

The Official Publication of the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic

## **The WaveWriter**

Thursday, September 22, 2010

### **Sink or Swim**

By Kim Byers, Public Affairs Director, Office of National Programs and Special Events

The sky was cloudy and the temperature on the cool side, but the weather didn't hamper the smiles of Teams Calypso and Olympus at the kayaking venue earlier this week.

"We have a veritable bevy of boats, of all types and sizes," said Ralph Marche, VA's venue coordinator at this event for the third year running. "Our goal is your goal." Speaking of goals, Team River Runner (TRR) is here again, whose goal is straightforward – getting "butts in boats." With 25 chapters around the country, the kayaking organization geared toward wounded warriors and disabled veterans has recruited several current and past participants into its ranks.

One is Stephen Bruggeman, a Coast Guard Veteran from Sioux Falls, S.D. A Clinic participant in 2008 (Nautilus) and 2009 (Apollo), Bruggeman is back this year in a different capacity – a kayaking volunteer. "I had already come to the event for two years in a row and needed to come back," Bruggeman explained. He discovered his love for the sport at the Clinic. "The first year peaked my interest, but the second year I discovered my passion." Starting in a sit-upon kayak, he took it up a level last year to a white water model. In January, he kayaked down waterfalls in Mexico and now is helping get a TRR chapter started back home. "The sky's the limit with kayaking," he said. "It's something you can do when you go home and really keeps you active."

Olympus and Calypso team members agree. Robert Wake, a combat-wounded Army Veteran who served in Iraq also found the experience "unbelievable" when he tried it for the first time at the 2009 Clinic. He continued his new-found interest when he returned home to Molden, Mo., got certified, and has since gone white water kayaking in Colorado, Mexico and the Grand Canyon. "I never dreamed I could do this," Wake said. "It helped me realize if I could do this, I can do anything."

### **Here's what others had to say.**

"I tried kayaking at the Golden Age Games and really enjoyed it. This is a full body workout. It's enjoyable in the water and a peaceful experience."

~ Jackie Collins, Army, Mettamora, Ind.

"There is nothing like this. Being out in the water you can go as fast or as slow as you want. You're free to do it the way you want to."

~ Ty York, Army, Mason, Ohio

“I can only kayak in the pool back home. This is so much bigger, and you can go wherever you want to go. It’s nice to not worry about other people running into you.”  
~ Benjamin McDermott, Army, Baldwin, Mo.

“This is awesome. It was absolutely fantastic – one of those experiences you won’t believe until you do it. I will definitely do it again. I highly recommend doing the rolls.”  
~ Mitchell Guyon, Navy, Morrow, Ohio

In keeping with the Kayaking Team’s battle cry to “roll, roll, roll your boat,” Calypso and Olympus swimsuits may have gotten pretty wet but their tremendous spirit was, in no way, dampened.

## **About VA’s National Programs and Special Events**

By Jan Northstar, Director, Atlanta Regional Office of Public Affairs

Grinning ear-to-ear every day. It’s hard not to. Whether you are a Veteran participating this week at the 3rd National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic, family member or a volunteer, the entire experience has been awe inspiring, goal setting, transformational, and most definitely, big fun.

As Air Force Veteran Claudia Perry of Silver Spring, Md., said after surfing, “In the beginning I was scared because I can’t see, but I put my trust in my team and I didn’t fall off [the board]. I was very impressed with myself.”

Perry went on to surf several more times. She plans to continue surfing as well as scuba diving and skiing at the Winter Sports Clinic. Check out information on this event as well as all of VA’s national rehabilitation programs:

The National Veterans Winter Sports Clinic consists of downhill and cross-country ski lessons, a challenge race, adaptive sports workshops and educational classes, plus sponsored and self-directed alternate activities such as scuba diving, sled hockey, a climbing wall, snowmobiling and other activities. More than 200 certified ski instructors for the disabled, and several current and former members of the U.S. Disabled Ski Team, serve as ski instructors.

The National Veterans Creative Arts Festival. Veterans treated at VA facilities compete in a local creative arts competition. This competition includes 53 categories in the visual arts division ranging from oil painting to leatherwork to paint-by-number kits. There are 123 categories in the performing arts; all aspects of music, dance, drama and creative writing. Select winners are invited to attend the National Veterans Creative Arts Festival.

The National Veterans Wheelchair Games. Attracting more than 500 athletes each year, the NVWG is the largest wheelchair sports event in the world and features very competitive events such as air guns, archery, basketball, bowling, field events, hand cycling, a motorized wheelchair rally, nine-ball, power soccer, quad rugby, slalom, softball, swimming, table tennis, track, trapshooting and weightlifting.

