

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Meeting Notice

TO BE ANNOUNCED

**Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.**

**Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.**

**Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.**

**Future Meetings 2020:**

To be announced

Chapter web page: [www.vietnamvetschapter324.com](http://www.vietnamvetschapter324.com)

National web page: [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)

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John is listed in the phone book - good luck finding one

**Due to the public health crisis, the May meeting is cancelled  
ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT A FUTURE MEETING**

VVA324 members deliver nearly 3000 donated Cousins Subs, enough for every VA worker. Cousins franchise donated chips for every sandwich. The first delivery (pictured) served the second and third shifts. A second delivery will be made Tuesday morning to serve the first shift. Shown L - R: John Zutz, John Morgan, Cousins franchise Manager Connie Pytlik, Mike Pytlik, Dennis Szymanski, Pat Moore. Thanks to all who made this possible.



# VA National Cemeteries to Commemorate 22 May

VA News Release | May 13, 2020

The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs' (VA) National Cemetery Administration (NCA) announced 13 MAY it will commemorate Memorial Day this year with solemn wreath laying ceremonies. Another offering is a new online memorial feature allowing the public to pay tribute to Veterans interred in VA national cemeteries across the country. "This year, by necessity, will be different from past Memorial Day observances," said VA Secretary Robert Wilkie.

Each VA national cemetery will conduct a brief wreath laying ceremony, accompanied by a moment of silence and the playing of Taps. In keeping with CDC guidelines to limit large gatherings, the ceremonies will not be open to the public. Live streaming, recorded video and photographs from ceremonies will be shared on NCA's Facebook and Twitter pages.

Other public events typically associated with Memorial Day at national cemeteries, including group placement of flags at gravesites, will not take place. However, all VA national cemeteries will be open Memorial Day weekend from dawn to dusk for public visitation. Cemetery visitors are asked to adhere to

health and safety guidelines and maintain physical distancing while visiting. Visitors are also urged to consider visiting Friday, Saturday or Sunday to avoid possible crowds on Memorial Day. Families may continue the tradition of placing flowers and small American flags at their Veteran's gravesite.

VA will also be launching a new way for the public to pay tributes to Veterans at the Veterans Legacy Memorial (VLM). The site, originally launched in 2019, contains a memorial page for each Veteran and service member interred in a VA national cemetery. Starting Thursday, May 14, VLM will permit online visitors to leave a comment of tribute on a Veteran's page, introducing a new way to observe Memorial Day. The tribute allows visitors to voice memories and appreciation for a Veteran's service. All comments will be reviewed for appropriateness prior to being posted.

As it has in years past, VA is again partnering with Carry The Load this Memorial Day to honor select "Veterans of the Day" with remembrances on social media from May 11-25.

## FEMA Diverted Masks From Veterans Hospitals, VA Official Says

By Matt Shuham, April 25, 2020

<https://talkingpointsmemo.com/news/fema-diverted-masks-from-veterans-hospitals-va-official-says>

The Federal Emergency Management Agency diverted masks from veterans hospitals and into the government's emergency stockpile, the executive in charge of the Department of Veterans Affairs claimed Saturday.

Health care workers at VA hospitals have for weeks warned of severely inadequate stocks of personal protective equipment. And in an interview with The Washington Post, the VA's Executive in Charge Richard Stone pointed the finger at FEMA.

The agency, Stone told the Post, had directed vendors with VA orders to instead send equipment to FEMA for the federal stockpile of such supplies.

"I had 5 million masks incoming that disappeared," Stone told the Post. Some VA hospitals, Stone acknowledged, are now on "austerity levels. The supply system was responding to FEMA," Stone added. "I couldn't tell you when my next delivery was coming in."

In a statement to TPM, FEMA spokesperson Janet Montesi said "FEMA does not, has not and will

not divert orders of PPE from federal, state and local partners, nor do we have the legal authority to do so."

"In support of VA and our nation's veterans, to date FEMA has coordinated shipments of more than 4.3 million various types of respirator masks, 1 million facial/surgical masks, 1.5 million gloves and 14,000 face shields to VA facilities across the country," Montesi said.

FEMA did tell the Post that following a request from VA Secretary Robert Wilkie, FEMA sent the VA 500,000 masks this week. But Stone told the Post that the VA system is using about 200,000 masks a day. FEMA has redistributed supplies relevant to the COVID-19 pandemic pursuant to the Korean War-era Defense Production Act, which allows the federal government to dictate private supply chains.

