

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



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: Joe Murray
414-306-3037
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 finding one

Meeting Notice

20 September, 2017

**No August Meeting
Enjoy Your Summer**

Future Meetings 2017
20 September, 18 October,
15 November, 20 December

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com
National web page: www.vva.org

PROPOSAL TO AMEND BYLAWS - SEE PAGE 2

Calling All Members

Chapter Fund Raising at Miller Park

Brewers vs Cincinnati Reds

Saturday, August 12 - Negro League Tribute game (game time 6:30)

Sunday, August 13 - American Legion Day (game time 1:10)

The Brewers allow us to ask for donations in the parking lots.

Parking lots open 3 hours before game time.

Parking fees reimbursed. Drinks and refreshments provided.

Meet near the Yount statue close to home plate.

The more people helping, the more we earn.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

July 19, 2017

Meeting called to Order at 7:05 by President Pat Ciofani

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, Pat Moore, Paul Balge, David Titter, Jeff Landowski, Dennis McCormack, John Morgan, Joe Herbert

Minutes of June 21, 2015 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$ 1496.16 balance in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert

Fund Raising – August 12th and 13th at Miller Park

Website – See Pat Moore to post items of interest to our chapter

OLD BUSINESS

South Milwaukee Parade – Saturday July 29th –

Parade kicks off at 11:00 am

NO AUGUST MEETING

NEW BUSINESS

By-Law Amendment – Due to declining attendance, it was moved and passed that an amendment to our by-laws will be presented and voted on at our September meeting. Our existing by-laws require 6 members and 2 officers to be present for a quorum. In order to continue conducting chapter business, it is being proposed that our by-laws be amended to read 2 members and 2 officers be present to make a quorum. Our regular September meeting will be designated a “Special” meeting in order to conduct this vote. Please attend this meeting so that your opinion can be heard and your vote counted.

For the Good of the Chapter – Our condolences go out to the families of member Ron Coppersmith and associate member Pa Cheng Cha who both recently passed away

Adjournment – 7:50 pm

PROPOSAL TO AMEND BY-LAWS

Due to declining attendance at our monthly meetings, it has been proposed that we amend our by-laws to change the number of members that are required for a quorum. Currently, our by-laws require 6 members and 2 officers to be present to constitute a quorum.

Article V – Meetings

Section 2 – 6 members and 2 officers of the Chapter shall constitute quorum at monthly meetings.

In order to assure that business can be conducted at monthly meetings, it is proposed we amend our by-laws to read:

Article V – Meetings

Section 2 – 2 members and 2 officers of the Chapter shall constitute quorum at the monthly meetings.

It is proposed that discussion and a vote on this change be made at our September 20, 2017 meeting.

Home-from-War

War Stories: Myth, Media & the Ken Burns Vietnam Series

By Jerry Lembcke

https://www.commondreams.org/views/2017/07/26/home-war-war-stories-myth-media-ken-burns-vietnam-series?utm_campaign=shareaholic&utm_medium=facebook&utm_source=socialnetwork

For decades, major news organizations have been taken to task before for giving voice to stories of denigrated veterans without tangible evidence. And yet it persists.

Stories of Vietnam veterans treated badly by war protesters proliferated in the years surrounding the Persian Gulf War of 1991. They were the inspiration for the “yellow ribbon campaign” intended to signal that Gulf War veterans would be treated differently. My book inquiring into the origins and veracity of the stories about disparaged Vietnam veterans came out in 1998. Little did I imagine at the time that, 20 years later, versions of the same stories would be figuring in remembrances appearing upon the 50th anniversaries of some important dates of the war in Vietnam.

The stories have reappeared, prominently, in the June 20 New York Times and the July 16 Washington Post. The Times piece was written by veteran Bill Reynolds who recounted his experience as an infantryman in a bloody Mekong Delta battle in 1967. Reynolds ended the account with the claim that he, “came home through San Francisco’s airport to throngs of hippies harassing me.” The Post story reported on a preview screening Ken Burns’ forthcoming documentary on the war in Vietnam. Following the screening, veteran David Hagerman told Associated Press reporter Holly Ramer that his reception at the Seattle airport was so negative that he “walked into the nearest men’s room, took off my uniform, and threw it in the trash.”

Reynolds’s story strains belief. Civilian airlines brought troops back from Vietnam but they landed at military airbases like Travis. And there are no news reports or photographs from the war years that document his memory that “throngs of hippies” greeted veterans. Hagerman’s memory also raises eyebrows: the abandonment of military property—his uniform—was a serious offense. And despite the numerous versions of this story that circulate, there is no evidence such as photographs of bathroom trash cans draped with uniforms to support the claims. Military personnel had to be in uniform to fly home free making it additionally unlikely that uniforms were shed in the manner described.