The National Veterans Golden Age Games is the premier senior adaptive rehabilitation program in the United States, and the only national multi-event sports and recreational seniors' competition program designed to improve the quality of life for all older Veterans, including those with a wide range of abilities and disabilities. Competitive events include: swimming, cycling, golf, shot-put, discus, 10-meter air rifle, table tennis, dominoes, shuffleboard, horseshoes, nine-ball, bowling, checkers and croquet.

The National Veterans TEE Tournament is a golf and bowling rehabilitation program for Veterans who are legally blind, amputees, those who use wheelchairs and Veterans with other disabilities. The NVTT uses a therapeutic format to promote rehabilitation, fellowship and camaraderie among its participants.

### Connect With VA

VA has gone viral!

Follow the links at [www.va.gov](http://www.va.gov), or go to [www.summersportsclinic.va.gov](http://www.summersportsclinic.va.gov) to find content you can't get anywhere else. We will post daily video highlights, news releases, photos and important information about the activities surrounding the National Veterans Summer Sports Clinic. Share your amazing experiences with other Veterans, your family and friends!

### Schedule of Today's Events

Thursday, September 23

| Time                   | Event   | Location                            |
|------------------------|---|-------------------------------------|
| 8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m.     | Track & Field<br>Team Poseidon and Team Mercury | Chula Vista Olympic Training Center |
| 8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.     | Surfing<br>Team Nautilus and Team Phoenix       | La Jolla Shores                     |
| 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.        | Kayaking<br>Team Titan and Team Vulcan          | Mission Bay Yacht Club              |
| 9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.     | Cycling<br>Team Olympus and Team Calypso        | Silver Strand State Park            |
| 11:30 a.m. – 5:30 p.m. | Sailing<br>Team Neptune and Team Apollo         | San Diego Harbor                    |
| 5:30 p.m.              | Mandatory Lead Staff Meeting                    | Santa Rosa Room                     |
| 6 – 10 p.m.            | Massages for Participants                       | Laguna Room, South Tower Level 1    |
| 6:30 – 10:30 p.m.      | Block Party for Participants                    | Embarcadero Park                    |

## Bus Schedule

Buses begin loading approximately 15 to 30 minutes prior to listed departure times.

| Session | Event           | Times                                     |
|---------|-----------------|---|
| a.m.    | Surfing         | board at 7 a.m.<br>depart at 7:30 a.m.    |
| p.m.    | Surfing         | board at 3:15 p.m.<br>depart 3:45 p.m.    |
| a.m.    | Kayaking        | board at 8 a.m.<br>depart at 8:30 a.m.    |
| p.m.    | Kayaking        | board at 3:45 p.m.<br>depart at 4 p.m.    |
| a.m.    | Track and Field | board at 7 a.m.<br>depart at 7:30 a.m.    |
| p.m.    | Track and Field | board at 3 p.m.<br>depart at 3:15 p.m.    |
| a.m.    | Sailing         | board boats 11:45 a.m.<br>depart at noon  |
| p.m.    | Sailing         | board boats 3:30 p.m. return<br>4:15 p.m. |
| a.m.    | Cycling         | board at 8:30 a.m.<br>depart at 9 a.m.    |
| p.m.    | Cycling         | board 3:45 p.m.<br>depart at 3:45 p.m.    |

## Medical Room

For life threatening emergencies, call 911. Medical care is available twenty-four hours a day, every day at the Clinic.

The medical room is located in Marriott Hotel, Room 318, 3rd Floor in the North Tower.

A nurse or doctor will be on duty from 7:30 a.m. - 8 p.m. daily. If for some reason the nurse is not in the room, please call (858) 642-1683; or (858) 642-1684.

- The nurse's on-call number: (213) 216-4710
- The doctor's on-call number: (213) 216-4720.

## Host Room

Participants who have questions or need assistance at the hotel should go to the Host Room in the Point Loma Room, South Tower, Level 1. Today through Friday, hours will be 7 a.m. - noon; and 1 - 5 p.m. Host Room phone number is (858) 642-1686.

**Prosthetics and Wheelchair Repair**

There is not going to be a central location for wheelchair or prosthetic repair at the Clinic. For issues or problems, call the NVSSC general help line (858) 642-1699 and request Prosthetics or Wheelchair Repair.

**Massage**

Massage for Clinic participants will be available today through Thursday, 6 - 10 p.m. in the Laguna Room, South Tower, Level 1. To schedule an appointment call (213) 216-4805.