

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

16 February, '11

Elks Lodge

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Meetings are held on the third Wednesday each month. You are also invited to join members for conversation and discussion after the meeting.

Chapter web page :

National web page: www.vva.org

Future Meetings

2011

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

Chapter 324 Officers

President -

Vice President - Pat Moore 354-2533

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Kent Draper 963-0375

Director - Pat Ciofani 332-7734

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Fundraiser for Homeless Veterans Initiative

Jason Moon CD Release Party

featuring Little Mischief, Mambo Surfers, more
7:30, Feb. 5, Linneman's, 1101E. Locust, \$5.00

All Members Are Encouraged To Attend

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

will be held April 20, 2011

Nominations are open for

MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS,

as well as the offices of

PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, TREASURER

to make a nomination contact Pat Moore or Dennis Symanski

You may nominate yourself.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

January 19, 2011

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by acting President Pat Moore.

A moment of silence was observed for our brothers and sisters no longer with us and for all POW/MIA's and their families.

Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer

Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Moore, Kent Draper, John Morgan, John Zutz, Bob Rugg, Ron Coppersmith, Pat Ciofani, Mike Lang, Mike Fahvner, Paul Balge, Oliver Williams, Milan Mursec, Minnie Herman, Joe Herbert, Paul Javins George Banda

Minutes of November 17, 2010 meeting reviewed and accepted.

Treasurer's report submitted by Kent Draper.

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership – Joe Herbert – 137 members

Volunteering and Activity at the VA – Many changes and much remodeling going on at the VA. A committee has been formed to look into fund raising for a Fischer House on the grounds.

Fund Raising – Kent Draper – We are in the process of getting our 2011 raffle going.

OLD BUSINESS

Tuesday Bingo – Thanks to all who have been showing up to help in the kitchen.

Candy Cane Lane – A fun time was had on a cool night – Thanks to all who were there.

Chapter Christmas Party – Party was a big success – 42 people attended – We hope to make this an annual event.

Packer Party at the doms – December party was cancelled at the request of the VA due to the Holidays – We will plan another party for them in the near future.

Chapter By-Laws – Work in progress.

NEW BUSINESS

Nominations of Officers – We will accept nominations up until our elections. If you are interested in taking a leadership role in YOUR chapter, contact one of the current officers or board members. All positions are available.

Stand-Down – Moved and passed to donate \$300 for the Feb. 19th Stand-Down.

Food Drive – Veterans for Peace has a food pantry serving 110 – 120 needy veterans a week – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to help purchase food – Chapter 324, with the cooperation of the Elks Club, will be holding a food drive in conjunction with the Tuesday night Bingo. A prize drawing will be held for all who donate to the drive – Volunteers are needed to help with the food pantry – Contact Bob Rugg if interested.

Brewers Games Fund Raisers – Chapter has 2 dates in May and 1 in July.

Dry Hootch – A 60 year old + peer support group has been formed and meets Fridays at 10 am.

For the Good of the Chapter – Long time member, Bill Crivello recently passed away. In lieu of flowers, a \$50 donation was made to purchase coupons for the VA 9th Floor residents where Bill was residing. A thank you was received.

Adjournment – 7:52 pm.

Coming Home Homeless

By BOB WOODRUFF and IAN CAMERON Dec 26, 2010

Jose Pagan is a decorated veteran who survived two tours of duty in Iraq as a road clearance specialist. Just three days after leaving the military he was homeless and living on the streets of the Bronx.

Jose says being homeless after his service is something he never would have imagined. "It was embarrassing," Pagan says.

"Honor, pride, duty, loyalty, all these things that we -- that kick in as a soldier, you know. And then to find yourself here," as he points to the park benches where he slept for almost two months.

Pagan is one of an estimated nine thousand returning servicemembers from Iraq and Afghanistan that the Department of Veterans Affairs estimates have been homeless. Paul Rieckhoff, director of Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America, calls that a conservative estimate.

"I think even if there's one, it should be a national outrage. I mean a day when it's twenty degrees outside and the idea that some men or woman who got home from Iraq or Afghanistan maybe just a couple of months ago are homeless, that should outrage everybody in America."

Even the Department of Veterans Affairs believes the number of homeless could be higher, a result of combat stress, brain injuries from IEDs, repeated deployments, and rising use of drugs and alcohol. For many families of servicemembers it becomes simply too much -- family breakups are one reason why women are becoming homeless faster than men.

Tara Henry was a chemical weapons specialist with the 101st Airborne and served two deployments to Iraq. Her second tour of duty came only four months after her son was born, but while in Iraq her husband filed for divorce and was granted custody of their two kids.

