

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

15 July, 2020 (Tax Day)

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings 2020:

19 August, 16 September, 21 October, 18 November

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani [rezmel\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net)

414-702-7734

Vice Pres: Oliver Williams [w.oliver96\(at\)yahoo.com](mailto:w.oliver96(at)yahoo.com)

414-358-4416

Secretary: Dennis Symanski [dski06\(at\)hotmail.com](mailto:dski06(at)hotmail.com)

414-453-3600

Treasurer: Pat Moore [irishpatat\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:irishpatat(at)sbcglobal.net)

414-354-2533 Cell: 414-731-6029

Director: Dennis McCormack [dxmccor2\(at\)msn.com](mailto:dxmccor2(at)msn.com)

719-339-9063

Director: David Titter [d.titterat\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:d.titterat(at)sbcglobal.net)

414-870-7012

Director: John Morgan [asa600\(at\)aol.com](mailto:asa600(at)aol.com)

414-871-9274

Membership: Joe Herbert Joe's a Luddite

414-873-7341

Newsletter: John Zutz [john\(at\)zutz.org](mailto:john(at)zutz.org)

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

**ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE JULY MEETING
PLEASE OBSERVE SOCIAL DISTANCES, AND WEAR A MASK**

Covid at the VA

Lauren Katzenberg is the editor of The New York Times's At War channel 7/9/20

This week, the Department of Veterans Affairs announced a surge in positive cases of coronavirus among veterans. Patients in Arizona, Texas and Florida made up nearly half of the 5,254 active cases reported by the department as of Wednesday afternoon — states where the overall infection rate has shot up in recent weeks and private-sector hospitals have warned that they're nearing capacity.

Among V.A. facilities, reporting from five centers make up 27.5 percent of the 5,254 cases, but department officials have said that the department has no concerns about running out of beds. Not all of these patients are hospitalized, and, according to Christina Noel, the department's press secretary, the hospitalization rate of Covid-19 patients is at 18 percent, its lowest since the start of the pandemic.

The department is legally designated as the backup health care system for the United States, and as the country sees infection rates rise in at least

38 states, it may have to take on a bigger role in caring for nonveteran patients than it has thus far. Department hospitals in hard-hit areas like Texas and Arizona are already providing support to state medical centers in 46 cases, V.A. Secretary Robert Wilkie said Tuesday, according to Military Times's Leo Shane III. "It is a balancing act for us, but veterans always come first," Wilkie said. "But the good news is we did not see the explosion in veterans cases that we feared."

As coronavirus cases increase, some department hospitals, like Bay Pines V.A. Healthcare System in St. Petersburg, Fla., are postponing elective surgeries, while facilities all over the country have seen spikes in the use of telehealth appointments.

If you're a veteran who uses the V.A. for your health care, how has the coronavirus changed the way you receive treatment? Have you been treated by the V.A. for Covid-19? How was your experience? Share your story by emailing atwar@nytimes.com.

First Female Green Beret

Thomas Gibbons-Neff, New York Times, July 9, 2020

WASHINGTON — A female National Guard soldier graduated from Army Special Forces training on Thursday and earned the title of Green Beret, the first woman to do so since the Pentagon opened all combat jobs, including those in the Special Operations community, to women in 2016.

The woman, an enlisted soldier, was on track to graduate in April, but was forced to repeat part of the training before continuing to the final portion, known as Robin Sage, which tests the candidates on a range of skills considered essential to becoming a Green Beret, according to military officials. The New York Times first reported the woman's ascension through the roughly yearlong course in February.

The soldier's name and other biographical information have been withheld by the Army for personal and operational security reasons as she enters the secretive Special Operations community.

But her socially distant graduation, during which she received her Special Forces tab and donned her Green Beret alongside her classmates, is a landmark moment, as the Green Berets were one of the last assignments in the Army without any women. In February, there was at least one other woman, a medical sergeant, going through Special Forces training.

IMAGINE

Imagine a world without war?

Oh, what a terrible bore.

Killing for peace is a lot of fun,

If you do it with a bomb or do it with a gun.

Imagine a world without poverty?

Oh, what a terrible sight to foresee.

Without poor people, it's a fact,

How can you have an aristocrat.

Imagine a world without discrimination?

Oh, that would be a total damnation.

Hating someone because of his color,

Makes you superior to one another.

Imagine a world without sin?

Oh, what a terrible state we'd be in.

Stealing and murder is all just a game,

To try and destroy it would be just insane.

