

Special Meeting Notice

15 May, '13

Milwaukee Co. War Memorial - Lincoln Memorial Drive - Rm. 413

Board of Directors 6p.m., General Membership 7p.m.

Free parking on the north side of building

This meeting is intended to judge the interest of our members in an alternate meeting place. If you are interested you should attend.

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

Disabled Vets Get Airport Break

VA Secy Vet Group Liason Officer message 3 Apr 2013

Disabled veterans can now move through airport security checkpoints without having to remove shoes, light jackets or hats, according to a new policy announced March 27, 2013, by the Transportation Security Administration.

The new policy is part of TSA's Wounded Warrior Screening program, (<http://www.tsa.gov/traveler-information/wounded-warrior-accommodations>) which was established in 2005 in an effort to ease the screening process for wounded service members. These individuals will be escorted through the security checkpoint and will be eligible for expedited screening through TSA Pre-Check.

They also will not be required to remove their shoes, light outwear jackets or hats when passing through security checkpoints.

To be eligible for the service, a wounded warrior or traveling companion must contact the Military Severely Injured Joint Services Operations Center at MSIJSOC@dhs.gov, or 1-888-262-2396, in advance of their travel to provide itinerary information.

Those traveling with injured troops or veterans must receive standard screening. According to TSA, the number of wounded service members using the

Wounded Warrior Screening Program is steadily increasing, with approximately 4,252 in 2011, 5,914 in 2012, and 3,315 since the start of 2013. TSA also offers expedited screening for service members including reservist and National Guard members at several airports across the country. The agency also supports the Honor Flight Network, which transports U.S. veterans and their escorts to Washington, D.C. area airports in order to visit the war memorials build and dedicated to honor their service.

Future Meetings

2013

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 - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray

Director - Oliver Williams 538-4416

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
April 17, 2013

Meeting called to order 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 and for all defending our freedom throughout the world.

Pledge of Allegiance

Prayer

Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, John Zutz, David Titter, Ron Coppersmith, Oliver Williams, Pat Ciofani, Joe Herbert, Joe Murray, Pat Moore, Kent Draper

Minutes of the March 20, 2013 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – Holding steady at about 130 with 99 actual veterans and the rest associates

Fund Raising – Kent Draper – 4,000 orange blossoms have been ordered for summer fund raising events

OLD BUSINESS

Meetings at the War Memorial - \$ 45 was approved to send reminder postcards to members that **MAY and JUNE MEETINGS WILL BE HELD AT THE WAR MEMORIAL – 7:00 pm – Room 415**

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Day Parade – We will participate May 27th in the downtown Milwaukee parade at 2:00 pm – Vehicles will be available to those who wish to ride in the parade

Veterans Day Parade – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to the Veterans Day Parade

Acupuncture Clinic – A free acupuncture clinic is being held on Mondays from 3 – 6 in room 313 (Dry Hootch office) of the War Memorial – Free parking is also available

Elections of Board of Directors – Nominations and elections were held and your new Board of Directors are: Ron Coppersmith, Oliver Williams, Pat Ciofani, John Morgan, and Joe Murray – Thank you for stepping forward and taking an active role in our chapter

For the Good of the Chapter – Moved and passed to donate \$100 to Joe Murray for his ongoing efforts to help needy veterans with car repairs – Member Harold Schmitt donated \$50 to the Homeless Veterans Initiative which was matched by the chapter

Adjournment – 7:50 pm

ATTENTION: MEMBERS AND ASSOCIATES
HAVE YOU BEEN GETTING YOUR NEWSLETTER?

If you've been getting it, good. If not, please read this message.

We believe our members deserve to know what the chapter is doing, and we hope more members will participate in chapter activities. Our main form of communication is this newsletter, which also includes items of general interest to veterans.

Chapter 324 has been delivering this newsletter via e-mail every month. This practice has saved us over \$1000 per year - it's like getting a \$1000 donation every year.

We will send snail-mail copies, on request, to members who don't have e-mail.

Many members have not provided their e-mail address.

It's easy - send an email to john@zutz.org with "324 newsletter" in the subject. Include "subscribe" along with your name in the message .

We are getting older, but Chapter 324 can still accomplish much, if we work together.

KIA Found Alive in Vietnam?

by Brian D. Johnson 29, 2013 <http://www2.macleans.ca/2013/04/29/forty-years-later-in-a-village-in-vietnam/>

Editor's Note: This article has been edited because of space constraints. Please refer to the web page for the complete article.

John Hartley Robertson was a ghost of history, an American soldier who vanished in a war that was not supposed to exist.

And for 44 years, neither did he.

