

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

15 June, '11

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

2011

20 July, 17 August, 21 September,
19 October, 16 November, 21 December

Chapter 324 Officers

President - Paul Javins 358-2813

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 - Michael Lang 355-1496

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Oliver Williams 538-4416

Flag Day Celebration Tuesday, June 14, 2011 "We Honor the Dead by Serving the Living"

11:30 am

- Presentation of Colors

Milwaukee Metro Non-Commissioned Officers Council

- Chaplain

Rev. Ray Stubbe, USMC – Chaplain Khe Sanh Vietnam

- Moment of Silence and POW/MIA Respect

Mr. Joe Campbell – Vietnam Veteran

- Master of Ceremonies

Mr. Gus Gnorski – Vietnam Veteran

- Welcome

Mr. Paul Mathews, Marcus Center-President/CEO

- Keynote Speaker

Colonel Kenneth Sweet - USAF Retired – WWII & Korean War Veteran

- Milwaukee Elks Lodge #46

Mr. Patrick G. Moore, Past Exalted Ruler – Vietnam Era Veteran

- "Helping Veterans who Survived the War Survived the Peace" Mr. Bob Curry, Founder Dryhooch, Inc. & Vietnam Veteran

12:10 pm - Entertainment by: 484th Army Band-Brass Quintet & Main Street Song & Dance Troupe

1:30 pm – Conclusion

**Marcus Center for the Performing Arts
Peck Pavilion 929 N. Water St., Milwaukee**

The Milwaukee County Zoo invites you to

Military/Veterans Family Day

Enjoy free admission to and parking at the Zoo
Sunday July 3, 2011 • 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Milwaukee County Zoo
10001 W. Bluemound Road
Milwaukee, WI 53226
414-771-3040



Don't miss the Supermarket of Veterans Benefits at the US Bank Gathering Place from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. This is a one-stop shop where veterans can learn about getting the benefits they deserve. Sponsored by the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs and the Milwaukee County Veterans Service Office. Bring your DD-214.

Admission tickets will be available from June 1 to July 1. Tickets can be picked up at your local County Veterans Service Office (CVSO). Contact your local CVSO for details on ticket pick up.

Tickets are required for entry and will be available for immediate family only, with a limited number of 10 tickets per family.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

May 18, 2011

Meeting Called to Order at 7:10 pm 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.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chaplain's Prayer – Joe Campbell

Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, Ronald G. Seider, Joe Herbert, David Titter, Milon Mursec, Kearney Bennet, Joseph Murray, Michael Lang, Nancy Sheridan, John Morgan, Oliver Williams, Ron Coppersmith, Joe Campbell, John Zutz, Janice E. Dahlke, Jerry Kunicki, Kent Draper, Paul Javins, Pat Moore.

Minutes of April 20, 2011 meeting reviewed and accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Kent Draper

Communications

Fisher House Presentation

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – Member Robert Holmes passed away last month RIP – David Titter and Jerry Kunicki have joined our chapter.

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Paul Javins

Education Outreach Update – We need to get word out to schools through our children and grandchildren that we are available to speak at their schools.

Fund Raising – Kent Draper – Our raffle made \$2591.84 after expenses.

OLD BUSINESS

Tuesday Bingo – We continue to ask for volunteers to help in the kitchen on Tuesdays. Our regulars need an occasional night off.

By Laws – In Progress.

NEW BUSINESS

Installation of Officers – Officers were sworn in and meeting was turned over to new President Paul Javins – State Delegates and 2012 Nominating Committee was selected.

Memorial Day Parade

Brewers Fund Raiser – June 8 & 9 and Aug. 3.

Reclaiming Our Heritage – June 4 & 5 - We will have an information table at event.

Vets For Peace Food Pantry – Moved and passed to continue our support with a \$100 donation.

NABVETS Pancake Breakfast – June 4 at Applebees in Bayshore Mall.

Raffle Drawing – Moved and passed to donate \$1900.00 from raffle proceeds to Dry Hootch.

Raffle Winners are: Joe Herbert – Laptop Computer, Jim Fennuty – TV, Sandy Conrady – GPS. Thanks to all who sold and bought tickets.

Adjournment – 8:28 pm.



Troop morale in Afghanistan plummets, report says

By PAULINE JELINEK May 19th 2011 Hawaii News Now - KGMB and KHNL Home Associated Press
WASHINGTON - As fighting and casualties in Afghanistan's war reached an all-time high, U.S. soldiers and Marines there reported plunging morale and the highest rates of mental health problems in five years.

The grim statistics in a new Army report released Thursday dramatize the psychological cost of a military campaign that U.S. commanders and officials say has reversed the momentum of the Taliban insurgency.

Military doctors said the findings from a battlefield survey taken last summer were no surprise given the dramatic increase in combat, which troops reported was at its most intense level since officials began doing mental health analyses in 2003.

