

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Meeting Notice

20 April, '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](http://www.vva.org)

## Future Meetings

2011

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

All Members Are Urged To Attend

## CHAPTER ELECTIONS

will be held April 20, 2011

Leadership Positions Available

*Nominations are open for*

**MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

*as well as the offices of*

**PRESIDENT, VICE PRESIDENT, SECRETARY, TREASURER**

Nominations may be made at the monthly meeting or, contact Pat Moore or Dennis Symanski  
You may nominate yourself.

## **VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**

### **Milwaukee Chapter 324**

**March 16, 2011**

Meeting called to order at 7:00pm by Vice 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

Chaplains Prayer – Joe Campbell

Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, John Zutz, Joe Campbell, Bob Rugg, Kearney Bennet, Nancy Sheridan, Ronald G. Seider, John Morgan, Joe Herbert, Oliver Williams, Pat Ciofani, Paul Javins, Joseph Murray, Robert Spehys Jr, Kent Draper, Pat Moore.

Minutes of February 16, 2011 Meeting – Accepted with amendments of dates for Brewer's fund raiser – June 8 & 9, Aug.3.

Treasurer's Report – Kent Draper

Communications

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – Joe Herbert

Stand-Down Update – Kent Draper

Allied Veterans Meeting – Kent Draper – VVA 324 will host April meeting if date is available.

Volunteering & Activity at the VA – Pat Moore

Website – Kent Draper – Progress being made.

Fund-Raising – Kent Draper – Raffle well underway with drawing at May meeting – See Kent for tickets to sell

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Tuesday Bingo – Help is always appreciated

By Laws – Almost ready for board review.

Veterans Food Pantry – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to the Veterans for Peace food pantry – Moved and passed to donate \$50 to the Bread Raiser Feeding America

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Nominations of Officers – Nominations will be open up until elections in April – All officer and Board positions are open – Please consider stepping forward and taking a leadership roll in your chapter.

Memorial Day Parade – Chapter 324 will participate – Moved and passed to donate \$150 to parade fund.

Brewers Fund Raiser – June 8-9, Aug.3 – We will be distributing Orange Blossoms at Miller Park – Details soon.

July 4th Wauwatosa Parade – Moved and passed to accept the invitation to participate in the 4th of July Parade.

Veterans Capital Rally – April 13th – Veterans Trust Fund in jeopardy of going broke – Use the opportunity to meet with your state elected officials.

VVA State Council Meeting – Pat Ciofani – VVA state budget, LZ Lambeau, Online Badger Veteran some of the issues discussed

Bronze Men Prints – Member John Borkowitz wishes to donate 25 of his prints of the Bronze Men Statue to be sold by the chapter with the proceeds going to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund in Washington DC – Issue has been tabled until an outlet for sales can be found.

Adjournment – 8:25pm

## From the Editor

by John Zutz - Opinion

I have tried to assemble this newsletter in a way that has, I hope, been informative and entertaining. I have done my best to keep my personal views separate. This month I'm adding my opinion because I feel it's important.

It's no secret that recent political affairs have caused great disruption. There has been marching in the streets, speeches and editorials, and even some levelheaded discussion about the direction of the State of Wisconsin. The final answer may never arrive.

However, there are a few facts being ignored in the entire dispute. One fact: if things stay as they are, and Governor Walker's proposed budget passes without changes, the Veterans Trust Fund will go broke some time in 2012.

That means that the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs will go out of business next year.

That isn't a misprint. Wisconsin will no longer provide help for its struggling veterans.

No more home loans, no more continuing education grants, no more cemeteries, no more Veter-

ans Museum, no more King or Union Grove nursing homes (they'll probably have to be privatized). No more of all the other things the department does for veterans, young or old.

There are those, even some in Chapter 324, who feel the Board of Veterans affairs is slanted and the Department of Veterans Affairs is corrupt. That may be. There is a legislative audit taking place that will answer those questions in an unbiased manner.

