea had been suggested privately and publicly by a number of people, with varying degrees of enthusiasm, prior to Moss's announcement. Walter Suchanoff, president of the Paralyzed Veterans Association, Bronx County, New York, had expressed in October, 1946, the hope that ultimately a national organization would be formed.³¹ Still, there is some uncertainty as to exactly who was responsible for the idea to establish a truly national organization. As has been shown, the Birmingham group must be credited with encouraging spinal cord injured veterans to organize within their hospitals. However, the concept of individual chapters under the leadership of a structured national organization should probably be most attributed to Gil Moss.

One thing that was quite clear to most spinal cord injured veterans was the need for a national organization. Robert Moss succinctly describes the problems paralyzed veterans faced in the mid-1940s.

"We were faced with a group of young men with a physical handicap that had virtually no survivor prior to then. Now since then we've heard of one or two people who have survived prior to World War II but the number is infinitesimal. There was no way of coping with society as society was then constituted. There were no programs for survival, there were no care programs, there was certainly no such thing as elimination of architectural barriers—there was no legislation for it. The needs were tremendous and we saw them in different ways."³² George Hohmann details some specific needs: "There were several immediate and pressing needs. The first need was for the center, and improved medical care especially for those of us who had been in the army—except with Ernest Bors. There were three pressing needs at that time.

"The first was that our basic service-connected compensation was allocated at that time at either \$250 or \$300 a month which was pretty big bucks. However, the law stated that if you had no dependents, then, while hospitalized at government expense you received \$20 a month and you never got the money back. It was just gone. Now this was one of the first things and as far as I know Fred Smead and the California PVA [Birmingham] essentially lobbied [in about June, 1946] to have that law changed so that the single guys were not penalized, and most of us were [single]. A few of the fellows were married and had families and they drew the full \$250 or \$300. It soon went to \$360 a month. But Fred went back to Washington and was the prime person who saw congressmen and talked to them, various committees and so on and so on. . . .

"[There was an] allowance of \$1600 then [towards the purchase of a new car. At that time the law said you had to purchase the car for \$1600. Well, you couldn't get a car with an automatic transmission for \$1600. So what we had to do was buy a Chevrolet, say, have it rigged up with all sorts of crazy controls to prove you could drive it, then sell it. It wasn't hard to do because it was right after the war and cars were rationed to dealers. So we had no trouble getting our Oldsmobiles once we got rid of this \$1600 or less car. . . . But the car bill needed some adjustment. This was another pressing need. . . .

"[In] addition, at the first [national] meeting in February '47 in Chicago, Bob Moss was the big mover and shaker behind the idea of the public law housing. He said if the government is to provide us with specially adapted transportation then they should provide us with specially adapted housing."³³

Paralyzed individuals in the years immediately following the close of World War II found themselves confronted with the dilemma of an improving life expectancy and a society unable or unwilling to accom-

moderate them. New drugs, rehabilitation techniques, and technology spawned by the war provided rays of hope for the future of the catastrophically injured. To the American public, however, paraplegia was an unfamiliar term. Prior to World War II few people had ever seen a paralyzed person, certainly not in public. If the spinal cord injured person did not die soon after being injured he was usually kept out of sight in a home or a hospital. To the public a person in a wheelchair was seen as diseased or at least mentally deficient.

The paralyzed veterans in particular were affected by the conflicting attitudes the American people demonstrated. "There was nothing too good for our heroes, and we were all heroes," recalls George Hohmann. "I don't care if we happened to have gotten our injury in a drunken brawl stateside, anybody who was in the war and injured in the war was a hero. There was nothing too good and the VA could ask for anything it wanted and it got it. So there was that attitude. Then there was the attitude when you begin to go out in the community and you begin to appear in restaurants and places like that. I was invited personally to leave two or three restaurants because my presence there would be depressing and upsetting to other customers. In other words, stay in your handicap place and you are our heroes and we will worship at your shrine. I'm overstating this, being very melodramatic about it, but that was underlined. But don't inflict yourself on us. And that message came through."³⁴

Conflict inevitably developed between the paralyzed individual and society at large. As the injured person began to live longer and rehabilitate quicker he attempted to resume his rightful place in society and live a normal life. Many of them wanted education, employment, houses, and families. But to achieve those ends adjustments had to be made in society. The public had to be educated to the problems and needs of the paralyzed. The struggle for integration involved the slow process of eliminating architectural and attitudinal barriers and improving the quality of medical care.

One early attempt to help disabled veterans return to society was the passage of an auto grant bill which gave the veteran \$1600 to purchase a car. The original bill was introduced into Congress by Rep. Edith Nourse Rogers of Massachusetts. The draft of Mrs. Rogers's auto grant bill received an important modification from Bob Moss.

"I was contacted by the American Veterans' Committee, which was a new post-World War II veterans organization, and they said they're pushing for this auto bill for amputees. Is there any way that they could be of help in getting paraplegics included, and how can they do that? Well, I got a copy of the legislation and the legislation read that anybody who had lost a limb, or limbs, as a service-connected injury would be entitled to come under the provisions of the automobile law. I suggested that a phrase be added where it said loss of, to 'have loss of limbs or loss of use of limbs.' That amendment was accepted and that's how paraplegics got the [grant] because we did some public relations and pushed for the bill."³⁵

According to Bill Green, the paralyzed veterans at England General Hospital were instrumental in getting backing for the bill. "We knew when we started this thing we were going to have to have some support from somebody. So we were discussing what we were going to do and Austin Kelly said, 'Well hell, Walter Reuther and them auto workers [the United Auto Workers Atlantic City convention] are here. I'll go over and see Walter Reuther.' Of course we all laughed like hell—just go over and ask for Walter Reuther. And damn it, he came back with him. Walter Reuther told us the auto workers would support anything we wanted."³⁶

The bill became Public Law 663 on August 8, 1946. Certain amputees and paraplegics were awarded a \$1600 grant for the purchase of an automobile with special adaptive equipment. "Upon its passage, however, the individual chapters of what became the Paralyzed Veterans of America became deeply involved. By including the necessity of a driver's license, the original law excluded quadriplegics from eligibility."³⁷ In 1951 a law was finally enacted that allowed automobile grants for quadriplegics.

II. The First Years

The formative meeting of the national Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America was called to order on February 7, 1947, by Acting Chairman Harold A. Scharper at the Vaughan Unit of the Veterans Administration Hospital in Hines, Illinois. Delegates to the meeting included: Donald P. Coleman, Joseph Gusmeroli, George W. Hohmann, and Frederick M. Smead from Birmingham VA Hospital in Van Nuys, California; Walter Suchanof and Alex P. Mihalchyk from Bronx VA Hospital in Bronx, New York; Harold E. Peterson and Robert Moss from Halloran VA Hospital on Staten Island, New York; William F. Day, Jr., Marcus W. Orr, and Kenneth H. Seaquist from Kennedy VA Hospital in Memphis, Tennessee; Eldred H. Beebe from McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond, Virginia; Joseph T. Gillette from St. Albans Naval Hospital on Long Island, New York; Alfred L. Gore, Gilford S. Moss and Harold A. Scharper from Vaughan Unit, VA Hospital, Hines, Illinois. The newly formed Paralyzed Veterans Association at Cushing Hospital in Framingham, Massachusetts, could not finance the trip to Illinois and was not represented at the meeting.

George Hohmann remembers the setting of the meeting: "As I recall, we met in the dayroom of one of the wards and for a while we all sat in rows, kind of. . . . Then I think we all ended up sitting around kind of in a circle so we could see each other when we talked. There was a lot of camaraderie and we were getting to know each other. I loved Gil Moss and liked Marc Orr because they saw eye to eye with me. It was just a bunch of guys sitting around saying, 'What are we going to do? Do we want a national organization? If so, what's it going to be like?' and so on. We sure talked a lot."¹

Fred Smead gives his recollection: "Of course, it was at first a process of feeling each other out really. And trying to find out just what each one had. Of course, it didn't really take us very long to find out that we all wanted more or less the same thing. It was just trying to get an approach where we could get down to something that would actually accomplish some work that would set up a national organization.

"Now some of the group that came were not authorized to actually agree to everything. In other words, they had to take whatever came out of this meeting back to their group and try to get approval of it. We had been authorized when we left California to . . . get it set up, sign whatever comes out of it, and become a part of it and offer to contribute funds."²

Indeed the sixteen men had a formidable task before them. Voting procedures, an organizational structure, type of national organization and its goals, bylaws and articles of incorporation had to be established. Some very strong differences of opinions produced bitter sessions. "[M]any of the delegates were amazed that there could be such definite differences of opinion on so many subjects between paraplegics in different parts of the country."³

One divergent view, which contributed to the later rift between East and West, concerned the fundamental nature of the national organization. The proceedings of the meeting tell us:

"We [Fred Smead speaking for Birmingham] have suggested in the past in correspondence from our chapter at Birmingham that each chapter of the Paralyzed Veterans Association incorporate in their own state and become financially independent. They can handle all business of the state without any help

from the national headquarters. However, we feel that in order to accomplish the prime reason for the formation of a national organization, and that is the establishment of a research program or a research foundation, that the association be formed not so much as a national paralyzed veterans association or a paraplegic association only for veteran groups but to non-veteran groups. In this way you will catch the people on the outside who have been hurt and do not have the privilege that we have of being veterans."⁴

A different position was offered by Bob Moss: "I think it would be very foolish at this time to take in anybody but veterans in the organization. Research is very important and I would be the last one to deride the good that can come from it. But many of the problems that we have now can be solved by legislation, and if the organization was composed solely of veterans, this legislation would have a much better chance of getting through. I do not think we should do anything to hurt our standing as veterans in regard to the passing of legislation."⁵

Donald Coleman from Birmingham came to the heart of the matter: "Now there are over two thousand veterans of this war that are paraplegics. There are few benefits to be obtained, but a slight one is that people will be more sympathetic toward a veteran. I think that all of us came here with the idea of organizing a paralyzed veterans association. Most of us had in mind, I think, the idea of helping the civilian paraplegic, too."⁶

The group defeated the proposal to include all paraplegics, veteran and civilian, in the organization, and decided that their chief effort should not be research but rather veteran oriented, "focusing on the basic immediate needs. Interest in research toward a 'cure' was unanimous."⁷ Then after considering such names as the National Paralyzed Veterans Association, the National Paraplegia Association, the National Federation of Paralyzed Veterans Association, The Paralyzed Veterans Association of America, the delegates voted unanimously to name the organization "Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America."⁸ Gil Moss was elected chairman of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America and Al Gore was voted vice chairman.

Fred Smead recalls some decisions that don't appear in the transcript of the meeting: "In caucus and just informal discussions and phone calls and one thing and another, we had more or less decided beforehand that whoever was elected president would come out of one of the eastern groups. I was offered the presidency and for the same reason we turned it down. I discussed it with the other delegates from the California chapter and they were in agreement with me. Even the California chapter here, the members, had felt that it would be more advisable for the organization to have its headquarters in the East.

"I think Gil Moss was probably the outstanding man at that meeting. Gil was an attorney and we asked him during one of the caucuses if he would be willing to accept the presidency. He said that he would. We were very early in the organizational meetings and we had not really even hit on the formation of it as to just exactly which way we would go or what we would do. But he was willing to take it. Anyway, that was the way it ended up and Gil Moss was elected as the first president."⁹

Resolutions were passed calling for: the expansion of P.L. 663 to quadriplegics, the question of greater federal participation in providing housing for the paralyzed to be taken under advisement, the creation of an aid and attendance allowance for quadriplegics, and the establishment of a research foundation. Also, Gil Moss stated: "We are strongly opposed to the tendency of cutting appropriations to the Veterans Administration as an economy move of government."¹⁰ The *Paraplegia News* was named the official organ of the organization.

Fred Smead had come to the organizational meeting with a full draft of articles of incorporation and bylaws for the group's consideration. Smead explains: "Jerry Giesler who was a well-known Hollywood attorney had originally set up the California group here when we incorporated. He gave us . . . outlined articles of incorporation and bylaws which we took to the Chicago meeting for the first convention. They were eventually accepted. Gil Moss was an attorney and a resident of Illinois. Even though we had gone through these articles of incorporation and bylaws he had to do considerable work on them to conform to Illinois state law. Later they were adopted by all chapters and he incorporated there [Illinois]. Then subsequently we did get our national charter."¹¹

The articles of incorporation were duly prepared by Gil Moss and the Paralyzed Veterans Association of

America was incorporated on April 14, 1947, as a non-profit corporation under the laws of the state of Illinois.¹²

Public Law 702

The fight for federally funded homes for paraplegics, a notion which the organization meeting of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America turned down, began in 1946 and resulted in Public Law 702 when signed by President Harry S. Truman on June 19, 1948.¹³ The idea for special housing for the wheelchair bound originated with the paraplegics at Halloran hospital. Their discussions led to the formation of a housing committee at the hospital and the assistance of the American Institute of Architects.

Bob Moss tells of the first steps toward adapted housing. "I approached them [the Red Cross] and told them of our need [advice on housing design] and they contacted the New York chapter of the American Institute of Architects. Since I turn blank when I see a blueprint, there was a fellow with some background, [a] quiet worker by the name of Harold Peterson, and I asked him to head a committee to work with this group of architects. I didn't know it at the time but this group of architects included the most prestigious architects in the country—in New York at least—but they were big names.

"The architects themselves put in 2,000 man hours to design a set of plans. It wasn't meant that somebody should take these plans and build a house because individual needs vary. But it was the basis for the physical needs. One of the people working on it . . . his firm was expert in making mockups, models. They made models of their plans for us which we brought to Congress during one of our testimonies. . . .

"When they [the committee] finished the last session I said to a friend of mine who was working with the committee, 'Well, now we have to ask Congress for a housing bill.' And he looked at me and he said, 'You're crazy.' . . . [T]hat was the start of the housing bill."¹⁴

Despite the lack of endorsement from the national PVAA for total federal support of special housing, some of the member chapters embraced the idea. The McGuire chapter in Richmond, Virginia, was especially interested in adapted housing. Soon public pressure "took the matter out of PVA[A] hands, and in the early months of 1947, a multitude of bills were introduced in both Houses of Congress reflecting the various opinions and beliefs of PVA[A] factions, congressmen, and the Administration itself."¹⁵

Support for various Senate bills came in the form of testimony by PVAA members and their wives. Also, McGuire PVA members Ed Kirscher, Bill Ellsworth, Ray Coblentz, Kermit McDonald, and particularly Bernard Shufelt, and Dave Reiniger lobbied hard in Washington for the passage of a housing bill. There was, however, opposition to the bill from the large veterans' organizations, the Veterans Administration, and Senator Robert Taft.

Public Law 702 was the result of a compromise Senate bill and H.R. 4244 from Congressman Vail of Illinois. The original S. 1293 as introduced by Senator Joseph McCarthy did not receive the backing of the Birmingham PVA which, unlike Halloran PVA and five out of seven other chapters, would not support full federal funding.¹⁶ Rather than lose everything, proponents of the original bill supported the amended S. 1293 that awarded a maximum grant of \$10,000.

The Eastern PVA-led publicity campaign for the housing bill did much to educate Congress and the American people about paraplegia. Bob Moss, national president of PVAA at that time, recalls the campaign: "The publicity in New York, for example, we organized. . . . [O]ur offices were at 99 Park Avenue which was a famous address then in New York because all during the war they gave free theater tickets to members of the armed forces from that building. We organized a petition campaign which went from our offices to Grand Central Station during the lunch hour from twelve to one. It was a matter of, I guess, two or three blocks from the office. We got about 75 or 100 guys in wheelchairs being pushed by some of the people from some of the Broadway shows, the choruses and the like (the musicals), some very conservative businessmen who never involved themselves in a picket line of any sort.

"We marched with signs and they were pushing the wheelchairs this two and a half blocks. It was to be of short duration, we spent an hour there, and in an hour we got 7,000 signatures. . . . All the tabloids, the *Daily Mirror* which was Hearst's paper, the *Daily News*, which were the two main tabloids in New York,

gave their front page over to this rally. The whole front page was a picture of us marching. . . .

"Then subsequently, because we were the media capital, CBS asked if I would speak on radio, which was the big thing then, not television, and they gave me a time after the eleven o'clock news. In those days the big news of the day was from 11:00 to 11:15 p.m. I went with my wife to the studio [on May 24, 1948] and I was supposed to make a 15 minute speech right after the news. . . .

"I checked my speech once or twice and just before I went on the air I was told that it wasn't just the CBS local station that was carrying it but it was going network. . . . Since you're alone in the studio with just the announcer and the technician, you have no idea what the heck is going on. We went down with one of the personnel there to have a drink at the bar downstairs and a few minutes later the announcer came over to me and said that the switchboards at CBS were jammed.

"It was on the housing bill, the speech [entitled 'A Paraplegic Is An Individual' which later became the PVA slogan], and I asked them to send letters to their congressmen and senators and I gave them appropriate names, addresses, so on. . . . There were some tremendous number of telegrams and letters received . . . the next morning in Congress both on the Senate and House side. I think that was probably the push that got the bill through."¹⁷

Paraplegia News

Mention was made earlier of the fact that the *Paraplegia News* was taken as PVAA's official publication in February 1947. The *Paraplegia News* has had a remarkable history of growth from a four page paper with a circulation of 2,000 in 1946 to a 64- to 80-page magazine reaching 24,000 readers around the world.¹⁸ The *Paraplegia News* has contributed significantly to the development of the present day PVA. During the years when chapter newsletters were weak or non-existent and the PVA was struggling to keep a national structure, the *Paraplegia News* served as a vehicle of communication among the chapters.

Volume One, Number One was published in July, 1946, in the occupational therapy department of the Bronx VA Hospital. Although produced by the men of Ward 3-D, the force behind the paper, "for the benefit of all paraplegic veterans in the United States and Canada," was editor John Price.¹⁹ "During the early years, John, a quadriplegic, prepared all copy himself with the help of volunteer secretaries. Bryon Deysher was co-editor for the first two editions. . . ."²⁰

In 1948 John Price moved the office of the *Paraplegia News* from the Bronx to PVA national headquarters at 99 Park Avenue, New York City. Bob Moss served as associate editor until August, 1949, when John Price resigned. Bob and his wife Lucille then took over as editor and associate editor.

Bob Bather, to whom John Price attributed the idea for the *Paraplegia News*, was appointed editor by PVA President Bill Green upon the resignation of Bob Moss in October, 1952. Bob Bather ran the magazine from Nutley, New Jersey, until he resigned due to poor health. Once again, in January, 1955, John Price took over as editor out of Stroudsburg, Pennsylvania. Under this second term of John Price's editorship, the magazine grew from twelve pages to sixteen pages and occasionally reached twenty pages.

On July 31, 1961, John Price died suddenly after returning home from the PVA national convention in Miami. Quadriplegic veteran Frank MacAloon became the fifth editor of the *Paraplegia News*, running the operation from his Fairview, New Jersey, home and later Northvale, New Jersey. "Frank and his wife published the *PN*, by working nights and weekends . . . until completing the July 1963 issue."²¹

Bob Webb's appointment as editor by PVA President John Farkas proved to be a milestone in the publication's history. For the first time the *Paraplegia News* was not published in the East, but in Seal Beach, California, at R. L. Webb Associates. The complexion of the magazine was dramatically altered by a format change and the addition of a second color. During Bob Webb's unprecedented 15 year directorship, the *Paraplegia News* increased significantly in advertisements and circulation.

From Bob Webb's death on April 8, 1978, until November 1978, the *Paraplegia News* continued to be published by R. L. Webb Associates. The following month Cliff Crase took the operation of the magazine to its present home in Phoenix, Arizona, when he was appointed editor and publisher.

Under the guidance of Cliff Crase *Paraplegia News* has attained a circulation of 24,000 copies per

month. Such a wide audience has enhanced the magazine's attraction to advertisers and has made *Paraplegia News* a respected voice worldwide for handicapped individuals. While remaining the official publication of and oriented to the PVA, *Paraplegia News* addresses the concerns of all paraplegics, PVA members and nonmembers alike. Through legislative reports, articles pertaining to current medical research, news of technological innovations and advances in accessibility, *Paraplegia News* provides a source of information for the civilian as well as the veteran paraplegic.

First Annual Convention

On September 26, 1947, the First Annual Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America was held at McGuire VA Hospital in Richmond, Virginia. There is some uncertainty as to the official title of that convention. The proceedings of the meeting refer to it as the "Second National Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America." However, possibly to avoid the necessity of explaining two national meetings in one year, the first national convention was later changed to the formative meeting and the second convention in that same year became the first annual convention.

