

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net
414-702-7734
Vice Pres: Oliver Williams w.oliver96(at)yahoo.com
414-358-4416
Secretary: Dennis Symanski dski06(at)hotmail.com
414-453-3600
Treasuer: Pat Moore irishpatat(at)sbcglobal.net
414-354-2533 Cell: 414-731-6029
Director: Paul Balge
414-212-3993
Director: David Titter d.titterat(at)sbcglobal.net
414-870-7012
Director: Mike Ducette miducette(at)aol.com
262-968-5508
Director: John Morgan asa600(at)aol.com
414-871-9274
Membership: Joe Herbert Joe's a Luddite
414-873-7341
Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org
John is listed in the phone book - good luck finding one

Meeting Notice

15 February 2017

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings 2017

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

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

CHAPTER ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE APRIL MEETING
MEMBERS MAY NOMINATE CANDIDATES BY CONTACTING A CHAPTER OFFICER
OR BY ATTENDING A CHAPTER MEETING

22 VA Mobile Apps Launched

VFW Action Corps Weekly, October 6, 2016

VA has launched a number of mobile apps aimed at improving the lives of veterans and making VA more accessible. Currently, VA has 16 apps available through the Apple store and 6 apps available on Android's Google Play. These apps help veterans manage their PTSD, pressure ulcers, preconception care and other aspects of their health care. Many of the applications are also available for download on desktops and laptops.

VA is currently field testing 11 more applications that will be released soon, including a self-scheduling application, an app to help veterans track their health care by receiving notifications from their health care team, and sending health information, such as blood pressure and other vital signs back to their health care team. For more information, visit: <https://mobile.va.gov/appstore>.

FOR SOME, COMING HOME FROM VIETNAM
WAS JUST THE BEGINNING OF A WHOLE NEW **FIGHT**.

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ORANGE
SUICIDE
CANCER
DIABETES
HEART ATTACK
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IN MEMORY PROGRAM

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VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
January 18, 2017

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

Attendance – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore, Paul D. Balge, David Titter, John Morgan, Joe Herbert, Janice E. Dahlke, Jeff Landowski, Dennis McCormack

Minutes of November 2016 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$363.26 was spent on our Christmas party leaving us a balance of \$3319.28 in our checking account

Communications – Thank you was received for our donation to Christmas with the Vets

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – 85 veteran members and 20 associates

Website – Contact Pat Moore to post items of interest for the chapter

OLD BUSINESS

Candy Cane Lane – Report on evenings efforts to raise funds for the MAAC Fund

NEW BUSINESS

Membership Roster Options – National will no longer mail membership rosters – It was decided that we would use the website option with password and ID to obtain our roster updates

April Elections – Board members will be elected this year – Please consider running

February Stand Down - Moved and passed to donate \$300 to this February's Stand Down

For the Good of the Chapter – Dennis McCormack gave an update on the Milwaukee County Veterans Treatment Initiative (Vets Court) and the Dole Foundation efforts to help caregivers – Milwaukee Homeless Veterans Initiative update

Adjournment – 7:50

SAVE THE DATE & SPREAD THE WORD!

**MILWAUKEE VA WILL HOLD
A 150TH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION**

JUNE 3, 2017

This all-day event will feature re-enactors, our history and current, world-class healthcare, plus lots more fun treats!

Another Hero Dies

Associated Press | January 21, 2017

Charlie Liteky, an Army chaplain in Vietnam who was awarded the Medal of Honor for rescuing more than 20 wounded men but later gave it back in protest and became a peace activist, has died. Longtime friend Richard Olive said Liteky died Friday night at the Veterans Administration Hospital in San Francisco. He was 85.

The Army awarded Liteky the highest military decoration for his actions on Dec. 6, 1967, when his company came under intense fire from an enemy battalion in Bien Hoa province. Despite painful wounds in the neck and foot, Liteky carried more than 20 men to the landing zone to be evacuated during the fierce firefight. "Noticing another trapped and seriously wounded man, Chaplain Liteky crawled to his aid," the Army's official citation reads. "Realizing that the wounded man was too heavy to carry, he rolled on his back, placed the man on his chest and through sheer determination and fortitude crawled back to the landing zone using his elbows and heels to push himself along."

