



20th National Disabled Veterans
Winter Sports Clinic



Snowmass, Colorado ★ April 2 – April 7, 2006



Volume 20, No. 4

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

Young and Old Alike Revel in Pace of the Clinic

“Live daringly, boldly, fearlessly. Taste the relish to be found in competition – in having put forth the best within you.”

– Henry J. Kaiser

These are words to inspire people, of all ages and backgrounds, worldwide. They can certainly also inspire the veterans participating at this week’s Winter Sports Clinic, even the oldest and youngest among them.

“I just simply can’t stand to sit,” said 86-year-old Chester Golembiewski, an Army veteran from Largo, Fla. (who prefers to shorten his last name to its first five letters). “I am very active and I want to always do my best and get out to compete with the younger ones,” he said.



Chester “Golem” Golembiewski of Largo, Fla., is interviewed by Lisa Gregory of Soldiers Magazine.



Steven Dassler of Palmdale, Calif., snowboards down the slope.

“Golem” is no novice to the Winter Sports Clinic – this is his third year participating. “My age tells me I’m in my 80s but I sure don’t feel like it,” he said. “This year I am skiing and snowshoeing. I don’t like to slow down and I have been very agile my entire life. Why should that change now?”

A veteran of World War II, Golem served from 1941-1945 as a gunner in the field artillery in Australia and New Guinea. After his military service, he worked for 41 years as a mailer for the Chicago Tribune until retiring in 1982. Three years later, he was diagnosed with macular degeneration causing the loss of his central vision. He is one of seven WWII veterans attending this week’s event, ranging in age from 79 to 86.

Neither visual impairment nor age have caused this spry octogenarian to slow down. A frequent competitor in the National Veterans Golden Age Games, Golem won last year’s “most inspirational athlete” award at that event. Back in Florida, he plays golf every week and also

competes in VA’s annual Tee Tournament for visually impaired golfers. In addition to golf, he also played baseball, tennis and touch football in his younger years.

Golem has looked forward to coming to the Clinic this week, and the opportunity to get out there alongside the younger veterans. “I don’t look at myself as the oldest or them as the youngest,” he said. “I’m just an ordinary guy doing the best that I can. I have people who are 10 years younger than I am telling me they wish they could keep up with me. I have the heart of a young kid, and really enjoy meeting everyone no matter what age they are.”

Just last week, 20-year-old Steven Dassler, an Army veteran from Palmdale, Calif., left his teenage years behind him – but he isn’t slowing down

See “Young and Old,” page 3

Group Reaches Significant Milestone at 20th Clinic

They are wiser, older and some would say, more jubilant than ever. For the past 20 years, these unsung heroes have journeyed to the snow covered mountains of Colorado to do what one of them says “is a difficult but rewarding job.”

Known as the “Terrific Ten,” this special group of volunteers and staff have been gearing up for the 20th National Disabled Veterans Winters Sports Clinic, now an annual routine for all of them. They have assisted at the event every year since the Clinic began in 1987.

This group with the perfect attendance has again joined all of the other volunteers and staff this week to meet and work with 338 veterans from across the country participating in the 2006 Clinic.

“When I first participated in the first Winter Sports Clinic at the Powderhorn Ski Resort outside of Grand Junction, you could tell it was going to be a special experience for the veterans, their families and volunteers,” said Rich Shew of the VA Salt Lake City Health Care System. “Disabled veterans found an enormous sense of triumph in doing something they never thought they could.”

Shew said he has formed numerous friendships over the years by volunteering at the Clinic, and is amazed at the results of the medical care and rehabilitation that VA provides. “I volunteer at the Winter Sports Clinic as much for me, personally, as for the veterans. It’s a rewarding experience,” he said.



Allen Baugh, Team Leader Coordinator, is another member of the “Terrific Ten.”

Grand Junction VA Medical Center volunteer Pat White, who serves as a ski instructor at the Clinic, said that he has observed over the years that the veterans at the Clinic grow by leaps and bounds during the week. “It gives participants the freedom to do activities they never expected to be able to do again,” White said. “The Clinic leads each person not only to help themselves, but also to help and serve others.”

Photographer Todd Peterson, also of the Salt Lake City VA facility, said he has watched equipment evolve from the early sit skis through mono and bi-skis, into prototypes that would make NASA proud. Peterson

points out that while there is a lot of change, one thing that doesn’t change is the participants’ determination, dedication and pride. “A grin or grimace in 1987 will pretty much look the same in 2006 – and it is in this consistency, the individual aspect of the Clinic, that I find the most personal satisfaction. Of course, the technology is fun too,” Peterson said.