Only five of the original sixteen delegates to the February meeting attended in September: Eldred Beebe from McGuire, Gilford Moss from Vaughan, Robert Moss and Harold Peterson from Halloran, and Frederick Smead from Birmingham. Rounding out the list of fourteen delegates were: Albert Arena and Robert Sheppard from Kennedy, Stanley Reese from Vaughan, Robert Pickerell and Harry Schweikert from Bronx, Peter Youakim and Charles Brown from St. Albans, Bernard Shufelt from McGuire, and Austin Kelly from Cushing. At the time of the meeting the organization had nine chapters (Corona in California was represented by Birmingham) and a total of 1,130 members.²²

The most important issues the convention went on record as favoring were: "the creation of domiciliary care for the NSC in the VA hospital system, liberalization of the auto grant to enable eligibility for quadriplegics, promotion of a Congressional Charter for PVA, the standardization of procedures for transporting the disabled aboard all national airlines, and the creation of a special spinal cord research foundation."²³

Gil Moss reported that Illinois laws governing non-profit corporations called for the organization to have a president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer. Therefore, he suggested that these offices be created and that the chairman and vice chairman be abolished. Although Gil Moss did not want to succeed himself as chairman so that the organization would not "become top heavy with 'professional veterans'," he was elected president and Robert Moss was elected vice president and secretary.²⁴

The segregation policy of the John Marshall Hotel brought the young PVAA into its first civil rights confrontation. Bob Moss described the event.

"[A]t the second convention which was held in Richmond, Virginia, arrangements had been made to have the banquet of the convention at the John Marshall Hotel which then was probably the leading hotel in Richmond. After a couple of days Bernie Shufelt, the president of I think it was called the McGuire chapter in Richmond then, told me that he had received word that the John Marshall [Hotel] would not receive any of our negro delegates or members. He told me that it would be kind of difficult for him to lead a protest, because he had to stay and work with the local politicians there, and would I do something.

"So I composed a telegram of protest which was passed by the convention and sent it on to the hotel. I called in the wording to the wire services, UPI and Associated Press. I forget the exact wording now but something to the effect that spinal cord knows no bias. When I called it in and the operator heard the language she said in a very thick southern drawl, 'It's about time people around here got some sense,' which absolutely threw me.

"The upshot was that the John Marshall Hotel because of public pressure, because the newspaper carried the story too, rescinded their order and were willing to accept our delegates. But of course this still was 1948 [1947] and it was the South and the problem was how many of our members would come to such a situation. And only two black couples did and they both sat at my table.

"One of them later came to New York, went to Brooklyn Law School, was president of the senior class, went back to Virginia and had a career which encompassed having the poll tax in Virginia overthrown, was

the vice mayor of Norfolk, the last I heard he was a judge. I forget what happened to the other man but that was a significant enough victory for the time. Incidentally, it was the first time that black people had been served in the John Marshall Hotel since the Civil War."²⁵

Formation of National Paraplegia Foundation

At the organizational meeting in February, 1947, a resolution had been passed "to set up a research foundation for the study of problems in all phases of paraplegia."²⁶ The first convention in September, 1947, followed the sentiment of the February meeting and passed a resolution that a board of trustees be elected to "raise funds for the National Research Foundation to be allocated to the National Research Council for research in paraplegia."²⁷ By April, 1948, the background work was completed for the establishment of the Paralyzed Veterans Research Foundation. A trust agreement was formulated between the foundation and the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America with Thomas DeArmond, Edward F. Gryzbek, Harry Schweikert, Frederick Dunlap, Jr., Alfred Gore, Robert Moss, Lionel LaFlamme, and Eldred Beebe as trustees.²⁸

In May of 1948 at the Hollywood Knickerbocker Hotel in Los Angeles, the non-profit National Paraplegia Foundation was "set up to help promote research in all aspects of paraplegia."²⁹ Articles of incorporation were drawn up and Eastern PVA gave a \$5,000 loan to start the endeavor. Furthermore, Gil Moss resigned as president of the PVAA and was elected the first executive secretary of the foundation. The articles of incorporation stated, in part, that the national foundation would benefit all persons "who have suffered injuries or diseases of the spinal cord." Additionally, it would educate the public "with the needs and problems of paraplegics" and "establish a foundation for research in the several fields connected with injuries and diseases of the spinal cord."³⁰

The creation of the Medical Advisory Board of NPF in the latter part of 1948 completed the initial structure of the foundation. Represented on the advisory board was a prestigious group of medical doctors and scientists including Paul Bucy and Leslie W. Freeman, who became the chairman. But a lack of adequate funding continually plagued the NPF, and throughout the foundation's history the PVA and NPF maintained a rocky relationship.

Robert Moss describes the origin of the NPF: "Gill Moss and Al Gore who were the pushers for the formation of the PVA on a national level really wanted a research wing. They really wanted a research organization. They really wanted a national paraplegia foundation. I think they really wanted that to be the organization. They just knew that it couldn't be done and the name Paralyzed Veterans would carry more weight. But they really wanted that to be the thrust of the organization.

"What happened was the NPF (National Paraplegia Foundation) became a parallel organization encompassing civilian disabilities. And after many years of being parallel and not being independent and being independent, finally, they broke away as a separate group.

"Even though I have been very involved with the National Paraplegia Foundation—I was one of the founders at that meeting in '48 in California that formed it and the last dozen or so years I've been head over heels involved in it—at the time I reluctantly approved because I felt that research was such an important aspect of the public relations part of our program that PVA could not afford to give it up.

"I was outvoted and I went along with it. Now there is a separate group which calls itself the National Spinal Cord Injury Association and the PVA has formed its own research arm which is called the [PVA] Technology and Research Foundation. I think we probably all would have been better off if we had stayed together to begin with."³¹

Early Conventions

On September 13, 1948, the Kennedy chapter at the VA hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, hosted the PVAA's second annual convention. Gil Moss had resigned the presidency of PVAA in May to become the executive secretary of the NPF and Bob Moss had become PVAA national president. It was reported that

the membership in the organization numbered 1,213.³²

"President Moss reported that a letter from VA Administrator Carl Gray, dated February 10, 1948, had (1) rejected PVA's request for the creation of a Co-ordinator of Paraplegic Affairs in the Central Office; (2) refused to recognize PVA for the purpose of representing claims of members; (3) refused to support paraplegic housing; (4) denied that reduction of personnel on SCI wards was affecting quality of medical care; (5) refused to advise field offices on the types of prosthetic equipment which should be furnished to paraplegics, and (6) rejected the PVA proposal that SCI personnel be permitted to visit other SCI centers to broaden their knowledge."³³

Former PVA President Harry Schweikert has suggested a reason for Gray's attitude: "At that time the administration and the VA were under the strong influence of President Truman, a Democratic Congress, and most of all, the three largest veterans organizations. These latter did not fully understand the special problems of paraplegia, and felt that attention to their particular needs would tend to discriminate against all other veterans."³⁴

Among the resolutions adopted by the second convention were: a ten percent assessment on chapter income, a shortening of Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America to Paralyzed Veterans of America, and the acceptance of Eastern PVA's New York City office as national headquarters. The delegates also discussed at length the operation of the *Paraplegia News* and spoke of a desire for PVA control over the NPF.

Substantial attention was devoted to sports and legislation. "The delegates were concerned with the standardization of rules for wheelchair sports and also commercialism. The convention rejected a resolution calling for support of state annuities but endorsed real estate tax exemption on specially adapted homes. It urged pension rates for NSC equal to the rate received by peacetime SC veterans. Housing for the NSC was also urged, as were automobiles."³⁵

The convention elected Bernard Shufelt as president by a vote of 5 to 4 over Bob Moss. Marcus Orr from the Kennedy chapter was elected vice president, David Reiniger from the McGuire chapter was elected secretary, and Gustav Kramer from the Eastern chapter was elected treasurer. Robert Moss was appointed as PVA's first executive secretary. After the convention Gus Kramer, a Halloran delegate, wrote:

"Members, don't forget it for one minute—this is going to be a powerful and successful organization."³⁶

Kramer's prophecy was, of course, to come true. However, in 1949, 1950, and 1951, the future vitality of the national PVA did not appear too promising. Meeting for the first time outside of a hospital setting, the third annual convention was held on September 7, 1949, at the Hotel New Yorker in New York City. After the first session all business was conducted at PVA's national headquarters on Park Avenue.

Patterson Grissom recalls the early conventions: "If there were sixteen [delegates] at that first convention then that was the biggest convention we had for several years. . . . [At] the subsequent conventions that I went to in New York and Richmond and Memphis there would be no more than one, well, maybe two, maybe there would be three from the host chapter. But the other chapters would send two and I'd come from California, usually I was the only one from California.

"When we had the convention in New York we met at their offices, 99 Park Avenue then. . . . We each had a little card table where we sat and they were all in a circle. The president of course, had his card table where they presided. . . . The next two or three conventions were that way, that small. [We] had probably no more than eight or nine delegates at those. We had six chapters then . . . and the chapters far away would only send one man."³⁷

The New York meeting revealed the increasing divergence of views concerning the national organization between the West Coast chapter and the Eastern chapter. Shortly after the convention opened, the California chapter presented a resolution to turn over to the National Paraplegia Foundation all PVA offices and functions, with the exception of the *Paraplegia News* and the veterans legislation program. The proposal to essentially abolish the PVA was solidly defeated.

PVA's legislative program for the next year included: an increase in the NSC paraplegic's pension, the raising of monthly compensation to quadriplegic veterans, state real estate tax exemptions, and outpatient treatment, and medical supplies from the VA for NSC paraplegic veterans.³⁸ Bernard Shufelt was re-elected president of PVA and Harry Schweikert was chosen as vice president.

It was at the fourth annual convention in Memphis, Tennessee, that a turning point in the history of PVA occurred. The meeting was held at the Parkview Hotel on March 4, 5, and 6, 1950. Personality conflicts and honest differences of opinions resulted in the dissolution of the PVA national headquarters and the position of executive secretary. In essence, the Paralyzed Veterans of America became a paper organization.

Pat Grissom of Birmingham PVA was elected president and treasurer. Verdell Foard from Kennedy was picked as vice president, and William Green from New England (formerly Cushing) was chosen as secretary. Except for the position of legislative director which went to Forest Bland from Virginia, all other elected positions were abolished. No official proceedings of the convention were recorded.

Two months after his election as president, Pat Grissom wrote of the new organizational structure: "In the past, nearly all the work of the P.V.A. was done by National Headquarters with very little inter-chapter correspondence being done. With these new changes, however, the burden of the work will now fall on the chapters. It will be the explicit duty of the chapter secretaries to circulate the minutes of their chapter meetings to all the other chapters. National Headquarters has been performing this function very ably in the past, and I think that all chapters have enjoyed learning of the activities and viewpoints of the other individual chapters."³⁹

The 1951 national convention was held at the VA hospital in Memphis, Tennessee, on June 19-22. Stanley Reese from the Vaughan chapter was elected president, Ernest Gendreau from the New England chapter became vice president and secretary, and Randall Updyke from the Birmingham chapter was elected treasurer. Pat Grissom told the convention that "during the past year the national office acted as little more than a collection agency for dues, and its chief accomplishment had been to pay off the National debt of \$2,000 owed the Eastern Chapter."⁴⁰

A resolution was submitted by the Birmingham chapter asking for the national organization to be retained in name only. The resolution went down to a 15-5 defeat, "and the predominant feeling was that a strong organization was needed and wanted."⁴¹ Six months after the convention Birmingham PVA voted to withdraw from the national organization.

III. Years Of Survival

During the years from 1952 through 1964 the character of the Paralyzed Veterans of America noticeably changed from that of the formative period. The first five years had been a stormy era for the young organization. Strong personalities had made the PVA a viable veterans' organization but had also created internal conflicts. The withdrawal of the California chapter from the national organization created a considerable void in PVA. Bill Green remembers that "there was a big void because California had [Pat] Grissom, Ted Anderson, and Fred Smead and a number of people out there . . . who were exceptionally fine leaders and we could have used them."¹

Since a formal national office did not exist any longer, the president's home became the center of PVA's operation. With each change of administration the headquarters shifted to a new location. Moreover, each officer in charge of a particular interest such as legislation and service carried out their national duties from different parts of the country. But most seriously affected by the disbandment of the central office was the cohesion of PVA. Bill Green, who was president of PVA during the first years without the national office, expressed in a 1952 *Paraplegia News* article the position the organization was in.

"We are a group of the most seriously disabled. We are good public interest for newspapers. We are organized. Add these attributes and you have a political force.

"But the power of any political force is in direct ratio to the disciplined activity of the group. Much of the discipline should be gained by competent aggressive leadership. But no matter how competent, or how aggressive, your leaders, your group fails without the complete support of the membership.

"A weak link in a chain makes it a questionable piece of equipment. It is the means of breaking the chain. A weak chapter can be our weak link.

"No one will doubt the power of the P.V.A. after both *Time* magazine and President Truman have labeled us a pressure group; no one of us but those who doubt themselves. Those doubts become the seeds of failure.

"Let's change those seeds to seeds of confidence. Let's build the confidence on the Chapter level, then we can be a greater force, and progress."²

Building on the chapter level became a chief PVA objective in the early 1960s. Between January 1, 1960, and July 25, 1964, ten new chapters were added to the national organization. Also, the California and Mid-South chapters rejoined after periods of absence. PVA President Robert Classon (1960-1962), did much to encourage the establishment of new chapters. Harold Stone, vice president in that period, traveled around the country helping to organize groups of paralyzed veterans.

During the fiscal year 1958-59 a drive was initiated to boost PVA's membership to 2,000. The campaign proved to be quite successful. In March, 1952, the membership stood at 1,400 and on February 9, 1959, the number increased to 1,818.³ Grander sights were then set for attaining a goal of 2,500 by July 1, 1960. Reportedly, on July 25, 1964, the membership was 3,826.⁴ Interestingly enough, the composition of the

membership in March, 1959, was 53% service connected (967), 46% non-service connected (844), and seven members had not been rated.⁵ Although membership was increasing, the organization felt the effect of losing its largest chapter which in 1951 had been 30% of the membership.

On November 1, 1951, PVA's Illinois charter was vacated by the Superior Court of Cook County. It was re-recorded on December 18, 1953, through the services of O.C. (Terry) Rose. It is interesting to note that on June 23, 1954, the directors of PVA resolved to change the corporate name of the organization from Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America to Paralyzed Veterans of America. The amendment, effective August 24, 1954, formalized the name change that had been made at the 1948 national convention.⁶

Eisenhower Years

The Eisenhower years were a time of cutbacks in the Veterans Administration's budget. PVA responded to the administration's moves by opposing, at the 1953 convention, the VA contracting with other federal agencies for the hospitalization of veterans. The 1955 convention opposed the Hoover Commission Report's recommendation to integrate all VA hospitals into a national health system.

"Since I've been in the organization," says Carlos Rodriguez, PVA national president from 1970 to 1972, "I think some of the most difficult years we had were when we started to have big bad times with the Eisenhower administration. That's when we started to find a lot of cutbacks. Prior to that there rarely was any cutback on care. We started having tightening on our money being spent on the care of veterans in general, not only SCI, all veterans."⁷

PVA joined the World Veterans Federation in 1954 and Douglas Valldejuli was PVA's first delegate to that body. In later years Robert Classon and Captain Jack Barleon became active supporters of the WVF.

Two pieces of prominent legislation to which PVA gave its full support were initiated in 1955 and 1961, respectively. The 1955 convention endorsed a bill for an aid and attendance allowance for the service connected spinal cord injured. Ted Anderson of California PVA was the originator of the idea which was enacted into a law in 1958. PVA in 1961 supported a bill in Congress for direct VA home loans to veterans eligible for the special housing grant, to finance their remaining mortgage. With PVA's backing and continuous effort the bill became Public Law 91-506 in 1970.

The 1957 national convention adopted the Speedy Award as PVA's recognition of an individual's outstanding contribution to the field of paraplegia. The first awards were given to Gil Moss and Dr. Leslie Freeman. At the next annual meeting the "Little Man in the Flying Wheelchair," or "Speedy," was adopted as PVA's national trademark and symbol. In 1959 the logo was registered with the U.S. Patent Office. There is some uncertainty as to the creator of the emblem but it was first used by the Birmingham chapter in 1946.⁸

At the 1958 convention in Chicago, PVA president Raymond Conley recommended the employment of a full-time executive secretary for PVA and a permanent national office in Washington, D.C. Neither of these suggestions was endorsed by the delegates. The idea was again brought forward in 1960 by President Dwight Guilfoil and once again failed to elicit much enthusiasm.

National PVA shared the office of Eastern PVA during Robert Classon's first term as PVA president in 1960-61. When the office became too crowded, the national directors voted (in 1961) to set up a separate PVA office. Shortly thereafter, Bob Classon opened a national PVA office at 1170 Broadway, New York City.⁹

PVA's poor financial health in the early '50s prevented the organization from taking the necessary steps to enhance its prominence. The situation, however, did change somewhat in 1958 after PVA President Ray Conley and the New England chapter devised a plan with Harry Schweikert and Robert Frost of Eastern PVA to have the Doehla greeting card program become a fund-raising source for the national organization. Dissatisfaction with that fund-raising program was to lead eventually to the creation of PVA/EPA, Inc., in 1973.

Mid-South Leaves PVA

The withdrawal of a second chapter from the national PVA occurred in 1959. At that time the Mid-South chapter (formerly the Kennedy chapter) left the organization because of a civil rights issue.

Bill Green explains the issue: "Mid-South withdrew at that particular time—this was right after we had the Supreme Court decision on [Brown] v. the Board of Education which was the school segregation case. Of course, that outlawed segregation. Now the convention was set up for Memphis. Memphis had made all the arrangements and practically at the last minute they found out that we had, I believe, two black delegates. Memphis went to the hotel and the hotel would not accept them and they [Memphis] made arrangements to put them [the black delegates] up in another hotel.

"Well, that set off a fight with Eastern on the rights of people. As a result of it they [PVA] withdrew the convention from Memphis and put it in [New York]. . . . Memphis got quite upset over the whole affair and withdrew from the organization."¹⁰

California and Mid-South Rejoin PVA

Nineteen sixty-three was a milestone year in the history of PVA. The thirteen years between the emasculation of the national organization and the 1963 annual convention had been a period of uncertainty as to the future of a truly national PVA. But many changes had transpired under strong leadership and the organization appeared to be regaining its health. A marked contrast was evident in the annual conventions. In 1952 eight delegates representing four chapters attended the meetings. However, attending the 1963 convention were 34 delegates representing 15 chapters.

After twelve years of separation from the national PVA, California PVA's president, Allan Jarabin, announced on July 11, 1963, the chapter's desire to reaffiliate with the Paralyzed Veterans of America, Inc. An attempt had been made on August 9, 1954, to discover the chapter's sentiment toward rejoining the national organization and the vote had been no. With the Mid-South chapter's return in December, 1961, and California's in July, 1963, the national organization was again united and stronger than it had been in 1950.

Former PVA President Wayne Capson tells of California's decision to rejoin the national PVA: "I understand that there had been at least one or two previous votes and it was turned down by the membership. I know I've read about one and there was possibly a second. But by the time it came to this . . . this was about the time I started getting involved. . . . I remember Bob Webb, Jim Scully, and I don't remember who else it was, produced a kind of argument paper that was mailed with the ballot . . . they went right in.

"Ironic as it is, there were accusations made that California's coming back in because they were having a funds problem and therefore, needed the national money to help survive. Well, that's really totally not true, and it was very costly for the CPVA to come back in. Because that was the first year that the organization [CPVA] was pushed so low in funds it had a deficit spending of \$2,000; it had a reserve fund of \$4,000. So in essence they were pushed to the bottom by paying the dues to national. Pushed to the bottom by 2,000 bucks was the difference between a bankrupt organization [and survival]."¹¹

Bill Green tells of some of the benefits California's re-entry brought to the national PVA: "Finally, when we got California to come back, that opened the door for even greater moves than we had made previously. Because that gave us the solidity that we needed and gave us some of the leaders that we needed out of California. Then, of course, they came back and we had people like Wayne Capson and well, Pat Grissom he's still active. So you've got a number of them out there that were able to come back and work in the national programs and also contributed, which they did in a great manner.

"In particular, one of the things which California did at that particular time was one of the agreements we made—John Farkas was president at the time. I made an agreement with California that if they would come back the control of the *Paraplegia News* would be given to one of their members. Fortunately, there was Bob Webb. Bob turned out to be one hell of a good editor. He really helped build the *Paraplegia News*. So we had one benefit right there."¹²

Farkas Affair

An unpleasant episode in the mid-sixties history of PVA was the impeachment of John Farkas. Formerly president of the Tri-State PVA, Farkas was elected national president in 1962 and re-elected in 1963. In April, 1964, Farkas was suspended from office and Harold Stone became acting president.

Prior to the 18th annual convention in Santa Monica, California, impeachment proceedings were brought against Farkas at a special board of directors meeting. "Allan Jarabin presented the case for impeachment, citing three general complaints against the president: (1) actions that were detrimental to the image and the reputation of the PVA, (2) actions that tended to harm relations between chapters and individuals, and (3) a failure and/or unwillingness to follow established budgetary procedures. . . . [It was shown that he transferred funds from one line item in the budget to another line item, which was forbidden in the bylaws.] The board of directors with a secret ballot vote of 38-16 [upheld] the impeachment action."¹³

Farkas responded by confiscating PVA equipment and records. Legal action was contemplated but at the January, 1965, national executive committee meeting "a motion was made and carried to drop all legal action against past-president John Farkas to gain possession of our records and equipment. The consensus was that legal fees would far exceed the money needed to replace the equipment."¹⁴ According to Wayne Capson, PVA "negotiated through New England and got it back ten years, fifteen years later. They finally got some of the stuff back."¹⁵

The effects of the impeachment were felt long after the fact. Wayne Capson says that "for every convention for probably fifteen years the Farkas fracas was smeared out on the table and battled again. . . ."¹⁶ Eight years later Farkas was sent to the Miami convention as a delegate from the Tri-State chapter, and was only seated after the affirmative vote of more than two-thirds of the attending delegates.

