

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America

Chapter Elections will be held at the April Meeting. Consider a holding an office.

Meeting Notice

16 April, '14

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

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

Chapter 324 Officers

President - Pat Moore 354-2533

Vice Pres. - Pat Ciofani 702-7734

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Kent Draper 963-0375

Director -

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray 262-389-7325

Director - Oliver Williams 538-4416

Michigan: Regulators Expand Medical Marijuana To Include PTSD

Press release from NORMAL

Lansing, MI: State regulators have agreed to allow physicians to authorize cannabis therapy for patients with post-traumatic stress (PTSD).

Members of the Medical Marijuana Review Panel voted 6 to 2 to expand the state's list of qualifying conditions to include PTSD. The Director of the Michigan Department of Licensing and Regulatory Affairs signed off on the recommendation earlier this month.

This is the first time that regulators have expanded the state's list of qualifying conditions since voters initially legalized the physician-authorized use of cannabis in 2008.

Six other states - Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, New Mexico, Nevada, and Oregon - explicitly allow for the use of cannabis to treat symptoms of post-traumatic stress. Nevada regulators expanded their law to include PTSD earlier this year. Oregon and Maine lawmakers amended their medical cannabis laws last year to include post-traumatic stress.

Clinical trial data published in the May issue of the journal *Molecular Psychiatry* theorized that

cannabinoid-based therapies would likely comprise the "next generation of evidence-based treatments for PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)."

Post-traumatic stress syndrome is an anxiety disorder that is estimated to impact some eight million Americans annually. To date, there are no pharmaceutical treatments specifically designed or approved to target symptoms of PTSD.

Last week, federal officials at the Public Health Service approved the use of cannabis in a privately funded pilot trial at the University of Arizona College of Medicine to assess its potential risks and benefits in war veterans suffering from PTSD, including the plant's potential impact on subjects' anxiety, suicidality, and depression. Although FDA officials had initially approved the study in 2011, neither PHS (Public Health Service) nor NIDA (the US National Institute on Drug Abuse) signed off on the protocol until this month. Both agencies, as well as the US DEA, must approve any clinical trial involving cannabis..

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324 February 19, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 7:05 by 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 and for all serving our country

Pledge of Allegiance

Member Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, Paul Balge, Ron Coppersmith, Pat Ciofani, Milan Mursec, Patrick Moore, Joe Herbert, John Zutz, John Morgan

Minutes of the January 15, 2014 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report - \$4755.99 current balance in our checking account

Communications – Invitations to participate received from the Memorial Day and 4th of July Parade committees. We will participate in both.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert

Volunteering at the VA – Brian Walker now in charge of volunteer services

Fund Raising – We have 3 dates at Miller Park this summer

OLD BUSINESS

Stand Down – We received a thank you for our donation for the February 22nd Stand Down

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Day Parade – Moved and passed to donate \$150 to the parade and to participate in the event

Elections – Elections for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and secretary will be held in April. Moved and passed to include a letter to all members encouraging participation and to have this newsletter mailed to all members.

Adjournment – 7:30

ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD DURING THE APRIL MEETING - PLEASE ATTEND

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324 March 19, 2014**

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by 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 and for all serving our country

Pledge of Allegiance, Prayer

Member Self-Introductions – Paul Balge, Oliver Williams, John Morgan, John Zutz, Steve Adamczyk, Milan Mursec, Joe Campbell, Joe Herbert, Kent Draper, Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore, Dennis Szymanski

Treasurer's Report - \$4,499.04 current balance in our checking account

Communications – Information on Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans Day March 29th – Information on the June 13th Flag Day Ceremony at the Marcus Center 11:30 am – 1:00 pm

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – Welcome to new life member Steve Adamczyk – We have 120 total members

Volunteering at the VA – Brian Walker is now head of Volunteering Services

Education Outreach – Joe Campbell – Joe will make a presentation at Menomonee Falls High School in April

Fund Raising – We have 3 dates at Miller Park this summer

NEW BUSINESS

Elections – Elections for President, Vice President, Treasurer, and Secretary will be held in April. Please consider stepping forward and taking a leadership role in YOUR Chapter

Adjournment – 7:35

POINT

Dear John -

For starters, I thank you for two things: (1) Your very honest letter regarding current membership participation woes. (2) Your many years of passionate service keeping Chapter 324 afloat.

In all honesty, time is running out for VVA and it's nobody's fault except Father Time. I'm guessing the average age of our members is pushing 70. At that age, whatever "Get up and go" someone once had has "Got up and left."