Robertson was shot down over Laos on May 20, 1968, as part of a mission by a special forces unit waging a secret war beyond the borders of Vietnam. The U.S. military listed him as MIA, then in 1976, presumed dead.

But a Canadian filmmaker and a Vietnam vet tracked down a man living in a remote Vietnamese village who claims to be Robertson, though he has virtually no memory of his former life, has lost his ability to speak English—and is now married to a Vietnamese woman who rescued him, gave him the identity of her husband, a slain South Vietnamese soldier, and bore him four children.

With *Unclaimed*, an astonishing documentary that premieres this week at Toronto's Hot Docs festival, Emmy-winning Alberta director Michael Jorgensen follows a bizarre trail into a modern-day heart of darkness, guided by Michigan's Tom Faunce, a traumatized Vietnam War vet obsessed with leaving no man behind, even decades after the war.

It climaxes—spoiler alert—as the self-proclaimed MIA is flown to Edmonton for a rendezvous with the sole survivor of Robertson's four siblings, Alabama's Jean Robertson-Holley. (He was unable to enter the U.S.) She instantly confirms he's her brother in a cathartic, tearful reunion.

"We had a small, private screening," says Hot Docs director Chris McDonald, "and I don't remember ever seeing an audience react like that emotionally. Afterwards, everyone was wobbly and teary—and curious. If this individual is a legitimate MIA left behind, as the family and filmmakers believe, it's hard to overestimate what the impact might be."

The documentary raises as many questions as it answers: it suggests Robertson's case is cloaked in an elaborate cover-up by the U.S. military. Jorgensen says the U.S. government first became aware of the man claiming to be Robertson as early as 1991, and tried to verify his identity in 2006. But Robertson's siblings were not informed. Then last year, before

the reunion, the filmmaker says he was summoned to a meeting with an official from the U.S. military's Joint Personnel Recovery Agency (JPRA), who told him Robertson's sister and brother (then deceased) had offered up their DNA for testing. Jean, however, insists no one from the agency ever contacted the family.

And as the plot has thickened, this family of apolitical, devout Baptists have become unlikely whistleblowers. In a tragic twist, two weeks after embracing the man she has no doubt is "Johnny," and proclaiming "a miracle,"

Jean, along with her husband, was seriously injured in a car crash. Her daughter Gail Metcalf, who now represents the family, told Maclean's they still haven't heard from the government. "I'm not a conspiracy theorist," said the retired kindergarten teacher and born-again Christian. "I love my government. I'm not trying to pick a fight. I'm not looking for money or attention. But I don't like being lied about."

Metcalf plans to attend the April 30 premiere of *Unclaimed* at Hot Docs, North America's largest documentary film festival. Already it has drawn fire from the Pentagon. Contacted by Maclean's, a Pentagon spokesperson said the JPRA never contacted Robertson's siblings or claimed to have their DNA. He says a JPRA official met with Jorgensen only at the filmmaker's request.

Tipped off by an ex-soldier who knew Robertson, Faunce led the filmmaker to the story. Together they made two trips to Vietnam, with a team that included interpreter Hugh Tran, an Edmonton police officer whose family had fled Saigon in 1981.

The man they discover in a remote village seems so transformed by his ordeal, and four decades of living another life, he no longer looks like an American. His gracious, humble bearing seems more like that of a Vietnamese peasant. He tells his story, via an interpreter, of being captured immediately after jumping from a helicopter that crashed during a firefight on a Laos mountaintop. "They locked me up, high in the forest, in a cage," he says. "I was in and out of consciousness from torture and starvation. The North Vietnamese soldier hit me on the head with a stick, shouting, 'American!' I thought I would die."

Pentagon to ask for Overhaul of Court Martial System

By CHARLIE SAVAGE New York Times April 8, 2013

http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/09/us/politics/pentagon-to-ask-congress-to-overhaul-court-martial-system.html?emc=eta1&_r=0

WASHINGTON — The Pentagon announced Monday that it would ask Congress to overhaul the court-martial system used to prosecute the nearly 5,000 service members annually accused of crimes, scaling back the power of senior commanders to overturn convictions and dismiss charges.

The proposal comes amid sharp criticism from advocacy groups and Congress over how the military has handled a series of sexual assault cases, including a decision by an Air Force commander, Lt. Gen. Craig A. Franklin, to dismiss the conviction of Lt. Col. James Wilkerson, who was found guilty in November of aggravated sexual assault and sentenced to one year in military prison.

“These changes, if enacted by Congress, would help ensure that our military justice system works fairly, ensures due process and is accountable,” Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel said in a statement. “These changes would increase the confidence of service members and the public that the military justice system will do justice in every case.”