"When I found out about court and everything else, I said, 'You know what? I gotta get a lawyer.'" Henry says. "So, I was trying to deal with those things while I was in Iraq. So that's where my money was going."

Henry has lived in shelters, hotels, even in a car on the street. She hasn't told her children that she's homeless. "I don't really think they would understand that," she says.

The military is beginning to understand why more veterans are homeless. "I think we have to do a better job of ensuring that all soldiers, not just those that are seriously wounded, are informed of the services that are available to them and so none of them leave the service and find themselves in a situation where they have nowhere to live," the Vice Chief of the Army General Peter Chiarelli told ABC "This Week" anchor Christiane Amanpour in an exclusive interview Sunday.

Chiarelli agrees repeated deployments are creating instability away from the frontlines of war. "We need more time at home before deployment," Chiarelli told Amanpour. "It affects everything. It affects the divorce rate. It affects substance abuse."

Chiarelli also says posttraumatic stress and traumatic brain injury impact those who have served in war, particularly when it goes undiagnosed. "We just don't know that much about the brain," Chiarelli told

FOOD DRIVE

The chapter is having a food drive to help homeless and at risk veterans. We are asking for any canned goods you may be able to donate. All non-perishable items are appreciated but canned goods are the greatest need. You may drop off your donation(s) at the Elks Club (5555 good hope road) anytime. Also at our next chapter meeting on February 16th at 7:00 pm. This drive is being held in conjunction with the veterans for peace project. If you have a large donation and need help getting it to the drive please call Bob at 414-469-2190 and I will try to arrange a pickup for you. Thank you for your time and aid in the worthy endeavor.

Bob Rugg

Report: 35% of warrior-unit soldiers face addiction

By Gregg Zoroya, USA TODAY Jan 1, 2011

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Medical officials estimate that 25% to 35% of about 10,000 ailing soldiers assigned to special wounded-care companies or battalions are addicted or dependent on drugs — particularly prescription narcotic pain relievers, according to an Army inspector general's report made public Tuesday.

The report also found that these formations known as Warrior Transition Units — created after the Walter Reed Army Hospital scandal in 2007 as a means of improving care for wounded troops — have become costly way stations where ill, injured or wounded soldiers wait more than a year to receive a medical discharge.

The newly appointed commander of the warrior units, Col. Darryl Williams, criticized the report's assertions about drug addiction. He said the high rate of drug addiction and dependency cited in the report was based on estimates made by case managers and nurses working with troops and are not statistically valid.

"It kind of caught me by surprise," says Williams, who has asked his inspectors to see if the numbers are accurate. He says most of the report's recommendations for change will be in place by summer.

"This report shows that there continue to be soldiers falling through the cracks of the Army's efforts to care for their wounded, ill, and injured," says Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., a senior member of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee who was briefed on the report because of her work to improve health care for troops. "It illustrates that soldiers are waiting too long for routine examinations, that many (warrior units) have not been provided the uniform guidance they need, that access to mental health professionals is too often scarce and that too many soldiers are abusing drugs as they struggle to recover both mentally and physically."

Most case managers and nurses interviewed by investigators said 25% to 35% of soldiers in warrior units "are over-medicated, abuse prescriptions and have access to illegal drugs."

They said most soldiers arrive in the units with narcotics provided by battlefield doctors or military bases. They also said a few soldiers under their care are buying narcotics out of pocket and may be mixing legal and illegal drugs.

About three out of four soldiers in the warrior units either leave the Army or active duty.

After nine years of war, the Army medical-discharge process has become a bureaucratic backlog where nearly 7,800 soldiers from across the Army wait for their cases to be reviewed. That's nearly a 50% increase since 2007, according to the investigation.

The "process is complex, disjointed and hard to understand," the report says.

For the high-care warrior units, it means many of their soldiers wait more than a year for a medical release from the Army, the report says.

"Medical resources (are) tied up for soldiers who will not be returning to the fight," investigators say.

Murray says "too often soldiers are finding themselves stuck (in warrior units). This is unacceptable."

The warrior units were created across the Army in June 2007 in response to media reports that the processing of wounded and ill soldiers at Walter Reed was poorly managed. The warrior units — where many ill, injured or wounded troops are temporarily assigned — have nurses, case managers and squad leaders to guide each soldier through the health system.

Only about 10% of the soldiers in these units are wounded in combat. The rest are there for injuries, illness or mental health issues.

The report says most people "generally" feel the units are the best place in the Army to heal up.

