

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

20 June, 2018

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings: 2018

18 July, 15 August, 19 September,

17 October, 21 November, 19 December

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net
414-702-7734

Vice Pres: Oliver Williams w.oliver96(at)yahoo.com
414-358-4416

Secretary: Dennis Symanski dski06(at)hotmail.com
414-453-3600

Treasuer: Pat Moore irishpatat(at)sbcglobal.net
414-354-2533 Cell: 414-731-6029

Director: David Titter d.titterat(at)sbcglobal.net
414-870-7012

Director: John Morgan asa600(at)aol.com
414-871-9274

Membership: Joe Herbert Joe's a Luddite
414-873-7341

Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org
John is listed in the phone book - good luck findinng one

VVA 324 FUNDRAISER

Help raise money for Chapter 324 activities. This is the only fundraising we do all year.

The Brewers allow VVA 324 to ask for donations before games.

The more we raise, the more we can give to help veterans.

We only have three hours each day, so we need all hands on deck.

MILLER PARK PARKING LOT

Thursday July 5 Parking lot opens 4p.m. Game time: 7:10 vs Atlanta

Sunday July 8 Parking lot opens 10a.m. Game time: 1:10 vs Atlanta

(The Brewers will give veterans two free tickets for Sunday games. You can stay and watch the game.)

Meet on the first base side of the park, near the Yount statue.

VVA 324 will reimburse you for parking.

VVA 324 will provide sandwiches and liquid refreshments.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
May 16, 2018

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 pm

A **Moment of Silence** was observed for our brothers and sisters no longer with us, for all POW/MIA's and their families and for all serving our country

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Ciofani, David Titter, John Zutz, John Morgan, Janis Dahlke, Milan Mursec, Pat Moore, Oliver Williams

Minutes of the April 18, 2018 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$4829.48 balance in our checking account

Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Pat Ciofani – Pat Moore

Education Outreach – Pat Ciofani gave a presentation at Whitefish Bay High School

Fund Raising – Miller Park fund raiser July 5 and 8

Website – Contact Pat Moore to post items of interest

NEW BUSINESS

Memorial Day Parade

State Meeting – June 16th

Wauwatosa July 4th Parade – 9am – Staging at 8am

South Milwaukee Parade – July 28th at 11 am

Orange Blossoms – Moved and passed to purchase orange blossoms for our fund raiser

NO AUGUST MEETING

Adjournment – 7:20 pm



The Fake Facebook Pages Targeting Vietnam Veterans

NATASHA BERTRAND APR 12, 2018 [TECHNOLOGY](#)

https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/04/foreign-actors-are-still-targeting-veterans-on-facebook-twitter-and-instagram/557882/?utm_source=atfb

Earlier this week, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg promised lawmakers that his platform would crack down on fake accounts and foreign influence. But at least two Facebook pages linked to websites operating out of Bulgaria are still targeting U.S. veterans of the Vietnam War, according to a letter obtained by The Atlantic that was sent to lawmakers by a nonprofit veteran's organization.

The U.S. military community is not a new or unusual target for foreign influence operations. [A study published in October by the University of Oxford](#) found that three websites linked to Russia—[Veteranstoday.com](#), [Veteransnewsnow.com](#) and [Southfront.org](#)—engaged in “significant and persistent interactions” with veterans during the election, concluding in part that veterans are targeted because they tend to be “community leaders” trusted by the public. Russian operatives went as far as to use advertising tools to target users by demographics and geography throughout 2016, prompting House and Senate investigators to question Facebook, Google, and Twitter executives about how foreign actors were exploiting their platforms to conduct influence operations.

Despite their exposure, however, these operations are ongoing—likely so that foreign actors can use them to spread divisive or fabricated news and other political content, especially in the run-up to the 2018 midterm elections. In August 2017, the nonprofit Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) discovered a Facebook page bearing its name, logo, and registered trademark that was not affiliated with the organization and whose posts linked to “vvets.eu”—a website anonymously registered through Netfinity JSC of Bulgaria. The page shared divisive political content, including posts about the NFL “Take a Knee” boycott controversies and the racially charged “Blue Lives Matter” movement.

The page had nearly 200,000 followers by October 2017, according to VVA, but was not shut down when the organization first flagged it to a Facebook representative on August 23, 2017. (Facebook said later that it had initially [determined](#) that the imposter page had not violated its terms of

use.) VVA's assistant director for policy, Kristofer Goldsmith, told a Facebook representative in late August that the page was “building an audience by sharing incendiary fake news” and propaganda, according to emails obtained by The Atlantic. On August 31, the representative asked Goldsmith whether he had reported the page, and said it was being reviewed by Facebook's internal team. When the page had still not been shut down by September 26, Goldsmith reached out again, this time to flag a video posted by the page with the caption: “Do you think the criminals must suffer?” The Facebook representative did not respond.