I admit I'm prejudiced. I wouldn't have been able to buy my house without the state GI home loan. I used the education grants a number of times. They helped me get my electrical license, and allowed me to advance in my profession.

But the bottom line is this - like it or hate it, this is the only Department of Veterans Affairs we have. Once it's gone, we won't have anything.

If you think the department is important, and it should continue in business, you need to stand up and be counted at the April 13 rally (see below). I'll be going to the rally on the 13th. Need a ride?

## Veterans Rally

Wednesday, April 13, 2011

The Veterans Rally is an opportunity for all veterans' advocates to network with friends and colleagues, meet with members of the Wisconsin State Legislature, and rally in support of veterans issues.

### \*\*\*REGISTER NOW\*\*\*

All attendees are encouraged to register before April 1st either online at [www.wisvets.com/rally](http://www.wisvets.com/rally) or by calling 1-800-947-8387

Place:

Education Center, 2nd Floor, WDVA Central Office  
30 W. Mifflin St., Madison, WI

Times & Activities:

- 10:00 a.m. – 11:15 a.m. Registration and Briefing on Legislative Priorities
- 11:15 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Lunch (\$7) with Featured Speaker (optional)
- 12:00 p.m. – 12:45 p.m. Rally on Capitol
- 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. Meetings with Legislators
- 2:15 p.m. – 3:00 p.m. Debriefing and Wrap-up
- 3:00 p.m. Social event at Quaker Steak & Lube (222 W. Gorham St., Madison)

For more information,

including parking and hotel accommodations, please visit [www.wisvets.com/rally](http://www.wisvets.com/rally):

Contact Max Dulberger at [Max.Dulberger@dva.state.wi.gov](mailto:Max.Dulberger@dva.state.wi.gov) or 608-267-0784

# Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

Sen. Richard Burr press release 8 Mar 2011

The U.S. Senate on 7 MAR declared March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day, agreeing unanimously to a resolution introduced by Senator Richard Burr (R-N.C.), Ranking Member of the Senate Committee on Veterans' Affairs. On March 30, 1973, all U.S. troops withdrew from Vietnam under the terms of the Treaty of Paris. This March 30th, the Senate has encouraged Americans across the country to recognize Vietnam veterans for their sacrifice and demonstrate a warm welcome to these soldiers who returned from war to a politically divided country. I'm pleased that the Senate has agreed to set aside a day to give our Vietnam veterans a warm, long-overdue welcome home. I strongly encourage communities throughout North Carolina and across the country to observe this day with activities and events that honor these veterans for their service. It's time they receive the recognition they have earned and deserve. This day also provides our nation with an important teaching moment. Never again should our men and women serving in the armed forces receive the same treatment as those returning from Vietnam, said Senator Richard Burr.

Senator Burr introduced the resolution for the second consecutive year on February 16, 2011. The United States became involved in Vietnam because policy-makers believed that if South Vietnam fell to a communist government, communism would spread throughout the rest of Southeast Asia. The US Armed Forces began serving in an advisory role to the South Vietnamese in 1961, and in 1965, ground combat troops were sent into Vietnam. On March 30, 1973, after many years of combat, all US troops withdrew. More than 58,000 members of the United States Armed Forces lost their lives and more than 300,000 were wounded in Vietnam. Senators John Boozman (R-AR), Thad Cochran (R-MS), James Inhofe (R-OK), and Johnny Isakson (R-GA) and Mike Johanns (R-NE) co-sponsored the legislation. The resolution now moves to the House of Representatives for

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## Housing and a Chance

Editorial New York Times, January 22, 2011

If the federal government is going to end homelessness among veterans in five years, as Veterans Affairs Secretary Eric Shinseki has vowed to do, then it will have to find a way to help the hard cases. These are the long-term street people — men mostly, many fragile in mind or body, often addicted to alcohol or drugs. They shuttle from shelter to street to emergency room, burning up caregivers' energy and social-service dollars.

