

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America

Meeting Notice

17 April, '13

**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

2013

15 May, 19 June, 17 July, 21 August, 18 September,
16 October, 20 November, 18 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 - Michael Lang 355-1496

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Oliver Williams 538-4416

ATTENTION!

Elections for Board of Directors will be held at the April meeting

15 May and 19 June meetings will be held in Room 413 of the War Memorial

FOOD FOR THE HUNGRY, INC. ALL YOU CAN EAT PASTA

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS HALL 1800 S. 92nd Street West Allis, WI 53214

Sunday, April 28th 3:00 to 7:30 PM

Adults \$7.00, Children 5-12 \$4.00, 4 and under free

Raffles ~ Music ~ Packer Legend Bob Long

This is the major fundraiser for **Food for the Hungry, Inc.** A program that distributes bakery products to Over 1500 Meal Programs, Food Pantries And other programs serving our poor

We are working with Milwaukee Homeless and Needy Veterans

Monetary donations welcome

You can sponsor a needy Veteran for dinner by writing "Veterans in the memo on your check"

Make checks to Food for the Hungry, Inc., 405 Lynnwood Lane, Brookfield, WI 53005

For information

John Schmitz 262-784-6591

Mike Czarnecki 414-771-0715

We are a 501 (c) 3 organization EIN 20- 8277733

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

March 20, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7:02 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

Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, Patrick Moore, Kent Draper, Pat Ciofani, Ron Coppersmith, Oliver Williams, John Morgan, John Zutz, Paul D. Balge, Joseph Murray, David Titter, Joe Herbert, Bob O'Neal

Minutes of February 2013 reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert working on getting names of area at-large members to see if they would be interested in joining our chapter.

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Kent Draper

Fund Raising – Kent Draper – Brewers fund raising dates are Aug. 2, 3 and 4.

OLD BUSINESS

Meetings at the War Memorial – Our May and June Meetings will be held at the War Memorial – Approved to send out postcards to inform members of the change.

Elections – Elections will be held in April for Board of Directors – This is a 2 year term open to any member in good standing – Please consider this opportunity to take a leadership position in your chapter.

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Day Parade – Moved and passed to participate in this year's Memorial Day Parade on May 27th at 2pm – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to Memorial Day Parade Fund.

August Meeting – Moved and passed to cancel the August meeting due to busy summer schedules.

Pizza Party at the Doms – We are looking into hosting a pizza party for the residents at the doms, hopefully on a semi-regular basis.

Donations – Vera Roddy is an Air Force Veteran who has been asked to testify in Washington DC on art as therapy for veterans – Moved and passed to donate \$166 to help offset her travel expenses. – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to Joe Murray in his continuing effort to help needy veterans with car repairs.

For the Good of the Chapter – War Memorial Update – A compromise has been reached between veterans and the Art Museum and is going before the county board for their approval.

Adjournment – 7:50 pm



Lawmakers to probe VA appointment delays

By Rick Maze Military Times Tuesday Mar 5, 2013

<http://www.militarytimes.com/news/2013/03/military-VA-claims-delay-investigation-030513w/>

A House investigative committee will try March 14 to get to the bottom of complaints from veterans about delays in getting medical appointments at Veterans Affairs Department hospitals and clinics.

Rep. Mike Coffman, R-Colo., a retired Marine Corps officer who also served in the Army, will conduct the hearing in his role as chairman of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee's oversight and investigations panel.

A VA-wide review of wait times for appointments has not been conducted for several years, but a partial review in 2012 found that 49 percent of first-time patients were seen within 14 days; but for the other 51 percent, it took an average 50 days to schedule initial examinations.

VA's inability to provide an accurate assessment of the average time to schedule an appointment and receive treatment will be one focus of the hearing, where Coffman is expected to challenge VA's ability to reliably report on its own performance, according to congressional aides.

On Tuesday, the commander of Veterans of Foreign Wars, the nation's largest organization for combat veterans, said getting appointments appears to be a major problem.

"The VFW continues to hear of delays in appointment times, especially for specialty care," said John Hamilton, testifying before a joint meeting of the House and Senate Veterans' Affairs committees. "We must not fail to provide the care these heroes have earned in a timely manner."

In a report earlier this year, the VA inspector general reported that veterans trying to get medical appointments can run into unhelpful staff. In one case in San Diego, a veteran called for an appointment because of a cut on a finger that had become infected. He was told someone would call him back to make an appointment. He called back after not hearing anything for six days, and was again told to wait for a call back, according to an IG report, which called for better training for call center workers.