Major news organizations have been taken to task before for giving voice to stories of denigrated veterans without tangible evidence. When the 25th anniversary of the war’s end was marked in 2000, a spate of them garnered similar press attention. News critic Jack Shafer then editor of “The Fray” at Slate criticized the Times and U.S. News and World Report for their reports, respectively that Vietnam veterans had been spat on by protesters and had had to abandon their military clothing to avoid harassment.

When President Barak Obama spoke on Memorial Day, 2012 he recalled that Vietnam veterans had been “denigrated” upon their return home. “It was a national shame,” he said, “that should have never happened.” The President went on to pledge that the current generation of veterans would be treated better. The next day, Los Angeles Times editor Michael McGough criticized the president for having “ratified the meme of spat-upon veterans”—an edifying myth, McGough said, but still a myth.

The questionable accuracy of the hostile-homecoming stories is suggested by data from those times. A 1971 survey by Harris Associates conducted for the U.S. Senate reported 94% of the veterans polled saying their reception from their age-group peers was friendly.

The problem with repeating these stories of doubtful truth goes beyond the credibility of the journalism itself. It is rather, the power of the stories to displace the public memory of the war itself and the nature of the opposition to it. The response to Reynolds’ article in the Times is a case in point: of the 159 online comments, 48 or 30% focused on just 13 of the 1,500 words that he had written: “I came home through San Francisco’s airport to throngs of hippies harassing me.” Many more of the comments were of the “thank you for your service” variety that are meaningful only with the backstory of supposedly hostile homecomings as context.

Most importantly, the war that Reynolds had written about, and we need to think about, was occluded by his veteran-as-victim anecdote, a storyline that readers could not resist.

Continued page 5

National Archives

Opens Groundbreaking Vietnam Exhibit November 10, 2017

Press Release · Thursday, March 30, 2017

Remembering Vietnam: Twelve Critical Episodes in the Vietnam War

Washington, DC – The National Archives will open a new exhibition, Remembering Vietnam: Twelve Critical Episodes in the Vietnam War November 10, 2017. The exhibit examines 12 critical episodes in the Vietnam War to provide a framework for understanding the decisions that led to war, events and consequences of the war, and its legacy.

This 3,000-square-foot exhibit uses more than 80 original records from the National Archives – including newly declassified documents – to critically reexamine major events and turning points in the war and address three critical questions about the Vietnam War: Why did the United States get involved? Why did the war last so long? Why was it so controversial?

Remembering Vietnam is free and open to the public, and will be on display in the Lawrence F. O'Brien Gallery of the National Archives Museum in Washington, DC, through January 6, 2019. Presented in part by the Lawrence F. O'Brien Family, Pritzker Military Museum & Library, AARP, FedEx Corporation, and the National Archives Foundation. Additional support provided by the Maris S. Cuneo Foundation, The Eliasberg Family Foundation, Inc.,

and HISTORY®.

More than 50 years after the United States committed combat troops to the war in Vietnam, and more than 40 years since the war ended, the complexity of the conflict is still being unraveled. Historians continue to make discoveries in National Archives' records that provide insight into this critical period.

Remembering Vietnam follows the trajectory of American involvement in Vietnam through six Presidential administrations, and from its World War II origins to the fall of Saigon in 1975.

This groundbreaking exhibit uses original National Archives documents, artifacts, and film footage to explore the policies and decisions that initiated and then escalated American economic and military aid to South Vietnam. Interviews with veterans, journalists, members of the peace movement, Vietnamese civilians, and leading Vietnam War historians provide first-person testimony and analysis of the events. These interviews and historic film footage will be screened in three mini-theaters within the exhibition.

Vietnam Medic Jim McCloughan Presented with Medal of Honor

Vietnam Veterans of America Press Release

(Washington, DC) -- "Forty-eight years after former Spec/5 Jim McCloughan risked his life nine times to rescue, treat, and defend wounded and disoriented comrades, the former Army medic today is to receive the Medal of Honor, our nation's highest award for valor," said John Rowan, National President of Vietnam Veterans of America.

"Forty-eight hours of close-quarter combat during the battle of Nui Yon Hill left dozens of his comrades killed, wounded, or missing in action. 'Doc' McCloughan, then a 23-year-old PFC, suffered wounds three times from shrapnel and small arms fire. Yet he refused medical evacuation because his comrades needed him, and his fellow medic there had been killed," Rowan said.

