

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

18 February, '15

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: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Future Meetings

2015

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

Chapter 324 Officers

President - Pat Ciofani 702-7734

Vice Pres. - Oliver Williams 358-4416

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Pat Moore 354-2533

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray 262-389-7325

Director - Mike Ducette 262-968-5508

VA Prescription Label Changed

VA has changed the format of your VA prescription label to make the most important information more visible.

By Hans Petersen, VA Staff Writer Monday, January 26, 2015

VA asked hundreds of Veterans to tell us what they liked and didn't like about the labels on their prescriptions. The results led to this new patient-centric prescription label. We've cleaned up the look and made the following changes:

- Your name has been moved to the top of the label.
- Directions on how to take your medication are now larger and bolded.
- The date the prescription can no longer be refilled is clearly stated.
- The new design makes it easier to identify important drug and safety information.

VA has now adopted this patient-centric prescription label as the standard format for all VA pharmacies. The 4.8 million Veterans receiving VA prescription benefits now receive prescription labels with standardized information.

- See more at: <http://www.va.gov/HEALTH/NewsFeatures/2015/January/A-New-and-Improved-VA-Prescription-Label.asp> - sthash.lzafgYRO.dpuf



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
January 21, 2015

Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 pm by President Pat Ciofani

A Moment of Silence was observed for our brothers and sisters no longer with us, for all POW/MIA's and their families and for all serving our country

Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer – Joe Campbell

Minutes of the November 19, 2014 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$5637.63 balance in our checking account

Communications

Attendance: Dennis Szymanski, Pat Moore, Oliver Williams, Pat Ciofani, John Morgan, David Titter, John Zutz, Joe Campbell, Joe Herbert

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert

Fund Raising – We have 3 Miller Park fund raising dates this summer

Website – Our website www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

is up and running – Pat Moore is our editor – contact him with anything you would like posted

OLD BUSINESS

Candy Cane Lane – Thanks to all who participated to help raise funds for the MAAC Fund – It was a fun evening

December State Council Meeting – Pat Ciofani gave an update

NEW BUSINESS

Gary Wetzel Medal of Honor Day – March 25th has been named Medal of Honor Day – The street in front of the War Memorial connecting Wisconsin Ave. with Lincoln Memorial Drive is to be renamed to honor Wisconsin Medal of Honor recipient, Gary Wetzel – It was moved and passed to donate \$500 to help cover the costs for this event

A VVA Regional State Council Meeting will be held May 16, 2015 in Janesville

Veterans Media Services (Dave Ryba)

Elections in April – Board of Directors will be elected in April – Please consider stepping forward and taking a leadership role in your chapter

Adjournment – 7:40 pm

Senior's Texting Codes

Young people have theirs, now Seniors have their own texting codes:

- * ATD- At the Doctor's
- * BFF - Best Friends Funeral
- * BTW- Bring the Wheelchair
- * BYOT - Bring Your Own Teeth
- * CBM- Covered by Medicare
- * CUATSC- See You at the Senior Center
- * DWI- Driving While Incontinent
- * FWBB - Friend with Beta Blockers
- * FWIW - Forgot Where I Was
- * FMI- Found My Insulin
- * GGPBL - Gotta Go, Pacemaker Battery Low
- * GGLKI - Gotta Go, Laxative Kicking in!
- * GHA - Got Heartburn Again
- * HGBM - Had Good Bowel Movement
- * IMHO - Is My Hearing-Aid On?
- * LMDO- Laughing My Dentures Out
- * LOL- Living on Lipitor
- * LWO- Lawrence Welk's On
- * OMMR- On My Massage Recliner
- * OMSG - Oh My! Sorry, Gas
- * ROFL...CGU - Rolling on the Floor Laughing... Can't get Up!
- * TOT- Texting on Toilet
- * TTYL - Talk to You Louder
- * WAITT - Who Am I Talking To?
- * WTFA - Wet the Furniture Again
- * WTP- Where're the Prunes
- * WWNO - Walker Wheels Need Oil

**Elections for the VVA 324 Board of Directors will be held at the April meeting.
Members are encouraged to attend.**

Agent Orange : C-123 Aircraft Exposed Reservists

AF Times | Institute of Medicine & Patricia Kime | Jan 08 & 09, 2015

Between 1972 and 1982, approximately 1,500 to 2,100 U.S. Air Force (AF) Reserve personnel trained and worked on C-123 aircraft that previously had been used to spray herbicides, including Agent Orange (AO), during Operation Ranch Hand (ORH) in the Vietnam War. Samples taken from these aircraft show the presence of AO residues. However, the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) considers AF Reservists who served in ORH C-123s ineligible for health care and disability coverage under the Agent Orange Act of 1991.

The VA asked the Institute of Medicine (IOM) to evaluate whether service in ORH C-123s could have exposed AF Reservists to herbicide residues at levels harmful to their health.

In the 'Post-Vietnam Dioxin Exposure in Agent Orange–Contaminated C-123 Aircraft' report, an expert

IOM committee performs a qualitative assessment based on the science and evidence available. The committee's key findings are summarized below.

