

2019

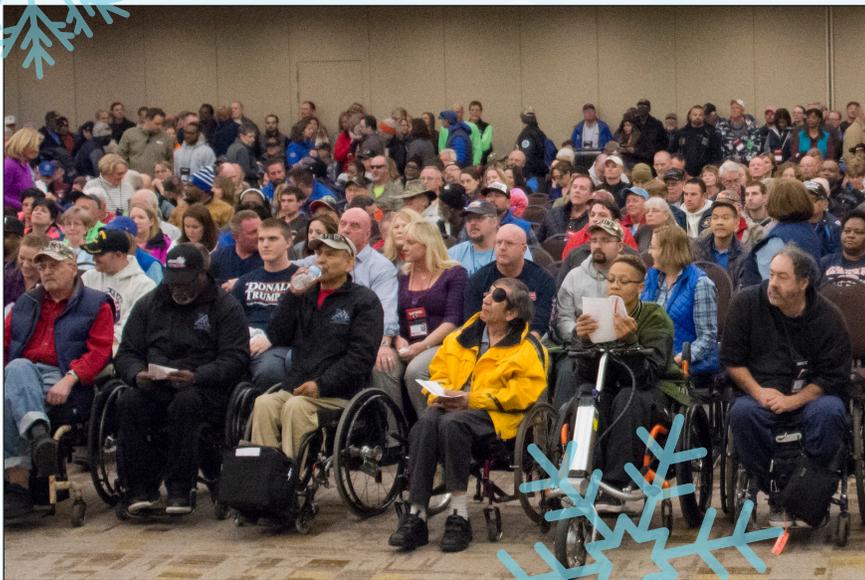
Monday, April 1



# NATIONAL DISABLED VETERANS WINTER SPORTS CLINIC

wintersportsclinic.org | #wintersportsclinic

## Welcome to the Clinic



The room is brimming with anticipation and nervous energy. It's GO time! Returning Veterans embrace old friends and first-timers try, but fail to control their jitters. Over 400 Veterans from 105 different facilities embark on a week-long transformation from uncertain to inspired as they stare down the mountains of Aspen. There are no limits, there are no expectations, there are no failures... only strength, courage, and belief. Here's to an incredible week!

### CLINIC STATISTICS

- ★ 640 volunteers
- ★ 136 first-timers
- ★ 410 Veterans
- ★ Youngest participant: 19
- ★ 42 states represented
- ★ Oldest participant: 94

Co-hosted by:



By Jeremy Laird

## Former Paratrooper always up for a Next Rush



### Amputee says he's down for his first Winter Sports Clinic

Alex Hussey sports an infectious grin as he gets fitted for his sit ski. He and his wife, Kim, are gearing up for his very first run at the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic and their excitement is contagious. You can't help but smile right along with Alex.

"I love recreation therapy," said the Army Veteran. The combat-injured amputee is more than ready for the challenge that lays ahead of him.

The 27-year-old knew at an early age that he wanted to join the military. In 2010, while still at Milwaukie High School in Oregon, he enlisted in the Army and shipped out to basic training right after graduation.

"My family has many military Veterans and I always knew I would join," Hussey said. "I wanted to be a paratrooper, so I was sent

to Fort Benning."

After completing infantry training and jump school, he was assigned the 82nd Airborne.

"That was awesome," Hussey said. "I loved jumping out of airplanes."

In 2012, Hussey deployed to Kandahar, Afghanistan. After being in country a little more than six months, he stepped on an improvised explosive device. The blast severed both legs, his left hand and left him with a severe traumatic brain injury. He spent the next six months in a coma.

"When I was finally aware again I had to learn how to talk, swallow, read—basically had to learn everything over again," Hussey recalled.

After countless hours of rehab his wife, noticed he was falling into a rut and was dreading therapy. That's when they found recreation

therapy.

"She found a great equine therapy program and therapeutic swim program for me," Hussey said. "I enjoy going to both."

"Alex looks forward to his therapy now," Kim Hussey said. "His smile is so bright when he does something for the first time that he hasn't been able to do since his injury—like sitting on his own, standing in the pool and he loves horses a lot."

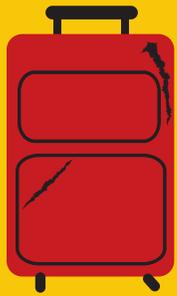
This is Hussey's first trip to the Winter Sports Clinic. He once skied Mount Hood, Oregon -- spending four hours in a sit ski.

"I could barely get him off the mountain," his wife remembered.

As for Alex Hussey, he showed his excitement for shredding the slopes of Snowmass with one simple exclamation. "I cannot wait to ski again!"



 **Veterans  
Crisis Line**  
1-800-273-8255 **PRESS 1**



### DAMAGED LUGGAGE?

If your luggage was damaged during your trip to the Clinic, visit the United desk in the Westin lobby to fill out a claim form.



## Claims expert is here to help

If you need assistance with your claim for VA benefits this week, Carmen McGinnis, a DAV benefits expert, will be on site tomorrow through Thursday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. in the sponsor room to answer your questions about disability claims and other earned benefits. You can also contact your local DAV representatives for free assistance when you return home. To find the office nearest you, visit [veteransbenefits.org](http://veteransbenefits.org).



Carmen McGinnis,  
DAV National  
Service Officer

 VIEW MORE PHOTOS: [flickr.com/TheDAV](https://www.flickr.com/photos/TheDAV/) or [facebook.com/Sports4Vets](https://www.facebook.com/Sports4Vets)

[wintersportsclinic.org](http://wintersportsclinic.org)

# Clinic gets Navy veteran back on the slopes

Mainer returns to Snowmass for fourth time

By M. Todd Hunter



Despite having skied throughout her upbringing in Maine, Navy veteran Niki Wyman was both apprehensive and intimidated the first time she attended the National Disabled Veterans Winter Sports Clinic in 2016. It was, after all, the first time she attempted skiing since suffering a traumatic brain injury while on active duty more than a decade earlier.

To this day, the injury affects her memory, balance and coordination—the latter two of which are crucial on the slopes.

“It was kind of nerve-wracking at first,” said Wyman, 45. “But then once you get there you realize that everyone is just like you are and everyone gets along because there’s that same shared camaraderie that everyone has from serving in the military.”

Wyman not only credits the clinic with helping her break out of her social shell, but also with reintroducing her to a childhood pastime that she now continues when she returns home.

“It improved my whole self-esteem because it proved that I could still ski with my disabilities,” she said. “I just have to do it in a different way.”

This year’s event marks Wyman’s fourth straight time at the clinic as her confidence continues to grow. She hopes newcomers heed the advice she has learned through experience.

“Be open and know that a lot of us have the same issues that you’re dealing with,” she explained. “And if you have any questions, it’s okay to reach out. Someone will be able to help you in ways you didn’t think possible.”

## Get Social

This week, inspire other Veterans, family, friends and people everywhere by sharing your experiences through social media. Don’t forget to use the hashtag **#wintersportsclinic** when sharing comments, photos and videos.



Social media is a great way to stay connected during and after the Clinic. Another way to stay connected is by using the Clinic App for updates during the event. Start connecting today!

 Sports4Vets  Sports4Vets  
 @Sports4Vets

 dav  @dabhq  
 dabhq  DAVeterans  
 company/dabhq



## Marine Night

Tonight, 7-9 p.m.  
Wildwood Bar

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Aquatic CEU Training Cancelled

Thursday, 6 p.m.

### Women Veterans Reception

5-7 p.m.

Conference Center Ballroom

### Goal Ball

7:30-9:30 p.m.

Conference Center Ballroom

Open to everyone.