

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

16 June, 2021

Elks Club

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings

21 July, 18 August, 16 September

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

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

Addition of 3 AO Presumptive Conditions to Begin

VA News Release, May 27, 2021

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced 27 MAY two major decisions related to presumptive conditions associated with Agent Orange.

VA will begin implementing provisions of the William M. Thornberry National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2021 (Public Law 116-283), adding three conditions to the list of those presumptively associated with exposure to herbicide agents, more commonly known as Agent Orange. Those conditions are bladder cancer, hypothyroidism and Parkinsonism. "Many of our Nation's Veterans have waited a long time for these benefits," said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. "VA will not make them wait any longer. This is absolutely the right thing to do for Veterans and their families."

VA will apply the provisions of court orders related to *Nehmer vs. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs*, which may result in an earlier date for entitlement to benefits for Veterans who served in the Republic of Vietnam during the Vietnam War. Vietnam War era Veterans and their survivors, who previously filed and were denied benefits for one of these three new presumptive conditions, will have their cases automatically reviewed without the need to refile a claim. VA will send letters to impacted Veterans and survivors.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
May 19, 2021

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by President Pat Ciofani

Attendance – Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore, John Morgan, John Zutz and Dennis Szymanski

Minutes of the April 21st meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer’s Report – Pat Moore - \$3131.58 balance in our checking account

Fund Raising – Brewers are establishing their fund raising policies per COVID restrictions – Will notify organizations when dates become available

Website – www.vietnamvetschapter324.com – contact Pat Moore if you have anything of interest to post

NEW BUSINESS

Wauwatosa Parade July 5th – We will participate in the July 5th Parade

Elections – All current officers and board members have agreed to continue to serve in their elected positions

Adjournment – 7:30 pm

On Memorial Day 2021 A Tigers Tale

In memory of Sgt Robert Crane Phleger USMC Ohio JULY 1938 - MAY 1970

Sgt Phelger USMC was killed on 5 May 1970. This event occurred on Phlegers 1st patrol after returning from Hawaii where he spent his R and R with his wife.

He was dragged by a tiger from his teams harbor site during the wee hours of morning. His team (Rock Mat) found blood trails that led to his remains the next morning. The tiger was standing over its prey. Phelgers teammates opened fire, missed, and the tiger vanished into the jungle.

A couple of weeks later the tiger was stalking the team and moved to attack the team when Sgt. Larkins of Echo Company opened fire and killed the tiger. Then Sgt Larkin and his team put the tiger on their extract helicopter and brought to 1st Recon rear area.

I was on my way to a insert helicopter with my team, when I took that photo.

The jungle. A place where death was a breath away. Daylight was edgy. Three o’clock in the morning was terrifying. Keeping our history alive.

Eric Schwartz,
Delta Co 1st Recon Bn,
1st Marine Division,
Vietnam 1969 1970



Afghan Withdrawal: Arguments for Staying

Daniel DePetris (Opinion), Washington Examiner, February 25, 2021

The momentum to keep American troops engrossed in a 20-year civil war has been given a fresh bolt of energy. The intellectual adrenaline shot was given by the Afghanistan Study Group, co-chaired by former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joe Dunford. Dunford recommended delaying former President Donald Trump's 1 MAY troop withdrawal timetable.

Since the 84-page report was published, a flurry of editorials and op-eds have piggybacked on its recommendations. On 19 FEB, Washington Post columnist David Ignatius wrote that "keeping the troops in place a while longer" is probably the best policy option available. The lobbying appears to be having some effect on the Biden administration. According to a source involved with President Biden's Afghanistan policy deliberations, full withdrawal by 1 MAY is "off the table."

None of us should take arguments against withdrawal laying down. Those who are advocating for a sustained presence have a responsibility to explain why the benefits outweigh the costs. For a start, why would the Taliban actually negotiate an extension with the United States? The movement's *raison d'être* is to expel U.S. and foreign forces from Afghanistan on the road to what it hopes will be an Afghan government under its control, or at least under its sway.

Taliban fighters have fought against the world's only superpower for 20 years for precisely this purpose. The only reason the Taliban agreed to sit down for talks with U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad in late 2018 was that the Trump administration was willing to discuss withdrawal as part of the negotiations. To expect Taliban negotiators to accommodate the U.S. now, regardless of what additional concessions Washington may put on the table, is based on hope, not reality.

Second, what evidence is there that keeping U.S. troops in Afghanistan for another six months will positively affect the intra-Afghan peace talks? Those who make this link overestimate what the U.S. military can do. They also ignore the history of these peace talks. After all, it took seven months for the Afghan government and the Taliban to complete a prisoner exchange process that was designed to be a confidence-building measure.