He left the priesthood and in 1983, married former Catholic nun and peace activist Judy Balch in San Francisco. His wife introduced him to refugees from El Salvador, "teenagers, whose fathers had been killed and tortured. I didn't believe it, but I kept going to more and more of these meetings and it became clear these people weren't blowing in the wind," Liteky told the San Francisco Chronicle in a March, 2000 interview.

Twenty years after his heroic actions in Vietnam, Liteky left the Medal of Honor - awarded under the name of Angelo J. Liteky - and a letter to

President Ronald Reagan at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington in protest of the country's foreign policy in Central America, where U.S.-backed dictators were fighting bloody wars against left-leaning rebels. With that, he renounced the award's benefits, which included a tax-free pension of \$600 a month. The medal was retrieved by the National Park Service and later put on display at the National Museum of American History.

After that, Liteky spent years protesting against the U.S. Army School of the Americas, an academy at Fort

Benning, Georgia, where the U.S. Army trained soldiers from Central and South America and the Caribbean. He was sentenced to one year in federal prison in 2000 for entering the school without permission and splashing its rotunda with their own blood. In 2003, he traveled to Baghdad with other peace protesters to bear witness to the war and work with children in an orphanage and at hospitals.

Over the past 10 years, Liteky had been working on a book, "Renunciation," that chronicled his life from war hero to peace activist. Friends said they expect the book will be published in the next few months. Liteky's health worsened in recent years, and in late 2016 he was admitted to the hospice unit at the Veterans Administration Hospital.

Olive said he remembers Liteky for his humility. "It was three years after I met Charlie and bonded a fast friendship that I learned he was a Medal of Honor recipient" when Liteky told him about his plans to renounce the medal, Olive said. There are no plans for a funeral, Olive said.

Activities at the Zablocki VAMC

Tai Chi-Tue-3-4pm Rm 3435....ques 384-2000 x 41140

Yoga Tue 4:15--5:15pm Bldg 43 B105, no equip needed

Vet's Open Gym M,W,F 2-3:30pm Rm B0513 ques x 41100

Open Pool, Rm B0520, M, W, F 8-9am, T/Th 2-3pm x41100, bring lock for lockers, swimsuit, footwear, toiletries for showering

Search for your activity at VA website: http://www.index.va.gov/search/va/va_search.jsp?NQ=URL%3Ahttp%3A%2F%2Fwww.milwaukee.va.gov%2F&QT=yoga&submit.x=27&submit.y=16

ProPublica Lawsuit Seeks VA Correspondence About Agent Orange

by Robin Fields ProPublica, Jan. 19, 2017

ProPublica and the Virginian-Pilot filed a lawsuit today in federal court against the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, accusing the agency of stonewalling requests for documents under the Freedom of Information Act.

The lawsuit, ProPublica's second against the VA in two months, seeks a preliminary injunction compelling the government to immediately release correspondence about Agent Orange, an herbicide used to kill vegetation during the Vietnam War, including documents sent to and received by Dr. David Shulkin, the VA's undersecretary for health. Shulkin has been nominated to be VA secretary by President-elect Donald Trump.

ProPublica and the Pilot have been reporting about Agent Orange for 18 months, documenting ongoing effects on veterans and their families. The FOIA requests at issue in today's lawsuit date back to May and September 2015.

The VA faces a number of imminent decisions about whether to cover certain groups of veterans who claim they were exposed to Agent Orange, as well as certain diseases that research has shown to be linked to the chemical mixture.

Exhibits attached to the lawsuits show how the FOIA requests submitted by the news organizations were subjected to one delay after another. ProPublica and the Pilot sought help from the VA's Office of General Counsel, the agency's chief information officer, as well as the Office of Government

Information Services, also known as the FOIA ombudsman. Those efforts were not met with success.

"Repeated pleas to the VA to process two FOIA requests, which now have been pending for 618 days and 506 days, respectively, have been utterly disregarded. Indeed, ProPublica and The Virginian-Pilot have done everything short of turning cartwheels in front of VA's headquarters to draw attention to these requests," the legal memorandum said.

Without immediate disclosure of the records, "ProPublica and The Virginian-Pilot will suffer irreparable injury with respect to their ability to timely and thoroughly report, for the public benefit, on these urgent and current issues concerning Agent Orange and dioxin," ProPublica senior reporter Charles Ornstein said in a declaration attached to the motion for a preliminary injunction.

"We continue to have intense interest in educating the public, including our readers in Congress, the administration, the military, and the veteran community concerning this subject matter," Ornstein wrote. "We continue to see intense interest in this subject matter from our readership as well as those who have completed our surveys or provided information through our crowdsourced efforts."

