

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Meeting Notice

16 June, '10

### 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](http://www.vva.org)

## Future Meetings

2010

21 July, 18 August, 15 September,  
20 October, 17 November, 15 December

## Chapter 324 Officers

President - Bob Rugg 412-3849

Vice President - Pat Moore 354-2533

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Kent Draper 963-0375

Director - Pat Ciofani 332-7734

Director - John Borkowitz 427-0977

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

## ~ Notice 1 ~

### Chapter 324 is moving into the 21st Century.

We intend to begin sending this newsletter via e-mail in September, 2010. You should have received a letter from the chapter telling you about this change. This will accomplish a number of things.

First, we will save money. We are spending around \$140.00 each month printing and mailing the newsletter. Every member we can e-mail will save money. If we can knock our newsletter costs down to \$40 per month it will be like holding a \$1200 fundraiser every year.

Second, we will save much time and effort in folding, stamping and addressing 150 newsletters every month.

### Chapter 324 wants to stay in touch with you.

If you want to continue to receive the chapter newsletter you must do one of two things:

- If you have e-mail enter your e-mail address on the form and return it in the self-addressed envelope, or send a message to [john@vva.org](mailto:john@vva.org) with the subject "324 newsletter" and the message "subscribe."

Privacy notice: Your e-mail address will be used only for Chapter business.

- If you don't have e-mail mark the form and return it in the self addressed envelope.

If you do not do one of these things your last newsletter will arrive in August.

## ~ Notice 2 ~

The August 18 Meeting will be held at the Zablocki VA Medical Center at 7 p.m.

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 324 May 19, 2010**

**Meeting Called to Order at 7:00 pm.**

**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.**

**Installation of new officers.**

**Self-Introductions** – Dennis Szymanski, Kent Draper, Pat Ciofani, Ron Coppersmith, John Zutz, Joe Herbert, John Borkowitz, Milan Mursic, Jerry Czubinski, Joe Campbell, Breezy, Jim Michelfelder, Kearney Bennet, Wesley Franklin, Paul Balge, Bob Rugg, John Morgan, Pat Moore.

**Minutes of April 21, 2010 meeting reviewed and accepted.**

**Treasurer's Report reviewed and accepted.**

**Communications read by Joe Herbert.**

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert** – Holding steady at about 135 members.

**Stand-Down Update – Breezy Brzeski**

**Volunteering at the VA – VAVS Picnic June 3<sup>rd</sup>.**

**Education Outreach – Joe Campbell** – Joe spoke to students at Nathan Hale HS and will be speaking at Menomonee Falls.

**Fundraising Kent Draper & Ron Coppersmith** - \$1069.93 raised from our Brewer's fund raiser in spite of bad weather. Thanks to all who helped. – Volunteers needed to sell Orange Blossoms at Serb Hall on Fridays from about 4:30 – 7:00.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**Missing Man Table at Unity Ev. Lutheran Church May 25, 2010.**

**Memorial Day Parade downtown May 31, 2010.**

**Vietnam Memorial Cleaning at Veterans Park** – About 35 people from several veterans organizations participated. Thanks to all and a special thanks to Joe Campbell for donating the lunch. Cost to chapter 324 for cleaning supplies was \$29.

**Alternate Meeting Site – OUR AUGUST 18 MEETING WILL BE HELD AT THE VA AT 7:00 PM. SEE NEWSLETTER FOR MORE INFO.**

**Tuesday Bingo** – Due to lack of volunteers, we will be cutting back to every other week.

**Flag Day Celebration** – Veterans will be honored at the Marcus Center on June 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Reclaiming or Heritage Days at the VA June 5 & 6** - Event will be honoring Vietnam Vets – We will have an information table and need volunteers.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**Web Site** - A committee, headed by Kent Draper, has been formed to look into getting a chapter web site up and running – Contact Kent if you have any ideas.

**News Letter** – In order to save money, we will be going to an e-mail only news letter, except for those who do not have e-mail access. All members will be receiving a letter in the mail with details.