You're not going to get anywhere close to half our members to go out to Miller Park to solicit donations, even if you paid them and gave them a game ticket in a luxury box. You're not going to get half of our members to march in a parade, even if they could follow behind the Dallas Cheerleaders. You're not going to get half our members to attend a meeting, even if you served free booze and steaks.

It has nothing to do with programs, or good cause, or great need, or patriotism or loyalty. It's all about people getting too old to actively participate.

To buy a few more years, what Chapter 324 can do is two things:

(1) Take the lead at the national level to install a succession plan for our veterans organization. What will happen to VVA once everyone is too old to do anything at any level? As difficult as this subject might be to think about, it's better to make these hard decisions now than wait ten years and find everyone sliding into senility and our entire VVA massively, coast-to-coast dysfunctional.

(2) Put a simple Webpage together that can be easily updated with calendar/news items. This Website can also serve as a platform from which monthly newsletters can be downloaded by the interested reader. Take a look at <http://www.cudworth.org>. No silly pictures, no ugly women, and it costs only \$106 a year. With luck, this might help maintain membership interest for a few more years.

Again, John, I appreciate all you have done. Chapter 324 is in a tough spot. I hope my comments are helpful.

Peace.
Mike Smith

COUNTERPOINT

Dear Mike,

Thanks for your kind words. Your comments are helpful.

You got the point of my letter, that time is running out for VVA. Sooner, or later, there will be no Vietnam vets left, but that is likely to be 30 - 40 years. VVA will probably die some time before that.

My other point is: **WE AIN'T DEAD YET.**

I don't agree that age or disability means our members can't do anything, and I didn't suggest that each of our members have to do everything. But everyone can do something, and as of now, most of our membership is doing nothing.

I don't expect to get half of our 120 or so members to Miller Park, but it would be nice to get 20 or 30.

Most of us don't march in parades anymore (I'm not sure I can do it myself), but we do have transportation available. Members can sit in comfort and wave, until they get too tired, then they can just sit.

And, I don't expect everyone to attend every meeting. However, I do wonder why most members have never attended any meeting. We have dozens of Members, including Life Members on the rolls, who have paid memberships, but have never attended. Maybe they don't know they can get a free hat.

Towards the end of your letter you get into my "pet peeve" zone. You suggest "Chapter 324" do things.

We should take a lead in closing down VVA.

We should put up a web page where the newsletter can be downloaded.

Good suggestions. I think we could make them happen. But remember, you are part of the Chapter.

Let's not kid each other, these actions take time, effort and dedication. By real people.

Where will we get these people from?

(1) We'll take the lead on closing down VVA when we shut down our Chapter. I hope it'll be a while.

(2) I'd be happy if we had a web page inviting new members, and telling them about our Chapter. I'm willing to post the newsletters (with archives to 2010) on a web page. I'll find the web space. Are you offering to create the page, and maintain it?

John Zutz
Newsletter Editor

**All members are requested to attend the April meeting.
Officers will be elected. Now is the time to consider running for office.**

Marijuana Study in Veterans Wins Federal Backing

By THE ASSOCIATED PRESS MARCH 17, 2014

WASHINGTON — The federal government has signed off on a long-delayed study looking at marijuana as a treatment for veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, a development that drug researchers are hailing as a major shift in U.S. policy.

The Department of Health and Human Services' decision surprised marijuana advocates who have struggled for decades to secure federal approval for research into the drug's medical uses.

The proposal from the University of Arizona was long ago cleared by the Food and Drug Administration, but researchers had been unable to purchase marijuana from the National Institute on Drug Abuse. The agency's Mississippi research farm is the only federally-sanctioned source of the drug.

In a letter last week, HHS cleared the purchase of medical marijuana by the studies' chief financial backer, the Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies, which supports medical research and legalization of marijuana and other drugs.

"MAPS has been working for over 22 years to start marijuana drug development research, and this is the first time we've been granted permission to purchase marijuana from NIDA," the Boston-based group said in a statement. The federal government has never before approved medical research involving smoked or vaporized marijuana, according to MAPS.

While more than 1 million Americans currently take medical marijuana — usually for chronic pain — rigorous medical research into the drug's effects has been limited, in part due to federal restrictions. Marijuana remains a Schedule I substance under the government's Controlled Substance Act. That means the drug is considered a high-risk for abuse with no accepted medical applications.