Assessment of Available Information

- C-123 aircraft that had sprayed herbicides during Operation Ranch Hand (ORH) in the Vietnam War were returned to the United States and were among the aircraft used by Air Force (AF) reservists from 1972 to 1982.

- Documentation of most aspects of the pattern of work performed by AF reservists on these aircraft has not been recovered (and is unlikely to be retrieved in the future).

- Sampling was conducted on the ORH C-123s long after the AF reservists' service and was not extensive. The committee finds that the methods used for surface sampling appear reliable, while methods used for air sampling do not.

- Limitations in the available information prevent the committee from deriving exact estimates of the AF reservists' exposure to herbicide residue.

- Herbicide residues detected on interior surfaces of three ORH C-123s provide the best available information. There is no reason to believe these aircraft are not representative of the entire fleet of ORH C-123s.

- Herbicide residues on interior surfaces would have remained mobile in an enclosed environment meaning that AF reservists could have been exposed through multiple routes.

- All of the results of interior surface samples fall in or above the cautionary range for adverse health outcomes as defined by international guidelines.

Key Findings

1. The AF reservists would have experienced some exposure to chemicals from herbicide residue when working inside ORH C-123s.

2. Surface levels at the time of the reservists' exposure could not be extrapolated from the sampling measurements gathered long after the reservists had worked in the aircraft, but levels must have been at least as high as the available sampling results.

3. It is plausible that, at least in some cases (which cannot be associated with specific individuals), the reservists' exposure exceeded health guidelines for workers in enclosed settings. Thus, some reservists quite likely experienced non-trivial increases in their risks of adverse health outcomes.

The findings — from a group led by Harvard Public Health expert Robert Herrick — are a hard-fought victory for a small group of former service members who have lobbied for years to be included among those presumed to be exposed to Agent Orange as a result of their military service. Led by retired Air Force Maj. Wes Carter, the members of the C-123 Veterans Association have pushed the Veterans Affairs Department to recognize illnesses they've developed and say are related to exposure. But VA consistently has maintained that trace amounts of dioxin on the metal surfaces in the aircraft, which were stripped of their spraying apparatus after the war, would not pose a threat to troops because it is not "biologically available for skin absorption or inhalation."

The VA's stand, according to the department's C-123 exposure website is that "although residual TCDD — the toxic substance in Agent Orange — may be detected in C-123 aircraft by sophisticated laboratory techniques many years after its use, the [VA] concluded that the existing scientific studies and reports support a low probability that TCDD was biologically available in these aircraft. Therefore, the potential for exposure to TCDD from flying or working in contaminated C-123 aircraft years after the Vietnam War is unlikely to have occurred at levels that could affect health."

But according to Carter and the Vietnam Veterans of America, at least 10 C-123 crewmen who

Continued on next page

Pro Bono Legal Assistance For Vets

Source: <http://www.americanbar.org> November 2014
The National listing of Pro Bono Resources for Veterans is a legal directory of offices that will advise and assist veterans and their dependents in legal matters. The directory can be accessed at www.americanbar.org/content/dam/aba/publications/division_for_public_services/final_updated_veterans_directory_authcheckdam.pdf. This listing covers services available from the following:

Stateside Legal Organization. Provides legal help for military members, veterans and their families. (<http://statesidelegal.org>).

ABA Law Student Division National Veterans Initiative. Duty Bound is a National Veterans Service Initiative of the ABA Law Student Division. Duty Bound connects law students with attorneys who provide free legal assistance on behalf of veterans and their qualifying family members who have an appeal pending at the U.S. Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. This web portal has been created to allow case-handling pro-bono attorneys to select available law students to assist with client interviewing, case management, research and writing, and advocacy tasks. Duty Bound will also

enable law students and pro bono attorneys to find resources supporting their work, and connect with other pro bono attorneys representing military personnel. Pro bono attorneys and law students can connect to the web portal at http://www.americanbar.org/groups/law_students/initiatives_awards/vets.html.

Center for Veterans Advancement. Public Counsel's Center for Veterans Advancement, a national leader in veterans' advocacy, is driven by its core mission to uphold our nation's promise to veterans and their families. CVA provides legal representation to veterans and their families. To contact go to www.publiccounsel.org/practice_areas/center_for_veterans_advancement for both local and national level assistance.

The Veterans Consortium Pro Bono Program. Provides pro bono attorneys to financially qualified veterans with meritorious claims when their benefits appeals reach the US Court of Appeals for Veterans Claims. In addition, we provide training for the volunteer attorneys as well as support them with mentors and materials once they accept a case. Refer to www.vetsprobono.org.

Agent Orange continued

flew in the aircraft after the war have died of cancers commonly linked to Agent Orange. And with many of his former colleagues ill or dying, Carter expanded his lobbying efforts to veterans service organizations, Congress and academia to help obtain health care and, if those sickened rate it, compensation.

