

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

21 May, '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

2014

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

2015

21 January, 18 February, 18 March, 15 April,

Chapter 324 Officers

President - Pat Ciofani 702-7734

Vice Pres. - Oliver Williams 538-4416

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Pat Moore 354-2533

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray 262-389-7325

Director - Mike Ducette 262-968-5508

New Assembly Point - Memorial Day Parade - May 26

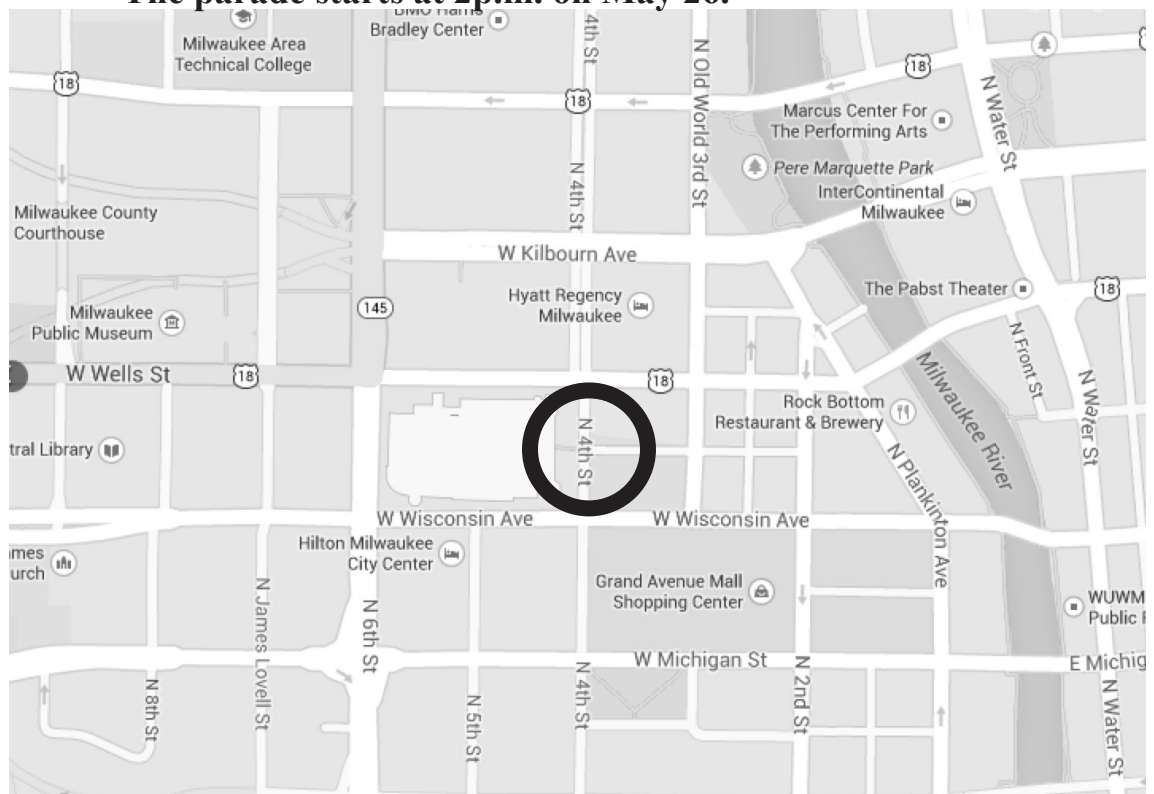
Vietnam Veterans are being honored and will be in front of the parade this year.

The parade starts at 2p.m. on May 26.

Parking is available north of the War Memorial, and a shuttle bus will transport participants to the beginning of the parade.

Chapter 324 will assemble at 1p.m on 4th Street between Wells and Wisconsin. Tell the Marshals that Chapter 324 is in Division 1, #18.

For those who can't walk the entire parade route, transportation will be available.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
April 16, 2014

Meeting called to order at 7:05 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 – Dennis Szymanski, Paul D. Balge, Patrick Moore, Oliver Williams, John Morgan, Ron Coppersmith, Pat Ciofani, Milan Mursec, Mike DuCette, Joe Campbell, David Titter, Joe Herbert, John Zutz, Steve Adamczyk, Joseph Murray, Forrest Nutting

Minutes of the March 19, 2014 meeting reviewed and approved

Treasurer's Report - \$4409.04 current checkbook balance.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership – Joe Herbert – 120 total

Volunteering at the VA – Brian Walker is the acting Volunteer Coordinator

Fund Raising – July 25 and Aug 5 – 6 are our fund raising dates at Miller Park – Moved and passed to purchase orange blossoms if needed

OLD BUSINESS

State Council Meeting – Pat Ciofani – Report on recent council meeting – discussion on what to do with “Sweepstakes” tickets from state.