In the past NIDA has focused its research on the risks of drug abuse and addiction, turning away researchers interested in studying the potential benefits of illegal substances.

Even with the latest green light from the Health and Human Services department, MAPS and the University of Arizona Professor Suzanne Sisley must still get approval from the Drug Enforcement Administration, though they expect that clearance to come more quickly.

Sisley's study will measure the effects of five different potencies of smoked or vaporized marijuana in treating symptoms of PTSD in 50 veterans.

The Veterans Administration estimates between 11 and 20 percent of soldiers who served in the recent Iraq and Afghanistan wars have PTSD, which can cause anxiety, flashbacks, depression and sleep deprivation. About 7.7 million American adults are estimated to have the disorder.

Physicians have long speculated that marijuana could be used to calm parts of the brain linked to overstimulation and anxiety, though little formal research has been conducted.

The American Medical Association has called for a change in marijuana's classification to make it easier for research to be conducted. The current classification prevents physicians from even prescribing it in states where medical use is permitted. Instead, they can only recommend it to patients who can then buy it through a government-approved dispensary in most states.



Military psychological counseling programs faulted

By Alan Zarembo [LA Times] February 20, 2014

<http://www.latimes.com/local/la-me-resilience-20140221.0,2201535.story#axzz2uH1XNEfj>

Ed Note: This article was written prior to the recent killings at Ft. Hood

Many federal programs aimed at preventing psychological problems in military service members and their families have not been evaluated correctly to determine if they are working and are not supported by science, a new report commissioned by the Defense Department says.

“A lot of their programs don’t have any good data behind them,” said Kenneth Warner, a professor of public health at the University of Michigan who led the Institute of Medicine committee that produced the report. “We remain uncertain about which approaches work and which ones are ineffective.”

The 291-page report was especially critical of the Pentagon’s biggest and costliest prevention program, known as Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness, which is used throughout the Army.

Based on the principles of positive psychology, it includes training in assertiveness, negotiation and coping strategies such as maintaining an optimistic outlook on life. About 900,000 soldiers receive the training each year at a cost of \$50 million. The program was recently expanded to include families of service members.

The Army has portrayed it as a success based on internal reviews that found that soldiers saw small improvements on some measures of psychological health.

But the medical committee concluded that the gains were not clinically meaningful. The program did not reduce rates post-traumatic stress disorder or depression.

“The effects were so small,” Warner said. “The amount of money being spent was so large. It did not look like a meaningful investment.”

An Army spokesman, Lt. Col. S. Justin Platt, defended the program, saying that it was not designed to prevent PTSD and depression but rather to improve social, emotional, spiritual, family and physical well-being. He said that the Army stands by its conclusions and that military families found the training effective.

“First-hand testimonies that tell how the program changed their life, saved their marriage or saved the life of a fellow soldier are more powerful than any report,” he said in an email.

Although military leaders would have

preferred a long-term scientific study before rolling out the program throughout the Army, they had to act quickly and rely on the best available evidence, Platt said.

Years of war have taken a heavy toll on the psychological health of U.S. troops. Rates of mental illness among active-duty troops rose 62% between 2000 and 2011, according to the Institute of Medicine report. More than 935,000 current or former service members were diagnosed with adjustment disorders, depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and other mental health problems over that time. The suicide rate nearly doubled between 2005 and 2010.

Families have also suffered, with researchers charting elevated rates of anxiety and depression in military spouses and children.

More than 90 prevention programs are scattered throughout the military. Experts said the total cost is difficult to calculate, but that it could easily top \$1 billion.

The Institute of Medicine, the health arm of the National Academies, reviewed a broad sample of those programs -- from resilience training to education and awareness campaigns designed to prevent suicide.

Although some programs have proven results, most did not.

The committee was unable to find any evidence-based programs to prevent domestic abuse in military families. And although sexual assault in the military has received growing attention, the military has no way to measure whether its prevention programs are working, the study concluded.

At the same time, some proven interventions are not being used, the committee found. Researchers said there is ample evidence to suggest that limiting access to personal firearms on military bases would reduce suicides. About 60% of service members who take their own lives do it with guns -- usually their own.

“Means restriction has been demonstrated to work,” said David Rudd, psychologist and suicide expert at the University of Memphis who served on the committee.

But in 2011, Congress prohibited the Defense Department from regulating legally owned personal firearms and ammunition on military bases.

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



In Service to America

Vietnam Veterans of America #324
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