**Operation Freedom** – July 3<sup>rd</sup> at the zoo – wrist bands are required.

**For the Good of the Chapter** - It was moved and passed to donate \$250 each to Being There – Reaching Out and Dry Hootch from the money raised at our Brewer's fund raiser.

**Adjournment – 8:10 pm.**

## PREZ SEZ

Thank you for showing your confidence in me by electing me as your new chapter president. I will endeavour to do the best job possible. Especially with your help. The following is the news we would like to get out prior to our chapter meeting:

1. It is my sad duty to inform you; of the passing of Eva Bennett. Eva was the wife of Kearney Bennett. She was a good and dear friend and will be sorely missed. Funeral services were held on Saturday June 5th.
2. The chapter was be Reclaiming Our Heritage days on June 5th and 6th on the VA grounds.
3. June 11th will be the flag ceremony at the Elks club; located at 5555 W. GoodHope Rd. We have been asked to attend, as we have every year. The ceremony starts at 6:00pm.
4. June 15th is flag day. There is a ceremony at the Marcus Center at 11:00 am. All vets are encouraged to attend. Located at the Performing Arts Center on Water Street.
5. A special thanks to John Zutz, Kent Draper and Candy Serafin for the work with the Orange Blossoms the last two Fridays. They managed to raise \$230 in just two days. Great Work!!!
6. July 4th parade is coming up in Wauwatosa. Please let us know if you intend to join in.
7. Due to the continuing shortage of new help at bingo; we will only be doing every 1st 3rd and 5th (if there is one) Tuesday from now on. It is unfair to ask the same 4 or 5 people to do it every Tuesday night as they have for at least the last 4 years.
8. We have one more Brewer Ball game for orange blossoms coming up on August 6th. Additional information will come as the date draws nearer.

A very special thanks to John Morgan and Joe Herbert. John has been a long time president of the chapter. He has done nothing short of an outstanding job. I will rely heavily on his expertise as I plod through my tour in this post. Joe has stepped down as treasurer after many years in that post. I believe he started as treasurer when the first invented money!! He has done a great job and we are all deeply grateful for his support.



Cleaning the Vietnam Veterans Memorial  
on the Milwaukee Lakefront

## Stigma of service may hurt vets' job search

By [Leo Shane III](#), Stars and Stripes Mideast edition, Friday, April 23, 2010

WASHINGTON — When Joe Tryon left the Army in early 2009 he assumed his six years as an officer and command experience in Iraq would make him an attractive employee. More than a year later, he still hasn't found a job.

"I thought my combat leadership would outweigh boardroom experience," the 32-year-old said. "But apparently it does not."

At least part of the reason for that, say veterans groups, is a lingering stigma among some employers who worry what else combat troops carry with them: post-traumatic stress disorder, traumatic brain injuries, or similar mental health problems. Tryon said he heard that concern in several job interviews.

Earlier this week a group of lawmakers led by Sen. Patty Murray, D-Wash., pushed once again to undo that stereotype, proposing legislation to help veterans better showcase their skills to potential employers through job training programs, expanded GI Bill benefits and career counseling advice.

Among all recently separated veterans the unemployment rate now stands at 14.7 percent, well above the national unemployment rate of 9.7. Among veterans under 24 the situation is even worse; Labor officials estimate that more than one in five could not find work last year.

"Part of the issue is there's a real disconnect between the military and the rest of America," said Mark Walker, deputy director of the American Legion's economic division.

"People outside the military don't know about PTSD or TBI. It's all new to them. So they worry, 'Am I going to see some sort of outburst? What might he do?'"



'They found out he was gay.'

Jason Hansman, who served eight years in the Army Reserves including a year-long tour in Iraq, said when he started looking for a job in 2008 he had a political science degree and what he thought was an impressive resume. But it took him five months to get an interview, and that was for an overnight security officer job.

"At that point, I had to take whatever I could get," he said.

Seven months and hundreds more resumes later, Hansman now works with the Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America as an online community manager, in part helping other veterans to find job training resources. He said many of them repeat the same complaint to him; Employers simply don't view young veterans as desirable employees.