"There are few stresses on the human psyche as extreme as the exposure to combat and seeing what war can do," Lt. Gen. Eric B. Schoomaker, the Army surgeon general, said at a Pentagon news conference.

Some 70 percent to 80 percent of troops surveyed for the report said they had seen a buddy killed, roughly half of soldiers and 56 percent of Marines said they'd killed an enemy fighter, and about two-thirds of troops said that a roadside bomb - the No. 1 weapon of insurgents - had gone off within 55 yards of them.

Most of those statistics were significantly higher than what troops said they experienced in the previous year in Afghanistan as well as during the 2007 surge of extra troops into the Iraq war, the report said.

Some 20 percent of troops said they had suffered a psychological problem such as anxiety, severe stress or depression. Considering the intense levels of combat they are seeing, that number may actually be small, said Col. Paul Bliese, who led the last three survey teams to the battlefield, in 2007, 2009 and 2010.

"We would have expected to see a much larger increase in the mental health symptoms and a much larger decrease in morale ... based on these incredibly high rates of exposure" to traumatic combat events, Bliese said. The report's authors took the statistics as evidence that the force is resilient, a trait the military has been working to develop in troops.

The report is a snapshot of the health of the forces in Afghanistan last year, drawn by a mental health team that polled more than 900 soldiers, 335 Marines and 85 mental health workers on the battle-

field in July and August, as troops surged into the country under the Obama administration's new strategy for fighting the insurgency.

Troops said they were receiving better training in suicide prevention and other coping strategies and that mental health treatment was easier to get at the warfront.

"I do believe we're making progress," Schoomaker said.

But a particularly stubborn problem for the Army persisted: About 50 percent of soldiers said they believe getting professional help for their problems would make them appear weak. Defense officials have gone to great lengths over a number of years to encourage troops to get treatment, and Marines made some headway in reducing the perceived stigma, according to the report.

Americans "have not solved this problem in the civilian world," said Dr. Robert Heinssen, a research director at the National Institute of Mental Health.

The military says it boosted the mental health staff in the Afghanistan to 1 for every 646 soldiers last year, compared with 1 for every 1,123 in 2009.

"War affects everyone ... and most are able to deal with their experiences and move on to stable, productive lives," said Joe Davis, a spokesman for the Veterans of Foreign Wars. "Key to coping with those experiences is available care, access to care and knowing that you are not alone."

Some of the report's highlights:

- Only 46.5 percent of soldiers said their morale was medium, high or very high last year, compared with 65.7 percent in 2005. For Marines, it was only 58.6 percent last year compared with 70.4 percent when they were surveyed in 2006 in Iraq. (The report compares numbers of the Marine to their time in Iraq because they were not in Afghanistan in significant numbers before the surge.)
- Nearly 80 percent of Marines and soldiers said they'd seen a member of their unit killed or wounded, compared with roughly half who said that in the earlier years.
- Nearly 1 in 5 soldiers and Marines reported psychological problems such as acute stress, depression or anxiety last year, compared with 1 in 10 among soldiers in 2005 and about 1 in 8 among Marines in 2006.

Vietnam Stats

There are 58,267 names now listed on that polished black wall, including those added in 2010.

The names are arranged in the order in which they were taken from us by date and within each date the names are alphabetized.

Beginning at the apex on panel 1E and going out to the end of the East wall, appearing to recede into the earth (numbered 70E - May 25, 1968), then resuming at the end of the West wall, as the wall emerges from the earth (numbered 70W - continuing May 25, 1968) and ending with a date in 1975. Thus the war's beginning and end meet. The war is complete, coming full circle, yet broken by the earth that bounds the angle's open side and contained within the earth itself.

The first known casualty was Richard B. Fitzgibbon, of North Weymouth, Mass. listed by the U.S. Department of Defense as having been killed on June 8, 1956.

His name is listed on the Wall with that of his son, Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Richard B. Fitzgibbon III, who was killed on Sept. 7, 1965.

There are three sets of fathers and sons on the Wall.

39,996 on the Wall were just 22 or younger.

The largest age group, 8,283 were just 19 years old

3,103 were 18 years old.

12 soldiers on the Wall were 17 years old.

5 soldiers on the Wall were 16 years old.

One soldier, PFC Dan Bullock was 15 years old.

997 soldiers were killed on their first day in Vietnam.

1,448 soldiers were killed on their last day in Vietnam.

31 sets of brothers are on the Wall.

Thirty one sets of parents lost two of their sons.

54 soldiers on the Wall attended Thomas Edison High School in Philadelphia.

8 Women are on the Wall.

244 soldiers were awarded the Medal of Honor during the Vietnam War; 153 of them are on the Wall.

Beallsville, Ohio with a population of 475 lost 6 of her sons.

West Virginia had the highest casualty rate per capita in the nation. There are 711 West Virginians on the Wall.