At least two facebook pages operating out of Bulgaria are targeting Vietnam Veterans

The page was ultimately taken offline for copyright infringement. But two more like it—“[Nam Vets](#)” and “[Vietnam-Veterans.org](#),” both of which are registered to the same Netfinity JSC of Bulgaria—were subsequently discovered. “[Vietnam-Veterans.org](#)” is registered specifically to an individual named Nikola Mitov, also through Netfinity JSC of Bulgaria. Mitov did not respond to a request for comment sent to an email listed under his name. Facebook did not respond to a request for comment.

Combined, “[Nam Vets](#)” and “[Vietnam-Veterans.org](#)” have fewer than 4,000 followers. But they have used the same tactics to gain traction and engagement as the previous imposter page did. “[Vietnam-Veterans.org](#)” used a logo similar to VVA's as its profile photo, and “[Nam Vets](#),” at its inception in 2015, co-opted the logo entirely. Both pages have promoted divisive political content including [videos of protesters stomping on American flags](#) and [photos of veterans' memorials being defaced](#). The pages are riddled with spelling and grammatical errors, mirroring the pages and ads purchased by Russian actors during the election that impersonated Americans and spread misinformation. “Does all of your friends know what day is today?” reads one link posted by “[Vietnam-Veterans.org](#).” “Very useful information (sic) for each Veteran!” reads another posted by “[Nam Vets](#).”

In the case of the now-defunct “[Heart of Texas](#)” Facebook page, the language was the biggest clue that it was a project spearheaded by foreign

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Vietnam veterans charity dissolved after ‘egregious fraud’

David Jackson and Gary Marx Chicago Tribune Nov. 6, 2017

The Rockford charity called VietNow National Headquarters Inc. raised more than \$15 million during the past 10 years with appeals to help veterans racked by joblessness and post-traumatic stress disorder.

But more than 80 percent of those donations were kept by for-profit telemarketers, records show, and much of the rest was used for administrative costs.

Now that lucrative fundraising machine is being shut down.

Attorney General Lisa Madigan on Monday announced a settlement led by Illinois and 23 other states to dissolve VietNow, which also goes under the name VeteransNow. The charity is being forced to stop operations, and its remaining assets will be distributed to two legitimate charities, according to Madigan and court records.

Madigan sued the charity after a 2015 Tribune investigation revealed that VietNow spent just a fraction of its donations on programs to help military veterans. State attorneys general from across the country soon joined Madigan’s lawsuit and took other enforcement actions. “For years VietNow has scammed donations from people who thought their money would be used to support necessary services for our military veterans,” Madigan said in announcing the settlement.

“Instead, VietNow pocketed donations and did virtually nothing for veterans. Today’s settlement finally will put an end to VietNow’s egregious fraud.”

To settle Madigan’s Cook County lawsuit, VietNow agreed to a court order that removes all 14 of the organization’s board members and bans its four controlling officers — Joseph Lewis, Steven Rucki, Richard Sanders and Terry Buscher — from any future fundraising, charity management or oversight of any charitable assets in Illinois.

Each of the 23 states will enter “into a state-specific settlement agreement with VietNow and its directors containing terms similar to those in the Illinois order,” Madigan said in her news release.

Reached by phone Monday, Lewis said, “I am very heartbroken.” He said there was “no malice” on the charity’s part but that he and other officers failed to provide proper oversight of its finances. “This is the culmination of 34 years of helping veterans, and to go down this way really hurts,” he said.

Carl Metz, ViewNow’s attorney, said charity members are mostly Vietnam veterans who volunteered their time to help fellow veterans and the homeless. He said none of VietNow’s officers benefited financially from their charity work. Records show officers did not receive compensation, according to the most recent tax filing.

“Their motives were altruistic,” Metz said. “Unfortunately, they relied upon professional fundraisers to raise money and to assist them in complying with the necessary financial regulations. This reliance ultimately led to the unfortunate downfall of VietNow.”

Attempts to reach other VietNow officials for comment were not successful.

In its most recent tax filings, for the year ending June 30, 2016, VietNow reported owning land, investment accounts and other assets worth about \$500,000. But a receiver is analyzing the charity’s financial data to update those figures and determine what remains, Madigan’s spokeswoman, Eileen Boyce, told the Tribune.

The receiver will distribute all remaining assets to two national veterans charities, according to the settlement with Madigan.