Sen. Mark Begich, D-Alaska, said that's incomprehensible. At Tuesday's press conference he recalled that during his time as mayor of Anchorage "one of the best places to look for employees was the military."

Medics make for model emergency services workers, he said. Civil affairs experts bring readily applicable skills to public works departments. Security and crowd control expertise make for a natural transition to police departments.

Murray's bill would help ease some of the difficulty in that transition, allowing new GI benefits to cover the cost of apprenticeships and other technical training programs. Pilot programs outlined in the measure would also look for ways to let veterans skip some licensing and qualification requirements, if their military skills already covered such work.

Numerous veterans groups, including the American Legion and IAVA, are backing the legislation not only as a solution to job training gaps but also as a potential message to employers that these younger veterans are an enticing talent pool.

"Let's face it: These people have been weeded out already," Walker said. "To join the military you need to graduate high school, you need to be in good physical condition, you can't have a criminal record."

"This is a qualified and committed group of people looking for jobs. Hopefully this bill can send a clearer message out that these veterans need to be on the front lines when they get back from war too."

## VA Claims Backlog Update

At a conference designed to help veterans service organizations better understand the issues their clients face, Paul Sullivan of Veterans for Common Sense tried to tie it up in a one-page document of new data from the Veterans Affairs Department: After looking at eight Veterans Benefits Administration regional offices in 2009 and 2010, VA's inspector general found a 28% error rate. In fact, the San Juan, Puerto Rico, overall error rate stood at 41%, while the Nashville office had made errors in 5 % of its post-traumatic stress disorder cases. In Baltimore, 55% of cases of diabetes in connection with Agent Orange had errors, and in Roanoke, Va., 49% of traumatic brain injury cases had errors. "VA has a very significant quality problem in adjudicating their claims," Sullivan said. "VA's own reports indict the place. VBA is the dam that holds veterans up from getting the medical care they need."

Sullivan spoke on a panel that detailed what roadblocks remain as service members transition from active duty to veteran status. He said Congress has focused so much on VA health care that the administrative end has gotten lost in the shuffle. "Some of their computers are older than I am," said Sullivan, who served in the 1991 Gulf War

and who used to work for VA. But Sullivan said the "fixes" aren't that difficult, at least in concept. For example, the idea of a joint Defense Department/VA medical record system has been fussed about for more than a decade as VA and defense officials say their medical records are not compatible, or that the hand-off violates federal HIPAA rules. Other solutions seem simple: There is no undersecretary for benefits. "If there are no leaders, who's running the place?" Sullivan said. "The agency is leaderless and rudderless." "Most people at VA are good-hearted and trying to do their best for the veterans," Sullivan said. "Their own rules are tying them up." He asked that:

- Benefits administration leaders be moved to offices near VA so they could communicate with other VA leaders.
- Conditions like traumatic brain injury fall into the presumptive service-connected injury category to streamline the benefits process.
- The veterans benefits paperwork be cut down from 23 pages to one page, as it is too complicated for veterans dealing with PTSD or brain injuries.
- The benefits administration hire more veterans

[Source: NavyTimes Kelly Kennedy article 12 May 2010 ++]

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## Vietnam War Anniversary Commission:

The Department of Defense is setting up the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Commission. The commission is Congressionally mandated and chartered by the Department of Defense to plan and conduct this commemorative program which may include activities and ceremonies to achieve the following objectives:

- To thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans.
- To highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces.
- To pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War.
- To highlight the advances in technology, science, and

medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War; and

- To recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

The Commission's activities will last until 2025 and will involve Vietnam War Commemoration programs conducted by the federal government, state and local governments, and international, commercial and private organizations. [Source: TREA Washington Update 7 May 2010 ++]

**Operation Freedom on July 3, 2010,  
at the Milwaukee County Zoo,  
10001 West Bluemound Road,  
Milwaukee, Wisconsin  
for veterans and their immediate family.  
Wristbands are needed for the event and  
free parking. Wristbands will be available  
at the chapter meeting on June 16th or  
contact John Morgan at (414) 871-9274 on  
or before June 22, 2010.**

# 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

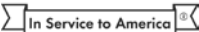


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