Other issues raised in the report:

- The Army does not have the resources to "appropriately treat drug dependence or abusers."
- The Army doesn't have enough doctors to review requests for medical discharges.
- A growing number of soldiers returning to duty from the warrior units may have unresolved medical problems — such as mental health or brain injury issues — from past deployments.

Sexual Assault Reports Increase at Military Academies

By Sharon Weinberger Dec 15, 2010 <http://www.aolnews.com/>

Reported sexual assaults at the military's three academies increased dramatically in the 2009-2010 academic year, but those cases are likely only a fraction of the number of attacks that actually occur, the Pentagon said today.

The 2009-2010 "Annual Report on Sexual Harassment and Violence at the Military Service Academies" found that reported assaults increased to 41, up from 25 in the 2008-2009 academic year.

The 41 cases reported are probably just a fraction of the actual assaults, according to the report.

"These survey results suggest that the 41 reports of sexual assault at the MSAs accounted for fewer than 10% of the incidents of unwanted sexual contact that may have actually occurred," it says.

"Sexual harassment and assault are incompatible with our core values, degrade mission readiness and reflect poorly on military culture," Clifford L. Stanley, undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, said in a statement released with the report's findings.

The report is part of a congressionally mandated requirement included in the 2007 defense authorization bill. Congress over the past several years has required the Pentagon to take a series of steps to address sexual assault and harassment at the military academies, including the establishment of a task force on the issue.

There were 20 reported assaults on students at the Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colo., in 2009-2010, up from eight the previous academic year,

At the Naval Academy in Annapolis, Md., there were 11 reported assaults, an increase of three.

The U.S. Military Academy in West Point, N.Y., had 10 reported assaults, up one from the previous period.

Can Government Employees Read the Pentagon Papers?

by John Prados DECEMBER 14, 2010

Those who have been following the wikileaks affair will have noticed the recent prominence of Dan Ellsberg, who leaked the Pentagon Papers in 1971. Ellsberg, in many respects, was a predecessor to wikileaks, and has provided insightful commentary regarding the current situation. So what has happened to the 43 volumes that Ellsberg leaked 39 years ago?

You might be dismayed to learn that the Pentagon Papers are still classified as TOP SECRET! This is despite the fact that The Pentagon Papers have long been in the public domain. Indeed, US government historians use them in official accounts of the Vietnam War and they are referenced and republished in official US government records, such as Foreign Relations of the United States. Senator Mike Gravel even entered them into the Congressional Record!

The classification of the Pentagon Papers takes on an even stranger significance when one considers the federal government's recent pronouncement that "unauthorized disclosures of classified documents (whether in print, on a blog, or on websites) do not alter the documents' classified status or automatically result in declassification of the documents."

This is the reason—in the case of Wikileaks—why the Government has been demanding that US government employees refrain from looking at any of

these documents, even if doing so hampers their ability to fulfill their mandates. If this standard holds true, government employees should not be allowed to read (or reference, or cite) the Pentagon papers either.

This classification policy might be more understandable if US declassification efforts were more forthright and better managed. But the opposite is the case; the Pentagon Papers are an excellent example. The US government continues to refuse to declassify them—and not for lack of public interest.

In 2000, the Archive filed a declassification request for the final four ultra-secret "diplomatic volumes" of the Pentagon Papers, which Ellsberg chose not to leak. In 2003, the State Department declassified these four diplomatic volumes in total.

So today, 39 years later, the ultra-secret negotiating material from the "diplomatic volumes" of the Pentagon Papers (which even Ellsberg refused to release) has been declassified, but the well-read 43 volumes that have been available to the public to since 1971 remain Top Secret. The Archive continues to fight for the official declassification of the bulk of the Pentagon Papers.

In the meantime the phoniness of many appeals to secrecy—including wikileaks material—remains readily apparent.

Sign Up Now With Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 324

Anyone can join! Membership Options:

Vietnam Veterans (A copy of your DD214 must be included):

- Individual Member - 1 year \$20 • Individual Member 3 year \$50 • Life Member \$250
- Life Member Installment Plan (\$50 Deposit; \$25 per month for 8 Months)

Anyone Else:

- Associate Member - 1 year \$20 • Associate Member 3 year \$50 • Associate Life Member \$250
- Associate Life Member Installment Plan (\$50 Deposit; \$25 per month for 8 Months)

Please Print

Name _____ Membership # _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

I would like to help Chapter 324 by donating \$ _____

Make checks payable to VVA324 and mail with this application to:
VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218

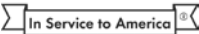


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