Another three months went by before the

parties could agree on what to talk about. Since December, the process has been essentially frozen in place, with both delegations trading blame for stonewalling and making excessive demands. All of this is occurring despite the roughly 10,000 U.S. and NATO troops still in the country. On what basis do we believe that a few more months will do what the last 20 years have not?

Third, and most important from the U.S. standpoint, proponents of jettisoning the May 1 withdrawal date consistently underplay the risks of staying in Afghanistan. The Taliban have made it abundantly clear what would happen if the Biden administration decided to stick around: more war and less peace.

Taliban fighters are preparing for escalated operations in preparation for precisely this scenario. U.S. troops would again be prime targets for Taliban offensives, exponentially increasing the prospect of additional U.S. casualties. And as U.S. casualties go up, the pressure in Washington to respond with more troops and more firepower would go up along with it. All of a sudden, a six-month extension turns into the continuation of an indefinite conflict.

Biden needs to think long and hard about what the U.S. can achieve in Afghanistan. He must demand specific answers as to the benefits of a U.S. troop presence past 1 MAY. He must question whether sacrificing more American blood and treasure is the price we need to pay for a peace that may never come.

Military Sleep

Pentagon report calls sleep deprivation a hindrance to readiness. Members of the U.S. military aren't getting enough sleep, and the Pentagon thinks it's a significant problem. A new DoD study estimates 64% of servicemembers routinely sleep for less than seven hours a night. That's nearly double the rate of sleep deprivation among the general public.

Drug Cost vs. Death

A study by the National Board of Economic Research, (NBER) explored how "cost-sharing", in other words co-pays and premiums, can affect patient choices and patient health. The researchers examined Medicare data and found that a relatively modest increase in drug costs (\$10 per prescription) lead to a 33% increase in mortality.

Air Force Adding Self-Serve Beer Taps To Its Arsenal (Let's see the Space Force top that)

Sarah Sicard, MilitaryTimes Observation Pos, March 16, 2021

Those stationed at Ohio's Wright-Patterson Air Force Base soon won't have to crack open a cold one from the comfort of home to enjoy a hand-selected beverage. Instead, patrons of Wings Grille & Lounge will soon be able to play bartender. In an attempt to "augment its current draft beer capabilities,"

Wings put out an official request to acquire a system of up to 20 additional taps that can be connected directly through the bar wall to beer in the walk-in freezer. If that's not the definition of lethality, I don't know what is. Those 20 do-it-



yourself taps can be enjoyed in addition to the 12 the establishment already has, making for "32 self-serve and self-pay draft beer taps".

The equipment solicitation also asks beer-enthusiasts to purchase prepaid swipe cards. Like Dave & Busters, but instead of dispensing funds for arcade games, you'll get a swipe card for a frosty beverage. So, once this whole COVID-19 nightmare releases us from its vice grip, go out and drown your sorrows at a classy, vibrant on-base establishment that enables the opening and closing of your tab on your own terms, because aim high. Beer funnels, helmets, and other accessories are not included, however. You'll have to bring your own.

Military History: How the Rum-Soaked Royal Navy Sobered Up

Wayne Curtis, The Dailey Beast, July 29, 2016

It's been nearly 50 years since British sailors stopped getting a daily ration of liquor. Here's your game plan for this Sunday, 31 JUL: download and crank up a sea shanty, hold aloft a tot of dark, tasty rum, observe a moment of silence, and then swiftly knock it back. For Sunday marks the 46th anniversary of Black Tot Day.

On July 31, 1970 the British Royal Navy ended a centuries-old hallowed tradition: the issuing a daily dram of liquor to sailors aboard its ships. When the day arrived, sailors around the world gathered for a final tot, and the remnants of the barrels were ceremoniously dumped into the ocean. Afterwards, the navy's rum budget was diverted into providing other sort of entertainment for sailors. This included bus excursions, golf outings and equipment for discotheques.

Military forces were once, essentially, alcohol-powered fighting machines. The Dutch navy provided gin to its sailors. The French (naturally) got wine. The American Continental Navy, established to fight in the War of Independence, included in its charter the issue of a half pint of rum daily to every man, with more doled out for extra duty and during military engagement. But the British navy had the most rococo,

highly evolved, and well- documented history of drinking on the high seas.