Federal prosecutors on Friday brought their first DPA-related case during the COVID-19 pandemic against a Long Island man accused of price-gouging and hoarding supplies. Still, some shipments face scrutiny from the feds but are ultimately not seized.

## 3-Part Plan to Resume VA Operations

Patricia Kime, Military.com, May 9, 2020

As the number of active COVID-19 cases among its patients declined slightly this week, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced a three-part plan for resuming operations at its facilities in the coming months. The effort will largely depend on local COVID-19 conditions, including a declining number of patients with symptoms, a reduction in those testing positive and widespread availability of testing. While the VA's Central Office has drafted a tiered plan for operations, decisions will be made at the local level and may not be in line with other state or federal reopening goals, VA officials said.

"A central planning solution for resuming regular operations makes no sense here because some areas of the country will take longer to recover, while other areas have seen minimal cases," VA Secretary Robert Wilkie said in a release. "That's why we're letting local conditions dictate our next steps."

The first phase, to occur within the next month, will largely consist of assessments by VA facilities to determine the risks and impact of increasing operations, such as non-emergency procedures like clinical visits and lab tests and admissions to spinal cord injury units. Officials will also explore the capacity for community health care providers to resume seeing veteran patients. In this phase, the Veterans Benefits Administration will increase virtual hearings and formulate plans to resume face-to-face compensation and pension exams, while the National Cemetery Administration will prepare for resuming memorial services and burials that will be held later.

Phase 2 will include expanding non-emergency procedures and medical visits to hospitals and clinics;

reopening the department's Fisher Houses; resuming memorial services and burials with military honors, with limited attendance based on local conditions; and services at VBA regional offices, by appointment.

The final phase will build on the others: resuming visitor access to all VA health facilities, including nursing homes, expanding services at VHA and VBA locations, and resuming all other operations. VA officials said the work will be done with employee health and safety in mind, and all criteria and parameters "must be met before starting the phases and may precipitate a return to an earlier phase."

"The pandemic is not over, and VA continues to provide response efforts," the plan notes. "The timeline for moving through this transition process will be dependent on the ability to minimize and control exposure and infection levels and maintain a constant decrease over time." VA's cemeteries, benefit administrators and Board of Veterans Appeals will use the same approach in determining when and how to resume activities such as interments and face-to-face meetings with veterans about their status, it said.

As of 8 MAY 8,137 veteran VA patients were confirmed to have contracted the novel coronavirus since the start of the pandemic and 619 had died. An additional 212 veterans deaths were reported to the VA. The number of new patient cases at VA facilities declined in the past week, with no new cases reported on 8 MAY from the previous day and 56 cases between 6 and 7 MAY. On 4 MAY, the VA reported 261 new cases in 24 hours. More than 1,200 VA employees have been diagnosed with the illness, including 26 who have died.



Gold Star Mothers Memorial, Yonkers, NY

## Ways to Avoid Potentially Devastating Falls

Chris Kissell, MoneyTalksNews, March 17, 2020

As we age, our sense of balance sometimes can betray us. The best way to avoid potentially devastating falls is to prioritize staying balanced, and to avoid other tasks that steal our focus from where it needs to be. In fact, “dual- tasking” — standing or walking while also performing a separate mental or physical task — is the No. 1 source of falls for older adults, according to Brad Manor, an associate scientist at the Hinda and Arthur Marcus Institute for Aging Research and an assistant professor of medicine at Harvard Medical School. Writing in the Harvard Health Blog, Manor says older adults are much more vulnerable to falls if they are moving when they try to perform a separate cognitive or motor task. Examples might include reading while walking, or talking and carrying a cup of coffee as you stroll.

Manor says simply standing upright or walking down a well-lit hallway are surprisingly complex physical tasks. Such activities involve continuously stabilizing our body’s center of mass (which is just behind the sternum, or breastbone) over the relatively small base of support that we create by how we position our feet on the ground. Manor writes: “This control requires quick reflexes, as well as strong muscles of the trunk, hips, legs, ankles, and toes. However, to avoid falling we also need to pay attention to our body and environment, predict and

perceive unsafe movements of our body, and adjust accordingly.”

As we grow older, simple tasks such as standing and walking require greater levels of cognitive effort as our senses and muscle strength begin to fade. As we spend more cognitive effort on those tasks, it steals away resources from controlling our body’s center of mass over our feet. Falls are often the result. To prevent falling, Manor suggests increasing awareness of your surroundings. Minimize distractions when in a crowded room, walking on uneven sidewalks, or hurrying to get somewhere, he says. Also, minimize or avoid talking while moving.

