



Paralyzed Veterans of America

by Andy Nemann

Changing of the Guard

After more than 60 years of service standing watch over PVA, “Speedy” has officially retired and a new logo has stepped up to take his place.

It’s a changing of the guard for Paralyzed Veterans of America (PVA) as the organization has officially retired the long-standing logo, nicknamed “Speedy,” and replaced him with a new symbol to represent the institution.

The new logo to stand guard over PVA was officially unveiled last month. The main version of the logo consists of a single, blue-silhouetted veteran sitting in a wheelchair, facing forward and saluting alongside the name “Paralyzed Veterans of America” in red. There are a few other slight variations of the logo such as vertical or horizontal versions, and in black and white for use on letterhead, the Web and elsewhere.

The PVA executive directors and board members voted, 27-5, to make the change during August’s national convention in Long Beach, Calif. The general concept of the new logo was approved at the convention, but it took some extra time to make final tweaks and color changes before it was placed into official service.

The Debate

Despite the overwhelming vote in favor of making the change, the decision didn’t look like it would turn out that way.

Once the motion to adopt the new logo was made there was a spirited debate for more than two hours on using the new logo versus keeping Speedy.

Directors and board members deliberated the significance, meaning and history of Speedy. Some wondered why a change was needed after 67 years and how such a move would affect PVA. Some worried the new logo looked too similar to others in use.

Those in support of the change believe the new emblem better embodies the mission of PVA, its 34 chapters, and the newly injured, younger veterans. Supporters see the new logo as important for helping move PVA forward into the future.

The new image brings an end to Speedy’s long history of service to PVA. The little guy in the wheelchair came to life in 1946 from a drawing of a PVA member. Speedy is regarded as a symbol of energy, drive, happiness, admiration and guts.

Speedy’s Origins

The PVA member represented by the characterization is Dick Sloviaczek.

Interestingly enough, Sloviaczek went through rehabilitation after World War II at the Long Beach Spinal-Cord

Injury Center in the same city where the decision was made to change the logo.

Sloviaczek was frequently seen zipping around the hospital halls with his pipe in his mouth and a trail of smoke following him. He entered the Army in 1940

as a private and left as a major in 1947. Sloviaczek was a charter life member of PVA. He passed away Dec. 7, 1998.

The Speedy logo itself went through several changes over the years. One of the final versions removed the distinctive smoking pipe after the dangers of smoking became better known and it was lessening in popularity.

For more information, visit pva.org. ■



Join the Conversation

You’ve seen the new PVA logo and heard the reasoning behind the change. What do you think? Share your thoughts and opinions with us and others.

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