By Rich Santiago 11/28/69

Footnote: John Lennon wrote Imagine in 1971.



Mekong Delta's reservoir of abundance runs dry

By Hoang Nam, VNExpress, April 30, 2020

Tre Province, April 2020.

Arguably Vietnam's most fertile region, feted for long as the nation's granary, the Mekong Delta is now a ghost of its former self.

Perhaps nowhere is this more evident, literally and symbolically, than at the region's largest reservoir, Kanh Lap, in Ben Tre Province.

The reservoir, which has a capacity of more than one million cubic meters of water, is virtually bone dry.

After a long drought, the once vast body of water is now a piece of parched land with a few puddles, dead lotus bunches and fishing boats and nets lying motionless on its bed. Birds walk about, looking for food and water pumps stand idle on its banks.

In the immediate vicinity, harvested rice fields stand barren, exposing cracked earth. Vegetable gardens are left untouched with withered grass and weeds.

Kanh Lap, nearly five kilometers long and 40-100 meters wide, is the Mekong Delta's largest manmade freshwater lake. Located in Tan Xuan Commune, it was built at a cost of VND85 billion (\$3.6 million). It opened last August but could only function for six months before it was overcome by a [salinity problem](#). Today the region's largest water reservoir is dry land.

The reservoir is designed to supply water to more than 200,000 people living in 24 communes and towns for household use, and for industrial and irrigation purposes. The fact that it has gone completely dry has thrown daily life into disarray.

New wells dug

Truong Van Chon drove his bike to his duck farm by the lake's bank, which is about a kilometer from his home. At peak salinity, the saltwater content read almost 10 parts per thousand (ppt). Fresh water has a salinity of 0.5 ppt or less.

The 53-year-old farmer had three 30-liter containers that he used to fill with water from the Kanh Lap reservoir. He drove two kilometers to a public freshwater well built by philanthropists about

two weeks earlier.

"When the lake's water turned salty, the ducks could still drink it, but now the lake has dried up, so there is no water for them," Chon said.

He drove back to his farm after filling all three containers. He also has nine cows on his farm. For them, he needs a lot more water, so he buys it from barges selling freshwater at VND70,000 (\$3) a cubic meter. This proved expensive, so he had a new well dug for VND5 million (\$213). However, even this did not work because the water in the well turned out to be alum-contaminated, rendering it undrinkable. Luckily, his four-member family still has enough rainwater stored in a cement storage tank for several months.

They use it frugally, waiting for the rains.

"I have to make up to six trips a day to bring enough water in these containers for the cows and ducks," Chon said.

Water deprivation has caused his ducks' fertility rate



A man walks in the dried-up Kanh Lap reservoir in Ben

to drop.

Chon's family has decided to wait for about a month before sowing a new rice crop as they want the rainy season to wash away some of the salinity in his 2,000-square-meter field.

The family is one of the 11,000 deprived of freshwater in Ba Tri District this season. People here have to buy freshwater, which can cost as much as VND150,000 (\$6.41) a cubic meter because 12 water supplying plants are also suffering from saline intrusion.

In Ba Tri, more than 4,300 hectares of new rice crop have withered and farmers have used it feed their cows. More than 100,000 cows, goats and pigs are also facing a serious water shortage. It is estimated that the total damage caused by the saltwater intrusion and drought in the district is about VND150 billion (\$6.3 million).

Continued next page

Delta continued

Ho Van Thuong, deputy head of the district's Agriculture and Rural Development Office, said the lake management agency has proposed to dredge the lake bed and increase water storage capacity. However, higher authorities are still considering the proposal over concerns that dredging can increase salinity levels and the risk of land erosion.

"In the long run, we are asking management authorities to continue to purify salinity in the reservoir so the citizens have water to use next dry season," Thuong said.

The saltwater intrusion and drought has arrived earlier this year and have severely depleted freshwater sources of more than 80,000 households and 43,000 hectares of rice fields in six Mekong Delta provinces: Tien Giang, Ben Tre, Long An, Kien Giang, Ca Mau and Soc Trang. All of them have declared the situation

an emergency.

The government has spent a total of VND530 billion (\$22.5 million) for the six provinces as well as two other Mekong Delta provinces of Tra Vinh and Bac Lieu to help them with the crisis.

Last month, meteorologists warned that the Mekong Delta would suffer salt intrusion at levels much worse than what was experienced in 2016. They had said that salt intrusion will keep escalating between March 6 and 10 before hitting its highest level in the middle of the month before slowly decreasing in April.