NEW BUSINESS

Elections – Oliver Williams resigned from the Board of Directors so he could run for Vice President – Mike DuCette was appointed to fill the vacant position for the remainder of the term – Elections were held and these are your new officers:
President – Pat Ciofani
Vice President – Oliver Williams
Treasurer – Pat Moore
Secretary – Dennis Szymanski

For the Good of the Chapter – Memorial Day Parade honoring Vietnam Veterans May 26th – We will participate – Flag Day at the Marcus Center June 13th at 11:00 am.



For Absent Companions ...

Bad Paper Discharges

New Haven Register, Conn | 3 Mar 2014

Five Vietnam combat veterans and three veterans' organizations filed a class action lawsuit in federal court on 3 MAR, seeking relief for tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans who developed post-traumatic stress disorder during their military service and subsequently received an other than honorable discharge. Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans received an other than honorable discharge for conduct attributable to their undiagnosed PTSD, according to a news release.

Because PTSD was not a medical diagnosis until 1980, many Vietnam Era service members who suffered from PTSD and struggled to perform their assigned duties received "bad paper" discharges instead of the medical discharges they would likely receive today, the news release stated. Students from the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at the Yale Law School have been working on the issue for some time and recently released a report that the Coast Guard engaged in the same policy decisions with regard to PTSD.

The class action suit names the U.S. Army, Navy and the Air Force. The law clinic, the Vietnam Veterans of America and the National Veterans Council for Legal Redress put out the following press release:

"When I was in high school, I worked at the VA (Veterans Administration) hospital in the kitchen as a dishwasher. After I came home from Vietnam, I couldn't even get my job back as a dishwasher because of my bad paper," said plaintiff Conley Monk. "My discharge status has been a lifetime scar. If I were discharged today, my PTSD would be recognized and treated — I wouldn't be punished for having a service-connected medical condition."

"Tens of thousands of Vietnam veterans with PTSD have been doubly injured by the black mark of an other than honorable discharge, resulting in unjustly denied support, services and benefits," said U.S. Sen. Richard Blumenthal (D-CT). "These veterans are long overdue present day appreciation of modern mental health in the timely review of their discharge upgrade appeals."

In addition to Monk, a New Haven resident and veteran of the U.S. Marine Corps, the other individual plaintiffs are James Cottam (California, U.S. Army), George Siders (Georgia, U.S. Marine Corps), Kevin Marret (Indiana, U.S. Marine Corps), and James Davis (New York, U.S. Army). Vietnam Veterans of America, Vietnam Veterans of America Connecticut State Council, and the National Veterans Council for Legal Redress have also joined the lawsuit on behalf of their members.

Despite advances in understanding PTSD since 1980, the Pentagon has refused to apply medically appropriate standards in reviewing Vietnam veterans' requests to upgrade their discharges based on PTSD attributable to service. The decades-long failure of the service branches to give fair consideration to these applications is discrimination against a group of veterans who not only have PTSD, but are also elderly and often indigent.

"These veterans served their country, but their country, through the service branches' failure to upgrade their discharges, has not served them," said Dr. Tom Berger, executive director of the Veterans Health Council, Vietnam Veterans of America. "It's time to finally give them the upgrades and recognition they deserve." "We started the National Veterans Council for Legal Redress to rectify the injustices that veterans with less than honorable discharges have endured. Hundreds of thousands of veterans who served during the Vietnam Era returned home with bad paper, many unjustly," said Garry Monk, executive director of NVCLR and brother of Conley Monk.

"Unfortunately, the Pentagon has refused to correct the decades of injustice experienced by tens of thousands of veterans who suffer from PTSD but were discharged before it was a diagnosable condition," said V. Prentice, a law student intern in the Veterans Legal Services Clinic at Yale Law School, which represents the plaintiffs in this suit. "This action seeks to compel appropriate action by the military and to finally secure justice for these veterans."

Veterans and White Supremacy

By KATHLEEN BELEW New York Times APRIL 15, 2014

Kathleen Belew, a postdoctoral fellow in history at Northwestern University, is at work on a book on Vietnam veterans and the radical right.

EVANSTON, Ill. — WHEN Frazier Glenn Miller shot and killed three people in Overland Park, Kan., on Sunday, he did so as a soldier of the white power movement: a groundswell that united Klansmen, neo-Nazis and other fringe elements after the Vietnam War, crested with the bombing of the Oklahoma City federal building in 1995, and remains a diminished but potent threat today.

Mr. Miller, the 73-year-old man charged in the killings, had been outspoken about his hatred of Jews, blacks, Communists and immigrants, but it would be a mistake to dismiss him as a crazed outlier. The shootings were consistent with his three decades of participation in organized hate groups. His violence was framed by a clear worldview.