The work of these staff and volunteers ranges from serving as ski instructors to photographing the participants in action to serving meals. It is a round the clock effort.

“Volunteers play a key part in the Winter Sports Clinic events and I applaud their selflessness as they give of themselves to help others,” said Diane Hartmann, director of VA’s national programs. “I am particularly impressed and grateful to the group of 10 volunteers and staff who have been with us at all the Clinic events. They are very special.”

Among these special people is Jeanie Getchner, a member of the Colorado Disabled American Veterans Auxiliary, who has been serving meals to the



The rest of the “Terrific Ten” are: (front row, left to right) photographers Rick Shew and Todd Peterson; and (back row, left to right) Clinic Director Sandy Trombetta and ski instructors Pat White, Mark Harsha, Carl Desrosiers, Dave Rosen and Wayne Grapes.

participants for the past 19 years. “I’m a glorified waitress,” she said, “but I enjoy helping in any way that I can.” Clearly understating her support, Clinic Director Sandy Trombetta said that Getchner’s contributions, in the early years and today, have been invaluable. He feels the same about the others.

Helping in any way that they can is the mission consistently displayed by the Terrific Ten group, a true testament of their character and human kindness. To each of these special people we say thank you for all that you’ve done at 20 Winter Sports Clinics!



Meals workers Jeanie Getchner and Mary Lane, two of the “Terrific Ten,” stand in front of the 20th anniversary Clinic quilt.

Terrific Ten

“Young and Old,” continued from page 1

enough to think much about it. “I aim to live it up for now and do my best,” he said. “I want to show people I can get out and take part with a competitive edge.”

Dassler, a first-time Clinic participant, is eager to demonstrate his bold, fast-paced style as he spins and turns his way down the slopes on his snowboard. After years of skateboarding, he finds snowboarding very similar except for the pace. Although he’s only been at it since January, he loves the speed.



Dassler’s injuries in Iraq resulted in the loss of his right leg below the knee. He is one of 25 veterans receiving care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center who are here at the Clinic. I’m here because my therapist told me about it,” he said. “Mostly, I’m excited about the social interaction that is part of being with other veterans.”

Dassler enlisted in the service on February 3, 2004, in the artillery. After completing training at Ft. Sill, Okla., his first duty station was in Georgia. In January 2005, he was deployed to Iraq and it was there that he was injured by a roadside bomb in southeast Baghdad last July. He expects to be released from Walter Reed this month.

“I really liked it in Iraq,” Dassler said. “I just zigged when I should have zagged as we were doing our everyday patrols in our Humvee. Next, it’s back home and back to school. I plan to study criminology or forensics and put those skills to use on a police force.”

Dassler has been looking forward to tearing up the slopes at the Clinic. He knows having the right attitude is an important part of his recovery. “I think there are two ways to look at every situation, good and bad. Every morning when I wake up, I ask myself, ‘What’s it going to be today, Steve?’ You can have a positive attitude and keep a smile on your face, or you can be negative and complain about all the bad stuff that has happened in your life. I choose to have happy days – because I’m not as cute without a smile on my face!”

It seems that whether you are 20 or 86, your experience on the mountain this week will be one you remember forever. So keep those smiles on those faces, everyone. Apparently, they contribute greatly to the cuteness factor.



History of the Clinic Quiz

How are you doing in knowing your National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic history? Test your knowledge again today by taking the Clinic History Quiz that’s been featured in each *SkiGram* this week. Submit an entry form with the most correct answers and you will win a prize!

Remember, quiz entry forms are located in the conference center ballroom, or you can pick one up in the Media Center, located in the Erickson Room in the conference center. Drop your entry in the box located outside the Media Center. All forms must be submitted by 11 a.m. to qualify, and the first form with the most correct answers wins. Today’s winner (and the correct answers) will be announced in tomorrow’s newsletter.

1. Who was a special guest who came to the 1992 National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic? (Think Country Music)
2. What is the name of the first sit ski that was used in the early days of the Clinic?
3. What was the name of the main hotel (where the participants stayed) when the Clinic was held in Crested Butte?
4. How many years was the WSC held in Crested Butte?

Yesterday’s Winner is:

Keith Wetzstein from Woodstock, Ill.

Stop by the Media Center to pick up your prize!

Yesterday’s quiz answers:

1. The National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic is the largest learn-to-ski clinic in the world.
2. All of the mentioned agencies/groups are sponsors or supporters of the Clinic.
3. A. Snowmass Village, C. Powderhorn Resort and E. Crested Butte have all hosted the Clinic.
4. The Disabled American Veterans became an official sponsor in 1991, but the organization was involved at the state level from the very beginning.