IV. Years of Growth

In the 1960s, the lack of funds was a grave concern to PVA. Wayne Capson, PVA president from 1968 to 1970, remembers that "At the San Francisco convention [1968] we were ending up with programs such as research, \$300 budget, just correspondence budget was all, postage budget. Everything was being cut back because the funds were just real tight. We ended up, during the two years [1968-1970], making more money than anticipated only because a few things happened. . . . [T]hey bought a mailing list from a women's hosiery outfit and the percent of return turned a profit on it . . . and a few things like that. So we came out in the end.

"The conventions were carried on at their regular schedules but the national executive committee, which had formed some four years before . . . used to meet three times a year . . . they were discontinued. The national executive committee met by mail. It was my job and my responsibility to put together the agenda, put together the material, send it to all the members and get all the members to respond and to vote on it. The national president was cut back from basically four to eight trips per year to Washington to one—the annual presentation is all that was allowed. I brought Les Burghoff back in because he could come cheaper from New England to Washington than I could from California to Washington. So it was a tough time. We came through very well in funds at the end but when we went into it we were totally expecting practically bankruptcy."

As a young organization, PVA was often held together by the forceful personalities of its leaders. Personal feuds and arguments over money and power factionalized it at times. During the past decade, the PVA has matured as an organization and this is amply demonstrated in the conduct of the annual conventions.

Carlos Rodriguez compares conventions then and now: "Conventions today are, putting it very mildly, very quiet, calm, and there's not much to do. . . . But the old conventions were real Donnybrooks. . . . Those who yelled the loudest were able to get things done. Everybody didn't have a microphone. So instead of waiting for a microphone you just yelled and got the attention of the chairman of the committee and you introduced a resolution before somebody else did and probably had it seconded by somebody. . . .

"Today, you put your hand up and you're recognized. Years ago, forget it. We would sometimes run 15, 16 hour days, just on the floor, without a break. People used to go berserk. Well, when you stop to think that we had sometimes three or four hundred resolutions to go through and we had the NEC. The NEC made recommendations on resolutions and nobody gave a dime about it. When they got there they decided what they wanted to do. . . .

"[W]e decided to do away with the subcommittees and hold the full session right on the floor. We also decided that maybe, since we have people that love to talk and know how to talk at length, we decided to give everybody a chance to discuss or to introduce something [and] put in a time limit. So we were able to run through the convention. . . . [W]e passed a lot of resolutions with a lot of money on it and then when it came to the budget we didn't fund them. So you had to go back to step one. Those who were

knowledgeable . . . you could pass all the resolutions you wanted but if we needed a budget and you didn't pass the budget that's another way to kill a resolution. . . .

"It used to be comical. [W]e tried to restructure it. I think the structure they have today is much better. They do a lot of the work during the year and there's not that much to do at convention . . . not as much as there was. [C]onvention was once a year—that's the only time the directors came together. Today the directors I think come together twice a year plus convention. So that's three times a year that the board of directors meet."²

Organization business sometimes would suffer because chapters would wage war on the convention floor. Pat Grissom describes the proceedings in 1963: "Both [sides] had *Robert's Rules of Order* with them and they used every tactic they could find in *Robert's Rules of Order* to delay or to make a point. They watched each other like a hawk. If they saw them going through the *Robert's* then they'd get out theirs and they'd start thumbing, waiting for them to raise a point. Then there'd be a question of order, a question of procedure, and they would stall each other on us.

"They were raising rules of order, question of order, procedure, constantly. It seesawed back and forth and it was absolutely delightful to sit there and listen to them. They were quoting *Robert's Rules of Order*; the books had to be worn out by the time they got through. . . .

"[It was] the first time we'd ever used [a parliamentarian] He was the last authority on these rules and then he would have to make a ruling when they raised these issues and points. There were exceptions made, then there was a motion made and amendments to motions and amendments to amendments, opposition to amendments. They could never deal with a show of hands. They called the roll to make sure they got the vote right. It was a heavy five days . . . wouldn't miss a session of it. Went home every night, was back there first thing the next morning, just sit there and hear it again. It was something."³

The behavior of the delegates changed when the financial picture of the organization improved. It was no longer necessary for one to fight for a favored program. Mike Delaney, PVA president from 1980 to 1982, noticed that, "as soon as the budget increased and the dollars were there, the discussion centered around programs and finances and building the organization as opposed to rhetoric and arguments about *Robert's Rules of Order* and all the other nonsense."⁴

Early members who recall the floor fights find it difficult to recognize PVA now. After an absence of many years, George Hohmann attended the 1981 convention, at which he was given a Speedy Award: "I went into the grand ballroom at the hotel by the airport and they had these tables quarter of a mile around. And they had a microphone at each one, and there were caucuses, and there was lobbying. California had to address the chair to get permission for me to set at the table with the California delegation—since I was a charter member of the California group. This was in the midst of the business session. That permission was given but I was not to open my mouth. I could just sit there and I could whisper to the other people. I couldn't believe it! My God, what's this about—they act like the United Nations. All around this huge table; I couldn't believe what was going on."⁵

PVA conventions today are undoubtedly more efficient and businesslike than formerly, but perhaps not as exciting.

Improved Funding

The financial outlook of PVA changed markedly in 1973, when it took control and management of the greeting card fund-raising program from the hands of a private company. The profits of this endeavor fueled the enormous growth of the PVA in the last decade and provided the organization with the funds necessary to carry on the programs that have helped so many paralyzed individuals.

Carlos Rodriguez, PVA president from 1970 to 1972, believes that the last few years have been the most productive for the organization: "We've always had the people. I think we have a wealth of knowledgeable people in PVA, but [while] we had a lot of knowledgeable people we didn't have the funds."⁶

Michael Delaney agrees that having money makes a great difference: "It's one thing to come to a meeting and talk about what you'd like to do or what should be done. But it's another thing to be able to take control of the situation and say look, we're going to form an advocacy program and we're going to

develop it out in the field with regional offices and a staff in Washington and be able to say with some certainty that this in fact is what we're going to do. So it's been because of the money that we've been able to develop the programs and go about doing some of the things that we've always wanted to do— like breaking down the barriers, like funding research programs, like putting service officers in fifty hospitals and regional offices around the country.”⁷

Governance

As the membership in PVA grew (3,826 members in 1964, 10,454 in 1983), various systems of governance were devised to manage the organization. Yet throughout PVA's history the board of directors (composed of a representative from each chapter) has remained as the policy-making body of the organization.

The national executive committee (NEC), first created in 1963, encountered difficulties at first in defining its role in PVA. In the first year of the NEC's existence, as Wayne Capson says, “There became a big dispute between the national executive committee who felt they directed the president to do things; the president said, ‘I am elected the bylaws say that I direct, you advise.’ And they got into this big hassle. I think they fought for at least one year maybe two before they ever got that settled down to where the NEC was strictly an advisory group. Then [1964] the national office was being set up and it was going to take funding, and so on. I think these were traumatic periods of time inasmuch as the change in the organization as to where it was going to go.”⁸

Paraplegia News noted, in June, 1965, the request of the NEC for “the true definition of their powers.” At issue was whether the NEC could be overridden by the president and whether the president could present motions to the board of directors without the approval of the NEC. President Wagner responded with his ruling that “the by-laws prescribe that the function of the National Executive Committee is to advise and recommend only; that the final decision on any subject or resolution, presented either to me by a chapter or by me to the PVA Board of Directors, rests solely with the PVA Board of Directors.”⁹

Howard Bennett, PVA treasurer and NEC member in 1964, speaks of the committee's significance: “The NEC at that particular time was basically an advisory group to the board of directors. . . . I felt that the board of directors was too large and unwieldy to be an effective administrative arm, you might say, of the Paralyzed Veterans of America and [I] was partially instrumental I think in the establishment of the national executive committee. However, the board of directors was very reluctant to release their powers to a small group of five or six people. And because of that the national executive committee really could not make any decisions on its own and go out and do things in a manner in which they [the executive committee] can now. But it [the NEC] did establish the concept of [a] national executive committee.

“I think that lots of times when there are changes in power structures of an organization it's something that has to begin in a small way and evolve. That's about the only way that these things happen. So I was pleased that at least it got started at that particular time. But it was purely an advisory committee to the board of directors at that particular time.”¹⁰

The office of executive secretary, changed to executive director in 1967, was established at the July, 1963 convention. It took some time to find a candidate that was acceptable, so it was not until November of 1964 that Harry Schweikert formally set up the office in Washington, D.C. Two years later, Howard Bennett took over the position. “I came on the scene when the national office was still in its embryonic stage. I think that one of the primary goals that I had at that particular time was to establish an effective national office. One that would help to tie and administer effectively to each of the chapters, at that time we only had [20] chapters. Also, to establish our prominence I guess you might say, or our presence at least, in both the bureaucracy of our government as well as in our Congress. By bureaucracy I think mainly of the Veterans Administration. The national office was our voice you might say, or our presence, in both the bureaucracy of the Veterans Administration as well as in Congress. Prior to that we had been represented only by people who made periodic trips, the president or other representatives that might come in to make presentations to Congress and perhaps visit the Veterans Administration.

“[PVA] was a group of chapters working effectively towards the enhancement of the lives of disabled

people, especially spinal cord injured veterans. I think that was probably, as I said, our primary goal. That was to be done, one, through better administration and the coordinator of chapter activities through the national office and, two, through the enhancement of legislation through Congress and, third, through better programming of programs through the Veterans Administration. The Veterans Administration is our primary government access or vehicle, you might say, for promoting SCI programs and the health care. We had a great number of problems both in the limitation of rehabilitation aspects of catastrophically disabled veterans in the Veterans Administration as well as some of the SCI medical program."¹¹

In 1968, known in PVA history as the year of the "Great Cuts," the 1968-69 operating budget was cut by \$55,782 from that recommended by the NEC. Budget slashing reduced the NEC to a "paper organization" in that it was forced to communicate by mail rather than meet its usual four times yearly.¹²

Carlos Rodriguez describes his experience on the national executive committee: "I used to get angry. The NEC used to meet, come up with proposals—actually we were only able to propose, we had no power. The power was invested in the board of directors. So many a time we were invested to come up with a budget. We met, we spent money to meet in Washington, we came up with what we thought was a sound budget. We used to take it to convention, present it to the board of directors and it was ripped apart. Actually, all we were was a recommending committee—that's all it was. All we were able to do was recommend. We really had no clout. We couldn't say this is what we're going to do and that's it, it had to go to the board of directors. This is one of the reasons why there was a change. I always said either you give the NEC the power to pass things and make new rules and regulations for the organization and be able to enforce them or structure something else. To me I thought it was a waste."¹³

Michael Burns was appointed executive director in 1970 by Carlos Rodriguez. He reports that "The executive director's report at convention used to be a real zoo. It used to be a four hour grilling—'What have you done for us lately?' Because he was the only one that really had any power to do anything. He didn't have 19 people in the Washington office. . . . He didn't have a legislative director, an advocacy director, and a barrier-free design director. I was all of those. To the extent that we did any of that stuff it was because I wanted to or I tried to or somebody asked me to or the convention had mandated it. . . . [The legislative resolutions agreed to at the convention] were your overriding checklist—did I do any of this stuff? Have we gotten these bills introduced into Congress that they want introduced? The way that the stuff got facilitated was pretty much the executive director's job—that was what he did. Also the medical care stuff—liaison with the VA chief medical director and the chief of spinal cord injury in central office."¹⁴

The year 1971 was a milestone for PVA. In its twenty-fifth year, it was granted a Congressional Charter. In his *Paraplegia News* column, Michael Burns explained part of the significance of this: "With this recognition comes the end of our protracted 'adolescence.' Congress considers us grown up now and we must act it. Everyone . . . must look upon their role within PVA with a new light and a new responsibility."¹⁵

Bob Webb's editor's column in the *Paraplegia News* following the 1971 PVA convention was titled, "Mellowing." It stated that several achievements at the convention denoted a "mellowing maturity" on the part of PVA, not least of which was the "relative decorum" of the proceedings, rather than the "kicking, screaming and back row shenanigans of some earlier conventions."¹⁶ Another sign of a maturing organization was the "adopting of special procedures and machinery for handling some of [PVA's] most important concerns."¹⁷ Established were: a standing development committee to oversee fund-raising activities, a special committee to oversee the investment of contingency funds and a research and development committee to evaluate requests for research funds received by PVA. It was also decided that the administration of the national service program, with a paid director, should be moved to the national office.

Restructuring the National Organization

In the period 1974 through 1977, the administrative structure of PVA was revamped. Mike Delaney states that Don Broderick was president (1974 to 1976) "through a very difficult transition time from poverty into affluence. . . . [H]e got the organization off and running in a professional way as opposed to the old philosophy of the organization. Everyone was working out of their home and it was really an association of

buddies, of friends. When Don was president he realized quickly that because of the revenue change in the organization we really had to become more professional."¹⁸

In 1975, the national office was authorized to create the positions of associate national service director, architectural barriers director, research director, and accounting director. Also, the administrative assistant became the legislative director. Don Broderick says, "You can't ask an executive director to be the administrator and be the legislative director and the hospital director and everything else. You just cannot do that. And we decided to try and break it down reasonably. . . .

"As a matter of fact PVA in the past had established these posts. We had had an architectural barriers coordinator. We had had a legislative director of some kind and we had the service director. They were identified. It's just the fact that nobody had ever before tried to put it all together in one place under one roof."¹⁹

In 1976, the NEC was abolished and the board of directors was scheduled to meet three times in the next year, instead of once. The service program was expanded to include paid, full-time national service officers hired by the national service director but under the control of the chapter. Too, the service officers were to work in the VA regional office nearest their homes.

Don Broderick's successor as president, Ed Jasper, continued the reforms. At the board of directors winter meeting in January, 1977, it was decided that the board of directors would continue to meet more frequently; the day-to-day management of the organization would fall to a new corporate board of management (CBM), which would consist of the president, first vice president, second vice president, third vice president, secretary, and treasurer.²⁰

The April, 1977, BOD meeting completed the new organizational plan which had been initiated in January for the national PVA. Bob Webb, editor of the *Paraplegia News*, described the newly adopted plan: "[T]he ongoing business of the PVA [operation of the national organization] will be carried on by a Corporate Board of Management comprised of seven members: the president, senior vice president, three vice presidents at large, secretary and treasurer. The full Board of Directors with a delegate from each chapter will continue to meet three times a year and review the actions of the Board of Management. The B of M will meet more frequently as necessary to carry on their day-to-day management duties."²¹

Mike Delaney explains the rationale behind those moves: "[T]he resolution was that we form a seven-man executive committee but also have more board of director meetings. The motion was made to establish an executive committee [CBM] and another motion to have two additional meetings a year. So you'd have the convention and then an April meeting and a February meeting. This allowed the board of directors an opportunity to come to Washington or collectively get together three times a year to monitor what was going on. It also provided the management capability of an executive committee to act between those three meetings. This came about also because of internal concern about getting the organization off in the right direction and appropriately using the dollar that it had raised and knowing that you can't do it through an inactive board.

"It also came about through criticism from NIB [National Information Bureau] and CBBB—[Council of Better Business Bureaus]. These are monitoring groups that monitor charitable organizations and their activities. One of the recommendations was that PVA's board should meet more frequently to transact business. I think between NIB's recommendation and the board's own concern the decision was finally made to form the [CBM] and to give it some authority."²²

The last major change in the organizational framework of the PVA occurred at the board of directors meeting in April, 1980, the name of the board of management was changed to executive committee. Under the present arrangement the executive committee is less involved in the day-to-day control of the national organization than was the CBM. Instead, the executive committee serves as a decision-making body between board of directors meetings, which in April, 1981, were reduced from three to two annually.

The organization having been placed on a professional and businesslike footing, plans are to continue in this mode. Delaney explains: "Well, in the future I think the organization is going to continue to grow. I think the organization will probably, as a result of the demographic study we've done with the VA, know with some certainty where SCI veterans live. And also the work we're doing with MS—the formation of the *MS Quarterly*, a magazine for MS members, the MS committee. Through those kind of activities and

research I think we're going to expand in membership to the point of maybe 20,000 members within the next five or six years."²³

In the following sections will be discussed the events in the recent past that shaped the current national Paralyzed Veterans of America.

V. PVA And The VA

Kermit McDonald remembers at the end of World War II, "[I]t was apparent that the military which had regulated our lives for years and care[d] for us in sickness and had become our 'security blanket' no longer had a place for us. . . . [W]e knew we would be wards of the government and subject to the rules and regulations of bureaucrats for as long as we lived.

"We received a medical discharge and came under the jurisdiction of the Veterans Administration. After being transferred to the VA it became apparent that if we were to survive and gain some of our just rewards we would need spokesmen to present our case, our needs and our concerns, to the Veterans Administration and Congress because neither really understood paraplegics nor our problems."¹

This statement is especially applicable to those paralyzed veterans who remained long-term residents of the VA hospitals' spinal cord injury centers. George Hohmann agrees that in part, the history of PVA is the history of "a struggle against the VA bureaucracy. A struggle to maintain health care, at least in the early days. A struggle to try to get the VA to put money into spinal cord injury research. . . . [F]or example, the government gave us the grants to buy cars, but the VA had a rule that no patient could have a car on the VA compound grounds. So what the hell good were these cars going to do us? Well, that was one of the early struggles, in California [PVA] at any rate, in the summer of '46. . . . We went to the hospital director, a group of us and I was then an officer in the PVA, and had it out with him. Well, the upshot was that finally we got permission to have our cars on the post. This is the kind of bureaucratic structure that was there; that just did not accommodate realistic rehabilitation goals."²

Pat Grissom believes that "it's just natural that [PVA and the VA were] going to be in adversarial positions. The PVA wants things better, is going to ask for it to be better and better and better and the VA is saying all the time this is good, this is good; well, we say it could be better. So there's an adversarial position there."³ Fred Smead maintains that "the VA is not geared for change. . . . They like to maintain the status quo like a tank in a trench."⁴

George Hohmann relates that "when we first started building our 702 houses, we had to be within a mile or two [of the hospital] because we'd get a flare-up and get very ill and then go into the hospital. So we all built houses in the valley right around Birmingham, that's where we would live. Then lo and behold in 1950, April 1950, for political reasons . . . Harry Truman personally made the decision to move the Birmingham VA Hospital to Long Beach. He had just closed the naval shipyard and it happened that the congressman from that district was one Clyde Doyle who played poker with Truman in his Friday night poker group. . . . Doyle said, 'You know you're going to cost me my election if you don't quit taking these federal payrolls out of my district.' . . . [So] the decision was made by President Truman himself to move Birmingham to Long Beach. . . .

"In a month's time through nickels, dimes and quarters, in quart milk containers scattered all over the valley in shops and stores and so on, over \$10,000 was raised to send a group of us back to personally appeal to Truman not to move our hospital away from where we had built our homes. Pat [Grissom] and I . . . I

was called out of school to do this by Ted Anderson who was then a honcho in the California PVA . . . we went back to try to get an audience with Truman to lay our cause before him. When it first started, the PVA took up the cudgel to leave us our hospital. [VA] central office, under orders from the White House apparently, sent a man out from Washington, called the hospital a firetrap and all sorts of things. It was essentially the same construction, temporary World War II, as the naval hospital at Long Beach where they were moving us. . . .