Half the money will go to Fisher House Foundation Inc., a Maryland-based nonprofit that provides housing to military families whose loved ones are hospitalized. The rest will be directed to Texas-based Operation Homefront Inc., which provides relief and family support programs to help military families overcome short-term problems. Both organizations provide services to Illinois residents.

In a related action earlier this year, a telemarketer used by VietNow called Safety Publications Inc. agreed to cease operations in Illinois after a Madigan lawsuit alleged that the firm misled donors to raise millions of dollars on behalf of veterans and other charitable causes.

Safety co-founder Arthur Olivera also signed a lifetime ban from raising charity funds in Illinois, while Safety’s other co-founder, Adam Herdman, agreed to a three-year prohibition. The 2015 Tribune investigation found that Safety failed to disclose Olivera’s felony arson conviction and also did not properly report the money it raised for VietNow,

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Philanthropy experts: 2/3 of every dollar should be spent on services

Charity continued

among other breaches of state law.

Safety, which had offices in Chicago and several suburbs, reported raising \$4.9 million for VietNow and an array of other U.S. charities from 2008 through 2014, but it gave the nonprofits only about 15 cents of every dollar raised in those seven years and kept the rest for itself, the Tribune found.

In its most recent tax filing, VietNow said it collected a total of \$1.9 million in donations last year — but used 88 percent of that to pay the fees of Safety and other professional fundraisers.

After paying VietNow's office and administrative expenses, the charity reported spending less than 4 percent of its revenues on programs that arguably served veterans.

In one example, it reported spending \$17,182 on meals for homeless people and assistance in unspecified "nationwide projects to benefit the homeless community." And while the charity advertises that it gives scholarships to veterans' children, it reported none last year.

Tim Abney, a member of VietNow since its inception, recalled the charity's initial decision to contract with professional telemarketer Richard Troia in the 1980s.

"It looked like a good thing, but from the beginning I felt the amount of money realized from those people, it was not right. I sat on my hands and shut up, and now I'm a life member of an organization that is going in the dumpster," Abney said.

Madigan in 2004 won a court injunction "permanently enjoining" Troia from charity fundraising in Illinois. But the Tribune reported in 2015 that Troia continued to recommend telemarketers to VietNow and also handle the paperwork required by government agencies around the country, taking a fee of 3 percent from what the solicitors gathered in donations.

Charities that receive high marks from watchdog groups sometimes use telemarketers to raise contributions. But they also deploy advertising, special events, direct mail appeals and corporate sponsorships, allowing them to spend a far higher percentage of the money they raise on programs.

Philanthropy experts say at least two-thirds of every donated dollar should be spent on services for the needy.

VA Pain Management

TREA Washington Update | May 2, 2018

BioWave Corp., a Health Technology company, offers "Smarter Pain Blocking Technology™." Its patented, FDA-approved medical device technology is now in use at 40 U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Centers (VAMCs) nationwide. This includes five of the 19 VA Centers of Innovation (COINs), which lead the charge in specific areas of patient care. The technology, which works on roughly 85 percent of people who try it, is a non-opioid, non-addictive technology that can cut opioid use by as much as 50 percent, while resulting in a greater range of motion and dexterity than while on a drug regimen. It delivers therapeutic signals through the skin into deep tissue, blocking pain signals at the source using electrodes that look like a TENS device. For more information, visit www.biowave.com/veterans.

Facebook continued

actors and not dissatisfied Texans seeking to secede. The memes posted in the group contained typos, grammatical errors, and a general unfamiliarity with basic English phrases. Still, followers engaged with the content and rarely, if ever, raised questions about the grammar. Moreover, some of the Facebook pages exposed as foreign influence operations were not limited to memes and "news" stories—they actually transformed into an organizing force, promoting rallies and protests that average Americans attended during the lead-up to the 2016 election.

"On behalf of the 80,000-plus members of Vietnam Veterans of America, we are requesting the assistance of your committee in investigating the use of social media by foreign actors to target and influence American veterans," Vietnam Veterans of America wrote in their letter to the chairman and ranking member of the House Committee on Energy and Commerce. "As social media becomes ever more important to the daily lives of all generations of veterans, we hope to see the government take a proactive approach to ensuring a safe cyber environment."

In his marathon congressional testimony earlier this week, Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg seemed pessimistic about the prospects of halting foreign influence operations on social-media platforms altogether. "This is an arms race," he told lawmakers. "They're going to keep getting better."



Vietnam Veterans of America #324
PO Box 18631
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Time Valued Material
Correction Service Requested
Forwarding Postage Guaranteed

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 completed application to:
VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218