



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President

As another month goes by, the COVID-19 pandemic continues to present tremendous challenges for the Chapter and its membership with long-term consequences we cannot fully predict or comprehend. As the Nation's deaths rise over 90,000, I sadly must report we've had 5 Chapter members die in the past 2 months, 2 known directly to be COVID related. I know there are others affected in the PVA family, but these 5 are New Englanders. We should all take a moment to think of these members and their families during this most difficult time and circumstances.

I want each of you to know, that as we all continue on this journey of uncertainty, your health, safety, and well-being is my #1 priority, as is the Chapter Board of Directors' and Staff's. We continue to closely monitor the fluid environments throughout New England to provide relevant and timely information, as well as, advocate on your behalf when your rights and access to equitable care are infringed upon or in jeopardy. If you every encounter a circumstance where you feel discriminated against or treated unfair because of your disability, please let me or our Govt Relation Dir. Kristen McCone Gordon know. We're here to ensure you're able to receive the benefits and care you've earned.

As part of our response to this pandemic, we continue to take advantage of every opportunity we can to assist you during these tempestuous times. To this, we are developing a Chapter "COVID-19 Relief Grant" that members in financial need may apply for assistance through. Details of applying for assistance through this grant will be distributed shortly, so please keep an eye on your Inbox for this information. We also continue to leverage our status as a non-profit Veterans Service Organization to apply for grants ourselves so as to shore-up the Chapter's operational infrastructure not knowing how this pandemic will affect future donations and fundraising efforts.

Finally, as I've often said, each of us has the individual capacity to make a positive impact in someone's life. It doesn't have to be something huge or time consuming. It could be a simple "Hello, how are you doing" as you pass by someone, a small \$10 donation or sharing a few minutes of your time with someone. Especially now, we need to lookout for one another so we all make it safe through to the other side of this pandemic. Theodore Roosevelt said it best, "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."

Michael G. Negrete, *President and Paralyzed Veteran*

From the Director's Desk

Mark Murphy, Chapter Executive Director



As we continue to navigate through these challenging days during this global pandemic, we have been working hard at New England PVA to support our organization and members in a variety of ways. Since March I have been researching and applying for local grants that could provide some financial support and relief to our organization, as most if not all Veteran Service Organizations and non-profits are feeling the recent pinch and strain on the economy. I am very happy to report that to date we have been awarded 3 unrestricted grants through the Boston Resiliency Fund, the Community Foundation of North Central Massachusetts, and the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation. These grants will be indispensable in providing some needed financial support for NEPVA while also continuing to sustain our COVID-19 response initiatives.

In addition to our focus on new revenue streams that could be helpful to our organization, we are continuing to assess how we can support and communicate effectively with you, our members, throughout the pandemic. Emails and direct mailings have been distributed articulating what New England PVA has been doing in response to COVID-19. This has included issues related to government relations and advocacy, member support and webinars facilitated through PVA National, and general Chapter operations. Our Facebook page @NEPVA1947 has new posts almost daily with some of this same information. Continued updates on our COVID-19 response, including some new support initiatives, will be forthcoming in the weeks ahead, so stay tuned!

On May 6th I participated in a PVA member webinar with the Executive Director of the VA SCI/D System of Care regarding their response to the pandemic. I found this webinar to be extremely informative and interesting, especially when they addressed how technology is being used to help veterans stay safely connected to their health care team through virtual care options. This includes VA Video Connect and 24-hour online access through My HealthVet. In addition to covering the VA's COVID-19 response, they also answered several live questions from PVA members. We will let you know when there are more PVA member webinars such as these.

As always, please feel free to reach out to our Board of Directors or staff if we can assist you in any way possible. I am deeply grateful for all the active engagement we have had over the past several weeks as we strive to support one another and our Chapter in these difficult days.

Mark Murphy, *Executive Director*