“At any rate, Pat and I and the president of the valley Chamber of Commerce, who got behind the thing and a guy who was a TB and MS patient (it was dry in the valley and wet in Long Beach so the TB group were opposed to this too) went off to Washington on this \$10,000, which in 1950 was a lot of bucks, and ensconced ourselves in the Mayflower [Hotel] and started lobbying to keep our hospital. We saw everybody from Vice President Alben Barkley on down. . . . Had newspaper photographers around . . . and Truman was being played as the hardhearted bastard who wouldn't listen to the war wounded. We had pictures taken peering through the picket fence around the White House wondering when the president would see us. We took pictures by the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and all that sort of thing. Truman would never see us. He damn sure knew we were there. At any rate, under orders, presumably from the White House to the administrator who was one General Carl Grey at the time, they moved a 1600 bed hospital lock, stock and barrel, including iron lung patients and everything else, in two weeks from the valley to Long Beach and set up operations in that period of time. Our cause was lost. What came out of it was that we did get a clinic established. . . . I think if we had had another couple of weeks we probably would have stopped it.⁵

Wayne Capson, a Korean war veteran remembers that “after the Korean War care for the veteran fell way off. Became a very low federal budget item and care went way down after the Korean. I mean so far down that there weren't enough attendants to get the guys up everyday. So they would take turns; one quad would get up one day, the next quad would get up the next day. As far as equipment, supplies and things like that were concerned, it was so low that it was. . . . Well, even Dr. Ernest Bors in the '60s went on television before his retirement and really kind of made a plea: ‘Give us the money; we're doing a good job but give us the money so we can do a better job.’ The Vietnam War came along, things became available to us, personnel became available, money, supplies, and so on.”⁶

In the early 1960s, Bill Green explains, kidney dialysis at VA hospitals was not permitted for paraplegics. “Said, ‘It's not going to help you people anyway.’ [PVA] started their agitation to correct the situation. . . . [They] more or less shamed the VA into it. They said, ‘All right, we got this amount of money to set up a dialysis unit for spinal cord. Now, you match it. We're not asking you to give the whole thing but we're going to try to prove this.’ So the VA finally agreed to a two-year test which inside of one year the results were so remarkable that they decided that they would support the thing. . . .”⁷ Wayne Capson states, “We forced it—that was kind of like picking up the bucks and hitting them over the head and saying ‘We need it and damn it let's go with it’.”⁸

George Hohmann recalls, “[I]n 1968 there was a panel of national consultants formed to the VA director of spinal cord injury . . . Dr. Mannarino, then Erich Krueger, and included: four neurosurgeons, all nationally prominent; four urologists, all nationally prominent; . . . David Berry at Liberty Mutual [which] had underwritten the early Munro work in '37, '38, '39, the first really hopeful kinds of things that had been said about the possibility of rehabilitation for spinal cord injured people; and myself. . . . I sat there quietly, much in awe of all these nationally-known figures. I was on that committee by virtue of Bors. [Dr.] Mannarino had asked Bors if they should have a psychiatrist or someone like that on it. He said, ‘The only sane one I know is George Hohmann and you might call him and see if you can get him.’ Which gives you some idea of Bors' opinion of behavioral scientists. At any rate, I said yes. So at that first meeting the only thing they talked about that had to do with other than neurosurgical issues or plumbing issues was how the Va could go about getting buses so that they could haul patients to football games to get them out of the hospital. This is what they were talking about—recreational therapy and [what] I term psychosocial rehabilitation. Someone asked me, ‘What do you know about the status of psychosocial [rehabilitation]?’ . . . I said, ‘Well, I really don't know . . . [but] one of the most important things that people need to learn to do is not go to football games in buses but need to learn to drive.’ . . .

"I ended up [at] that meeting with the charge to report on the status of psychosocial rehabilitation in the VA spinal cord injury centers at the next meeting. . . . Another thing that was decided at that meeting was that there should be a series of in-service kind of meetings held around the country where as many of the staff as possible could be involved. And kind of updated because it was very clear that the medical care was quite deficient in many of the then 8 or 9 spinal cord injury centers. Cleveland had been added, Houston had been added, Milwaukee had, maybe Hampton, Virginia had been added by then. Several of them were seen as kind of long-term or warehouse repositories for the failures out of the principal centers, the large centers.

"So I came back at the meeting, six months later, of the national consultants, [and said], 'I don't know what the status is and I don't know what anyone else does. What we really need to do is find out what it is and what needs to be done.' In the audience, unknown to me, in the administrator's conference room, was one Essie Morgan, who was a social worker in central office who was in charge of special rehabilitation, dialysis, spinal cord injury and so on, for social work. She called me that night at my hotel and said she was very interested in what we were doing. . . . I was designated to do a survey for psychosocial rehabilitation and group therapy in the VA spinal cord injury centers and report with recommendations. Essie volunteered to help me with that and I agreed to accept that challenge. I said, 'But I will do it my way, I will not do it the VA way.' I think they wanted a White Paper. In my opinion, of all the VA White Papers I've known, most of them have been where someone goes around and they talk to the hospital director and maybe a service chief or two and then write a paper that says everything's hunky-dory. I said, 'I won't do it that way. I will have a completely free rein.' . . . Mark Musser was chief medical director at that time and he said, 'You shall have it.' I said, 'I will go talk to where the action is. I don't presume that psychosocial rehabilitation has much to do with the psychologists or social workers that are there. Probably has more to do with patient-patient interaction and patient-aide interaction, maybe patient-nurse interaction.' I was aware of Fineburg and Willup's research out of Texas Institute of Rehabilitation where they showed that the influence on adjustment was inversely related to rank in the hierarchy.

"The people least influencing the outcome of rehabilitation were the physicians then the nurses; the people who were most influential were other patients. So I said, 'I'll talk to patients; I'll talk to those people who lay on hands, they know what's going on. I will talk to the administrators and that sort of thing to get their perceptions.' This resulted in a report about a year later. We visited the 8 or 9 then extant VA centers with one exception, which wasn't really organized yet, and that was Houston I think.

"This was in '68-'69 that I reported on, in '70. The situation was deplorable. We not only found that the psychosocial quality of life, if you will, emphasis was nonexistent but that the medical care in general was lousy. With the exception being mainly Long Beach; Bors was still there at the time we went there. . . . The report was published, a summary was published with recommendations with Mark Musser's permission in *Rehabilitation Psychology* which is a journal put out by the Division of Rehabilitation Psychology of the APA [American Psychological Association] and is open to the public. . . .

"The upshot was that there was a big turmoil. . . . Vietnam veterans were coming back, the *Life* magazine article had appeared, and things began to change. We recommended things like patient government, that driver training be universal, that there be some sex education (it was not discussed up until 1970). We had a series of what Essie and I came to call revival meetings held around the country in which we got a team from each . . . a physician, a nurse, an aide, a PT or some rehabilitation therapist from each of the spinal cord injury centers. We had four or five of these and they went on for three days, maybe a week. The idea was to try to instill some idea of enthusiasm for the idea of you need to be paying attention to how your patients are living. Because it seemed that the programs that we observed really were preparing people for institutional living, and indeed nursing homes were the largest recipient of discharges."¹⁹

The *Life* Magazine Article

In the late 1960s, many members of PVA were dissatisfied with conditions at the SCI centers and with the attitude of the VA. "[I]n spite of the liaison and promises nothing was being done," explains Donald Broderick, executive director of EPVA at that time.

"I met with [the chief medical director] and I said, 'You got to come with me to the Bronx [VA Hospital] and see what I'm telling you. You have to see this because you just can't keep doing it.' . . . When I left he allowed as to how he would definitely do that and he was so happy that I would come down and convey my problems, etc., etc. When I got back to New York we got new hospital beds. We're saying, 'Hey, we're all getting electric beds.' A whole row of electric beds is supposed to pacify you. So we got our electric beds but the next time I called for an appointment I couldn't get one. I was shut out."¹⁰

The situation at the Bronx center was such that it would require much more than electric beds. Carlos Rodriguez describes it thus: "[T]he facilities were antique, the buildings . . . terrible. . . . What you had was a long corridor going through A building all the way up to F building, I believe. And off this corridor was just wide open. There were the curtains that went around the beds but nobody even pulled them. So you just can imagine when visiting hours came about. The nurse was either changing a dressing on somebody or there's a guy laying on his stomach with his butt exposed and young girls walking by. In the daytime visitors were coming to visit somebody, or even people who worked in the building passed up and down the ward. To go from one building to the other you had to go through that ward—it was just a long street. On the other side of the ward were the bathrooms. So people were lined up on Stryker frames out in the hall waiting to get put into the Blue Room to go for their bowel care or for their baths and showers. . . . I thought this was degrading. You had no privacy. . . . Lot of the guys complained about it—a lot of the young fellows. World War II guys were used to it. They complained about it too but I guess it becomes a part of life. But a lot of new Korean fellows and Vietnam fellows didn't like it and they complained about it. . . ."¹¹

"In our presentations and letters to Congress, Don Broderick says, "I really became extremely critical and laid it all out. No politics being played, just straight . . . 'You people are really screwing,' this type stuff. I guess by doing this my name, I assume, came up with somebody in the media. I got a call one day from a *Life* reporter, who was doing an article on the VA and told me he had gotten absolutely nowhere. He'd been shut out . . . he said he got into one hospital and could see abuses. He said he couldn't believe some of the things he saw there. He said, would I talk to him? At least tell him what was going on. He really wanted to do an article—the Vietnam thing [or] MS. I said, 'Well, you got a problem here—politically and everything else. But I'll tell you, I'm at the end of my rope. I want this thing put out in the open if I can.' So I met with him one day and I took him up to the hospital. I said, 'You and me will go in, you'll be my friend and I'll show you around.' I showed him around, and he got very angry. Then we were put onto a photographer . . . a combat photographer. These guys were mad about this story—and they should have been. So should everybody else. Anyway, we did it. I got them in there I guess three straight days before anybody smelled a rat. By then the story was done."¹²

"Don and I were wary," explains Carlos Rodriguez, "because usually all we always saw was a big whitewash of everything. [W]e've been to many SCI centers or many other VA hospitals and they were as bad. I'm not saying staffing. The staff was good. They tried to do their job. I'm saying the structure, the building itself just wasn't conducive to the care of people. Our biggest fear was well, gee, they'll go up there and they'll paint a beautiful picture of it. So we just decided well, look, what could we do? They go up there and they're going to print whatever they want to print. So let them go up there. They whitewash it, we know what's wrong with it. If they don't, great."¹³

The May 22, 1970, issue of *Life* featured an article, "Our Forgotten Wounded—Assignment to Neglect." For Don Broderick, "[it] was the most incredible experience I've ever had in my life. Probably what ruined my health. It went on and on and on, day and night. I couldn't even get away at the theater, they'd come after me, they'd find me some place, at dinner, at my house. It was incredible. It was terrible."¹⁴

The national PVA initially disclaimed the article. "[I]t really left me kind of holding the bag because I was the one that had gotten them [*Life*] in, I was the one whose name was appearing in print and I had the responsibility. . . . The press was jumping all over me, I was getting called all kinds of names in my neighborhood, and on the TV . . . everytime I turned on the news there's someone beating up on me. . . . I had the biggest support from people in the Veterans Administration themselves who felt that this was going to enable them now to get some funds and to get permission to finally do something to help care and treatment of spinal cord injured. . . . It was a great insight as to how the country works—the response to

the article. . . .

"I met a nice guy, later on, that was the guy who was head of investigating to prove that I was some kind of a maniac. It was openly hostile . . . how else do you say it? It was a tragedy. It was the second biggest story in the history of *Life* magazine. It was interesting because the administration almost was successful in getting the magazines never to hit the newsstands even after it was published."¹⁵

Carlos Rodriguez recalls that "We probably were being tapped, because everytime we used to pick up the phone at the office and at home we always would hear some clicking. . . . Naturally, all the VA rallied around the flag and all the hospitals around here were saying that it wasn't true, that the staff there gave the veteran the best treatment in the world. I mean, we never said anything about the staff—the article didn't. It just showed how the conditions were at this particular hospital at that time."¹⁶

Don Broderick remembers that "we [EPVA] were rather reluctant to launch any major counterattacks towards the media. The VFW and particularly the American Legion came in in support of the Veterans Administration. The American Legion came in and actually did an article using the same pictures but with a wide-angle lens to make sure that the rooms looked big and airy. Then they went back and cleaned up the wards. Oh, they did incredible things. . . . They were accusing *Life* magazine people of doctoring the photos. It wasn't true—these were just shot on the run. Obviously, some technique's involved in doing it but they were shot on the run. The other ones were all posed. The American Legion came with their magazine, went to press real fast, spent some money . . . and produced their rebuttal of the *Life* magazine in which everything is airy and beautiful and the patients were saying we really love it here. It was like a joke. They went so far as to distribute door to door in my neighborhood on Long Island. And I kept saying, 'This can't really be going on.'

"The crowning achievement was having to go to PVA [1970 convention]—I'm getting all ready with my stuff and everything, I'm going to go and face them . . . they had decided they were going to ignore it. So as soon as the convention opened I asked for permission to waive the agenda. . . . Nothing was going to be done so we had to lay it all out and hash it out. I had all my facts and figures and packets prepared for everybody about what was going on, the lack of support we were getting from everybody, the ramifications of this and that. . . . I got great compliments as soon as everybody understood what was going on. I mean the support I got was tremendous, totally 100 percent. [Delaware proposed a resolution, which read in part: 'Whereas: these (SCI center) conditions were truly and meticulously presented in the *Life* magazine article . . . Resolved: that the Paralyzed Veterans of America . . . unanimously petition that the Veterans Administration, the Congress of the United States, and the White House correct those aforementioned deficiencies in the care and support of the paralyzed veterans of this nation which have been repeatedly reported and recently publicized; . . .']

"[T]he [VA] administrator was coming to speak at our convention . . . because he thought . . . that I wasn't getting any support. . . . Meanwhile, now, because of the delegates and the guys things had changed. . . . I never spoke, I never did anything. I sat there and watched people just take him apart—just like he should have been—intelligently and not back down. It was great. It was great. I felt really proud to be a part of that. And, it produced a whole lot of money for new hospitals. Once they backed off the world opened."¹⁷

Carlos Rodriguez recalls the first PVA convention following publication of the *Life* article. "[T]he Chicago convention [of 1970] was the first time an administrator of the Veterans Administration addressed a PVA convention. . . . When Donald Johnson showed up Wayne Capson brought him into the room. The room, which is unusual for a PVA convention, was quiet. And Donald Johnson came in with his entourage and he just walked into a room of silence. One of the first things, he just looked at me and he looked at Wayne Capson and I think he made a remark of, 'Now I know how Daniel felt in the lion's den,' something to that effect. I think those were his exact words. He addressed the problem of the care and treatment of the veterans and everything. The funny thing about it is right after the *Life* article they were saying that it wasn't true, wasn't true, wasn't true but all during that time after they let it cool down for a while they'd touch with us. They wanted to find out how they could improve conditions."¹⁸

After publication of the *Life* article, Michael Burns recalls, "[T]he VA was very paranoid about us. We were trying to belie that paranoia, we were trying to get rid of it, and the way to do that was to say, 'Look,

all right, we've pointed out all these problems. Yes, whenever you throw mud against the wall it's going to hit some people that don't deserve to get hit.'

"I went into this whole thing right after the Chicago convention. I was glad I ended up going to Dayton and doing Donahue and before that Chicago and a talk show out there. And I always appeared with the chief medical director, who was also new, at the same time. He kept saying, 'Yes, we have a few problems and we're trying to straighten them out. The staffing ratios. . . .' You know, he was talking in all this bureaucratic stuff. My answer always was, 'Look, the Bronx is a terrible situation. The other centers aren't a hell of a lot better. Now maybe you don't trap rats at your bedside but there are a lot of problems and they need to be looked at and they need to be solved. Certainly, the Bronx article may or may not have been a distortion of reality in terms of looking at the entire system. But, again, when you do that kind of an exposé some very good people always are going to get hurt. Some reputations are going to get sullied that probably shouldn't get sullied.'"¹⁹

Frank DeGeorge, PVA president from 1972 to 1974, states, "[The *Life* article] brought a lot of attention to the needs of veterans in physical facilities. Once the crying and the screams died down over the conditions of the hospital—and I say the cry and screams by the VA defense of it as well as PVA's pointed illustration of it—I think that's when PVA began to turn the adversary-type approach towards the VA towards an advocacy type role. To have them understand we had problems and they had to understand and hear what they were and work them out together. That's not to say that there weren't up and down periods during and since the 1970s, but I believe that was probably the real threshold of working with the VA."²⁰

The New Relationship

A goal that PVA attained in 1970 was to witness the establishment of a separate spinal cord injury service within the VA, which PVA had been urging since 1954. The SCIS had formerly been a staff element. An ad hoc committee was also formed to facilitate communication between the VA and the PVA.

Howard Bennett, who was SCI staff person at the VA, recalls, "[When] Dr. Jim [Marc] Musser was chief medical director, I was working for the Veterans Administration; before I went to work for the VA I used to be a private consultant to Dr. Musser. He just wanted me to come in quarterly and tell him what was happening, what was going on out in the world with the spinal cord injured veterans. In other words, he was interested to know what our concerns and our problems were and where the next ruckus was going to come from. Because he was medical director right after the 1970 Bronx episode which was traumatic. . . . He wanted to know about what was happening out in the areas before they came to a head such as what happened with the Bronx *Life* magazine article. I used to try to brief myself by talking with different people and then would go in and talk with him.

"When I came to work for the spinal cord injury program he said, 'I think I'd like to have an ad hoc committee in which representatives say from New York and Chicago and the West Coast and the South would all come in, maybe semi-annually or quarterly and just air their concerns.' I suggested to him that it was a very very good idea. So we established what he called the Chief Medical Director's Ad Hoc Committee for Spinal Cord Injured. I had the administrative responsibilities. Dr. Musser, for a man who was as busy as the chief medical director is . . . he used to give a considerable amount of time to that particular committee. His duty executive assistant was Bob Rynearson . . . who had been a therapist at Long Beach back when it was one of the first for spinal cord injury care. Bob understood the needs of the spinal cord injured. . . . The committee functioned during Dr. Musser's time, then it became defunct."²¹

Frank DeGeorge points out that "[T]here is a [PVA] Rehabilitation Advisory Committee that works with the Veterans Administration and that's in a sense of the word an outgrowth of that ad hoc committee. PVA works very closely on that rehabilitation advisory committee today. . . . In addition to that our service program works very very closely with the Veterans Administration. So the increased communications that came about because of the ad hoc committee are evident today because of the close working relationship through our national service program and the rehab advisory committee."²²

A priority for Carlos Rodriguez during his PVA presidency was ". . . establishing a criteria for SCI

centers. Every SCI center was run differently, they were built differently. Plus, the space criteria for SCI was the same as regular hospital spacing, which wasn't too good. . . . [T]he Mid-South chapter . . . had a big fear that they were too high in the hospital and they were afraid of fire. The hospital director told them that he was reassured by the fire commissioner of the City of Memphis that if there was a fire there that they would be able to evacuate all the SCI patients. I believe at that time they were on the 6th floor. They were on an upper level. . . . I spoke to the [VA] administrator and I spoke to Dr. Musser who, I have to say, was a great help to us. . . . Since then all [new] SCIs have been at ground level."²³

Bill Green, an early service director, remembers his dealings with the Veterans Administration: "The relationship in the beginning [of PVA] was at a standoff, almost a politeness. After we proved ourself and showed that we were doing our homework and coming in with cases that were well planned and well laid out, the VA would sit down and go through things with us. It became a very profitable relationship. . . . I would make, for instance, about eight trips a year to Washington and I would take things over to central office that had to be gone over with the service department. I was always scheduled to meet with the chief of benefits. And he would call in his chief people on every case that I presented and gave us all the help that we could use. . . . At every convention I would have a seminar on some problem such as insurance or compensation and they would provide the whole staff for us to teach that seminar.

"So we built a relationship which was based upon their respect for us because of what we were doing and the manner in which we were doing it. But we did have a rough go with a chief medical director by the name of Engel. Dr. Engel could not see any of the problems of spinal cord. He thought spinal cord could be treated anywhere. And I was quite pleased the last meeting I had with him when he told me he was retiring."²⁴

Michael Delaney, PVA president from 1980 to 1982, believes that "we're not at a state of utopia or anything like that, but we have made a tremendous thrust forward in the area of medical care. . . . Now we have approximately 19 spinal cord centers across the country in addition to several long-term care facilities for spinal cord injured veterans. It was because of our efforts early on and throughout our organization's history that we've been able to get these services for the spinal cord injured and improve the quality of care. So I think that is a very major achievement for the organization and we continue to monitor it.

"In fact, when I was president of PVA I formed the first—to my knowledge the first—spinal cord injury medical care committee. I think that was my way of saying that we really need to continue to place great emphasis on spinal cord injured treatment and care and continue to monitor it. So that we have an active group of PVA board members and officers constantly looking at what's going on in the field, working with the officers and staff and the board of directors to make sure that the spinal cord injury program in the VA is working the way we want it to work."²⁵

National Service Program

Through its national service program, PVA interacts with the Veterans Administration to provide quality medical care and entitled veterans' benefits for PVA members. The roots of the national service program go back to the early years of PVA when service was provided by each chapter's part-time volunteers working out of their homes. Bill Green, national service director from 1961 to 1971, explains that "[P]rior to 1960 we had a system in every system in every chapter where we were giving service to our members. But we were doing it in a manner in which we were working through other organizations in order to get the work done in the [VA] regional offices. . . . [We worked through] DAV, American Legion, VFW. DAV has always been a strong backer of that, also the VFW has been tremendous for us."²⁶

At the 1959 annual convention an effort was made to give some structure to the ad hoc system of providing service to the membership. However, a proposal to budget \$14,000 for a service program was rejected as being too expensive. Five thousand dollars was allocated, but there is no evidence that any of it was spent. In 1960 a national adjudication office was an attempt by PVA to take over much of the service work that in the past had been done for PVA members by the DAV, American Legion, and VFW. In 1960, says Green, "[W]e started working on a formal basis within our own group [PVA]."²⁷

For the first year the office was headed by Patrick Marron and briefly by Harry Schweikert. Green continues: "Harry [Schweikert] and Bob Classon [PVA president at that time] had a disagreement and Harry resigned. So at that point Bob called me up and asked me to take it. I told him, 'Well, you're going to get some changes. You're going to pay for some changes.' And he said, 'That's all right.' . . . [My] first year, to give you an idea, our cost per contact was over \$14. And I instigated payment for research time and study. Within five years we had the cost of contact down [to] a little over \$2. But by paying for training we profited by it, and at the same time the growth in the [service] program and the number served was absolutely unbelievable. Because once our members found out that we had competent people who knew what they were doing and could answer their problems and handle the [VA] regional office things then, of course, they went right to us about it.

