

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

17 August, '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

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



Chapter 324 Brewer Crew, Miller Park, Milwaukee, WI, August 3, 2011

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

July 20, 2011

Meeting Called to Order at 7:05 pm by President Paul Javins

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

Attendance – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore, Kent Draper, Paul Javins, Ron Coppersmith, Oliver Williams, John Morgan, Joe Herbert, Janice Dahlke, David Titter.

Minutes of June 15, 2011 meeting reviewed and accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Kent Draper

Communications – Copies of VVA National Convention resolutions and letter of good standing received from VVA National – Thank yous received from Fischer House and Reclaiming Our Heritage for donations.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert – Total membership has dropped slightly to 130.

Education Outreach – Ron Coppersmith – Menomonee Falls will be honoring Vietnam Veterans at their annual Veterans Day program. Anyone interested in giving a talk or displaying any artifacts should contact Ron at 262-255-2832.

Fund Raising – Kent Draper – Dry Hootch is planning on doing a raffle and would like our help selling tickets.

OLD BUSINESS

By-Laws – Significant progress has been made. Committee is working on finalizing a draft to present to the membership for their suggestions before being voted on.

NEW BUSINESS

Brewers Fund Raiser – August 3 – We will be doing our final Brewers fund raiser for this season on Wed.



*"Peace? Of course I want peace, Mr. President.
Hell, I'd kill for peace!"*

August 3rd. This is a day game and we will be distributing Orange Blossoms from 10am until the start of the game. All parking fees will be reimbursed by the chapter the day of the game.

Vets For Peace Food Pantry – Moved and passed to donate \$100 in our continuing support – Contact Dennis Johnson – 414-810-0655 for information or if you have large furniture items you would like to donate. He will arrange for pickup.

Walk for the Fallen – August 21 at 10:00 am at the VA Medical Center – Moved and passed to donate \$50 – Volunteers are needed. – Contact Judith Singer at 241-1809 or e-mail: Gentlyjs@yahoo.com

Lao/Hmong Recognition Days July 23 – 24.

For The Good of the Chapter

Free State Fair Admission for Vets and Military – Sunday August 14 with ID.

Free Brewer Tickets for Vets and Military for Sunday home games if tickets are available.

Presidents Message

Adjournment – 7:55 pm.

Veterans with PTSD, government reach settlement

By Kimberly Hefling - The Associated Press Friday Jul 29, 2011

WASHINGTON — More than a thousand Iraq and Afghanistan veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder would be given lifetime disability retirement benefits such as military health insurance under the terms of a settlement reached between the government and the veterans.

Attorneys for the veterans, the Justice Department and the military jointly filed a motion on Thursday that spelled out the terms. The settlement must be approved by a judge to be final.

It also affects another thousand veterans who already had lifetime retirement benefits, but would receive a higher disability rating from the military. All of the veterans affected by the settlement would potentially receive new monthly disability compensation.

The settlement stems from a 2008 class action lawsuit filed in the U.S. Court of Federal Claims in Washington by veterans unable to serve, at least in part, because of the anxiety disorder who said they were illegally denied benefits. The law requires the military to give a disability rating of at least 50 percent to troops discharged for PTSD, but each of the plaintiffs received a disability less than that, said Bart Stichman, co-executive director of the National Veter-

ans Legal Services Program, a nonprofit organization that represented the veterans.

As part of the lawsuit, the military in January 2010 said it would expeditiously review the cases. But attorneys for the veterans grew concerned about the pace in which the cases have been reviewed by military boards. One of the boards reviewing the cases was moving so slow, it was going to take seven years for all the cases to be reviewed, Stichman said.

That led to settlement talks. Timothy Martin, 32, a former specialist in the Tennessee National Guard, who struggles with panic attacks and nightmares related to his war service in Iraq, would benefit from the settlement. He said the health care benefits from the settlement would help with health care for his kids, ages 2 and 5. "The extra money, the back pay, the insurance, it's going to really help change our lives," Martin said.

