

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

17 January, 2018

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings: 2018

17 January, 21 February, 21 March, 18 April, 16 May,
20 June, 18 July, 15 August, 19 September, 17 October,
21 November, 19 December

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National web page: www.vva.org

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Pentagon: 44,000 Troops Unaccounted for

Stephen Carlson Stars And Stripes December 7, 2017

The U. S. military has more than 44,000 troops across the globe that the Pentagon claims it cannot track, according to a recent report. "We are not at a point where we can give numbers other than those officially stated," said Army Col. Rob Manning, a Pentagon spokesman. The report — compiled by the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) under the Office of the Secretary of Defense — shows more than 44,000 personnel in a category labeled "Unknown."

Active-duty military personnel number slightly more than 1.3 million in the Army, Navy, Marine Corps and Air Force, and hundreds of thousands more civilian personnel fall under Defense departments. That number does not include Reserve and National Guard formations that might be active at any particular time. The United States has military personnel in nearly every country in the world, ranging from two liaison officers in Fiji to tens of thousands from all of the service branches in Japan and Germany, according to the report. Manning said during a press briefing 6 DEC that troop numbers in Syria are about four times higher than reported by the Pentagon, with 2,000 present in the country.

He also clarified that there are 5,200 in Iraq,

up from about 5,000 reported earlier. "We seek to balance informing the American public with the imperative of operational security and denying the enemy any advantage," Manning said at the briefing. The Pentagon's previous number of troops in Syria was 503. Though the additional 1,500 acknowledged Wednesday is small compared to the size of DOD manpower -- over 246,000 in California alone according to the data center -- such discrepancies could help explain why 44,000 are unaccounted for.

Bet You Didn't Know

Early aircraft's throttles had a ball on the end of it, in order to go full throttle the pilot had to push the throttle all the way forward into the wall of the instrument panel. Hence "balls to the wall" for going very fast. And now you know, the rest of the story.

Ladies wore corsets, which would lace up in the front. A proper and dignified woman, as in 'straight laced' wore a tightly tied lace.

The war in Afghanistan messed with my head

Here's how I found peace — and hope. By Florent Groberg, Washington Post, October 7

Florent Groberg is a retired Army captain, Medal of Honor recipient and author of "8 Seconds of Courage: A Soldier's Story from Immigrant to the Medal of Honor," to be released Nov. 7.

Oct. 7, 2017 marks 16 years since the start of the U.S. war in Afghanistan. The longest war in American history turns 16 years old Saturday — the anniversary of the first deployment of elite special operators to Afghanistan just weeks after the worst terrorist attack in our nation's history.

Back then our mission was clear, and the call to war was simple: We were going to take out Osama bin Laden, and shut down al-Qaeda's safe haven.

For most American teenagers, a 16th birthday is a huge milestone, a joyful transition into the independence, freedom and opportunities that come with adulthood. But in war, these milestones operate in reverse. The longer they stretch on, the murkier our mission feels, the greater the sacrifice becomes, and the farther into the distance our original goals fade.

Most Americans, glad to be hitting back after being attacked on 9/11, never imagined how expansive this war would become, how many millions would ultimately deploy to fight it, that bin Laden would prove such an elusive target, or that this conflict would morph from a massive manhunt to an even greater struggle for Afghanistan's nationhood and soul.

And no one would have believed 2,500 American lives — and even more Afghan allies — would be lost.

Americans look at these questions differently and from many perspectives — across our dining room tables and our political divides. Some think we have been there too long, some that victory is just around the corner. Some think we have a responsibility to put Afghanistan back together, others that we are doing more harm than good.

I've been a part of these conversations, and I've been one of the many confused about our mission. Until I deployed. On the ground in Afghanistan, walking through the silvery moon dust that layers the mountain ridgelines and among ancient societies who carve their homes out of some of the world's most unforgiving terrain, this war looks very different.

Instead of hostile barbarians, I found myself among hungry and hopeful people. Instead of hunting a terrorist, we hunted for a nation's future.

Yes, we fought the Taliban, and we used overwhelming American strength to fight those who engaged us with hostility. But we spent much

more time working to improve the living conditions for ordinary Afghans, to clear paths for children to safely go to school, to deliver electricity, clean water and basic human security.

I saw the best of humanity at work in Afghanistan through the sacrifices and bravery of the people we worked alongside. I also saw the depths of evil. Acts of barbaric cruelty, Afghan against Afghan, and brother against brother. The Taliban are a merciless enemy, happy to kill scores of their own people if it was worth one American life.

What hits hardest from my time in Afghanistan is how many of us came home with wounds — physical and emotional.

I realized sitting in my own hospital bed, injured by a suicide bomber, that no Taliban, no al-Qaeda, no foreign fighter ever truly scared me. What frightened me were the demons in my head left behind after that traumatic attack, and their relentless work to destroy my spirit and finish me off.

I nearly became a statistic, one of the 20 veterans who takes his or her life every single day. But like my time in combat, I relied on my brothers and sisters around me. They never quit on me, they pushed me and guided me. They saved my life once in the mountains of Afghanistan and again at the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center.

Today, I work with the Boeing Co. to help veterans and their families land careers where they can use their rare and unique skills. Part of that process involves providing our veterans with the resources they need when they, too, are struggling, physically or emotionally. To me, the continuing legacy of this war resides in every job offered to a veteran, in every family reunited with their service member, and in every opportunity for peace that we create.



VA Physician Poor Performers Not Reported

Nikki Wentling Stars And Stripes November 27, 2017

The Department of Veterans Affairs fails to report 90 percent of poor-performing doctors to national and state databases intended to alert other hospitals of misconduct, according to findings released 27 NOV by the Government Accountability Office. The government watchdog found VA officials were slow to investigate when concerns were raised about the performance of certain doctors. Further, in eight out of nine cases, the VA failed to report doctors who didn't meet health care standards. "Until [the Veterans Health Administration] strengthens its oversight of these processes, veterans may be at increased risk of receiving unsafe care through the VA health care system," the GAO concluded.