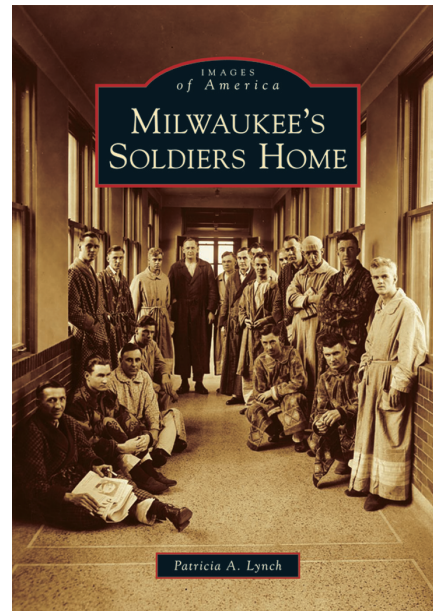
The report did not, however, appear to take the incident very seriously, saying the veteran was told he could go to an emergency room if he felt he needed to be seen right away. A review of treatment records from the hospital where the veteran sought care revealed the providers did not consider this a serious injury.

The Independent Budget, a document released in early February by major veterans groups, says mental health counseling is one of the areas with long wait times, but that getting a firm answer on delays is difficult because VA does not make available the number of veterans waiting for appointments.

ANNOUNCING

the arrival of a new book in
ARCADIA PUBLISHING'S IMAGES OF AMERICA SERIES

MILWAUKEE'S SOLDIERS HOME



JOIN US FOR OUR BOOK LAUNCH
SUNDAY, APRIL 14, 2013
1:00 - 4:00 PM AT

BURKE'S IRISH CASTLE

5328 W. BLUEMOUND ROAD, MILWAUKEE

FEATURING Historic Milwaukee VA Display • Children's Activities
Free Root Beer Floats • Grand Army of the Republic Yates Post #8

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Orlando group pushes for center to study children of Vietnam vets

by Kate Santich on January, 8 2013

<http://blogs.orlandosentinel.com/changetheworld/2013/01/orlando-group-pushes-for-center-to-study-children-of-vietnam-vets.html>

The toxic legacy of Agent Orange still affects the children and grandchildren of those who fought in Vietnam.

Vietnam isn't exactly the war most people are concerned with these days. But if you had a father or grandfather exposed to Agent Orange — the toxic defoliant used in that time and place — you may not be able to ignore the war or its effect on your health.

And Betty Mekdeci, an Orlando woman who founded the nonprofit Birth Defect Research for Children, doesn't think you should be ignored, either.

Thirty years ago, after having a son born with unexplained medical problems, Mekdeci started the charity Birth Defect Research for Children out of her home's utility room. With the help of her husband, she investigated possible causes — a mission that eventually led to ridding the market of a pregnancy drug linked to her son's condition. In those seven years of research, she also found that precious little information was available to parents about what can cause birth defects and where to turn for help.

One of her biggest contributions has been the National Birth Defect Registry, which tracks possible associations between birth defects and disabilities and the exposure of the child's parents to certain toxins. In 1986, Mekdeci was invited by representatives of the court in the Agent Orange litigation to become involved with the issue of birth defects and disabilities in the children of Vietnam veterans. Through her registry's research, she says, "we found an impressive

pattern of learning, attention, immune and endocrine problems in their children."

This is consistent with other research on dioxin, the chemical contaminant of Agent Orange, Mekdeci says. "We have talked with thousands of families over the years and are constantly frustrated that we don't know where to send them for care. What they need is specialized diagnosis and treatment."

To that end, her organization is sponsoring an online petition for a national center devoted to Vietnam veterans' children. It would be staffed with experts on the effects of exposure to such chemicals as dioxin, as well as with doctors who know how to test and treat the serious conditions found in the soldiers' children.

Already, she has more than 3,000 signatures, and her work has some high-ranking supporters. The director of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, for instance, wrote Mekdeci last year to encourage her to publish her findings, saying the exposure of Vietnam veterans "is still of great concern." Further, director Harold Zenick wrote of toxic exposure in general that, "we are also beginning to understand that the range of possible effects ... goes far beyond structural birth defects and includes functional, physiological and other effects that may not manifest until later in life."

If you're interested in signing the petition, go to the Causes.com website.

VA In Vitro Fertilization

KPBS Beth Ford Roth 6 Mar 2013

Veterans whose war injuries prevent them from having children would get coverage from the Department of Veterans Affairs for reproductive treatment options like in vitro fertilization under new federal legislation.