While many experts have blamed climate change and upstream dams on the Mekong River in China and other countries, there is no indication that the situation will improve on this front.

Some have said that the delta, which is also a major agriculture and aquaculture hub for the country,

Troops Who Responded to COVID-19 Crisis Are Now Eligible for These Medals



DOD has approved two awards, the Armed Forces Service Medal (left) and the Humanitarian Service Medal (right), for troops who carried out missions tied to the coronavirus pandemic. (DoD Photos)

By [Gina Harkins](#).

Military.com, 2 Jul 2020
Service members who built hospitals, ran COVID-19 test sites or participated in other missions tied to the ongoing global pandemic are now authorized to receive military awards for those operations.

Defense Department officials this week approved the Armed Forces Service Medal and Humanitarian Service Medal for troops who took part in COVID-19-related missions, officials announced on Wednesday. The medals are approved for both active-duty and Reserve troops -- including members of the [National Guard](#) -- who were tasked with responding to the coronavirus crisis.

“Totally Fearless” Vietnam Hero Awarded the Medal of Honor

Jeremy Lyons, Aug 8, 2018, https://www.warhistoryonline.com/war-articles/vietnam-hero-moh.html?fbclid=IwAR20DZbGilRzIqfOZQjgwL0RBLjPCTQbSZdJ_Qrr1uxefjUaaWgz0N8EMiY



Ed. Note: A little late, but still worth printing.

A battalion of Marines who served in the Vietnam War was determined to see their leader, Sergeant John Canley (a gunnery sergeant at the time), receive the Medal of Honor for service, for his leadership during the war’s week-long, bloody Battle of Hue in 1968.

After their commander was seriously injured, Canley, of 1st Battalion, 1st Marines, immediately took control to help and protect his men. Although wounded by shrapnel himself, he did not allow his injuries to deter him. He led an operation that vanquished the enemy, saved dozens of lives, and helped get his wounded men to safety when the battle was over.

Canley had already received the Purple Heart, two Bronze Stars, and the Navy Cross – an astounding list of achievements for any Marine. However, his men felt strongly that he deserved more. It took 15 years for the Battalion, led by one of Canley’s Marines, John Ligato, to get this result. Ligato endured more than 10 “turn downs” by officials before he and his comrades achieved their goal.

“There were times I gave up,” Ligato admitted to the military website military.com. “The irony is that he is one of the most deserved Medal of Honor recipients ever in the history of our country.”

Typically, the Medal of Honor – the highest award given to any soldier – must be awarded within five years of service. Because this one hurdle was proving insurmountable, Ligato and another marine took their proposal to Congresswoman Julia Brownley, D-California (where Canley lives, in Oxnard), in 2014, and persuaded her of the merits of their cause.

Brownley then contacted the Secretary of Defense Jim Mattis, who agreed that Canley was deserving of the recognition. However, Mattis’s office reiterated that the five-year window prevented him from qualifying.

Undaunted, Brownley drafted and promoted H.R. 4641 in the House of Representatives. The document allowed President Donald J. Trump to bestow the Medal on Canley, despite

the time lapse. In July of this year, Canley took a call from the President himself, who signed the official document in early 2018.

The President told him of the outcome of his men’s remarkable perseverance. “Congratulations, you’ve waited long enough,” President Trump told the 80-year-old veteran, who recounted the phone call to the Ventura County Star on July 19th. Trump then added, “We’ve made it happen.” The administration will formally announce Canley’s award when a date for the ceremony is set.

Canley was a gunnery sergeant when he won the Navy Cross. Its citation reads: “Gunnery Sergeant Canley lent words of encouragement to his men. And [his efforts] exhorted them to greater efforts as they drove the enemy from its fortified emplacement.”

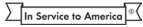
Canley is now Retired Sgt. Major Canley, yet he seems to be taking this latest development in his career in the modest, self-effacing manner his men say is typical of him. But, Ligato added, “He’s totally fearless. You followed him, he was a true leader – something you need in a life or death situation.”

In a release announcing the award, Brownley’s office said, “he neutralized many enemies and saved dozens of our soldiers’ lives. He is a true American hero, and a shining example of the kind of gallantry and humility that makes our Armed Forces the best military in the world.”

“It’s more about them than me,” Canley told the Ventura County Star in July. “This is for the young marines who sacrificed so much. I just happened to be their leader.” Spoken like the true American hero that he is.



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