The findings were based on reviews of 148 instances of complaints against VA medical providers at five hospitals from 2013 to 2017. The concerns ranged from unsafe or inconsistent practices to doctors incorrectly recording patient visits. The VA failed to document about half of those cases, the GAO found. For 16 doctors, the VA waited multiple months or years to initiate reviews of complaints. During that time, nine doctors were disciplined by the VA for possible professional incompetence or misconduct, or they resigned to avoid disciplinary action. But the VA didn't report any of them to state licensing boards, and only one was reported to the National Practitioner

Data Bank. Those databases are designed to inform other health care facilities about doctors' past performance. In one instance, a doctor who resigned from the VA while under investigation was not reported, and later hired to another, non-VA hospital in the same city. Two years later, that hospital disciplined the doctor for the same conduct that prompted the VA investigation, the GAO reported.

The GAO is recommending the VA improve oversight of how concerns raised about doctors are reviewed and documented. In response to the watchdog report, VA Deputy Chief of Staff Gina Farrissee wrote the agency agreed with the recommendations and would comply with them by October 2018. "Without documentation and timely reviews of providers' clinical care, [VA] officials may lack information needed to reasonably ensure that providers are competent to provide safe, high quality care to veterans," the GAO report reads.

The U.S. Office of Special Counsel has recently received complaints from whistleblowers that seem to back up the GAO findings of VA leadership failing to address concerns about doctors, inspectors wrote. A subcommittee of the House Committee on Veterans' Affairs is planning to meet 29 NOV to discuss the report publicly.

The Forgotten Doughnut Heroines of Wartime

ELIZABETH VAN FLANDERN SEPTEMBER 26, 2017

<http://www.messynessychic.com/2017/09/26/the-forgotten-doughnut-heroines-of-wartime/>

The doughnut—America's favourite indulgence—has an unexpected heroic history. Despite having been invented in the 1800s, the doughnut wasn't popularised until WWI, when the ring-shaped pastries brought comfort to thousands of soldiers serving in the trenches during the brutal years far from home. The Salvation Army, a well-known Christian charitable foundation, became the first prominent organisation to provide soldiers with fried doughnuts on the front lines of the Great War, thanks to the brave women whose story has remained a footnote in wartime history.

Although only about 250 volunteers were sent to the French trenches, these women were eventually able to turn out 8,000 doughnuts a

day and news of these "donut girls" spread quickly throughout France and the U.S. The women traveled with their troupes to the front lines, piling their supplies into the ammunition train and moving through the night. Often, army generals weren't fond of women being so close to combat, but the ladies were determined to dish out their donuts to the troops.

The first donut girl, Lt. Col. Helen Purviance, is quoted as saying "General Pershing wasn't keen about women going close to the front lines. He said he didn't want to take responsibility for us. We told him he wasn't. We were taking responsibility to do this," (The Salvation Army).

These women took their fate into their own

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became a perfect option for women on the front lines who often struggled to obtain ingredients. Doughnuts didn't require the fruit fillings that pies did and eggs could be bought from the local French villagers.

When production began, their instruments were crude and they were only able to produce 150 doughnuts a day, twisting the shapes by hand. Because of limited space, the doughnuts could only be fried seven at a time. Eventually Lt. Col. Helen Purviance went to a local blacksmith and asked him to nail together an empty condensed milk can and shaving cream canister to jerry rig a mold with the right shape.

Doughnut girls became a signature of The Salvation Army's work

hands, fighting hard just to support their troops in the best way they knew how. Despite many men's doubts, the doughnut girls were far from helpless. They were outfitted with gas masks, helmets, and .45 caliber revolvers, which they were instructed to practice with. Despite warnings to stay back, they stayed at their posts, constantly in danger of gas or bombings.

Salvation Army lassies, and their male assistants (doughboys) were not sent overseas simply to bake. Their primary function being to bring a piece of normalcy and home to troops, but they were essentially surrogates for wives or mothers and would serve hot chocolate or hand out clean socks— whatever it was that the troops needed.

Although donuts had been invented in the 1800s without creating much enthusiasm, they

in the 20th century and they played it up, raising money with doughnut games, and even hosting a beauty competition for “National Doughnut Queen” that lasted through the middle of the century.

Come World War II, the American Red Cross created a Clubmobile Service, London Green Line buses converted to provide servicemen with food, entertainment and “a connection home.”

Women who volunteered for the Clubmobiles became known as “donut dollies,” required to be between the ages of twenty-five and thirty-five, have some college education and work experience, and to be “healthy, physically hardy, sociable and

Continued next page

attractive.”

Clubmobiles were kitted out with a built-in doughnut machine within a fully equipped kitchen. The rear of the Clubmobile had a “lounge” area with benches that doubled as sleeping bunks for the volunteers. The bus service also offered books, candy, gum and cigarettes, and had a music player with loud speakers to play for the troops.

There were around 100 Red Cross Clubmobiles present for the Invasion of Normandy in June 1944, each of which was driven and staffed by three American women. After the invasion, eight Clubmobiles were around France,



traveling with the rear echelon of the Army Corps, receiving their orders from the army.

The donut dollies continued their service throughout France, Belgium, Luxembourg and Germany until the war was won in 1945 and would go on to operate during the Korean War and Vietnam War.

In remembrance of these women’s act of bravery the Salvation army created “National Donut Day” in 1938 which we have continued to celebrate. You can even learn a pretty adorable song written in 1919 about the doughnut girls’ adventures...



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