The most casualty deaths for a single day was on January 31, 1968 ~ 245 deaths.

The most casualty deaths for a single month was May 1968 - 2,415 casualties were incurred.

The Marines of Morenci - They led some of the scrappiest high school football and basketball teams that the little Arizona copper town of Morenci (pop. 5,058) had ever known and cheered. They enjoyed roaring beer busts. In quieter moments, they rode horses along the Coronado Trail, stalked deer in the Apache National Forest. And in the patriotic camaraderie typical of Morenci's mining families, the nine graduates of Morenci High enlisted as a group in the Marine Corps. Their service began on Independence Day, 1966. Only 3 returned home.

The Buddies of Midvale - LeRoy Tafoya, Jimmy Martinez, Tom Gonzales were all boyhood friends and lived on three consecutive streets in Midvale, Utah on Fifth, Sixth and Seventh avenues. They lived only a few yards apart. They played ball at the adjacent sandlot ball field. And they all went to Vietnam..

In a span of 16 dark days in late 1967, all three would be killed. LeRoy was killed on Wednesday, Nov.

22, the fourth anniversary of John F. Kennedy's assassination. Jimmy died less than 24 hours later on

Thanksgiving Day. Tom was shot dead assaulting the enemy on Dec. 7, Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.

Five years studied:

Soldiers hospitalized for suicidal thoughts increased 7000 percent

by Nina Mandell, nydailynews.com May 6th 2011

The rate of soldiers hospitalized for having suicidal thoughts has soared a staggering 7,000% in the last five years, a new Pentagon report says. The report, which covers the period from the fourth year troops were in Afghanistan and the third year they were in Iraq, is the latest troubling survey on potential suicides in the military.

* The Army reported last month there in March had been eight reported potential suicides involving soldiers who were not on active duty, and seven potential suicides among active duty soldiers.

* A study released in March found the suicide rate for female soldiers tripled while at war between 2004 and 2009 compared to soldiers who were not overseas.

* Five months ago, another survey found suicides had doubled among National Guard and U.S. Army Reserve soldiers from 65 in 2009 to 145 in 2010.

“Suicide is a symptom of a bigger problem,”

Post-traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) App Helps Thousands

WASHINGTON (May 17, 2011) – The PTSD Coach smartphone application (app), launched in April by the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and the Department of Defense (DoD), has already helped more than 5,000 users connect with important mental health information and resources.

“This new tool is about helping Veterans and Service members when and where they need it,” said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki. “We are encouraged so many have already downloaded this resource and hope many more will utilize this convenient tool to access VA services.”

Since its launch, the PTSD Coach app has been downloaded by thousands of individuals. While 96 percent of the users so far are located in the United States, the app has also been downloaded in 25 other countries. The app lets users track their PTSD symptoms, links them with public and personalized sources of support, provides accurate information about PTSD, and teaches helpful strategies for managing PTSD symptoms on the go.

Currently, the PTSD Coach app has received perfect customer review scores on the iTunes App Store. Comments from Veterans and family members are overwhelmingly positive and one user describes

Gen. Pete Chiarelli, the army’s top anti-suicide advocate told Time Magazine. “It is rarely based on a single factor, but from work, health, finance and relationship problems.”

The Pentagon says a new diagnostic code and greater awareness of the problem could be helping to drive the numbers higher.

The Defense Department has focused on improving suicide prevention among its troops who suffer from high rates of mental illness following their returns from war zones.

“Efforts to improve suicide prevention awareness, education and support that is readily available to all members of the Army family continue to be of paramount importance,” said Col. Chris Philbrick, deputy director of the Army Health Promotion, Risk Reduction Task Force. “Informed and engaged leaders at every level help foster a sense of responsibility in soldiers, Army civilians and family members.”

the app as “a must for every spouse who has a family member with PTSD.” Professionals have sent positive reviews, suggestions and offers to collaborate on research evaluating the PTSD Coach app.

The app has also already proven to be a useful tool for the staff at the Veterans Crisis Line. Within the first two hours of the app’s official launch, the Crisis Line staff were contacted by a distressed Veteran who reported being instructed by the app to call the crisis line and was subsequently given an appointment at the local VA medical center. Crisis Line staff have begun to regularly recommend this resource to callers.

The app is one of the first in a series of jointly-designed resources by the VA National Center for PTSD and DoD’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology to help Service members and Veterans manage their readjustment challenges and get anonymous assistance. Given the popularity of mobile devices, VA and DoD hope to reach tens of thousands of Veterans, Service members, and their family members with the new suite of apps.

National Center for PTSD Website: <http://www.ptsd.va.gov/public/pages/PTSDCoach.asp>. More apps from DoD’s National Center for Telehealth and Technology can be found at: <http://www.t2health.org/apps>.

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



**Vietnam Veterans of America
Chapter 324
PO Box 18631
Milwaukee, WI 53218**



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