"The [PVA] Regional [Service] Offices were not set up until after '70. What we had at that time was each chapter had their own office. We set up a system by which they would ask the [VA] regional office to send the files over that they needed. In that way they were able to have access to the files that were necessary for carrying on a case and studying the case. The biggest problem there was that you had to rely on the couriers from the hospitals to go back and forth—you didn't have somebody over there all the time. As I say, that was changed [in the '70s] because we started getting a lot more money and we could afford to do things. To give you an idea, my total budget for a national service program after ten years was somewhere in the neighborhood of \$96,000. . . . And when I left the program I had 22 chapters in it and all the service officers were competent and trained and certified."²⁸

In addition to money, a basic impediment to the development of a cohesive national service program was, until 1971, the fact that PVA was not a congressionally chartered service organization. Harry Schweikert spoke to this problem in a June, 1965, *Paraplegia News* article: "PVA's Service Program is frustrated by bureaucratic convention: PVA's Service Officers are permitted to investigate and prepare the claims of their members, but they must then turn to a recognized organization to prosecute them! A lot of delay ensues thereby, and even then the PVA Service Officer receives less than the expeditious or courteous attention he requires and deserves. After all, he may not even be a member of this organization—or want to join at all! (It is not unusual for a major veterans' organization to suggest a life membership in return for a favor.) . . . For the presentation of claims, the Veterans' Administration will only recognize state or governmental services or organizations granted a charter or recognition by act of Congress."²⁹

PVA's 1971 convention, held a month before the organization was granted a federal charter, voted for the "hiring of a National Service Director . . . to be a part of the National Office responsible to the Executive Director." Also, the convention approved funds "to allow for a [training] course for service officers. A one week course given by the VA or a recognized service organization. The purpose would be to obtain VA recognition for the service officers. If a Congressional Charter is obtained then VA recognition can be sought. Before it will be given we must be able to certify our service officers as being competent in all areas."³⁰

The granting of a Congressional Charter to PVA made it possible for the organization to deal directly with the VA on matters of medical care and benefits. The charter also required that the national service staff be available and trained to handle the claims of all veterans seeking assistance from the VA. Nevertheless, the creation of a truly national service program encountered some initial difficulty in getting started. Frank DeGeorge, PVA president from 1972 to 1974, recalls the 1972 Miami convention when "the national organization turned down, defeated, a resolution to a National Service Program nationwide. [We] had individuals serving voluntary mostly at the chapter level where there were spinal cord injury centers. . . . Our now executive director [Jack Powell] came back to Chicago and said, 'They defeated the best thing that could have ever been done in this organization. They turned down the service program.' . . . I said, 'I'm willing to support it. If you put it in writing we'll send it out there and let's see if we can't get a service program.' Fortunately for PVA, because it's the main thrust of our organization to provide service, a mailed ballot came back approving the service program. And in that same year, 1972, we held the first National Service Officers' Seminar meeting in Crystal City, Virginia, at the Hospitality House."³¹

The delegates had originally rejected the proposal, DeGeorge feels, because "they didn't feel like PVA had the money or the wherewithall to do it, number one. And then there were also people that were involved in the program that thought maybe . . . they were losing grip on something they thought was theirs instead of the organization's. Those were the kind of times—'It's my program, it's my program.' Failing to recognize we were growing and it was PVA's program."³²

The 1974 convention directed that the national service program be moved to quarters within the VA and that the national service director be made a presidential appointee. Hence, on November 1, 1974, PVA's National Service Office was opened in the Veterans Administration Central Office in hope that the location would facilitate handling of claims and the monitoring of regulatory developments.³³

The following year, the 1975 PVA annual meeting in Phoenix, Arizona, revamped the service program and mandated that the national service director work out of the PVA national office and be under the administrative control of the executive director. The national service office at the VA Central Office was to "continue to handle all appeals before the Board of Veterans Appeals, Administrative appeals before the appropriate department of the VA Central Office and Hospital liaison at the VACO." Additionally, the BOD instructed that an office be opened in the [VA] Washington Regional Office, the service program continue to train and develop service officers, the development of a full-time O.J.T. program and the paying of full-time national service officers under the jurisdiction of the national service director at the chapter level.³⁴

PVA's successful fund-raising endeavor in the mid-'70s made it possible for the national service program to expand in scope and staff. At the April, 1978, BOD meeting in Arlington, Virginia, a program consisting of five regional service directors was instituted for the purpose of field supervision. By mid-1979 the service program staff in Washington was comprised of seven people. The field staff was described by National Service Director James Turner in his report to the 1979 PVA convention: "Our field staff consists of thirty National Service Officers located in twenty-six chapters. . . . PVA is fortunate to have both full-time and part-time Volunteer Service Officers in various PVA chapters. . . . PVA also has hospital/clinic and community liaison officers providing services to its membership and veteran population. We have many liaison officers located in cities where there are no hospital or VA medical facilities, that report problems to the Service Officers of that jurisdiction regarding medical problems or problems in receiving medical care, patients in nursing homes, and general problems that involve SCI PVA members and non-members."³⁵

Since 1980 the national service program has grown in professional stature and has attained stability in its leadership. One of the major developments in the evolution of the service program was the removal of the service offices from their location within the chapters to offices in a VA regional office or facility. PVA's Service Office Network also has enhanced its volunteer service program whose trained volunteers are supervised by official PVA service officers. In June, 1983, the national service office brought PVA into an agreement with the National Multiple Sclerosis Society to address together the needs of MS veterans. Currently, the national service program has a staff of thirteen people in the Washington area, three national field directors, and sixty-two national service officers in forty-five national service offices.



Gilford S. Moss, first president of PVA from 1947 to 1948.



Sergeant Fred Smead (center), of California, testifying before the House Veterans' Committee on May 16, 1946, in support of a bill to extend compensation benefits to hospitalized veterans.



Formative meeting of the national PVA at Hines VA Hospital, Illinois, in February, 1947. Front row, left to right: Alex Mihalchyk, Robert Moss, Harold Peterson, Joseph Gillette, unidentified, Marcus Orr, unidentified, Kenneth Seaquist, unidentified.



Scene at the Fourteenth National Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans of America in July, 1960, at Denver, Colorado.



Harry A. Schweikert, Jr., legislative director of PVA, presents national Speedy Award to Representative Olin Teague, chairman of the House Committee on Veterans Affairs, as Nathaniel Martin (left) of Virginia PVA and Walter Suchanoff (right) of Eastern PVA look on. January 28, 1960.



The Administration and Purpose Committee in session at the 1963 PVA convention in Bal Harbour, Florida. From left to right: Jerry Sills, Harry Schweikert, Bolivar Rivera, Harold Wagner, William Green, Connie Standinger, Thomas Ward, Leonard Kennedy, Joseph Blanton, John Krenzel, James Smittkamp, Allan Jarabin, and Marion Phillips.



PVA members and officers after having testified before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs in March, 1965. From left to right: Leonard Kennedy, Howard Bennett, Lou Logan, Dixon Christian, Boyer Parnell, Harry Schweikert, Russell Sherwood, and William Green.



Scene from the Twentieth Annual Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans of America in July, 1966, at Detroit, Michigan.



PVA representatives attending a legislative presentation on March 30, 1967, in Washington, D.C., are shown here with three members of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs. Standing, left to right: Rep. George E. Brown (D-Calif.), Rep. Margaret M. Heckler (R-Mass.), and Rep. Walter S. Baring (D-Nev.). PVA members in front row, left to right: Robert Classon; William Green, national service director; John Krenzel; and Andrew Phacas. Second row, left to right: Howard L. Bennett, executive secretary; Wayne Capson; Leslie P. Burghoff, president; Robert Rohrer; Leonard Chrysler, vice president; and Arthur Haines. Last row: Ernest Sawyer, secretary-treasurer.



Carlos Rodriguez, PVA president, and Michael Burns, executive director, testifying before the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs on February 10, 1971.



An overflow crowd attending the Friday night banquet climaxing the 1977 PVA convention.



Ground-breaking ceremony on August 17, 1981, for the PVA headquarters building in Washington, D.C. Front row, left to right: R. Jack Powell, PVA executive director, and Michael Delaney, PVA president. Back row, left to right: A. Leo Anderson, director of veterans' affairs for the District of Columbia, and A. Wilhelm Veenhuysen, executive vice-president of Savage-Fogarty Companies, Inc.



National headquarters of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, 801 Eighteenth Street, NW, Washington, D.C. The grand opening and dedication were held on February 9, 1983 with members of Congress and government officials in attendance.



Richard D. Hoover, twenty-fourth and current president of PVA.

VI. The Charter Fight

A landmark in PVA history occurred on August 12, 1971, when President Nixon signed into law H.R. 2894 (Public Law 92-92), granting a federal charter to the Paralyzed Veterans of America. This had been a goal of the organization since September, 1947, and bills for a federal charter had been submitted regularly since 1948. The PVA considered a charter essential for the operation of their service program which assisted PVA members with VA claims. "PVA's service officers [were] permitted to investigate and prepare the claims of their members but they [were forced to] turn to a recognized organization to prosecute them. . . . For the presentation of claims, the Veterans Administration [would] only recognize state or governmental services, or organizations granted charter or recognized by act of Congress."¹

First Success in the House of Representatives

Howard Bennett, PVA executive director from 1966 to 1968, recalls early attempts to obtain a Congressional Charter: "I used to be so disappointed when I went to see Emanuel Celler. The first time I asked for a bill to be introduced it was by Emanuel Celler [chairman of the Judiciary Committee] because I thought that was the way. He was very polite to me and I didn't realize at that time that he was the guy that was blocking these congressional bills and would never ever have a hearing. Because when I went back and asked him to have a subcommittee hearing he kept giving me this song and dance, 'Well, my subcommittees are real busy. We'll get this on the agenda.' You know, that political procrastination that is easy to give, especially when you're very naive and young as I was. I can't remember how I learned that Emanuel Celler had said that hell was going to freeze over before another organization was congressionally chartered . . . because every year there were hundreds of bills introduced to charter everything from some areas of the Boy Scouts to probably the Ku Klux Klan, I really don't know. But in other words, it was a large gamut of bills that were introduced by congressmen just for a Congressional Charter.

"In reading the *Congressional Record* one day I happened to notice that an organization that had its headquarters in the District of Columbia, it seemed to me like it was some woman's club organization, had asked for a bill to be introduced in the District of Columbia Committee—there is a committee that administers the District of Columbia. All of a sudden a light dawned on me that that might be a new avenue of approach because at that time our headquarters was 3636 16th Street, NW and it was in the District of Columbia. McMillan, the chairman of the District of Columbia Committee, was a representative from Florence, South Carolina. I went to see him one day and told him who we were and took a number of our brochures and documents with me. And he had a large stocky man [known as the] major, he was his chief aide. The chemistry between the major and myself seemed to turn out right on our very first meeting. The major and the congressman, we all three sat down and I told him what we had in mind. And he said, 'Why don't you draft me up a bill? I don't see any reason why we can't do something on that.' I was very very appreciative, wrote him a letter when I got back and called the major a couple of different times.

"We had two service connected spinal cord injured veterans that lived in Florence, South Carolina, and this congressman's home was in Florence. And I immediately called these two guys up and told them that we had a key piece of legislation that was going to be introduced by their congressman and that I would be eternally grateful if they would find out the next time that he was going to come home and contact him. I said a personal visit would be much more [effective] and I gave them considerable briefing on exactly what it was and followed it up with some correspondence to them. Believe it or not, both of them contacted the congressman the next time he went there. It was just amazing. It looked like everything just fell into place. I made an appointment, this was probably about 10 days later. . . . We had had all kinds of bills, it was no problem to draft up a bill because we had so many bills drafted before and it was a matter of changing [the names of] the directors and then copying off the rest of the bill. So I carried it back to the congressman and he looked at it and said, 'Well, you know, I've got a couple of boys down in my area. I didn't realize how much this meant to your organization. But these boys came over to see me and there's no question we're going to get this piece of legislation enacted in the House of Representatives.' I'm about to fall out of my chair, you know, to hear this. Because he said, 'I want to help you fellows.' I said, 'Well, we sincerely appreciate this.' These people really were on our side. So he introduced the piece of legislation and he referred it to one of the subcommittees in the District of Columbia [Committee].

"The chairman of that subcommittee was a congressman from Louisiana. As soon as it was introduced to his subcommittee I went to the congressional records and found out what counties were in his congressional district and looked up to see if we had any members. And we have five members that lived in his district. I called these guys and none of them were very hep on this thing. So I finally said, 'Well, if I write letters for you will you sign them and send them to this congressman?' 'Oh yea, sure, we'd be glad to do something like that if it's on the legit.' I said, 'Well, of course it's on the legit. It's for a congressional charter for our organization and that's very, very important to it.' So I remember we had two different typewriters in the office at that time and Margie Scott was my secretary; she wrote one letter by hand, I wrote one letter by hand and used a typewriter to write a letter and another letter. Each letter was different; but I didn't want any of them to look like a form letter or look like they were written by the same one. I sent a cover letter to each one of these veterans along with a stamped addressed envelope to their congressman. So all they had to do was sign their name and mail the thing. Each one of them was kind enough that they did sign their name and they did mail it to the congressman. I remember that shortly after that he scheduled a subcommittee hearing on our bill. . . .

"There was no one there but the congressman and Les Burghoff. . . . We prepared testimony of course, and Les came down. And there was no one at the hearing but the congressman, Les Burghoff and myself—no other subcommittee members were there. He opened that meeting by saying, 'Your organization as I've looked into it is not that large but I did never realize that a piece of legislation could be so important to a number of my constituents.' He said, 'You know, I received more mail on this than I have on a lot of important pieces of legislation from people in my district. I realize that it must have considerable significance to you.' Well, of course Les and I both amen'd that. We presented our testimony and he favorably referred the bill to the whole committee.

"It was H.R. 11131, I can remember that number, and it was scheduled to be put on the floor of the Congress one day. And I picked up my wife and went over to the gallery and sat up in the gallery and I said, 'Boy, you know, this is going to be historic.' I went through this thing and so I sat there for the whole time of the [day's] session of Congress and at about a quarter to one why, they rapped the gavel and it was adjourned and 11131 never was brought up. I could see [McMillan] was down there so I knew it wasn't 'cause he wasn't there that he didn't bring it up. So I was really disappointed. Well, when I got back to the office I called up the congressman's office and I talked to the major. And the major said, 'Yea,' I know you were disappointed today but Celler was on the floor today and the congressman said it just wasn't the right time to bring it up. So he didn't bring it up.' I said, 'Okay, I understand.' So I called up Les Burghoff, of course I'd already told Les, 'Hey, it's coming up today. This is the day. We'll be able to run up the flag' and all this. So I had to call Les and say, 'Les, we're real disappointed.' And of course it was a little bit of an emotionally down time for us. Anyway, the major said, 'Don't have any concern. This bill is going to be referred. It's going to pass the House of Representatives then it will go over to the Senate.'

"I kept in contact with the major and he said, 'Well, I'll tell you this. It's going to be on a Tuesday when that bill is going to pass the House of Representatives.' And it just so happens that on Tuesday there's a lot of special bills which people ask for special privileges for constituents and so forth that are passed merely by the rap of the gavel. In other words, they'd say H.R. so and so, and so and so in the Congress and no objection it's passed, no objections it's passed, no objections and it's passed. The major says, 'Howard, don't be concerned. The Congress has given us their word it's going to pass.'

"Anyway, with the schedule that I had I just didn't go over to the House of Representatives every Tuesday. And one Tuesday about one o'clock I got a telephone call, this was about a month after that first disappointment that [we] had, from the major and he said, 'H.R. 11131 was referred to the Senate. The House of Representatives passed it today [October 17, 1967].' I said, 'Oh no, you don't mean it.' He says, 'Yes, I did. You said you wanted it sent to the Senate Judiciary Committee.' I said, 'Yea.' And he said, 'Well, that's where it was referred to.' I said, 'That's great, I don't know how to express my appreciation to you.' So I called Les and we really did celebrate.

"I had wanted it to go to the Senate Judiciary Committee for some reasons that were wrong. At that time Senator Everett Dirksen was chairman of the Judiciary Committee. And it had responsibility for holidays and calendars and bills for private organizations came up through his subcommittee. He had a staff representative by the name of Tom Collins and Tom was from New England. I had been over and talked to Tom and he gave me all kinds of favorable vibes about this thing. Senator Dirksen gave me an awful lot of political talk. I always held that guy in the highest esteem possible. I always thought that he represented the epitome of what senators and what the people of our country ought to be like. . . . So, I thought I had it in the right place.

"Tom Collins and Senator Dirksen really gave me a political stall. Congress was in its final session of the particular Congress and if you didn't get a bill through both parts of the Congress you had to start all over again. So in the early part of '68 I was using all kinds of persuasive power that I thought was possible with both Tom Collins and Dirksen and just did never get it out of their subcommittee. I kept thinking that I was going to [but] it never got before the Senate."²

Outwitting Emanuel Celler

Bill Green relates the story of consideration of the charter bill on the House floor in the following Congress: "[When] the bill came up for a vote, right away Celler objected saying that he had a similar bill in his committee and that it was only proper that they be allowed to submit their report before the bill was voted on. Well, we had gotten to John McCormack—and you have to know old John, he was quite a character—and he told Celler, 'I'll give you five days to get your report in.' At the end of five days he stood there and pounded the gavel and called out the numbers of the bills that were going to be voted on. And Celler stood up and said [that he] wanted the speaker to note that they had not filed their reports and that bill was on the agenda. So McCormack told him, 'I gave you five days. Now the five days are up and it's on the agenda and it's going to be voted on.' So then he turned around and walked back and sat down in his chair. And Celler immediately, seeing him sit down, figured that they were going to wait until somebody called for the floor to call in one of the bills, so he stood up and signaled all of his buddies and they all got in the cloakroom. Well, the minute they went to the cloakroom McCormack came up, banged the gavel, called the number, and asked for ayes and nays and declared it passed. Celler came running down the aisle hollering, 'You didn't give us a chance.' He [McCormack] said, 'You knew it was on the agenda and you left. Now sit down.' That's the way Celler was handled."³

Charter Granted

In 1971, Michael Burns, PVA executive director at that time, was able to shepherd the PVA charter bill through the Senate. It was his "first real understanding of what horse-trading on Capitol Hill really was all about. . . . I don't think that anything that I did was particularly skillful in getting it. I think a larger element

of luck was involved. By that I mean, there was a senator, who wanted to get a federal charter for the Merchant Marines' Association. Senator Stevenson from Illinois—Adlai the third—was the chairman of the District Sub-Committee in the Senate at the time and that's where our charter was at the same time. So I went up and testified—did the usual public things. Then Senator Stevenson's staff sort of grabbed ahold of things. They were a little bit concerned about giving Merchant Marine seamen the same status as veterans because there's always been a question of whether they were veterans. They say, 'Well, we had guns on the boat and got shot at.' . . . In any event, it was basically a horse trade. The House wanted to pass the Merchant Marine thing because there were a lot of people who were in the Merchant Marines during World War II . . . who felt very strongly that they should have a charter. And Stevenson's staff pretty much negotiated a deal where the Merchant Marines' Association's bill was going to pass and the PVA's bill was going to pass. Because the PVA obviously, at least in their minds and ours of course, deserved it at least as much if not more since we're made up with spinal cord injured veterans mostly of the service connected persuasion. The usual red-blooded shirt was waved in front of everybody's face. That's how we got it. It was that simple."⁴

Once the goal had been reached (signed by President Nixon on August 12, 1971), it was found to have its disadvantages as well as benefits. Burns explains: "[W]ith the charter came a certain responsibility. Yes, there were things that you could do for veterans that you couldn't do as a non-chartered organization: adjudication of claims, certain prerequisites like the use of federal telephone services, having service officers in . . . regional offices. And everybody thought that was really neat.

"While it's neat it also brings with it a certain amount of responsibility to behave in a fashion which you don't necessarily have to behave in if you're not chartered by Congress. You sort of become an American Legion, if you know what I mean. Yes, I think that the membership, to the extent that they thought about it, wanted a charter because they wanted to be recognized—they wanted the recognition. I don't think that a lot of them understood, and I don't think that even the leadership understood at the time terribly well, what it was going to mean in terms of the kinds of services you're going to have to provide veterans. And not just paralyzed veterans because once you become a chartered organization any veteran that walks in the door and wants to [give you his] power of attorney, you've got to service him. That's a big burden. It's a big burden in terms of the kind of service you have to provide which means it takes more money to do it, takes more organization to do it, takes more people to do it and you have to train those people so they know how to do it. I don't think anybody really knew. . . ."⁵

The charter increased PVA's visibility literally and figuratively. "Prior to [becoming] a chartered organization we weren't given a seat in left field at the Veterans' Day ceremonies," says Carlos Rodriguez. "We were up front all the time since then. . . . [W]e ran the Veterans' Day ceremony a couple of years back in Washington. Each year it rotates. One of the chartered organizations has to run it—they handle the whole program. And a few years back . . . it was PVA's turn. That was great. I think when we did that we finally arrived."⁶

VII. PVA Fund Raising

Doehla Program

A great problem in the operation of the PVA until recently was the lack of funds. To carry out the simplest of programs demands money, so EPVA turned to a professional fund raiser. Les Burghoff, PVA president from 1966 to 1968, recalls: "[T]he Eastern chapter of PVA had a greeting card fundraising program . . . through a corporation called Doehla Greeting Cards in Nashua, New Hampshire. [M]eetings were held between representatives of Eastern and national PVA and New England PVA—three separate entities—and they came to an agreement that this program worked so well for Eastern that it would perhaps also work well for national PVA. The national president at that time I think was Ray Conley [1956-1958].