In early 2014, VA paid the IOM \$500,000 to study the issue and put the controversy to rest. But the report's conclusions do not support VA's long-maintained position. In developing the report, panel members reviewed existing evidence, public input, interviews with experts and existing tests performed on the aircraft.

The group found that while the evidence is limited, the data indicate that the Reserve members could have been exposed through multiple routes and "some reservists quite likely experienced non-trivial increases in their risks of adverse health outcomes." The findings, which the VA received 8 JAN, have stirred action within the Veterans Affairs Department. The VA has 60 days to respond to the report, but on receipt of it Thursday, officials held the first meeting of a working group to address related issues and is planning followup action.

Deputy Secretary Sloan Gibson attended the working group meeting, and VA Undersecretary for Benefits Allison Hickey was to be briefed Friday on the findings as well, according to VA officials. "I can't

speaking for [Hickey] but I know it is an important issue for her," said VA Assistant Secretary for Policy and Planning Dr. Linda Schwartz during a public briefing on the report at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. Schwartz said in addition to determining who has been affected, VA must also assess whether legislative action is needed to offer them health care and benefits. In its report, the panel did not weigh in on whether the VA should approve compensation claims filed by C-123 veterans but noted in strong, unequivocal language that the veterans were exposed. Following the briefing, Carter, who has cancer and heart disease he believes is linked to Agent Orange exposure, said he was relieved by the findings and hopes for swift action from VA.

"[Retired Air Force Brig.] General Hickey said she'd go by the decision of the IOM ... [VA] needs to act quickly, because this is not solely about compensation. These are veterans who should have been entitled to medical care at the VA and those doors were shut," Carter said. He noted that as a military retiree who was injured during the Persian Gulf War, he already is eligible for VA care. The fight, he said, was for those who are gravely ill and have no health benefits or can't work because of their illnesses. With the new decision by the IOM panel, he hopes they'll get help, he said. "This was my last trip to D.C.," he said. "And it was worth it."

New bill would allow the VA to prescribe medical marijuana

By Emily Wax-Thibodeaux Washington Post November 25

Arguing that medical marijuana may help wounded warriors with anxiety and stress disorders to “survive and thrive,” Rep. Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) and Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.) have introduced legislation that would allow Department of Veterans Affairs’ doctors to recommend the drug for some patients.

The Veterans Equal Access Act would challenge the VA’s policy that forbids doctors from consulting about medical pot use. Earlier this month, The Washington Post reported about the issue.

“We should be allowing these wounded warriors access to the medicine that will help them survive and thrive, including medical marijuana, not treating them like criminals and forcing them into the shadows,” said Blumenauer in a statement.

The federal government classifies marijuana as a Schedule I drug, the same as heroin and LSD, deeming that it has no accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse. That means that VA, which

runs the largest network of hospitals and health clinics in the country, cannot prescribe pot as a treatment, even for veterans who live in a state where medical marijuana is legal. VA says that its physicians and chronic-pain specialists “are prohibited from recommending and prescribing medical marijuana for PTSD or other pain-related issues.”

Medical staff are also prohibited from completing paperwork required to enroll in state marijuana programs because they are “federal employees who must comply with federal law,” said Gina Jackson, a VA spokeswoman.

Over 20 percent of the 2.8 million American veterans who served in Iraq and Afghanistan suffer from PTSD and depression, according to the Blumenauer statement. In addition, a recent study found that of the nearly one million veterans who receive opioids to treat painful conditions, more than half continue to consume chronically or beyond 90 days, their statement said.

Study: Synthetic Cannabinoid Relieves PTSD-Associated Nightmares

NORML press release

Ottawa, Canada: The administration of nabilone, a synthetic cannabinoid, mitigates the frequency and intensity of trauma-related nightmares in military personnel suffering from treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress, according to clinical trial data published in the journal *Psychoneuroendocrinology*.

Investigators from the Canadian Forces Health Services Group and the Operational Trauma and Stress Support Centre in Ottawa assessed the efficacy of nabilone, an FDA-approved selective CB1 agonist, versus placebo over a 16-week period in a cohort of Canadian military personnel diagnosed with PTSD. Nabilone administration was associated with greater likelihood of nightmare suppression and general well being as compared to placebo.

“In this small sample NAB (nabilone capsules) provided significant relief for military personnel with PTSD, indicating that it shows promise as a clinically-relevant treatment for patients with nightmares and a history of non-response to traditional therapies,” authors concluded.

A 2009 Canadian Forces Health Services study similarly reported that adjunctive treatment with nabilone was associated with nightmare cessation and a significant reduction in nightmare intensity in a

cohort of 47 PTSD patients with treatment-resistant nightmares.

For more information, please contact Paul Armentano, NORML Deputy Director, at: paul@norml.org. Full text of the study, “The efficacy of nabilone, a synthetic cannabinoid, in the treatment of PTSD-associated nightmares: A preliminary randomized, double-blind, placebo-controlled cross-over design study,” appears in *Psychoneuroendocrinology*.



Helmsman with an attitude



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- 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)

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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