**Photos from
the slopes...**



Lee Williams of Palo Alto, Calif., practices his putting during Monday afternoon's golf session.



Don Crago of Lowellville, Ohio, cross country skis followed by instructor Phillip Torie of Seaside, Calif.



Mannie Allen from Sunnyvale, Texas, tosses the "goalball" during Monday evening's competition.



Carlos Leon of Pompano Beach, Fla., is assisted by Linda Tomsevics of Pewaukee, Wis. Hannah Nishimoto of West Los Angeles, Calif., looks on.



Brian Anderson from Rolling Meadows, Ill., climbs the rock wall on Monday afternoon.



Sled hockey is definitely an action sport! VA Secretary Jim Nicholson is the center player.

Northrop Grumman Launches Program to Assist GWOT Vets



Northrop Grumman Corporation's Operation IMPACT (Injured Military Pursuing Assisted Career Transition) was launched in May 2005. The program is designed to provide transition support to military service members (or a primary wage earner in the family) who has been severely injured in the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT) and assist them in identifying potential career opportunities within the corporation.

Northrop Grumman Corporation is a global defense company headquartered in California, made up of seven sectors and has more than 125,000 employees located in all 50 states and 25 countries. The corporation provides a broad array of technologically advanced, innovative products, services and solutions in systems integration, defense electronics, information technology, advanced aircraft, shipbuilding and space technology.

If you are interested in the getting more information about the IMPACT program, please check out their Web site (<http://operationimpact.ms.northropgrumman.com>). You may also call (800) 395-2361, ext. 8322; or contact James "Ward" Critz at (254) 634-5088.

National Veterans Wheelchair Games Coming Up in Alaska!



Interested in signing up to compete in the 26th National Veterans Wheelchair Games taking place July 3-8, 2006 in Anchorage? If you use a wheelchair to compete in sports, stop by to see Doug Beckley from the Paralyzed Veterans of America, who will be available during lunch in the conference center ballroom through Friday. Special funding for OIF/OEF veterans and a companion may be available to attend the 2006 Games.



A VA historical fact in commemoration of VA's 75th anniversary year.

In 1948, VA operated 125 hospitals with 102,200 beds. One-third of VA patients had service-connected disabilities. At end of year, 20,700 veterans deemed eligible for VA medical care awaited hospital admission. In 1949, VA staffed and equipped seven hospitals to specialize in treatment of spinal cord injury (SCI) patients. There were 1,400 paraplegics in VA hospitals. Today, VA has 23 VA SCI regional centers and 135 SCI primary care teams or support clinics at non-SCI local VA medical centers, treating nearly 44,000 veterans.

2006 Clinic Statistics

150 veterans have seen combat in the following conflicts. 116 of these veterans were wounded in combat.

Statistic	Number
Participants Registered	338
Women Veterans	36
Vietnam	62
Korea	7
World War II	7
Gulf War	24
Bosnia	1
Grenada and Panama	2
Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF)	54
Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF)	2
Paraplegics	83
Quadriplegics	46
Amputees	71
Visually Impaired	64
Brain Injured	33
Neurological Damage	13
Multiple Sclerosis	28
Army	179
Navy	62
Air Force	45
Marine Corps	57
Coast Guard	2
National Guard	1



The Honorable Gordon Mansfield Attends Clinic

For the next several days, we will have a very special guest from Washington, D.C., Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Gordon H. Mansfield.



Mansfield, who arrives later today, is an Army veteran who served two tours in Vietnam as company commander with the 101st Airborne Division, and was wounded during the Tet Offensive of 1968. A wheelchair user himself, Mansfield hopes to personally tackle the mountain tomorrow, so look for him on the slopes or at the trap shooting venue.

He looks forward to meeting with fellow veterans around the Clinic while he is here. At Friday's Closing Ceremonies, he will address the audience on behalf of VA.



My HealthVet is for all veterans, their families and advocates, clinicians, and VA employees. It is a voluntary, secure website that optimizes healthcare by providing trusted healthcare education, information on VA benefits and services, and a **personal health record** to record and track health readings for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol, weight, temperature and pain. You can keep food and activity journals, and record your military health history. **You can even refill your VA prescriptions online!**

Stop by the My HealthVet tables in the Convention Center Ballroom. Anne Klein and Cheryl Roberts will be happy to tell you more or help you register.



For your reading pleasure...

Zodi Yak

Preparer of horror-scopes and predictor of your future

Aquarius (Jan. 20- Feb. 19)

Today you are filled with confidence. It is shining from you, reflected by the snow and making us sunburned! Wear your sunscreen.