The Women Veterans and Other Health Care Improvements Act of 2013 (S.131) is authored by Reps. Rick Larsen (D-WA) and Steve Stivers (R-OH). It's similar to a bill introduced last year by Sen. Patty Murray that never made it to the president's desk.

Murray's bill failed because the bill would've been funded by wartime contingency funds, according to the Military Times. Now, [the] legislation would

cover the cost by letting the Veterans Affairs Department levy fees on large corporations that contract with VA. Larsen said of his legislation, "Too many veterans are returning home with injuries that make conceiving children impossible without assistance. Veterans deserve access to advanced fertility treatment and adoption assistance so they can achieve their dreams of starting families."

More than 1,800 troops have suffered wounds in the Iraq and Afghanistan wars that have made having a baby the old-fashioned way impossible without medical assistance.

Brain circuits uniquely disrupted in Gulf War syndrome

<http://www.newscientist.com/article/dn23303-brain-circuits-uniquely-disrupted-in-gulf-war-syndrome.html>

The cause of Gulf War Syndrome remains shrouded in mystery. When she returned from serving in the Gulf conflict in 1991, US Air Force nurse Denise Nichols experienced sudden aches, fatigue and cognitive problems, but had no idea ‘what was causing them. They grew worse: even helping her daughter with multiplication tables became difficult, she says, and eventually she had to quit her job.

Nichols wasn’t alone. About a third of Gulf war veterans – possibly as many as 250,000 – returned with a similar set of symptoms.

Now an imaging study has found that these veterans have what appear to be unique structural changes in the wiring of their brains. This fits with the scientific consensus that Gulf War syndrome (GWS) is a physical condition rather than a psychosomatic one, and should be treated with painkilling drugs instead of counselling.

The military in various countries has in the past consistently denied that there is a physical basis to GWS. Although the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) now officially accepts that the disorder is physical, the issue has been mired in controversy.

Earlier this month, Steven Coughlin, a former senior epidemiologist at the VA, testified to a Congressional panel that the VA had suppressed and manipulated research data so as to suggest that the disorder was psychosomatic.

Coughlin told the panel: “If the studies produce results that do not support the [VA’s] unwritten policy, they do not release them... On the rare occasions when embarrassing study results are released, data are manipulated to make them unintelligible... Anything that supports the position that Gulf War illness is a neurological condition is unlikely to ever be published.”

In response, the VA said that the organisation has a “long history of conducting world-class research studies that meet accepted and rigorous scientific standards”. They also note that “all allegations of malfeasance are taken seriously and are investigated fully”.

Whatever the cause of GWS, it is certainly not psychological, says Bernard Rosof of Huntington Hospital in New York, although no single cause is known. Suggested causes include exposure to low levels of sarin gas in fallout when chemical munitions

were destroyed, and a drug called pyridostigmine bromide, which soldiers were given to protect them from sarin.

It’s vital to find an objective test that will allow physicians to make a diagnosis, says James Baraniuk of Georgetown University in Washington, DC. To that end, Baraniuk and colleague Rakib Rayhan examined 31 veterans with GWS, including Nichols. They scanned their brains using a technique called diffusion tensor imaging, which highlights the bundles of nerves, or white matter, connecting brain regions. They compared these to scans of 20 veterans who were not deployed in the Gulf.

The images indicate that in GWS, these nerve bundles break down and may have trouble forming connections: a phenomenon that has not been associated with any other illness. This suggests that the brain circuitry, rather than any specific brain area, is disrupted in people with the condition. Veterans with the worst symptoms tended to have the most pronounced abnormalities in their white matter.

Easily distracted

The damaged areas tended to be in fibres that connect pain-registering nerves to higher brain centres responsible for interpreting pain. Another affected area was the ventral attention network, which allows people to break their concentration to respond to a stimulus. This fits with the affected veterans’ tendency to be easily distracted and to have trouble with memory formation.

Because the number of people studied was small, it is not yet possible to draw a clear distinction between an affected brain and a normal brain, Baraniuk says. He next wants to look at similar scans of people with chronic fatigue syndrome or fibromyalgia – characterised by widespread chronic pain – both of which share some symptoms with GWS.

“It’s a very important paper,” says Robert Haley of the University of Texas Southwestern in Dallas, not least because it helps establish GWS as a treatable, physiological problem. But he says the team will have to examine dissected brain tissue from deceased veterans to better understand what the scans show.

The findings still do not pinpoint a specific cause or mechanism for the disorder.

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 _____

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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



In Service to America

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