Keeping your mind sharp can help. Manor writes that older adults with cognitive impairment are more than twice as likely to fall as their peers who do not have such cognitive issues. For help with that, check out <https://www.moneytalksnews.com/5-ways-to-keep-your-aging-brain-sharp>. Engaging in mind-body exercises such as tai chi, yoga or dance can help. These activities all help to improve your balance. Finally, Manor emphasizes that falls are rarely the result of one factor. Poor muscle strength, fatigue and failing vision can all contribute to falls. So, the best way to prevent falls is to combine multiple preventive measures.



# Post-Traumatic Surprise

By Lenore Skenazy, April 2, 2020.

<https://www.creators.com/read/lenore-skenazy/04/20/post-traumatic-surprise>

So, here's something you might not have heard of: post-traumatic growth. I promise I am not making this up just to cheer anybody up. But I hope it does cheer you up, because it's real.

"We are far more resilient than we give each other credit for," says Dr. Samantha Boardman, founder of the website Positive Prescription and assistant attending psychiatrist at Weill Cornell Medical Center in New York City. And the research proves it.

Beginning in the '90s, some psychologists finally started turning their focus away from dysfunction to study its good-twin opposite: how people cope. By some estimates, at least half the population has gone through some kind of real trauma. (And let's assume by September or so, that could be a lot more of us.) And yet, writes John Tierney, co-author of the new book, "The Power of Bad: How the Negativity Effect Rules Us and How We Can Rule It," 4 out of 5 trauma victims did not suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder. "And in the long run, they typically emerged stronger. Instead of being permanently scarred, they underwent post-traumatic growth."

The reason most of us haven't heard of this positive turn of events, Tierney added in a phone chat, is because good news never gets the kind of attention bad news gets. (That's a big theme in his book — that the brain, Twitter and cable TV love bad news and ignore most of the good.) Anyway, this growth doesn't mean trauma is something you should seek out, like probiotic Greek yogurt, because it's so healthy. Trauma is truly, hmm, what is the word? Traumatic.

But psychologists have seen people coming out the other end with an "increased appreciation of life, deeper relationships with others, new perspectives and priorities (and) greater personal strength," Tierney writes.

And even in the meantime, while we're still in the midst of this miserable thing, I've been hearing from parents who are kind of stunned to see their kids not only coping but almost unfolding like a new shoot watered by the unexpected gift of the virus: free time.

"My daughter is almost 12, and my son is 9. They've been off school since March 12," a mom in Canada told me. "I was expecting a lot of bickering and crabbiness, and there's been a little bit, but

not nearly as much as I expected." Instead, her son spontaneously took a kite out to fly the other day — for the first time in his life — and his sister, who normally goes to bed at 11 p.m. and has to get up at 7 a.m., is still going to bed at 11 p.m. but now getting up at 11 in the morning. That seems to mean the girl needed four more hours of sleep than she was getting before. More sleep is making her — and everyone around her — calmer.

Meagan Heryet, a fundraiser in Oregon City, Oregon, has an 8-year-old daughter who is normally, Megan says, "a disaster. She's a hoarder; she's an artist; there's trash everywhere; there's no laundry basket. But since we've been home — no prodding from me — she just decided it was important for her bedroom to stay clean." The girl is making her bed every day. Strange but true.

And Stephanie Gillespie's son, age 14 and normally not too keen on school projects, "all of a sudden decided that there's all these things he wants to pursue." Top of the list? Building a computer. Dark are these days, but there is light at the end of the tunnel — and some surprisingly cool light shows inside the tunnel, too.

Lenore Skenazy is president of Let Grow, founder of Free-Range Kids and author of "Has the World Gone Skenazy?" To learn more about Lenore Skenazy ([Lskenazy@yahoo.com](mailto:Lskenazy@yahoo.com)) and read features by other Creators Syndicate writers and cartoonists, visit the Creators Syndicate website at [www.creators.com](http://www.creators.com).





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Anyone can join! Membership Options:

**Life Membership for all veterans \$50:**

VVA is only offering LIFE memberships at \$50. If you have been getting a 1 year membership for \$20 you will need to pay \$50 at your next renew or be dropped from the VVA. If you paid \$50 at your last renewal you will become a LIFE member automatically without any further payment. NEW members will only have the \$50 LIFE membership when they join. (with a DD214 submitted).

Anyone Else:

- Associate Member - 1 year \$20 • Associate Member 3 year \$50 • Associate Life Member \$250
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I would like to help Chapter 324 by donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to VVA324 and mail with this completed application to:  
VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218