Pisces (Feb. 20- March 20)

You rocked in all the snow sports, and scuba diving was a blast too. Now, move on to the ice – there's a hockey stick in the Aspen Ice Rink with your name on it!

Aries (March 21-April 19)

You've been using all of your abundant energy on the mountain. Save some of it to help set the pace for a fun Dueling Pianos concert tonight. Bring all of your friends!

Taurus (April 20-May 20)

You love peaceful scenes, Taurus. The gondola will help you capture the incredible view from the top of Aspen Mountain.

Gemini (May 21-June 20)

Partied too much last night? Today is a good day to take it easy – go to yoga twice and relax.

Cancer (June 21- July 22)

Your persistence will help you achieve your goals. Today is a great day to try a new route on the climbing wall, ski a new course, or aim your arrow for a new target. Success is yours!

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22)

Leo, a spot on the Dueling Pianos stage has your name on it. Warm up your singing voice – we can't wait for this performance. We know how much you love the limelight.

Virgo (Aug. 23- Sept. 22)

We saw you at the Instructors' Party last night; the mountains have obviously released your inner animal!

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 23)

Today is a good day to rest. You may have overdone it yesterday, and tomorrow brings not only more events, but entertainment from country music sensation Clay Walker!

Scorpio (Oct. 24-Nov. 22)

Congratulations! Today your determination will help you master a skill you once thought unattainable. The question is – what is it?

Sagittarius (Nov. 23- Dec. 21)

You have a tendency to be distracted. Archery or trap shooting may not be the best activities today.

Capricorn (Dec. 22- Jan. 19)

Today is the first day you will notice your similarities to the nimble goat. Good day to try rock climbing!



Medical Assistance

Bedford A Conference Room

A medical room is available each day during Clinic operation hours (from approximately 8 a.m.–9 p.m.) for non-emergent care. The Bedford A Conference Room is located one level below the mall, across the street from the Mountain Chalet Hotel. There is stairway access from the mall next to Christy Sports. For wheelchair access, please use the elevator above the main bus terminal (at the far end of the mall) to get to the medical room level.

Transportation to Bedford A Conference Room

Van transportation is available from the Silver Tree Hotel to the Medical Room. Catch the medical van in front of the hotel, or call the Medical Room for transportation.

After Hours Medical Help

Call the Medical Room for recorded instructions on how to contact the on-call medical provider, or dial the hotel operator.

Medical Room Phone — (970) 923-8330

(extension 8330 on conference center phones)

For life threatening emergencies, dial 911.



Wheelchair & Prosthetic Repair

Conference Center, Sinclair Room

6:30. to 8:45 a.m.

11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

4 to 5:30 p.m.

For assistance in between those hours, call:

Wheelchair Repair (Don at 300-8006), Prosthetic Repair (Joe at 300-8024) Please do not call after 6 p.m. unless it is an emergency.



1:30–3 p.m. - CEU Educational Workshop:

“Recent Iraq Returnees:
Facing possible Symptoms of PTSD”
Kearns Room, Conference Center
Presented by Patrick Neeser

3:30–5 p.m. - CEU Educational Workshop:

“Assistance Dogs in your Life” - Kearns Room, Conference Center -
Presented by Michael Sergeant

6–7:30 p.m. - Educational Workshop: “Entrepreneurship”
Kearns Room, Conference Center, Presented by Scott Denniston

7:30–9 p.m. - CEU Educational Workshop: “Exercise and Rehab Prescription for Chronic Medical Conditions” - Kearns Room, Conference Center, Presented by Robert Ryan, MA, ATC, CSCS

7:30–9 p.m. - Instructional Workshop: “Self Defense for Everyone”
Max Park Room, Wildwood Hotel



The Menu for Today

Wednesday’s Meal Schedule

Conference Center Ballroom

6:30 to 8:45 a.m. Breakfast

11 a.m. to 1 p.m. Lunch

5 to 6:15 p.m. Dinner

Breakfast Buffet

Fresh Sliced Fruit, Oatmeal with Brown Sugar, Raisins, Sliced Bananas & Skim Milk in a Carafe Breakfast Breads Muffins and Biscuits, Breakfast Sausage

Thick-Sliced Ham, Potatoes

Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee, Herbal Teas, Assorted Chilled Juice Omelet Bar with Cooked-to-Order Omelets to include Ham, Cheese, Asparagus, Mushrooms, Roasted Peppers, Fresh Tomatoes, Green Onions and Salsa