"It was agreed through the parties that certain territorial arrangements would be set up where fund raising would take place by Eastern PVA in the eastern portion of the United States. National PVA would have the rest of the United States and the New England chapter would refrain from fund raising in the eastern states where it was located. So with that type of an arrangement contracts were drawn up with Doehla Greeting Card Company and the National PVA and the Doehla Greeting Card Company and Eastern PVA. The program was presented and adopted by the respective approving boards."¹

Under the agreement signed by EPVA and PVA, Doehla would provide the merchandise and service, PVA and EPVA would provide mailing lists of customers. Boxes of greeting cards would be mailed in PVA's name twice yearly to persons on the mailing list. A brochure would be enclosed describing the organization and soliciting money. Don Broderick remembers that it "started out minimally with a steady growth and planning it became a substantial program."²

When Howard Bennett became treasurer, "I think our total income in 1964 was projected at about \$60,000. That's about how much income we had; and that was from the Doehla greeting cards. Maybe a little of it from ancillary sources such as private donations and things like that. But it would be two, three or four thousand dollars and the rest of it came from Doehla.

"In 1967, '68, the Doehla program had gotten up to where we were at nearly \$100,000 a year. We were looking for some way to supplement this because there was a lot of pressure. . . . This was unsolicited mail, the Doehla program. There were political and postal pressures against [it]."³

After the death of Mr. Doehla, the program required a great deal of intervention on the part of PVA. As Don Broderick remembers: "[C]osts had gotten out of hand, returns had gone down, there were some changes made in the law about how you could mail out and in general the cards just got too old and they died—they bombed because there were a lot of changes in the greeting card industry. . . . It's 1968, they had the little cards with little beads on them that you shake, they fall off. People just wouldn't buy them again."⁴

Carlos Rodriguez remembers that "in going through our mailing of the cards Don Broderick and I noticed that they were mailing the same cards year after year after year. We got very little input in what went

out. So we decided to go up to New Hampshire—we visited Doehla Company, which I think it's only been visited once or twice by anybody . . . and this was in ten years of doing business with them. We went up there and we wanted more input of what went out. In fact, we wanted the line changed, we wanted to update our cards and we wanted to do a lot of surveys to see how we could get new names and everything, which we did. We took more of an interest in it. We went up about twice or three times a year. And at that time there wasn't a split but Eastern had a program with Doehla and national had a program with Doehla and we used to deal separately with the Doehla organization. When I became president (I was the president of Eastern and president of national [1970-1972]) we dealt together. Which gave us more strength because we were almost 50 percent or more of their business."⁵

Despite repeated efforts by Broderick, Les Burghoff, and Carlos Rodriguez to improve the fund-raising arrangement, it became clear that the Doehla program was not working. Les Burghoff states: "[I]n 1973 our arrangements with the Doehla Greeting Card Company were not all the best and the programs were not doing the best they could and we thought that we could do better ourselves. So the representatives of the Eastern organization and the national organization got together and decided to do that which was necessary to terminate our arrangement with the Doehla Greeting Card Company. . . ."⁶

Howard Bennett, who was chairman of the PVA Development Committee, noted in his annual report for FY 1973 that "In addition to the management problem that we have been encountering with the Doehla Corporation, some of which were substitution of inferior materials in our package, failure to cross-match name lists and lack of adequate inventory for our merchandise program, it had become known that the Doehla Corporation was about to be sold and could possibly be facing financial problems."⁷

PVA/EPVA, Inc.

Since PVA and EPVA had in fact lost a substantial amount of money in this so-called fund-raising program, the time was ripe for change. An additional incentive was the availability of Milton Beckley, their Doehla account representative, and George Provencher, who became president and vice president, respectively, of the new corporation. Bennett says, "When they became available and it looked like we could raise the money to go out into this we took the gamble."⁸ Les Burghoff continues: "We transferred our assets from Doehla to the new corporation and hired management. Then went around and secured a building and proceeded to set up a factory in Wilton, New Hampshire—leased the building, an old woolen mill in Wilton, New Hampshire—and we proceeded at that point in 1973 to produce our first fund-raising program which was our 1973 Christmas card program. I think what was unique and of special interest was that it was all done without skipping a beat."⁹

"Some of the groundwork [for PVA/EPVA, Inc.] was laid at the end of my presidency," states Carlos Rodriguez. "I discussed it with Michael Burns; I discussed it with Don Broderick. We just didn't like the way the Doehla people were handling our account. We were more than 50 percent of their business and they were making all the money and they really weren't doing that much for us. After we found out how the business was being run and what they did we felt that we were knowledgeable enough—we had people knowledgeable enough in this chapter [Eastern] and we had people knowledgeable enough in the national organization that could probably do the same thing."¹⁰

Bill Green also felt that the organization was capable of managing such a program. "Les [Burghoff] and Don Broderick from New York came to me and laid it out—told me what they thought we could do. And I agreed that for 15 years we'd been in the card business; if we didn't know enough to run it we should get out of it. We also felt that Dohela was making one hell of a profit out of us which we had never even seen. So we had an executive board meeting and California was the key—their vote was the crucial vote. And finally I got that. I got him [Wayne Capson] in the latrine and said, 'OK, look, these people are giving us \$300,000 a year. Suppose I told you we could make a million?' Well, that would be great. So I said, 'Then you'll go along with it?' OK. We finally passed it and I think we shocked everybody. Because in the first year we had over a million."¹¹ Howard Bennett states that "it was a gamble that truly, truly did pay off, although we didn't know for sure at the time."¹²

The Certificate of Incorporation of PVA/EPVA, Inc. was filed with the New York Department of State on

April 23, 1973; the first meeting of the board of directors of the corporation was held on May 23, 1973. The directors were: James Maye, Frank DeGeorge, Les Burghoff, Don Broderick, Jim Peters, Terrence Moakley, Mitchell Levy, and Gerard Kelly. Jim Peters was elected chairman of the board; Milton Beckley, president; George Provencher and Henry Beaulieu, vice presidents; Don Broderick, secretary; and Les Burghoff, treasurer. A meeting with Doehla was held on June 19, 1973, to arrange a financial settlement. PVA paid \$37,500 on that date, and payments of \$25,000 to be paid on the same date in 1974 and 1975 were promised.

Bennett believes that his fiscal conservatism served the organization well. "As treasurer in the development of PVA/EPVA I think one of the things that Les [Burghoff] and I did, we had to have a little bit of seed money to start that organization. We were able to accumulate about \$300,000 even though we didn't have big money. That was big money to us at that particular time. But we kept the national office living within its means during the two years that I was executive director. We kept it down on a lower level than what our income was so that we established some reserves for some contingencies. We accumulated enough equity that we could start PVA/EPVA. If we hadn't had this seed money we wouldn't have been able to do that. I think that was my biggest contribution to the national organization."¹³

Frank DeGeorge initially felt a certain apprehension about forming PVA/EPVA, Inc. There were "struggling years after we signed the contract to do our own fund raising. That was make it or break it. I believe 1974 for myself going out as president and the incoming president [Don Broderick]—it was difficult for both the presidents and PVA at that time. While ironically and fortunately our growth in the first year, I believe, was double our income [the previous year], at the same time we had hanging over our heads the fact that we had a note to pay on"¹⁴

Bill Green notes: "What they were concerned with more than anything else was a lawsuit with Doehla over a broken contract. I told them, 'If Doehla sues us what are they going to recover? All they're going to do is have to prove damages. And to do that they're going to have to come out and tell that court what their actual profits were on that program and what they're giving us.' And I said, 'I don't think Doehla is ready to do that.' The way it worked out the suit with Doehla was over the mailing lists and PVA finally won that."¹⁵

AFRS

PVA also experienced difficulties with the direct mail fund-raising company, American Fund Raising Service, and switched to Epsilon, who continues to handle it. Mike Delaney explains the problem with AFRS: "[W]e felt that they were utilizing our mailing list in an unauthorized way with other clients, of course without our permission. So we had what we considered to be documented evidence, we took it to court, we sued and it took approximately nine years to get this through the court system to get a settlement. Fortunately it was in our favor; we won the case in I think 1982 . . . we got I believe a \$96,000 settlement from AFRS—American Fund Raising Services.

"This was while I was president because I recall seeing the check myself. But when you go back and look at it we really didn't make any money on this thing—we simply just covered our legal expenses. But it was important to us to pursue because of the fact that we had to demonstrate as a non-profit organization that we were not going to allow other for-profit corporations like AFRS to use us. We wanted to show our donors that we would take appropriate action against people who do those kinds of things. It was worth the effort. And it was because of Les Burghoff and his persistence early on and also Don Broderick who was president at the time that this occurred that we filed the suit and that we persisted throughout and finally won the case. But again, it took about nine years. I think you can't minimize something like that. The donors are sacred as far as we're concerned and we've got to protect them and protect our own interest as well."¹⁶

Successful Fund Raising

"The [greeting cards] program has been very successful," says Mike Delaney. "It's been administered and operated by PVA and we don't have to worry about outside fund raisers and their misuse of our mail-

ing list. And I think we've been able to cut fund-raising costs too as a result of it."¹⁷

Frank DeGeorge, who was PVA president when PVA/EPVA, Inc. was founded, believes that it was important that "PVA take on its own fund-raising programs to insure the monies would come in to provide for those programs PVA is concerned with. That did happen. And while I signed on the dotted line and I was the one who didn't sleep at night, there was a nucleus of PVAers that I feel were more involved in and served a very important role in seeing that we did in fact take the helm and take the reins on our own fund-raising efforts. In those days [before PVA/EPVA] the income on an annual basis was something like \$400,000 per year and now they've grown to I believe twelve or thirteen million dollar income a year. So I feel that those people that were involved, and myself, have something to be very pleased about as having happened in this organization. Not so much that the money in itself is important but that we are able to provide more services, more programs and pursue the goals of PVA in a more professional manner."¹⁸

VIII. Technology and Research Foundation

A resolution to establish the PVA Technology and Research Foundation was passed at the 1974 and 1975 conventions, and was approved by the PVA Board of Directors on July 23, 1975, at Phoenix, Arizona.¹ The TRF Board of Trustees' first meeting was held on May 4, 1976. The TRF Board of Trustees included: Edward R. Jasper [national PVA president], president; James E. Seybold [PVA/TRF research director], secretary; John A. Lancaster, treasurer; Captain John S. Barleon, Jr.; Michael W. Burns; George W. Hohmann, Ph.D.; James A. Maye; Morris G. McGee, Ed.D., and Alan A. Reich. This foundation would "have the authority vested in it to make grants to groups and individuals for the purpose of furthering technological advances in rehabilitative methods and devices, basic cure research for spinal injury and disease, and other areas beneficial to disabled individuals, especially veterans."²

Capt. Jack Barleon, a former trustee of TRF remembers: "Don Broderick was president for the first year that we were evidently getting in more funds than we could spend wisely and properly. . . . He said, 'Let us set up a nonpolitical research committee, a foundation, in which the elected officers, board of directors, would not interfere with this foundation going over research projects.' We had two goals: to solicit requests for certain areas that we wanted some research done on, such as a better urological collecting device, a drainage system, or regeneration of cord and so on. And the other, we would ask people, 'Would they do more research in something?' And let's say, mixed up with the two, we would pass on applications for grants for proposals that covered this broad area. We had two areas then: regeneration of spinal cord and technological devices that would make life much better for the paralyzed veteran."³

Michael Burns describes the background of TRF. "One day after reading a number of financial statements about the PVA . . . we seemed to have a tremendous amount of money that we didn't spend on anything particularly useful except traveling people around to meetings and making sure everybody knew that PVA existed. My concern was twofold. One was that it seemed to me that the VA had been more than derelict in their attempts to do research into a cure and better prosthetic aids and even outreach. That was my initial conception of the TRF. It was a kind of vehicle for which it seemed to me that the PVA, first of all, could embarrass the VA and the government itself, because of the PVA's own finances, into getting the government to do something—do more. Because you can go up to the Congress and legitimately say, 'We spend almost as much as the Veterans Administration does every year and we're just a bunch of cripples trying to help ourselves. You guys are supposed to be cradle to graving the veteran . . . the widow and her orphan and all the other things that Abraham Lincoln has said so eloquently. Where are you guys? You haven't even invented a better wheelchair since 1947, for God's sake. It's a little bit lighter but that's about all you can say about it.' It seemed to me that that kind of thing was important.

"The other thing that was going on at the time was that at that point the Disabled American Veterans built their building. And when they started to build their building suddenly the IRS got very interested in their nonprofit status. That concerned me just about the organization itself. I didn't want to see that kind of thing happen to PVA. It seemed to me that we ought to take two million dollars, if we had it, and that

ought to be committed before anything else was committed. So I wrote this document because I got enraged after reading this thing.

“At the time I was working in legislative drafting [in the Senate Veterans Committee]. . . . I sat down and I wrote out this ridiculous thing. It had officers and it did this and it did that—it had the ability to do that—and the PVA was going to provide the money for it. But it was going to be a separate and distinctly different organization to which PVA was going to contribute munificent sums of money and was going to get, as far as I was concerned, tremendous public relations value. Not to mention the fact that we were also going to help some researchers who were desperate for money trying to figure out what the hell makes the spinal cord work.

“[I]t also seemed to me that as their fund raising improved, if it did, that the PVA—who had by this time started up their own fund raising . . . that anything they [PVA/EPVA, Inc.] wanted to give was a tax write-off because that’s a profit making organization. And we could avoid some of the problems that the DAV found themselves in. Now the DAV solved their problem by setting up a trust which they call a service foundation. They took all their excess profits and tossed it in there and started giving the money away to their various posts around the country. That to me didn’t seem to be a viable way for the PVA to do it just simply because the chapters weren’t there. As far as I was concerned, three guys in Minneapolis aren’t capable of doing [what] the DAV with a building and a post [could]. . . .

“I took the document to Donald Broderick, who was at the time [PVA] president. And this was really just the culmination of conversations he and I and Carlos [Rodriguez] and other people who all through a number of years had. I gave it to him and said, ‘Here it is.’ And he read the first and last page and said, ‘Let’s see what we can do with it.’ Well, what it came out as was not what it went in as. . . . As in all organizations compromise is the way to win things. For example, my original setup was it had a president but that president was not the president of PVA. The way it works now is the president of TRF is also the president of PVA. All of the officers included on the board—some of them voting, some of them non-voting, the research director belongs to PVA—those people were all . . . included but only tangentially. I tried to ensure that the PVA would have control of the money but I didn’t want them to have control of the way it was spent. As it turns out they have control of the way it’s spent. But that was a political compromise that had to be made to get the thing passed. I understand political compromise and understand reality. That was fine with me, we still got the TRF.”⁴

In a “PVA-TRF Policy Paper” James Seybold, national research director for both PVA and TRF, described the relationship between the two organizations: “Initially, the concept behind the Foundation was to create an entity through which PVA could funnel its financial resources for research in spinal cord injury and disease in a more professional manner and free from the politics of PVA. Thus the Foundation was created and set into motion as a separate organization from PVA, but yet in a sense in a subsidiary corporation. The Foundation in fact runs its own activities as designated by its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws as a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation. This is in contrast to PVA which is a 501(c)(4) corporation which has the authority to lobby, whereas the TRF cannot.

“PVA set the Foundation into motion as its research arm, but has no direct control over its actions. PVA does have the ability to influence and control it by virtue of the fact that only PVA members elected by the BOD can serve as Trustees of the Foundation; the President, Executive Director, and Research Director of PVA hold identical positions in the TRF; and PVA allocates the bulk of the Foundation’s financial support.”⁵

Don Broderick, PVA president from 1974 to 1976, participated in the conception of TRF. “Michael [Burns] and I used to meet when I went to Washington. I used to sit down and tell him my sad stories and he used to tell me about what was going on in the Senate. . . . So we used to sit down at the end of our conversation and say, ‘What would we do if PVA started to get a lot of money? If we can get a grant or if we could get somebody to give something.’ And we felt that research, a neglected area, was absolutely vital for the organization to have any credibility. . . .

“Financially, a non-profit organization also should not have a huge bankroll. I’m not a believer of having tons of money involved in a nonprofit organization. I feel we have a responsibility to plan it well and then spend it. So our goal was that we would have to create an entity that was outside the main political struc-

ture of PVA that could get all the monies and spend it among people that had a professional background. . . .

"[T]he fund-raising program was taking shape . . . a number of things had happened there. . . . As we went along it suddenly became critical—we were going to have this kind of money. . . . So [Michael] pulled together a set of proposed bylaws for a TRF. And we sat around one night and had about four martinis and got a little bleary-eyed and said, 'Technology and Research Foundation of the Paralyzed Veterans of America, yeah.' . . .

"[W]e went over [the bylaws] and discussed a number of aspects that I thought should be changed and vice versa. We beat it up a little but we came to an agreement on what PVA would basically accept politically. I made him settle for something he really hated. . . . It had to do with control of funding but we also had something that I was going to have to sell to the board of directors at PVA. . . . There were very few changes really in it. . . . I had Jim Seybold now as the research director—the in-house politician. I said, 'Jimmy, here's your product. Go sell it.' And he did. He did a terrific job."⁶

"The initial two years were really fairly difficult in terms of just getting it procedurally—finding a way to run the thing that made some sense," recalls Michael Burns. "Where you didn't have just five guys sitting around a room that didn't know anything about science trying to decide whether a doctor should get a grant. That was one of the reasons I left it. The other reason I suspect, or had something to do with it, was that at the time I was on the Senate payroll. I was working for the Veterans Committee and it was a question of ethics. . . . I think the main reason I got out of it at that point was I just thought that it was running well and there were other guys there who were better qualified to judge the scientific merit of a lot of this stuff."⁷

George Hohmann, a former TRF trustee, states that, "Fortunately, when it [TRF] was formed it managed . . . to get a wide enough charter that we can spend money on wheelchair research, on developing standards. Probably in some of these engineering things we have come up with some of the most immediately applicable areas. There have been a number of clinical sciences or clinical research that have paid some dividends: like what antibiotics are effective and what's the dosage level? Is it different for cord injured people? Do they metabolize the drug in the same way? . . . Some pharmacological work seems to threaten some real payoff. Another really important thing was sponsoring some of the research that demonstrated what was wrong with the Russian studies. . . .

"There was a flurry with great national publicity of people going to Russia to receive treatment and came back and TRF whenever possible had those people examined by national authorities in this country. Based on their medical records [we] could see little change from the treatment that they had received in Russia. Although many of the people refused to be examined, it appeared that this was mainly an enthusiasm placebo kind of an effect. I think it was very, very important to clearly establish this. . . . In the basic area it's hard to point to anything because it's building with tiny tiny pebbles the China Wall. One pebble doesn't seem very important and so it's hard to point to anything in that . . . but we've put a few pebbles in the wall."⁸

According to Cliff Crase, TRF trustee, "[I]t has emerged as the leader in financing all research . . . regeneration, walking with electronic pulses, bladder surgery, wheelchair research, any prosthetics type research. . . . Not only giving the money out but also following up and coordinating scientific minded medical doctors and scientists and laymen who know how products work or a good mechanical engineer. It's kind of a clearinghouse to get all these folks together as far as I can see. Now we're criticized by groups that we don't want to get people cured. Well, everybody wants a cure but you have to live. And I think the people that give it a second thought realize that PVA supports research for a cure but they're also supporting a lot of research to sustain their members now, or any person with spinal cord injury, nonveteran as well as veteran. I think they've really, as a whole, made an extremely important impression on the National Institutes of Health, the bigger people, the VA research department. They come to PVA for advice because they have a very good staff in the research department that has the material on hand. When someone calls up, we want this, we want that, they've got it.

"We're advised by the scientific advisory board [established in 1981] which are top brains in the field The scientific advisory board, on every proposal, gives a rating, gives the strong points, gives the

weak points, very objective. The person who requests a sponsorship, the investigator, doesn't know what peers of his are going to be advising us . . . so it works very well, it's done professionally. . . . It's sad sometimes. We have to turn a lot of them down, because of funds, that are highly recommended by the scientific advisory board. But here we have some pretty sharp cookies on the TRF who are being advised by the elite of the different fields and it works out really"⁹

Among the new projects funded by the foundation during FY 1978 was that of Francis Macks Buck, M.A., "Influences of Parental Disability on Children: An Exploratory Investigation of Adult Children of SCI Fathers," which was awarded a \$5,200 fellowship. George Hohmann recalls, "One of the best values we got for our bucks was six thousand dollars put into the support of a dissertation by one of my students Francis Buck asked me in the class that I was giving, . . . '[W]hat effect does a disability like this have on youngsters?' I said, 'Nobody really knows but there is, it seems to me, right now an opportunity to find out what if any effect it has.' So in essence what she did was study a group of 45 or so young adults who had been raised by a paraplegic, I think all fathers, or quads, about half quads and half paras, had a matched control group. This was a national sampling and essentially found few differences.