You can't predict whether any one person will commit violence, but it would be hard to think of someone more befitting of law enforcement scrutiny than Mr. Miller (who also goes by the name Frazier Glenn Cross). I've been studying the white radical right since 2006. In my review of tens of thousands of pages of once classified federal records, as well as newly available archives of Klan and neo-Nazi publications, Mr. Miller appears as a central figure of the white power movement.

The number of Vietnam veterans in that movement was small — a tiny proportion of those who served — but Vietnam veterans forged the first links between Klansmen and Nazis since World War II. They were central in leading Klan and neo-Nazi groups past the anti-civil rights backlash of the 1960s and toward paramilitary violence. The white power movement they forged had strongholds not only in the South, but also in the Pacific Northwest, Colorado, California and Pennsylvania. Its members carried weapons like those they had used in Vietnam, and used boot-camp rhetoric to frame their pursuit of domestic enemies. They condoned violence against innocent people and, eventually, the state itself.

Before his 1979 discharge for distributing racist literature, Mr. Miller served for 20 years in the Army, including two tours in Vietnam and service as a Green Beret. Later that year he took part (but was not charged) in a deadly shooting of Communist protesters in Greensboro, N.C.

In 1980, Mr. Miller formed a Klan-affiliated organization in North Carolina that eventually was known as the White Patriot Party. He outfitted members in camouflage fatigues. He paraded his neo-Nazis, in uniform and bearing arms, up and down streets. They patrolled schools and polling places, supposedly to protect whites from harassment. F.B.I. documents show that they also burned crosses. By 1986, Mr. Miller's group claimed 2,500 members in five southern states.

The archives also show that Mr. Miller received large sums of money from The Order, a white power group in the Pacific Northwest, to buy land and weapons to put his followers through paramilitary training. Mr. Miller's group paid \$50,000 for weapons and matériel stolen from the armory at Fort Bragg, N.C., including anti-tank rockets, mines and plastic explosives. He targeted active-duty troops for recruitment and hired them to conduct training exercises.

Mr. Miller's downfall came after the Southern Poverty Law Center filed a lawsuit on behalf of black North Carolinians; as part of a settlement in 1985, he agreed to stop operating a paramilitary organization. In 1987, a federal judge found that Mr. Miller had violated the agreement, and barred him from contacting others in the white power movement. Outraged, and anticipating criminal charges regarding the stolen military weapons, Mr. Miller briefly went underground. He would write in a self-published autobiography, "Since they wouldn't allow me to fight them legally above ground, then I'd resort to the only means left, armed revolution." He was later caught with a small arsenal, but he began cooperating with prosecutors, testifying against other white supremacists in exchange for a reduced sentence. He was released in 1990, after serving three years.

In 2009, the Department of Homeland Security issued a nine-page report detailing the threat of domestic terrorism by the white power movement. This short document outlined no specific threats, but rather a set of historical factors that had predicted white-supremacist activity in the past — like economic pressure, opposition to immigration and gun-control legislation — and a new factor, the election of a black president.

White Supremacy Continued next page

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The report singled out one factor that has fueled every surge in Ku Klux Klan membership in American history, from the 1860s to the present: war. The return of veterans from combat appears to correlate more closely with Klan membership than any other historical factor. “Military veterans facing significant challenges reintegrating into their communities could lead to the potential emergence of terrorist groups or lone wolf extremists carrying out violent attacks,” the report warned. The agency was “concerned that right-wing extremists will attempt to recruit and radicalize returning veterans in order to boost their violent capabilities.”

The report raised intense blowback from the American Legion, Fox News and conservative members of Congress. They demanded an apology and denounced the idea that any veteran could commit an act of domestic terrorism. The department shelved the report, removing it from its website. The threat, however, proved real.

Mr. Miller obviously represents an extreme, both in his politics and in his violence. A vast majority of veterans are neither violent nor mentally ill. When they turn violent, they often harm themselves, by committing suicide. But it would be irresponsible to

overlook the high rates of combat trauma among the 2.4 million Americans who have served in our wars in Iraq and Afghanistan, the full impact of which has not yet materialized. Veterans of those conflicts represent just 10 percent of those getting mental health services through the Department of Veterans Affairs, where the overwhelming majority of those in treatment are still Vietnam veterans.

During Mr. Miller’s long membership in the white power movement, its leaders have robbed armored cars, engaged in counterfeiting and the large-scale theft of military weapons, and carried out or planned killings. The bombing by Timothy J. McVeigh, an Army veteran, of the federal building in Oklahoma City in 1995, which killed 168 people, was only the most dramatic of these crimes. When we interpret shootings like the one on Sunday as acts of mad, lone-wolf gunmen, we fail to see white power as an organized — and deadly — social movement.

That Mr. Miller was able to carry out an act of domestic terror at two locations despite his history of violent behavior should alarm anyone concerned about public safety. Would he have received greater scrutiny had he been a Muslim, a foreigner, not white, not a veteran? The answer is clear, and alarming.



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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