



Out Front

Michael G. Negrete, Chapter President

I returned this past week from the 40th National Veterans Wheelchair Games held in New York City, NY. PVA and the NY area VA did an outstanding job of successfully executing the Games and keeping us COVID safe. There were a number of COVID safety measures taken, such as required mask wearing, daily COVID tests and stringent contact tracing measures at each event venue. I feel none of this significantly detracted from or hindered any of the events. With all the precautionary steps taken I felt very comfortable and safe throughout the entire week.

Although we had a small number of athletes representing the New England Chapter this year with 2 in Group One and 3 in Group Two, everyone still had a great time with opportunities to compete and meet up with old friends and make some new ones, too. Please turn to [page 8](#) to see a sampling of pictures of both Group One and Two. (As of the publishing, we hadn't receive pictures for the atHOME

athletes.) Most events were held within the hotel with the field, softball and basketball being held at nearby Randall's Island and Ruckers Park. Although the heat index was over a 100° the VA had plenty of Volunteers distributing water and iced towels. They also had tents for shade and large mister fans setup. For more pictures please check out the Chapter's Facebook Page at www.facebook.com/NEPVA1947. There is also a great video of Mark Sanders navigating the Slalom course, in which he won a Silver medal.

You'll also see one picture where I had the opportunity to participate in a Wreath Laying Ceremony at the 9/11 Memorial's "Survivor Tree". The entire Memorial was extremely moving. Words can not express the thoughts and feeling you take away from visiting this hallowed ground. If you have never visited the 9/11 Memorial or Museum, you should absolutely make it a point to do so.

The hotel location was perfect, too. The Sheraton Time Square was only a few blocks rolling distance by chair from Central Park, Rockefeller Center and Time Square. There were also plenty of great restaurants and Delis to dine and eat at.

There are high expectations for next year's Games to be at full capacity in Tempe, AZ. I'm anxious to see the full complement of our in and out patient athletes participating at these next Games. Everyone should start gearing-up and training now in anticipation of some robust competition next year.

On to other things. If you use [My HealththeVet](#), VA's online patient portal, please the article on [page 7](#). This article details the discontinuation of "Advanced" accounts for portal access and services. If you are not using [My HealththeVet](#), consider creating a "Premium" account. Through the portal your able to easily and securely communicate via Secure Message with your providers, renew prescriptions, request appointments and much more. I personally use [My HealththeVet](#) for these and a number of other services.

In wrapping up here, I think about what's happening in Afghanistan. Whether you agree or disagree with the circumstance, one thing is true - we made a difference there, even if only for a period of time, we made a difference in people's lives there. It makes me think back to Leon Brown and what he said about making a difference. He said, "Never underestimate the valuable and important difference you make in every life you touch for the impact you make today has a powerful rippling effect on every tomorrow."

Think about the positive difference you can make in someone's life today.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael G. Negrete". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Michael G. Negrete
PVA National Vice President and
New England Chapter President