A new program in Los Angeles seeks to break that cycle for a small number of the most troubled veterans using a strategy known as "housing first." This approach, which has been successfully used by the Department of Housing and Urban Development for nearly a decade, doesn't wait for people to sober up or get a job before they are given a place to stay. A permanent home, provided through a Section 8 voucher, instead becomes the anchor that makes all the rest possible: addiction services, therapy, sobriety, a steady job.

Critics worry that the vouchers come with no strings attached, so the incentive for positive change disappears. The numbers tell a different story. Federal officials reported a 30 percent drop in homelessness from 2005 to 2007, crediting the "housing first" programs. But the downturn has since hit hard, and new

crops of soldiers from Iraq and Afghanistan are returning to a brutal job market. Veterans currently make up an estimated 13 percent of the people in America's shelters. There are believed to be more than 17,000 homeless veterans in Los Angeles County alone.

Despite the size of the problem, there is nowhere near enough money these days for ambitious programs. The Senate adjourned last year without passing a bill to increase V.A. financing for homeless services by \$50 million a year. Advocates are promising to be creative and keep trying. The Los Angeles pilot, called Vets to Home Project 60, for the 60 people it aims to help over the next two years, comes with no new funds, just new coordination among Veterans Affairs, Los Angeles County and several small nonprofit organizations. Organizers say that this is the first time these agencies have worked together this way toward one focused goal. We hope it works, and proves worthy of rolling out nationwide to meet the great unmet need.

# GET INVOLVED

## HELP WANTED - SALES

Your help is needed now to sell raffle tickets for our Chapter Raffle.

We will raffle a Dell Laptop, a 32" HDTV with Blue Ray player, and a GPS at our May 18 meeting.

Proceeds will be donated to Dryhootch

Contact Kent Draper

## HELP WANTED - KITCHEN

Tuesday Evenings Chapter 324 makes sandwiches for Bingo players at the Elks Club. This work funds much of the Chapter giving.

Contact Pat Moore

## HELP WANTED - SOLICITATION

May 8, May 9 - Miller Park Orange Blossom Sales

The Brewers allow solicitation before the games.

This effort could generate thousands of dollars for the chapter. The more volunteers soliciting, the more money we bring in.

Work is followed by a tailgate party.

Contact Ron Coppersmith

# HIGHGROUND WORK WEEKEND - APRIL 21 - 23

Hundreds of volunteers bring their energy and talents together to make this a welcome home for all veterans and visitors. Enjoy the company of good friends and share in the satisfaction of a job well done. Whether you come for one day or all four; your help is needed and appreciated.

Local restaurants and businesses generously support our volunteers by providing snacks and lunch; so please call ahead and let us know you are coming so we can give them an accurate count.

See the project list <http://thehighground.org/newsletter/documents/spring-newsletter-2011.pdf> (page 10)

## Request to Drop Dishonorable for Troops Discharged as Gay

By MICHAEL D. SHEAR

New York Times February 3, 2011

Now that Congress has approved repeal of the ban on gay men and lesbians serving openly in the armed forces, a Wisconsin congresswoman is urging the Defense Department to reconsider the less-than-honorable discharges issued to some soldiers under the policy.

In a letter to Defense Secretary Robert M. Gates, Representative Gwen Moore, a Democrat, said veterans who had received "other than honorable" discharges because they are gay were being unfairly barred from access to medical care and other military benefits.

"Even after we have ceremoniously repealed 'don't ask, don't tell,' we know there are still consequences," Ms. Moore said in a statement to The Caucus. "For some gays and lesbians, the policy might as well have been - don't ask, don't tell, don't provide veterans the benefits they earned."

Aides to Ms. Moore said that most of the people expelled from the military under the policy, which was in place for 17 years, received honorable discharges. But some did not, they said. In addition to preventing them from receiving some benefits, their status could also mean that they cannot re-enlist when the policy is officially repealed.

The letter, and a similar one to Eric Shinseki, the secretary of veterans affairs, will be sent Thursday. The Pentagon is still writing its final regulations to replace the policy.



*Some vets develop a taste while serving that last a life time*

# 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

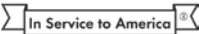


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