"I know I speak on behalf of all members of Vietnam Veterans of America when I say that this retired high school coach and teacher from South Haven High

School in Michigan represents the very best of those of us who served with honor in the Vietnam War. I know, too, that Jim has said he is no hero, that 'the real heroes are not here with us,' but in a nation hungry for heroes, Doc McCloughan is the real deal," Rowan said.

"Now he will add the MOH to the dozen decorations he'd previously been awarded," Rowan added, listing the Combat Medical Badge, two Purple Hearts, two Bronze Stars, the U. S. Army Valorous Unit Citation, the National Defense Medal, the Good Conduct Medal, the Vietnam Service Medal, the Vietnam Campaign Medal, the Republic of Vietnam Cross of Gallantry, and the M16 Expert Rifle Badge.

In 2009, his former platoon leader revived the effort to upgrade his Bronze Star with "V" device to a Distinguished Service Cross, and former Secretary of Defense Ash Carter saw fit to upgrade this to a Medal of Honor.

Project 112 & SHAD Update: What Happened - Who Suffered?

Anshu Siripurapu, Mbltchey DC Bureau, July 12, 2017

The Pentagon conducted a series of secret chemical and biological weapons tests involving military personnel in the 1960s and 1970s. Veterans groups and members of Congress are demanding to know exactly what happened – and who has suffered. The tests, known as Project 112 and SHAD (Shipboard Hazard and Defense) involved some 6,000 military personnel between 1962 and 1974, the Vietnam War era. Most served in the Navy and Army. The purpose was to identify any weaknesses to U.S. ships and troops and develop a response plan for a chemical attack.

The tests involved nerve agents like Sarin and Vx, and bacteria such as E. Coli. Sarin and Vx are both lethal. According to DOD documents, death can occur within 10 to 15 minutes of exposure to a fatal dose of Vx. After exposure to a sufficient amount of Sarin, symptoms include, “difficulty breathing, dimness of vision, confusion, drowsiness, coma, and death.” “Veterans were exposed to some of the most extreme and hazardous agents... and they now suffer from debilitating health care conditions,” said Ken Wiseman, senior vice commander of the Virginia Veterans of Foreign Wars. “They want to know more about the extent to which service personnel were exposed.” The Pentagon did not immediately respond to request for comment.

Information about the tests first surfaced in 2000. At the request of the Department of Veterans

Affairs, the Pentagon released some limited data about the nature of the tests, including the locations and the agents used. Since then, the VA has sponsored studies by the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine in 2007 and 2016 to look at the tests’ effects. While they found no significant difference in the health of veterans involved in the tests and those who were not, the authors acknowledged the difficulty of studying this issue.

“Our task was challenging because of the passage of time since the tests, and because many of the documents related to the tests remain classified,” last year’s report said. “Our requests for declassification of additional documents were not approved.” A VA spokesperson did not immediately respond to request for comment.

“It’s been over 50 years since these tests were conducted and the DOD has yet to provide a complete accounting of what truly happened to our service members,” Mike Thompson (D-CA) said. “Veterans can’t wait any longer.” Veterans say they need answers to get the proper medical care.

“We have a duty to make certain our service members’ health is protected both in and out of service, and providing access to classified military records that may prove exposure to toxic substances is critical to veterans applying for VA benefits and service-connection,” Jerry Moran (R-KS) said in a statement.

War Stories Continued

The stories of Vietnam veterans defiled by activists has worked over the years to vilify the anti-war movement and even discredit the many veterans who joined the cause to end the war. The stories fed a belief that the war had been lost on the home front; from the 1980s through the 2016 election, conservative politicians ran for office on a conviction that radicals on campuses and liberals in Congress had sapped American will to win in Vietnam; it is the wellspring of the resentfulness that Donald Trump tapped for his run to the White House.

President Obama’s 2012 Memorial Day speech announcing Pentagon funding for a twelve-year series of Vietnam War anniversary commemorations renewed interest in the war and made the treatment of veterans the focus of that interest. Ken Burns’

film due out in September will keep the war in our conversations.

News coverage of the commemorations and the film will magnify those interests. Let’s hope that news coverage of the remembrances and reception to the film will temper the alluring but dubious reports of unfriendly veteran homecomings with references to more historically grounded research.

Jerry Lembcke is Associate Professor of Sociology at College of Holy Cross in Worcester, MA. He is the author of *The Spitting Image: Myth, Memory, and the Legacy of Vietnam*, *CNN’s Tailwind Tale: Inside Vietnam’s Last Great Myth* and more recently *Hanoi Jane: War, Sex, and Fantasies of Betrayal*. He can be reached at jlembcke@holycross.edu



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- 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)

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Make checks payable to VVA324 and mail with this completed application to:
VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218