"The literature up to this time was absolutely appalling; all of it non-data based, all of it impressionistic, experiential kind of reporting. [There was a case in California that concerned Bill Carney] who lost his children basically to a mother who had been disinterested in them until he became a quad and service connected. Then she was interested in the children and the \$900 or \$1,000 a month she got of his compensation. So she flew into New York and got the kids and the court said you [the father] can't possibly take care of these youngsters. He had been taking care of them ever since his injury, or he arranged for someone, a housekeeper to take care of them when he was hospitalized.

"So he had had the children from the time they were infants and they split. Mason Rose carried that all the way to the California Supreme Court and they said it was against the law based on the Rehabilitation Act of 1964. . . . The judge said after the trial was over that my testimony based on Dr. Buck's dissertation was one of the deciding factors . . . that of kids raised by paraplegic and quadriplegic fathers will not be adversely affected. Because of the publicity in the Carney case, because three articles have appeared in the *Archives of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation*, because we have presented papers at national meetings, . . . probably it's the best value that we've gotten for our money."¹⁰

Spinal Cord Research Foundation

On February 13, 1984, the Board of Directors of PVA changed the name of the TRF to the PVA Spinal Cord Research Foundation. Since its formation in 1976, the SCRF has awarded project funds totaling \$3,012,160. Funds are granted in November and May of each year in four research areas: basic scientific, applied medical, technological and assistive devices, and design development.¹¹

Michael Delaney notes that: "[W]e've been able to embarrass somewhat the VA and NIH and other federal agencies into allocating more dollars for spinal cord regeneration search. So that, I think, has been a major achievement. [O]ur foundation alone has spent approximately [3] million dollars to date and I think that's very significant"¹²

IX. PVA as Advocate

Since its earliest days PVA has worked through the political system to maintain and upgrade medical care and benefits for its members, and has supported measures to enhance the quality of life of paralyzed individuals. Accessibility has been one of the highest priorities for the PVA. Frank DeGeorge enunciates the areas of interest: "Accessibility into society has become a big issue over the years, pursued by PVA. When I talk about accessibility I mean in employment, I'm talking about in housing, I'm talking about in transportation, airlines. In every area accessibility into society has become a big issue with PVA. . . . [There has been a great] effort by the PVA to see that nonservice-connected veterans receive some form of benefits. That was a big issue in PVA's history. Something that PVA should be pleased with to have had that come about.

"Then of course, the benefits that spinal cord injured veterans receive are totally earned. In my estimation I don't even know if you really could say, or this country could say they're really remunerating their spinal cord injured veterans or any disabled veteran for what they've done and served on behalf of our country. So whatever benefits the veteran enjoys he or she has earned and highly deserves. But at the same time it's because of organizations like PVA those benefits are there. You can go back in history . . . in fact, I remember reading something, in 1933 benefits were like \$2 a month or something like that. Even with inflation it's come a long way, and rightfully so. So the issues have been benefits, medical care, accessibility, recognition, maintaining the [VA] systems they support."¹

In its efforts to bring about a better life for its members, PVA frequently joins its voice to that of other groups. DeGeorge notes: "Looking at the total organizations that are there . . . I believe PVA should be, and is, considered now one of the big five. We're talking about congressionally chartered veterans' organizations—VFW, American Legion, Disabled American Veterans, AmVets, PVA. That's not to demean or lessen any other veterans' organizations—there's many of them out there. We work with them through a Combined National Veterans' Association. We meet monthly with representatives from about 15 organizations—committees for veterans that work together within the VA system."²

Concerning non-veterans groups, "While PVA doesn't like to belong to coalitions, in fact, it was involved in the creation of the ACCD—American Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities. PVA was involved in forming that group. [It works with] the National Spinal Cord Injury Association, which was the National Paraplegia Foundation . . . and works in liaison with the National Rehabilitation Coalition which is comprised of 40 groups. [PVA] works in liaison with the Consortium of Citizens with Developmental Disabilities, another 42 organizations. Then there's the 504 Task Force Advisory Group, the coalition on Voter Accessibility, another 50 groups."³

The PVA, while focused on the needs and concerns of veterans, is aware of the effect of their accomplishments on non-veteran handicapped. Carlos Rodriguez states, "I think we're doing a lot more trying to assist and work with other handicap organizations to improve things for the handicapped. I know that most of the regulations and laws that a lot of the handicapped have today came about because of the

veterans having these laws passed, first for veterans and then [for] the civilian community.”⁴ Bill Green believes that “the greatest thing that PVA did really was open the door for all disabled people. Because once we started our programs and we had people running around in the streets of cities in wheelchairs and on crutches, that opened the door for every other type of disability. Got them out of the shell, got them out, made them productive people again, gave them a sense of bring worth something.”⁵

According to Ralph Markward, former PVA vice president: “Another area that we’re unique in as opposed to other service organizations is in the area of legislation on the state level. In those areas where there is a strong and active PVA chapter, quite often that chapter is the leader in its state of the handicap movement and we’re up at the state capitol lobbying for benefits for the handicap movement.”⁶

Bill Green attributes the early success of PVA to the “feisty bunch” of World War II veterans. “[W]e were a generation that just came out of the most successful army in the world. And we thought that we could do anything. . . . [O]nce we found out that we could get the ear of the Congress—when we found out that because we were vets in a wheelchair disabled in service that they couldn’t say no to us. They had to listen because they had a responsibility, we made the most of that. We were aggressive to the point that we would push it and actually command that we had an audience on anything that we wanted. In that way as well as with the VA with a chapter in each hospital command that we had an audience on anything that we wanted. In that way as well as with the VA with a chapter in each hospital we began to have an influence on the whole hospital policy. . . .

“[T]hey’ve been active individuals [veterans] and they also had what I would call plain guts. Sometimes they’ve [nonveterans] accused us of having chutzpah. They would do things like . . . Bill Ellsworth [did] when the Senate Finance Committee one time was [meeting] on one bill and they weren’t going to vote on it. So Bill got a bunch of the boys from Virginia and they blocked the door to the committee room and they wouldn’t leave until the bill was voted on. Senator Byrd finally came out and told them, ‘All right, Bill, we surrender.’ . . . [PVA was a part of all] the agitation in the beginning. We were the ones that had the fights in Congress.

“We were the ones who all of a sudden appeared in a wheelchair in places where they’d turn and say, ‘How did you get here?’ Well, if it meant being carried up two flights of stairs we got carried up two flights of stairs. As I say, the greatest thing that they [PVA] did was open the door because you can see it’s been remarkable with every group in the country.”⁷

Carlos Rodriguez explains why [present day] PVA is especially successful in its relationship with the government.

“The reason why a lot of people in Washington listen to us is we don’t just bitch about something and complain about something. If we have a problem we come up with solutions to the problem, or we try to. Other organizations just bitch about a problem but they have no solutions how to take care of them. We try to come up with solutions. We try to work with them and we put our own money into them. You don’t just ask them to put their money up, we put our own funds up to try to [achieve] solutions.”⁸

“Congress . . . looks to us for some expertise and for some guidance,” Mike Burns explains. “For example, a congressional committee might call up and ask for documentation of how claims are being handled in the automobile adaptive equipment program because we had alleged in testimony that they were handled unevenly. What was considered adaptive equipment in the [VA] New York Regional Office, for example, was not considered adaptive equipment in the [VA] Los Angeles Regional Office. It doesn’t make sense. One guy could get automatic windows and the other guy couldn’t. Well, what’s the difference between Los Angeles and New York? So we used to supply a lot of information and that all came either out of my head or I called the chapters, got the information and sent it up to the Hill.”⁹

One legislative area that has always been of concern to PVA is pensions. “[I]n the 50s the income for a nonservice-[connected] veteran was \$135.45 a month,” claims Jim Smith, a former PVA vice president. “That’s one of the reasons I think that a lot of nonservice-[connected veterans] stayed in the hospital as long as they could—because of the income. . . . It was very, very difficult to survive.”¹⁰

PVA has long fought to improve the benefits for peacetime and non-service connected spinal cord injured veterans. Wayne Capson states that “[I]n the earlier days before Social Security came into existence the nonservice-connected had a very, very rough time of it. Also in those days they did not have entitle-

ment to outpatient treatment. So the non-service connected were either sharing supplies with a service connected or coming into the hospital. Most nonservice-connected paras or quads could strip a GU cart of what supplies he needed in nothing flat and be out the door. That's the way he got his supplies because it really was tough."¹¹

Bill Green notes that "The wartime and peacetime situation previous to 1970 something—peacetime veterans only got 80 percent of what the wartime veterans did. The only way that you could get 100 percent for him was to prove that he had been on hazardous duty, handling hazardous material and other things."¹²

As executive director, Howard Bennett worked "to establish a prominence both in the bureaucracy and on Capitol Hill. There had never been very many wheelchairs. In other words, the number of wheelchairs that are out in society nowadays just dwarfs the number that was out a decade and a half ago. A wheelchair's presence over there was very, very significant, I found that out. People remembered when you were there. I know there's a lot of people that go on Capitol Hill and they don't remember when you were there. [Other than the PVA charter bill] the other piece of legislation that I was most satisfied with was Public Law 90-480. This was in the Ninetieth Session of Congress and that was the Architectural Barriers Act [signed on August 12, 1968]. This was the first time that anyone said that buildings had to be made accessible. What this act said was that all future federal construction would be made accessible to all citizens. That's one of the reasons why we have as many ramps right now. Because accessibility wasn't then like it is now."¹³

Fred Smead describes PVA's first federal lobbying in May, 1946, for a new pension bill. "Lloyd Pantages [got us in] contact with William Randolph Hearst. They gave us nationwide publicity for weeks on end in connection with this pension legislation. They just hit it day after day, day after day, Frances Langford and Dan Markel [journalists] . . . it just helped so far as the drive to get this legislation introduced. Senators Knowland and Wylie introduced this legislation. Of course, the other veterans' organizations got on the bandwagon and really supported it. . . .

"At the time Edith Norse Rogers was the chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee and she was a tremendous amount of help. She gave us all the help she possibly could. The Hearst papers at first were going to send Frances Langford back to Washington when this bill came up for final hearing. At the last minute they decided that they would rather send me as a representative of the PVA and as a veteran. So I actually went back and testified and was the first . . . I think, representative really of the paraplegic group that testified on veterans legislation."¹⁴

An early legislative endeavor for Bill Green was "the one in which I got a full-page blast in *Time* magazine, when I asked for aid and attendance allowance for nonservice-[connected veterans]. Truman was president and I got a full-page blast using Truman's figures. And when I wrote to *Time* magazine they wouldn't publish my reply. But we made sure a copy went to every damn congressman, showing him the cost of what it would be to keep a person in the hospital as against what it would cost as far as giving the nonservice enough to live on in the outside. On that bill we did have to make several visits and buttonhole a few key people. . . . Truman was wild at us. The worst part about it was that Herblock got ahold of it—I think Bill Ellsworth got to Herblock [editorial cartoonist]. The *Washington Post* had a cartoon of a guy in a wheelchair with Truman standing behind him with a knife. And that really blew the thing up. So he vetoed the bill and we had to get it through over his veto. I was told that he ranted and raved for an hour and a half in his office."¹⁵

Olin Teague of Texas, chairman of the House Veterans Affairs Committee, had great sympathy for service-connected paralyzed veterans, but was less warm toward peacetime and nonservice-connected paralyzed veterans. "Olin Teague's theory was nobody should be compensated unless they got a Purple Heart," says Michael Burns.¹⁶ Howard Bennett "used to just go over and talk with Oliver Meadows who was Olin Teague's chief staff assistant. I think we did well in the statutory awards for the catastrophically disabled people and in expanding those. He and Edwin Patterson, he was the legal counsel on the House Veterans' Affairs Committee, they were two great friends of the Paralyzed Veterans of America. They did a lot to help our organization."¹⁷

The PVA was involved to a lesser extent with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. According to Frank

DeGeorge, PVA president at that time. “[The act] brought an awareness to the civilian population that disabled people did have needs as disabled people whether they be veteran or nonveteran. The veteran disabled could bring some credence to the Rehabilitation Act by the fact that they had served in the military. Just the fact that our people had been injured in a war period lent a lot of impetus to the Rehabilitation Act.

“[PVA’s] advocacy program wasn’t much at that time. The advocacy program’s grown out of an architectural barriers program in PVA. It gave impetus to create the advocacy program in later years. The advocacy program I believe was instituted in PVA in 1978. Prior to that it was the architectural barrier program or barrier-free design program.”¹⁸ Former Advocacy Director John Lancaster describes the activities of PVA in the past decade: “We were getting involved in many activities that PVA hadn’t been involved in before—not just veterans’ issues, issues of quality of health care and quality of services in the spinal cord injury system and what the veterans’ benefits were, what their monetary amount was and those sorts of issues. But we were also getting into the issues of civil rights for disabled persons in general whether they be veterans or not. Issues of access to transportation, equal opportunity employment, access to housing, access to public buildings and accommodations, access to services, a variety of different issues. So we were significantly expanding our scope.

“Back in those mid-’70s periods we did an awful lot with the Department of Labor, for example, working to get regulations implementing Section 503 of the Rehabilitation Act, which is affirmative action in federal contracting, and seeing that they were enforced. We did similar work on Section 402 of the Vietnam Veterans’ and Disabled Veterans’ Readjustment Act of 1974 in terms of, again, developing affirmative action and employment regulations and monitoring enforcement of those regulations. So we were very influential in developing affirmative action in employment not only for disabled veterans but for disabled citizens in general.”¹⁹

Carlos Rodriguez believes that “If we would have had the staffing that we have today and the funds we have today back in the late ’60s and early ’70s I think we would have made great strides quicker. That’s when everybody was veteran-conscious. Today there’s not many wars around so you’re on the back burner. The veteran population is dying off; we don’t have that many congressmen and people being elected who are veterans. Right after World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, you had people elected who, a lot of them, were veterans. But as time goes by there’s going to be less and less of them. The people who are going to fight for veterans’ rights are going to find it harder because it gets put on the back burner.”²⁰

X. PVA's Washington, D.C. Office

For many years the headquarters of the PVA was wherever the president lived. In some instances, "the records were maintained out of boxes under individuals' beds in the hospital."¹ In late November 1964 Harry Schweikert set up the Washington national office of the PVA at the Woodner Hotel, 3636 16th Street, NW, Washington, D.C. The need for a central administrative office for the organization had been demonstrated, and the benefits of proximity to the VA and Congress were obvious.

When Michael Burns took over as executive director in 1970, the office was still very small and the records were kept in the bathtub. He remembers that. "[T]here was myself and Harry [as administrative assistant] and two secretaries sitting in two rooms on 16th Street running the whole damn thing. . . . [T]hese two girls [were] beating their brains out on typewriters and keeping the membership straight."²

In addition to the squeeze for space, the Woodner had other disadvantages. Frank DeGeorge recalls a visit to the office in 1972. "[Everybody was going into] the lounge while there was a fire in the building. I couldn't believe it. I ended up there myself with a few other people. I said, "What are we doing in here when there's firemen running through the building?" But there had been so many fires in the building that everybody had adjusted to the fact that they could expect a fire and became very callous to it. . . . The restaurant in the hotel would be opened up in the morning and it would be condemned at lunchtime and closed down by the health department and at dinnertime it would be opened up again—on the same day."³ Burns remembers that "We had to go out through the basement where you probably could get mugged"⁴

PVA's departure from the Woodner was the first of several moves. John Lancaster notes the peripatetic and burgeoning nature of the PVA national office: "[PVA] moved from 16th Street in Washington, D.C. over to Wisconsin Avenue in Bethesda and we were in the Air Rights Building. We had very small space in there and before I knew it the staff had grown by a couple more secretaries and another professional, Phil Harper. Then we got a small office down by the Veterans Administration building in the Export-Import Bank building. We expanded our office space in the Air Rights Building, then we expanded it again. We moved up a floor and got more space. Then we moved to the East-West Towers building and even more space. Then they moved to another tower in the East-West Towers building to even more space and more staff. And now they've built a building down on 18th Street. So it's tremendous growth when you consider that the organization in 1975 had a staff of, in essence, what was probably five people."⁵

Michael Delaney relates the steps leading up to the decision to establish PVA headquarters in its own building in downtown Washington: "By 1973, with the fund-raising arm of PVA/EPVA underway and going full speed, the board of directors realized that we needed to put our dollars somewhere. And at the time we were scurrying to try to develop programs because we didn't have the people, we didn't have the programs, to put the dollars in. It was really a case of the egg before the chicken. So I think the majority of the discussion at that time was centered around the concern that we had to put these dollars somewhere and maybe a building might be a good investment. But PVA being what it is, the directors quickly developed

the kind of programs they needed and worked very much at building up the professionalism of the programs. Therefore, we were able to put our dollars into programs instead of bricks and mortar. . . .

“[W]e didn’t want to rent [anymore] because we wanted to build up an asset for the organization, something that’s tangible. And at the time all we had in terms of assets were the furniture—the furniture in our office was the only asset that we had other than cash in the bank. Obviously, IRS frowns upon non-profit organizations building up too much of a cash reserve. You need to have an asset so that in the event that our fund raising had a bad year or some other catastrophe in the area of development, we would have something that we could borrow against. So that’s why we decided that we needed to have a building.

“For a number of years while I was on the [corporate board of management], from ’77 to ’80, we talked constantly about the need to find a building for PVA, a home in the nation’s capital. At the time we were talking about just building something in Bethesda, Maryland. But then we quickly realized that we needed to be downtown because we could reduce our transportation cost and the number of productive hours could be increased here at the national office. We wanted to increase productivity and allow the staff to work more closely with the federal agencies. So we began to look around the District of Columbia for space and we also realized that the cost of property down here is out of this world. So we could not own a building on our own—we recognized that we’d have to go with a partner so that we could afford a building. Fortunately, we were able to come up with an arrangement with the AMFAS Group and we were off and running. . . .

“The AMFAS Group is a Dutch pension company. They were looking for a secure investment; one that they could feel comfortable about investing pension dollars into. I think they were also looking for an organization like PVA. Being foreigners, I think they wanted to be in partnership with a group that was recognized and respected by Congress

“[A]fter we decided that we were going to sign the agreement and put our one million dollars which was in our building fund into this partnership, we realized that we needed to get the entire membership involved if we hoped to pay off the mortgage. So [PVA had to invest approximately one million dollars in the building’s joint venture development agreement and became a one-third partner in the joint venture and the remaining mortgage]. We also wanted to raise approximately one million dollars [through a capital campaign] from the membership, the staff, corporations and foundations

“The building fund was something the board of directors established back around 1977 when the discussion really started about a building. It was also a method for PVA to put some of those dollars away in a way that IRS would not have any problems with because it was an earmarked fund. So it was good that we did establish it back in ’77, ’78. Because by the time that we were ready to sign the agreement in late 1980 or early ’81 we had the dollars that were needed to get into this agreement.

“The Capital Campaign was an issue that I think was somewhat controversial. There were a number of directors who felt that we should not ask the chapters to raise dollars for this building—that indeed national PVA ought to take its revenue and pay for it itself. But there were a number of officers and directors like myself that felt that the members should be involved and that it was a kind of a program that they would indeed support. And we did receive very good response from the membership.”⁶

A ground-breaking ceremony for the Paralyzed Veterans of America headquarters building was held on August 17, 1981, and fifteen months later, on November 20, 1982, the facility became operational. The grand opening and dedication were held on February 9, 1983, with members of Congress and government officials in attendance. Located at 18th and H Streets, NW, near Pennsylvania Avenue, the headquarters is much closer to the agencies and congress than previously, and enhances the visibility of the PVA. The office features accessibility and barrier-free design and occupies the top four floors of the ten-story building.

PVA Today

In 1984 PVA is a professional and respected congressionally chartered veterans service organization with approximately 11,000 members in 32 chapters throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. On June 1, 1984, PVA completed the purchase of the remaining two-thirds interest in the national PVA

building from its former joint venture partner, AMFAS, and is now the sole owner of its Washington, D.C. headquarters.

Since 1964 when the national office was virtually a one-man operation, the headquarters staff has grown to its current size of 58 employees using the latest innovations in office technology to administer the many programs and services of the national organization. The goals of PVA, which have remained constant since the formation of the organization, are to promote quality medical care for the spinal cord injured, advocate for the rights of the handicapped, and promote medical research into a cure for spinal cord injury. To achieve these goals the national PVA is centered around the advocacy, research, legislative, and service program areas. Support for these major programs in the national office is provided by PVA's Development Program, Director of Medical Services, Office of Public Education and Communication, Office of Personnel, Office of EDP, Membership Office, and Accounting Office.

In its ongoing endeavor to educate the public to the needs and problems of the spinal cord injured or diseased, the PVA in the last few years has become involved in a variety of media activities. Media tours around the country were initiated in 1981 to directly enhance the public's awareness of the PVA and the aims for which it stands. Public service announcements narrated by celebrities have also provided the non-profit organization with both visibility and charitable donations.

The modern PVA is presently involved in all areas pertaining to the welfare and life of spinal cord injured veterans. From medical care and treatment to wheelchair sports, from enhanced veterans benefits to rehabilitation engineering and wheelchair standards, PVA's activities and programs have grown dramatically in size and scope since the organization was founded 37 years ago.