Lunch Buffet

Tossed Salad with Assorted Dressing
BBQ Chicken with Grandpa Bill’s Famous BBQ Sauce on the side
Italian Sausage with Grilled Onions and Peppers, Buns, Mustard, Ketchup, Relish
Assorted Chips, Granola Bars

Dinner Buffet

Turkey Dinner, Oven Roasted Corned Beef
Brisket with Cranberry & Onion Sauce
Mashed Potatoes, Vegetables
Tossed Salad with Assorted Dressings
Fresh Ground Coffee, Decaffeinated Coffee and Herbal Teas
Iced Tea



Benefits Counselors Available

Do you have questions about the VA benefits you may be eligible for? Do you need to speak with someone? Check the booth in the Conference Center lobby today. VA benefits counselors are available to answer your questions.



Today's Schedule

Wednesday, April 5, 2006

6:30 – 8:30 a.m.	Breakfast: Conference Center Ballroom
7 – 8:30 a.m.	Yoga Warm Up: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
8 – 11:30 a.m.	Snowmobiling: T Lazy 7 Ranch
8:15 – 11 a.m.	Sled Hockey: Aspen Ice Rink
8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.	Downhill Skiing: Rock Island, Granite, Sneaky's
8:45 a.m. – 3 p.m.	Cross Country Skiing, Snowshoeing (Top of the Village, Lunch - Elks BBQ)
9 – 11 a.m.	Wheelchair Fencing: Conference Center
9 – 11 a.m.	Scuba Diving: Silver Tree Hotel Pool
9:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	The Hot Springs, Glenwood Springs
10 a.m. - Noon	Rock Climbing: Conference Center Circle
10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Gondola Trip to Aspen, Lunch at Elks Lodge
10:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Shooting Sports/Archery: Basalt Trap Club
11:15 a.m. - 1 p.m.	Lunch: Conference Center Ballroom
12:30 – 3:30 p.m.	Downhill Skiing: Moonshine, Wildcat, Slider
1 - 3 p.m.	Rock Climbing: Conference Center Circle
1:30 - 3:30 p.m.	Adaptive Golf: Conference Center Ballroom
1:30 - 3 p.m.	CEU Educational Workshop: "Recent Iraq Returnees: Facing possible Symptoms of PTSD" Kearns Room, Conference Center Presented by Patrick Neeser
2 - 4 p.m.	Scuba Diving: Pool, Silver Tree Hotel
3 – 4:30 p.m.	Yoga Cool Down: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
3:30 – 5 p.m.	CEU Educational Workshop: "Assistance Dogs in your Life" Kearns Room, Conference Center Presented by Michael Sergeant
4:30 – 5:15pm	Ski Instructor Meeting: El Dorado Room, Silver Tree Hotel
4:30 p.m.	Team Leader Meeting: Stonebridge Inn, Council Meeting Room
5 p.m.	Coaches' Meeting: Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge
5 -6:15 p.m.	Dinner: Conference Center Ballroom
6-7:30 p.m.	Educational Workshop: "Entrepreneurship" Kearns Room, Conference Center Presented by Scott Denniston
7 – 9 p.m.	Doc Eason does Magic "Magician from the Tower" Conference Center
7:30- 9 p.m.	CEU Educational Workshop: "Exercise and Rehab Prescription for Chronic Medical Conditions" Kearns Room, Conference Center Presented by Robert Ryan, MA, ATC, CSCS
7:30 - 9 p.m.	Instructional Workshop: "Self Defense for Everyone" Max Park Room, Wildwood Lodge Presented by: Special Agent Mark Copanzzi United States Secret Service
9 p.m. - Midnight	"Twin Keys" (PG13) Dueling Pianos Entertainment: Conference Center Ballroom

SkiGram on the Web



Share this newsletter (in full color) with

your friends and family. It is located on the Web at:

www.wintersportsclinic.org

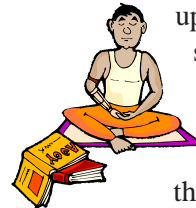
If you have misplaced an item, check Lost and Found



located in the Sinclair Room (Host Room).

Yoga Sessions

Prepare yourself for your day on the slopes at the daily warm-up and cool-down yoga sessions being held today. Sessions are from 7 – 8:30 a.m. and 3 – 4:30 p.m. in the Max Park Room at the Wildwood Lodge.



Complimentary Massages

Complimentary massages are available by calling and scheduling an appointment. Massage is located in the Lower Level Lobby of the Silvertree Hotel in the Cabaret Room. Appointments can be made by calling (970) 361-6829.



Snowmass Weather Forecast

**Snow Showers Overnight
Rain and/or Snow During Day
Low 35° – High 46°**