Each of the veterans in the suit was released from the military between Dec. 17, 2002, and Oct. 14, 2008. PTSD is an anxiety disorder that can develop after a terrifying event in which a person felt physically harmed or threatened.



Front Page - The VVA 324 Brew Crew
Left - Ron Coppersmith, crew coordinator
Below - Pat Moore, pushing orange blossoms

Thanks to all our members who helped with our Miller Park fund-raiser yesterday. It was a nice day and I think we had 8 members working. I deposited \$1265.00 in the bank this morning.

I added a few bucks and some change to round it off.

- Not bad for a few hours work -



As soon as the season is over I will try to get some dates for next season. This is a great fund raiser for us and the more help we have the more we make, so we can help our brother and sister veterans.

Pat Moore

Why military veterans make great employees

By Rye Barcott, Special to CNN July 15, 2011

Editor's note: Rye Barcott, the author of "It Happened on the Way to War," is a former marine and a co-founder of Carolina for Kibera, a nongovernmental organization devoted to alleviating poverty in the Kibera slum of Nairobi.

(CNN) -- Last Sunday, on the final stop of their final day in North America, the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge popped in to a Los Angeles job fair for military veterans and spouses. William and Catherine spent their time with vets and enlightened business leaders looking to pair talent with opportunity.

The unemployment rate among young American veterans is higher than the national average, and the same may be true in the UK, though the UK Office of National Statistics does not post data on veteran employment levels. Yet military service equips most men and women with skills that translate well into private, public and nonprofit sector careers. So why does high unemployment among veterans persist?

Most people associate military service with discipline, hierarchy and command and control. This reputation is well deserved, but it is not complete, and what I found during my five years as a Marine was that the military is a tremendously empowering place for many servicemen and women. It often instills confidence, teamwork and integrity: qualifications crucial for any growing organization.

There is a term in the Marines called the "strategic corporal." Corporals, the lowest-ranking noncommissioned officers, are typically young men and women in their early 20s who have been in the military two-to-five years after enlisting out of high school. There are 21 ranks above corporal, three below it. Yet these young people often find themselves in positions with heavy leadership responsibility in command of small teams.

Occasionally corporals make hasty decisions that can have strategic ramifications. Much of Marine Corps training is designed to equip young men and women with the skills to make smart decisions in high-stakes, time-sensitive scenarios. For example: What do you say to the foreign reporter thrusting a camera in your face and asking you, "Why are you here?"

Do you and your Marines open fire on a police car that has just blazed past a roadblock, is heading

straight at you, and may be a vehicle-born improvised explosive device?

Decision-making under such duress has lingering effects, some of which can be as damaging as they are fortifying. The media reports frequently about post-traumatic stress disorder, an unfortunate label for a psychological condition that, when treated appropriately, can be overcome.

Employers, however, may not realize this, and the hidden cost of all the attention that post-traumatic stress disorder generates is an unspoken bias among many who fear veterans losing control. The irony of this is that veterans are often far more effective than civilians under duress. Getting shot at tends to widen one's perspective on what is high-pressure, and how to handle it.

So why do unemployment levels remain persistently high? It's in part due to a lack of awareness and an ever-widening gulf between the military and civilian society, particularly among so-called elites. Less than 1% of the U.S. population serves in the armed forces. Veterans make up 20% of Congress today, compared with 70% in 1975.

The same trend is true in the United Kingdom. This is part of the reason why actions like those of the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge matter. The military prides itself on teamwork and the suppression of individual identity. It is service based, and that can come in conflict with modern capitalistic values, especially when greed runs amuck.

One of the greatest challenges veterans have is the self-promotion involved with interviewing for a job. The whole process is an affront to our ethos. Employers would be wise to understand this cultural divide when they are interviewing veterans. They should realize the differences and recognize the strengths within them.