Afterword

We have seen that the Paralyzed Veterans of America has evolved from a small grass-roots organization struggling to keep itself united and financially alive, into a financially secure professional advocate for the spinal cord injured. Two events particularly stand out in the history of the organization since 1970: the granting to PVA of a Congressional Charter and the establishment of a viable source of revenue. Indeed, these two events served as the catalyst for the PVA's momentous growth and centralization of power in the national organization in Washington during the mid- and late-1970s. Since 1979, stability and maturity have been the hallmarks of the national Paralyzed Veterans of America.

Major Events in the History of the National PVA

July 27, 1946	First issue of <i>Paraplegia News</i> published.
August 8, 1946	Public Law 663, auto grant, signed by President Harry Truman.
February 7, 1947	Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America formed.
April 14, 1947	PVAA incorporated in Illinois.
May 18, 1948	National Paraplegia Foundation formed.
June 19, 1948	Public Law 702, housing grant, signed by President Harry Truman.
September 17, 1948	PVAA's name changed to Paralyzed Veterans of America.
July 24, 1957	First Speedy Award presented.
October 1, 1958	Public Law 86-782, aid and attendance bill, became effective.
December 1, 1964	National office opened in Washington, D.C.
August 12, 1968	Public Law 90-480, Architectural Barriers Act, signed by President Lyndon Johnson.
March, 1970	Spinal Cord Injury Service became a separate department in the VA.
August 12, 1971	PVA Congressional Charter signed into law by President Richard Nixon.
April 23, 1973	PVA/EPVA Inc. established.
September 26, 1973	Public Law 93-112, Rehabilitation Act of 1973, signed by President Richard Nixon.
July 23, 1975	Technology and Research Foundation established by PVA Board of Directors.
August 19-20, 1977	Paralyzed Veterans of America International Disabled Expo held in Chicago, Illinois.
November 17, 1980	PVA Professorship of SCI Medicine Chair, Inc. organized.
October 1, 1982	Congress proclaimed October "National Spinal Cord Injury Month."
January 4, 1983	Public Law 97-414, Orphan Drug Act, signed by President Ronald Reagan.
February 9, 1983	Grand opening and dedication of the PVA headquarters building in Washington, D.C.
July 29, 1983	President Ronald Reagan signed Public Law 98-62 designating August 3, 1983, "National Paralyzed Veterans Recognition Day."
August 3, 1983	Paralyzed Veterans First Day Cover Dedication Ceremony in Portland, Oregon.
June 1, 1984	PVA became sole owner of building at 801 H Street, N.W., Washington, D.C.

Chapter Roster (1947-1984)

	Date of Acceptance into PVA
Alabama-Mississippi*	April 1, 1966
Arizona	October 1, 1966
Bay Area & Western	October 1, 1962
Bayou	April 19, 1979
Buckeye	July 24, 1967
Cal-Diego	July 24, 1981
California	February 9, 1947
Capital Area	June 1, 1962
Central Florida	April 7, 1977
Delaware	July 29, 1968
Eastern	February 9, 1947
Florida	July 22, 1960
Gateway	July 19, 1976
Georgia-Carolina	October 1, 1961
Great Northwest*	June 1, 1964
Great Plains	May 1, 1971
Indianapolis*	January 1, 1969
Kentucky-Indiana	May 1, 1966
KMO*	May 28, 1974
Lake Erie*	October 1, 1954
Mexico*	June 1, 1964
Michigan	March 12, 1961
Mid-South	February 9, 1947
Mountain Home (Tenn.)*	March 23, 1956
Mountain States	May 4, 1955
New England	September 26, 1947
North Central	July 25, 1964
Northwest**	May 1, 1973
Northwest	July 21, 1978
Oregon	July 19, 1976
Palmetto*	June 1, 1971
Puerto Rico	February 27, 1963
Sooner	March 14, 1979
Southwest	February 14, 1983
Tampa Bay	May 7, 1968
Texas	November 18, 1961
Tri-State	January 1, 1960
Vaughan	February 9, 1947
Virginia	February 9, 1947
Wisconsin	August 2, 1983
Zia	December 1, 1967

*Disbanded

**Merged with Bay Area & Western

PVA Presidents

Gilford Moss, 1947-1948 (deceased)

Robert Moss, 1948

Bernard E. Shufelt, 1948-1950 (deceased)

Patterson Grissom, 1950-1951

Stanley Reese, 1951-1952 (deceased)

William P. Green, 1952-1954

Robert Frost, 1954-1956 (deceased)

Raymond K. Conley, Jr., 1956-1958

Harry A. Schweikert, Jr., 1958-1959 (deceased)

Dwight D. Guilfoil, Jr., 1959-1960

Robert Classon, 1960-1962 (deceased)

John H. Farkas, 1963-1964 (deceased)

Harold L. Stone, Jr., 1964

Harold W. Wagner, 1964-1966 (deceased)

Leslie P. Burghoff, 1966-1968

Wayne L. Capson, 1968-1970

Carlos Rodriguez, 1970-1972

Frank R. DeGeorge, 1972-1974

Donald H. Broderick, 1974-1976

Edward R. Jasper, 1976-1978

Joseph Romagnano, 1978-1980

Michael F. Delaney, 1980-1982

Paul M. Cheremeta, 1982-1984

Richard D. Hoover, Present

Recipients of PVA's Speedy Award

- 1957 Leslie W. Freeman, M.D.; Gilford Moss
- 1958 A. Estin Comarr, M.D.; John M. Price
- 1959 C.A.L. Bassett, M.D.; James B. Campbell, M.D.; Harry A. Schweikert, Jr.
- 1960 Julius Tannenbaum; Olin E. Teague; O.C. "Terry" Rose
- 1961 No Award Presented
- 1962 William P. Green; Benjamin Lipton
- 1963 John J. Farkas; Herbert S. Talbot, M.D.
- 1964 Ernest Bors, M.D.; Frank G. MacAloon
- 1965 John F. Kennedy (posthumously); Timothy J. Nugent; Harold L. Stone, Jr.
- 1966 John Krenzel; Donald Munro, M.D.
- 1967 Carl Bunts, M.D.; Judy Krenzel; Lois Rohrer; James Smittkamp
- 1968 Ted Anderson; Lloyd Pantages
- 1969 Howard L. Bennett; Paul C. Bucy, M.D.; Oliver Meadows; Edwin Patterson
- 1970 Leslie P. Burghoff; Frank H. Krusen, M.D.
- 1971 Erich G. Krueger, M.D.; M.C. Montgomery; Robert Moss
- 1972 William F. Windle, M.D.; Edward G. Maxwell (posthumously)
- 1973 Marc J. Musser, M.D.; Wayne L. Capson
- 1974 Essie Morgan; Harold Willson
- 1975 Robert Rynearson; Joseph L. Mandella (posthumously)
- 1976 Harold Truebger, M.D.; Odell Vaughan
- 1977 Ahmed Z. El Ghatit, M.D.; Frank R. DeGeorge
- 1978 Jonas Salk, M.D.; Carlos Rodriguez
- 1979 Bunny Sexton
- 1980 James P. Hill; Benjamin A. Moeller, M.D.
- 1981 George W. Hohmann, Ph.D.; Inder Perkash, M.D.
- 1982 Alain B. Rossier, M.D.; Ibrahim M. Eltorai
- 1983 Captain Jack Barleon; Miriam Frances King
- 1984 James E. Seybold (posthumously); Audrey Young

Paraplegia News Editors

John Price, July, 1946–August, 1949; Byron Deysher co-edited the first two editions.

Bob Moss, September, 1949–October, 1952

Bob Bather, November, 1952–December, 1954

John Price, January, 1955–July, 1961

Frank MacAloon, August, 1961–July, 1963

Bob Webb, August, 1963–April, 1978; R.L. Webb Associates continued publishing the magazine until November, 1978.

Cliff Crase, December, 1978–present

PVA National Conventions

F	February 7-9, 1947	VA Hospital, Hines, Illinois
1	September 26-28, 1947	VA hospital, Richmond, Virginia
2	September 13-17, 1948	VA Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee
3	September 7-12, 1949	Hotel New Yorker, New York, New York
4	March 4-6, 1950	Parkview Hotel, Memphis, Tennessee
5	June 19-21, 1951	VA Hospital, Memphis, Tennessee
6	June 17-19, 1952	VA Hospital, Richmond, Virginia
7	June 9-11, 1953	VA Hospital, Boston Massachusetts
8	June 22-24, 1954	Va Hospital, Hines, Illinois
9	July 18-20, 1955	Hotel New Yorker, New York, New York
10	July 23-25, 1956	Pick-Congress Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
11	July 22-24, 1957	Hotel Bradford, Boston, Massachusetts
12	July 21-23, 1958	Pick-Congress Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
13	July 20-23, 1959	Hotel New Yorker, New York, New York
14	July 20-22, 1960	Albany Hotel, Denver, Colorado
15	July 19-21, 1961	Americana Hotel, Bal Harbour, Florida
16	July 18-20, 1962	Milwaukee Inn, Milwaukee, Wisconsin
17	July 23-27, 1963	Americana Hotel, Bal Harbour, Florida
18	July 21-29, 1964	Miramar Hotel, Santa Monica, California
19	July 19-23, 1965	Hotel Commodore, New York, New York
20	July 18-22, 1966	Whittier Hotel, Detroit, Michigan
21	July 24-28, 1967	Sheraton-Lincoln Hotel, Houston, Texas
22	July 24-28, 1968	Jack Tar Hotel, San Francisco, California
23	July 14-18, 1969	Americana Hotel, Bal Harbour, Florida
24	July 20-24, 1970	Pick-Congress Hotel, Chicago, Illinois
25	July 26-30, 1971	International Hotel, Los Angeles, California

26	July 17-21, 1972	Americana Hotel, Bal Harbour, Florida
27	July 16-21, 1973	International Hotel, Los Angeles, California
28	July 17-21, 1974	Puerto Rico-Sheraton & Casino, San Juan, Puerto Rico
29	July 21-26, 1975	Arizona Biltmore Hotel, Phoenix, Arizona
30	July 19-23, 1976	Stouffer's Denver Inn, Denver, Colorado
31	July 17-22, 1977	Dearborn Hyatt Regency, Dearborn, Michigan
32	July 16-21, 1978	Hilton Airport Plaza Hotel, Kansas City, Missouri
33	July 29-August 3, 1979	Hyatt Regency, Houston, Texas
34	July 21-25, 1980	Albuquerque Hilton, Albuquerque, New Mexico
35	July 19-24, 1981	Stouffer Inn, Denver, Colorado
36	July 23-28, 1982	Sheraton Century Center, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma
37	August 1-6, 1983	Red Lion Inn-Lloyd Center, Portland, Oregon
38	August 13-17, 1984	New Orleans Hilton Towers and Riverside Hotel, New Orleans, Louisiana

Notes

I.

1. Gilford S. Moss, "Letter to the Editor," *Paraplegia News*, November, 1946, p. 4.
2. Ibid.
3. Letter from Gilford S. Moss to Harry A. Schweikert, Jr., October 26, 1970.
4. Harry A. Schweikert, Jr., "The Paralyzed Veterans of America 25 Years Later," *Paraplegia News*, July 1971, p. 15.
5. Ibid.
6. Tape-recorded interview with George Hohmann, Ph.D. on September 21, 1983, Tucson, Arizona. PVA archives tape number 9.
7. Tape-recorded interview with William Green on November 13, 1983, West Roxbury, Massachusetts. PVA archives tape number 18.
8. Memorandum to the commanding officer from E.H.J. Bors, Capt., MC, on the subject of "Formation of Paralyzed Veterans Association by the Paraplegic Patients of Birmingham General Hospital," 23 January 1946.
9. Ibid.
10. Ibid.
11. Ibid.
12. Tape-recorded interview with Patterson Grissom on September 23, 1983, Long Beach, California. PVA archives tape number 11.
13. "Minutes of a Committee Meeting of the Paraplegic Patients' Council," 21 January 1964. Birmingham General Hospital, Van Nuys, California.
14. Schweikert, p. 15.
15. Jim Scully, "History of the California Paralyzed Veterans Association from 1945 to June, 1950." Unpublished, p. 4.
16. "Minutes of Meeting of Paralyzed Veterans Association," (Birmingham) 25 March 1946.
17. Bulletin "To All Paraplegia and Quadriplegia Patients," (Birmingham) no date, p. 1.
18. Ibid.
19. Letter from Elder H. Beebe to Frederick M. Smead, May 31, 1946.
20. Ibid.
21. Copy of Western Union telegram, June 26, 1946, 757.p.m.
22. "Minutes of Meeting," Bldg. 27, 22 May 1946, Halloran General Hospital.
23. Tape-recorded interview with Robert Moss on December 1, 1983, Roslyn Heights, New York. PVA archives tape number 29.
24. "Minutes," 22 May 1946, Halloran General Hospital.
25. "P.V.A. Minutes of the Meeting," September 11, 1946, Halloran General Hospital, p. 2.

26. "Minutes for June 12, 1946," Halloran General Hospital.
27. "Minutes of Meeting January 15, 1947," Halloran General Hospital.
28. Ibid.
29. Ibid.
30. "Halloran P.V.A. Minutes of May 21, 1947."
31. *Paraplegia News*, October 1946, p. 1.
32. Robert Moss, tape number 29.
33. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 9.
34. Ibid.
35. Robert Moss, tape number 29.
36. William Green, tape number 18.
37. Schweikert, p. 21.

II.

1. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 9.
2. Tape-recorded interview with Frederick Smead on September 23, 1983, Long Beach, California. PVA archives tape number 12.
3. "What Went Before," *Paraplegia News*, August 1949, p. 3.
4. Proceedings of the "First National Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans Association of America," February 7, 8, 9, 1947, Vaughan Unit, Veterans Administration Hospital, Hines, Illinois, pp. 53-54.
5. Ibid., p. 56.
6. Ibid., p. 57.
7. Schweikert, p. 16.
8. Proceedings, pp. 77-73, 86.
9. Fred Smead, tape number 12.
10. Schweikert, p. 16.
11. Fred Smead, tape number 12.
12. Proceedings of the "Second National Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America," September 26, 27, 28, 1947, Veterans Administration Hospital, Richmond, Virginia, p. 31.
13. Ibid., p. 21.
14. Robert Moss, tape number 29.
15. Schweikert, p. 21.

16. Halloran P.V.A., "Minutes of Meeting June 25, 1947."
17. Robert Moss, tape number 29.
18. Schweikert, p. 19; Cliff Crase, "Paraplegia News Profile," from the PVA 37th Annual Convention program.
19. *Paraplegia News*, July 1946, p. 1.
20. Schweikert, p. 19.
21. Ibid.
22. Proceedings of the "Second National Convention," p. 31.
23. Schweikert, p. 17.
24. Proceedings, p. 35.
25. Robert Moss, tape number 29.
26. *Paraplegia News*, April 1947, p. 5.
27. *Paraplegia News*, March 1948, p. 1.
28. *Paraplegia News*, April 1948, p. 1.
29. *Paraplegia News*, July 1948, pp. 2-3.
30. Ibid, p. 3.
31. Robert Moss, tape number 30.
32. "Third National Convention of the Paralyzed Veterans Associations of America," September 13-17, 1948, Memphis, Tennessee, pp. 22-23.
33. Schweikert, p. 17.
34. Ibid.
35. Ibid.
36. *Paraplegia News*, November 1948, p. 2.
37. Patterson Grissom, tape number 12.
38. *Paraplegia News*, September 1949, p. 7.
39. *Paraplegia News*, May 1950, p. 3.
40. *Paraplegia News*, July 1951, p. 1.
41. Ibid.

III.

1. William Green, tape number 18.
2. *Paraplegia News*, December 1952, p. 3.

3. *Paraplegia News*, November 1958, p. 4; *Paraplegia News*, March 1959, p. 5.
4. Membership statistics compiled by Harry Schweikert.
5. *Paraplegia News*, March 1959, p. 5.
6. "State of Illinois Articles of Incorporation under the General Not For Profit Corporation Act."
7. Tape-recorded interview with Carlos Rodriguez on November 30, 1983 in New York City. PVA archives tape number 28.
8. Tape-recorded discussion with Wayne Capson, Patterson Grissom, Edward Santillanes, and Frederick Smead. PVA archives tape number 13.
9. *Paraplegia News*, October 1961, p. 4.
10. William Green, tape number 19.
11. Tape-recorded interview with Wayne Capson on September 23, 1983, Long Beach, California. PVA archives tape number 11.
12. William Green, tape number 19.
13. *Paraplegia News*, September 1964, p. 2.
14. *Paraplegia News*, March 1965, p. 5.
15. Wayne Capson, tape number 11.
16. Ibid.

IV.

1. Wayne Capson, tape number 11.
2. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.
3. Patterson Grissom, tape number 13.
4. Tape-recorded interview with Michael Delaney on September 16, 1983, Washington, D.C. PVA archives tape number 8.
5. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 10.
6. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.
7. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.
8. Wayne Capson, tape number 14.
9. *Paraplegia News*, June 1965, p. 5.
10. Tape-recorded interview with Howard Bennett on December 6, 1983, Richmond, Virginia. PVA archives tape number 31.
11. Ibid.
12. *Paraplegia News*, September 1968, p. 2.
13. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.

14. Tape-recorded interview with Michael Burns on November 15, 1983, Kensington, Maryland. PVA archives tape number 25.
15. *Paraplegia News*, September 1971, p. 11.
16. *Ibid.* p. 2.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.
19. Tape-recorded interview with Donald Broderick on November 9, 1983, Salisbury, Maryland. PVA archives tape number 23.
20. *Paraplegia News*, February 1977, p. 8.
21. *Paraplegia News*, May 1977, p. 6.
22. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.
23. *Ibid.*

V.

1. Kermit McDonald, "Recollections," Virginia Paralyzed Veterans of America, 1974-1976, p. 3.
2. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 9.
3. Patterson Grissom, tape number 14.
4. Fred Smead, tape number 14.
5. George Hohmann, Ph. D., tape number 10.
6. Wayne Capson, tape number 12.
7. William Green, tape number 19.
8. Wayne Capson, tape number 14.
9. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 10.
10. Donald Broderick, tape number 22.
11. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
12. Donald Broderick, tape number 22.
13. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
14. Donald Broderick, tape number 22.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
17. Donald Broderick, tape number 23.
18. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.

19. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
20. Tape-recorded interview with Frank DeGeorge on October 19, 1983, Washington, D.C. PVA archives tape number 20.
21. Howard Bennett, tape number 32.
22. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.
23. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
24. William Green, tape number 19.
25. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.
26. William Green, tape number 18.
27. Ibid.
28. Ibid.
29. *Paraplegia News*, June 1965, p. 16.
30. "Twenty-fifth National PVA Convention," July 20-29, 1971, pp. 11 and 15.
31. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.
32. Ibid.
33. *Paraplegia News*, December 1974, p. 15.
34. *Paraplegia News*, September 1975, pp. 5-6.
35. "Report of National Service Director to 1979 Convention."

VI.

1. *Paraplegia News*, June 1965, p. 16.
2. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
3. William Green, tape number 18.
4. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
5. Ibid.
6. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.

VII.

1. Tape-recorded interview with Leslie Burghoff on October 12, 1983, Westwood, Massachusetts. PVA archives tape number 16.
2. Donald Broderick, tape number 23.
3. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
4. Donald Brodeick, tape number 23.

5. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
6. Leslie Burghoff, tape number 16.
7. "Fiscal Year 1973 Annual Report of the Development Committee," p. 4.
8. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
9. Leslie Burghoff, tape number 16.
10. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 27.
11. William Green, tape number 18.
12. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
13. *ibid.*
14. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.
15. William Green, tape number 18.
16. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.
17. *Ibid.*
18. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.

VIII

1. *Paraplegia News*, August 1977, p. 14.
2. 1974 PVA Convention resolution #74-A-35.
3. Tape-recorded interview with Jack Barleon on August 5, 1983, Portland, Oregon. PVA archives tape number 7.
4. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
5. *Paraplegia News*, March 1978, p. 35.
6. Donald Broderick, tape number 22.
7. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
8. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 10.
9. Tape-recorded interview with Clifford Crase on August 1, 1983, Portland, Oregon. PVA archives tape number 2.
10. George Hohmann, Ph.D., tape number 10.
11. "List of SCRF Funded Projects," July 1984.
12. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.

IX.

1. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 21.
2. *Ibid.*

3. Ibid.
4. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.
5. William Green, tape number 19.
6. Tape-recorded interview with Ralph Markward on August 2, 1983, Portland, Oregon. PVA archives tape number 3.
7. William Green, tape number 19.
8. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.
9. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
10. Tape-recorded interview with James Smith on August 2, 1983, Portland, Oregon. PVA archives tape number 3.
11. Wayne Capson, tape number 14.
12. William Green, tape number 18.
13. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
14. Fred Smead, tape number 12.
15. William Green, tape number 18.
16. Michael Burns, tape number 26.
17. Howard Bennett, tape number 31.
18. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.
19. Tape-recorded interview with John Lancaster on February 1, 1984, Annapolis, Maryland. PVA archives tape number 36.
20. Carlos Rodriguez, tape number 28.

X.

1. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 20.
2. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
3. Frank DeGeorge, tape number 21.
4. Michael Burns, tape number 25.
5. John Lancaster, tape number 36.
6. Michael Delaney, tape number 8.