The daily tot likely started for a simple reason. Water in the casks would often develop algae and taste putrid and sour. And beer (also rationed for centuries) didn't hold up well in humid heat; captain's letters often referred to the beer on board as "stinking." Higher proof spirits, however, retained their bright, sweet flavor far longer (even improving in the barrel), and as such were much in demand by seamen living on a diet of bland porridge and salted meat. Liquor rations may not have kept men hydrated, but at least it offered an oasis of tastiness.

More importantly, of course, alcohol offered a respite from the tedium of shipboard life. In their quarters below decks, men were stacked like cordwood in hammocks in airless spaces, living literal inches away from fellow sailors possessed of uncertain hygiene and almost-certain gastro-intestinal distress. Naturally, the high point of any day was hearing the piper call sailors above decks to receive their daily allotment of spirits. "Good liquor to sailors is preferable to clothing," noted Woodes Rogers, an English privateer and later governor of the Bahamas.

Continued next page

Rum continued

But what liquor? Seamen were rationed fortified wines and brandy when in the waters of Europe and Africa. When the British navy turned its sights to West Indies and North America, “naval rum” became an essential staple. By 1740, writes James Pack in his detailed 1982 history of the spirit, “the rum issue, as the daily alternative to beer, was common practice on the West Indies station.”

Naturally, sailors tended to quaff their daily pint-sized ration all at once. This led to predictable problems. Traversing lines high in the rigging was difficult enough when sober. And even greater problems arose when in port. Drunken sailors got into fights and were killed, and were more easily shanghaied or recruited aboard other ships when potted and staggering about. Famous and revered Admiral Sir Edward Vernon oversaw ships in the West Indies for decades. He thus saw the effects of rum first hand. It was responsible for “stupefying [his sailors’s] rational qualities,” he wrote, resulting in “fatal effects to their moral as well as their health.” I

n August 1740, he issued an edict that contained two sweeping changes to the rum rations. First, it was to be disbursed twice daily, thereby discouraging wholesale guzzling. More significantly, he called for it to be significantly watered down: one part of rum to four parts water.

Sailors called the new drink “grog.” Grog was a type of gum-coated cloth that shed rain nicely and was supposedly favored by Vernon. His men had nicknamed him “Old Grog,” and so a shortened version of the name made the leap to drink, where it has endured to this day. The diluted grog ration was formally incorporated into the naval regulations in 1756, which was followed by a gradual, 260-year history of further watering down. The ration was cut in half in 1823, and then halved again in 1850.

Over the next century, the interest among seaman in partaking of the tot started to fall off; by the 1950s, only a third of navy sailors lined up for it. Then came the Breathalyzer. A meddlesome British newspaper used one to demonstrate that a sailor could still be legal drunk after consuming his ration.

The House of Commons then took up the debate, and eventually decided that what you do with a drunken sailor is not give him control of nuclear weapons and high-tech electronics. A lump sum of several million dollars was paid into the Sailor’s Fund to compensate for the loss of rum, which went to pay

for the disco balls and whatnot.

On July 31, 1970, British navy personnel around the globe donned black armbands to mark the lamentable day. Mock funerals were staged. A British guided-missile destroyer tied up at Pearl Harbor in Hawaii was the nearest British ship to the international date line, so was the last to do away with the tot. Crewmen assembled on deck of the HMS Fife, tossed back their final dram, then tossed glasses into the harbor followed by a barrel. And a centuries-old tradition came to an end. But in doing so, it gave birth to another tradition. So ration yourself a tot (neat, no ice, a blend of Jamaican, Guyanese, and lighter rums), and salute the sacrifice of sailors everywhere.

After

After the Dear John Letter

After the tears

After the weeks of depression

After the mortar attacks

After another crash landing

After the dead and the wounded moved permanently into my brain

After the walk to the guard shack at the perimeter

After entering the brothel in the village of Phu Hiep

After negotiating with the Mamma-son

After picking the tall one with the short hair

After seeing her naked in the candlelight

After hearing her sweet sounds

as we made love in the sweltering heat

After wiping the tears from her pretty face

As she told me her story

After leaving that oven together

After walking the well-worn path to China Beach

After seeing the brightest full moon ever

After finding a large piece of driftwood

After we sat down

After the brilliant light from that moon

transformed the breakers

into a billion dazzling sparks of electricity

After I looked upon her and saw the reflection

of that light as it danced about her face and hair

After I looked into her eyes and saw time standing still

After I put my arm around her

After She laid her head on my shoulder

After all that

I fell in love again

Frank G Schafer



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- Associate Member - 1 year \$20 • Associate Member 3 year \$50 • Associate Life Member \$250
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Make checks payable to VVA324 and mail with this completed application to:
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