The VA did not respond to a request for comment. In response to the first lawsuit, filed last month, the agency said it does not comment on pending litigation. It also said, "VA strives to process FOIAs on a first-in, first-out basis. Generally, requests are placed on one of two tracks: simple or complex. Complex requests, are more laborious."

In its first lawsuit, ProPublica sought correspondence between various VA officials and scientist Alvin Young, who has guided the stance of the military and VA on Agent Orange and whether it has harmed service members. The suit also sought internal correspondence about any contracts awarded to Young or his consulting firm.

Today's lawsuit, filed in U.S. District Court in Washington seeks an order compelling the VA to produce the records and pay its attorney's fees.



And Then They Tried Drone-Based Mail Odor Delivery Service...

Millions More Vets to Be Able to Shop at Exchanges Online

POSTED BY: TOM PHILPOTT JANUARY 12, 2017

After two years of study and debate, the Department of Defense has made a policy change, effective next November, to allow 16 million honorably discharged veterans to shop online for discounted military exchange products.

Peter K. Levine, acting undersecretary of defense for personnel and readiness, signed a memorandum Wednesday announcing the benefit expansion, effective Veterans' Day Nov. 11, and giving Congress the required 30 days' notice before actions begin to implement the plan.

Months of preparation are needed to make e-shopping portals more robust and to allow the Defense Manpower Data Center (DMDC) time to create software for verifying veterans' status using Department of Veterans Affairs records.

Several million vets already are eligible to shop in exchanges — on base or online — because they are active or reserve component retirees, or 100-percent disabled from service-connected injuries or ailments, or Medal of Honor recipients. Thomas C. Shull, chief executive officer of the Army and Air Force Exchange Service, led a three-year quest to expand online exchange shopping to all honorably-discharged veterans with access to computers. It cited two reasons.

One was to reward their service with exchange product savings that, on average, will be near to 20 percent versus commercial department store prices when military exemption from state and local sales tax are considered too.

Shull's other purpose was to increase exchange revenues to help offset troubling declines due to the drawdown of active duty forces, base closures and the end of military tobacco discounts for the higher priority of healthier populations.

The Navy, Marine Corps and Coast Guard exchange services joined Shull and AAFES in pushing for the shopping benefit expansion. They worked with Levine's office and with resale board executives in refining the proposal.

The online benefit does not extend to veterans' dependents, although spouses and family members theoretically could use the authorized customer's log-in credentials, given the nature of an online shopping benefit. Exchange officials project that expanding online shopping will result in \$1.8 million in added annual fixed costs to handle the larger customer base.

However, they also project added sales and revenue, which will more than offset any added operating or order-fulfillment costs. Higher net earnings are seen boosting exchange dividends to support on-base morale, welfare and recreational activities.

Defense officials believe they have mitigated concerns previously raised on expanding the exchange benefit. These included worries it would dilute the benefit for currently authorized patrons, increase appropriated funding costs, reduce state and local tax revenues for civilian communities and harm commercial retailers.

The business case for expanding the online benefit calls it "a low-risk, low-cost opportunity" to better fund morale, welfare and recreation programs and quality of life activities. It also notes that smaller percentages of recently discharged veterans are serving until retirement to qualify for base shopping, yet a higher proportion of them probably had multiple tours deployed, often to war.

Exchanges project \$18 million to \$72 million in new annual earnings when the online operation is fully matured. Half of the added earnings typically would be distributed as higher dividends to MWR programs, which have come under budget pressure as the services divert funds to more immediate readiness needs.

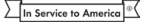
The four exchange services reached agreement last year on how to divide revenue from the online purchases, in part by using zip codes of buyers to estimate their service affiliations. They have been eyeing a "soft launch" of the expanded online benefit to segments of vets by mid-2017 to gauge demand and test system capabilities including the process to verify veteran status before the full launch.

The more highly prized commissary benefit isn't being opened to all veterans. Current exchange patrons won't see more store traffic and discounts for exchange shopping on base are expected to remain higher than savings online. These factors helped to persuade major military associations to back the initiative.

Military exchanges acknowledge that they are losing sales to popular online sites such as Amazon, particularly as military patrons grow increasingly comfortable with using smart phones and tablets to shop.



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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)

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 completed application to:
 VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218