But make no mistake: Hiring veterans is not a matter of charity. For those organizations looking to excel in the world, it is pure, enlightened self-interest. Veterans deliver results. They build teams. They are, in the words of Colin Powell, "force multipliers." That's what 160 employers discovered this past Sunday at a job fair in Los Angeles with the Duke, the Duchess, and a legion of strategic corporals.

With abuse increasing, Army limits addictive meds

By KRISTIN M. HALL - Associated Press | AP – Mon, Jul 11, 2011

FORT CAMPBELL, Ky. (AP) — Faced with rising abuse of prescription drugs, the Army has limited how many painkillers a soldier can get at one time and is threatening disciplinary action for troops caught violating the restriction.

Army data requested by The Associated Press shows the number of soldiers referred for opiate abuse treatment has been growing steadily for at least a decade, a time when increasing numbers of troops have returned from Iraq and Afghanistan with combat or training injuries that can cause chronic pain. The Veterans Administration says more than 50 percent of Iraq and Afghanistan veterans report pain issues as they leave active duty military service.

The Army put limits on painkillers in November by restricting most Schedule II controlled substances, which include narcotics, opiates and amphetamines, to just 30-day prescriptions. Previously, some prescriptions had been available for 60 or 90 days and the average was 40 days. The policy makes an exception for medications for attention deficit hyperactivity disorder and it affects anyone who fills a prescription at an Army hospital or pharmacy, including military spouses, children and retirees.

In June, the Army followed with a policy that soldiers found using the restricted drugs six months after they were prescribed could be disciplined, too. The force carries out random drug tests among active duty soldiers.

Col. Carol W. Labadie, the pharmacy consultant and pharmacy program manager for the Army Surgeon General, said the changes are intended to improve medication safety and encourage soldiers to see their doctors more often if they are having chronic pain.

“In today’s society, more prescriptions are getting written and abuse is high across the world, whether it is the military or the civilian side,” she said.

According to Army data provided to AP, referrals for opiate abuse increased from 87 in fiscal year 1998-99 to 703 referrals in fiscal year 2008-09. There were more than 670 referrals from October 2009 through June 2010, the latest figures available. Opiates include common pain drugs such as oxycodone, sold under the brand name Oxycontin, and hydrocodone, also known as Vicodin.

Soldiers are referred to the Army Substance Abuse Program based on a commander’s recommendation, such as when a soldier tests positive on a drug test.

By limiting the prescriptions to 30 days, the Army is encouraging providers to give patients the smallest amount of medication needed for an acute condition, like a sprained ankle, Labadie said.

It also lowers the risk of abuse by reducing the number of unused prescription drugs, she said. “When it is sitting around, it’s fair game,” she said. “When you’re not taking the medications, you don’t realize someone else has been taking the medications until it’s too late.”

Soldiers can get painkillers for longer than 30 days only if they get the prescription renewed by their physician.

Under the new six-month rule, a soldier who tests positive for a drug that he hasn’t had a prescription for in the last six months gets sent to a medical review officer, who determines if it was a legal use or if the soldier was abusing the drug, Labadie said. The soldier’s commander determines whether a soldier faces punishment or is referred to the Army’s Substance Abuse Program.

“A lot of times the soldier may realize they have a problem but are reluctant to say anything, and, when they do get caught, then the opportunity is there to step up and get help,” Labadie said. “It does help us identify people who want to get help.” Drug abuse in the military can lead to charges under the Uniform Code of Military Justice, a dishonorable discharge or even criminal charges.

As thousands of soldiers have returned from Afghanistan over the past year, the number of prescriptions filled at Blanchfield Army Community Hospital has been rising, said Maj. Paul Kassebaum, who has been serving as the pharmacy chief at the hospital during the deployment.

“With most of the soldiers back from deployment, we are probably going to average around 70,000 outpatient prescriptions a month,” Kassebaum said. Only a small percentage of Fort Campbell patients will be affected by the new rules on controlled substances, he said.

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
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