Mr. Hagel said that the Pentagon would ask lawmakers to scale back the power of the convening authority — a commander who exercises significant control over courts-martial in a system that dates to the British Empire. The commanders decide whether to approve charges for trial, select the jury and negotiate plea deals, and they can overturn guilty verdicts or reduce recommended sentences.

The proposal would eliminate commanders’ authority to overturn a guilty verdict by a court-martial in “serious” cases like sexual assault; minor offenses would be exempted from the change. Commanders who modify a sentence — or change the findings in minor offenses — would have to explain the decision in writing.

Eugene R. Fidell, who teaches military justice at Yale Law School, said that the proposal was a good first step, but argued that it did not go far enough in removing a “tether to the 18th century” and in making prosecution decisions more independent from the chain of command.

“Allowing convening authorities in this day and age to have their hands on the administration of military justice is an artifact, and it’s time to toss it over the side,” Mr. Fidell said.

“Commanders are responsible for life-and-death decisions, the safety, welfare, well-being and good order and discipline of those under their charge,” said Vice Adm. Nanette DeRenzi, the Navy’s top lawyer. “My experience has been that these convening authorities and these commanders take these decisions to heart. They strive day in and day out to do the right thing. They’re people of integrity. They’re advised by well-qualified and well-trained legal counsel.”

Several other countries with common British roots have in the past generation made changes to their military justice systems. In Canada and Britain, courts-martial are now handled by administrators independent of the chain of command. But while the United States has made other changes since World War II, like allowing appeals to civilian judges, it has kept the convening authority.

Earlier this year, a Canadian judge overturned a deportation order involving an accused American military deserter because if he were returned to the United States, he would face a court-martial under a traditional convening authority structure. The judge questioned whether that would be a fair trial, writing that the American military justice system “appears to be outdated and sadly at odds with Canadian and international norms.”

On another track, after the collapse of the prosecution of Marines involved in the 2005 killing of 24 civilians in Haditha, Iraq, the previous secretary of defense, Leon E. Panetta, and the previous general counsel of the Pentagon, Jeh C. Johnson, set up a special legal policy board last year to study possible changes in how troops accused of killing or abusing civilians in war zones should be prosecuted.

The controversy over the handling of sexual assault cases within the military comes amid rising concern about growing reports of such episodes. Last April, Mr. Panetta instituted a new sexual assault policy for the military, requiring that all such complaints be handled by more senior officers rather than lower-level unit commanders.

On Monday, Mr. Hagel said that “despite the attention and efforts of senior leaders throughout the Department of Defense, it is clear the department still has much more work to do to fully address the problem of sexual assault in the ranks.”

Soldier's Heart Journey to Vietnam

Sept. 5 - 22, 2013

Join us for this transformative journey!

Viet Nam is a Buddhist country. Its breathtaking mountain views and lush green foliage are a soothing balm as we ride between cities, villages and hamlets. We meet gentle Vietnamese people – teachers, farmers, monks, village elders, college students, shopkeepers, street children and many more. We attend ceremonies conducted in our honor at Buddhist temples and have special audience with their head monks. We visit museums and marketplaces, private homes and rehabilitation centers and participate in humanitarian projects.

We have observed and experienced how healing it is for veterans of the Viet Nam War to meet and council with former enemies. We are especially committed to encouraging and arranging opportunities for our travelers to meet with former ARVN, Viet Cong, and NVA soldiers wherever we go and to respectfully and personally share our common history.

We make every effort to support our returning veterans in visiting places that are important to them whether it is a mountain base, a rice paddy “grave”, an indigenous village, the tunnels, an old battle site. Together we create rituals that enable healing and closure. We honor each other and those who have died. We open to forgiveness and reconciliation and peace.

Veterans who take our Journey to Viet Nam are transformed... and so are the rest of us!

For more information: info@soldiersheart.net

Vera Roddy goes to DC

VVA 324 and VVA 448 contributed to Vera Roddy's trip to DC.

She says thanks.

“OMG! Have I said lately how much respect I have for my Vietnam Veterans??? Their mantra is never will one generation of veterans leave another generation behind.

“Over the last week they have raised enough money for me to attend the 2nd National Summit: Art, Health and Well-being Across the Military Continuum at Walter Reed Hospital to talk about the Artful Warriors group at Dryhootch.

“The Department of Defense wants to know more about peer-to-peer led groups and how they are helping our veterans. I am HONORED to have been chosen and HONORED to be supported!”



MEMORIAL DAY
MAY 27, 2013

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
PO Box 18631
Milwaukee, WI 53218

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