

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

No August Meeting - See You in Sept.

Elks Club

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings

16 September, 20 October, 17 November

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

Ed Note: The following article is aimed at fire fighters, but it contains information about dioxin that applies to Vietnam Vets. I urge you to visit the two websites contained here to continue your education.

Expert Warns of Post-Fire Dioxins:

The Most Hazardous Substance in Structure Fire Environments

07/13/2021 <https://www.financialbuzz.com/expert-warns-of-post-fire-dioxins-the-most-hazardous-substance-in-structure-fire-environments/>

Sean Scott, author of The Red Guide to Recovery – Resource Handbook for Disaster Survivors and Secrets of The Insurance Game, is offering up important and often overlooked health and safety information for structural fire survivors, first responders and anyone moving into a home that had previously suffered a fire.

In an in-depth article posted on The Red Guide to Recovery website, Scott, an author, disaster recovery expert and fire restoration contractor who has spent nearly four decades in the construction and restoration business, outlines in detail what 2,3,7,8-tetrachlorodibenzo-p-dioxin (TCDD), better known simply as “dioxin,” is, how dioxins are formed in a fire, and why they pose such serious and overlooked health risks. Dioxins have been identified by scientists as being the second most toxic chemicals

known to man – bested only by radioactive waste.

Dioxins are formed when products containing carbon and chlorine burn, especially plastic, paper, PVC, household chemicals or other products where chlorine is used in the manufacturing process.

“Since it has been established that there is no safe level of exposure to TCDD, the current culture of fire investigators, homeowners, disaster relief workers, insurance adjusters, restoration personnel, and others who enter post-fire structure environments without wearing personal protective equipment must change,” explained Scott.

Visit the article for free and vital information from Sean Scott about the toxicity of dioxins and precautions that should be taken: <https://theredguidetorecovery.com/dioxins-the-most-hazardous-substance-in-structure-fire-environments/>

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

July 21, 2021

Meeting called to order by President Pat Ciofani at

7:00 pm

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

Minutes from June reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$3708.58 in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting – Pat Ciofani – Our annual dues were paid

Fund Raising – Thanks to Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore and Dennis Szymanski for their efforts July 10th at American Family Field - \$652.00 were raised – Also, two of our members donated an additional \$500 each to bring our total up to \$1,652

Website – Contact Pat Moore with any items of interest for the chapter website

OLD BUSINESS

Wisconsin State Council June Meeting – Pat Ciofani – Our documents releasing our delegates for the national convention were turned in

NEW BUSINESS

Donations – Discussion on who to donate our fund raising money to – Discussion will resume at our September meeting

South Milwaukee Heritage Days Parade – We will participate

NO AUGUST MEETING

Adjournment – 7:40 pm

Keeping Records for Our Significant Others

VVA | John A Miterko | May 2021

Veterans need to be well organized when it comes to keeping records for our significant others. They will be stressed out enough dealing with our passing. They do not need the added chore of trying to find critical items necessary for planning funerals and other issues. What follows is a list of documents that are necessary to ensure that things get taken care of in a timely manner when we die.

First is a copy of your DD-214. This is the most important document relating to your military service. It shows a funeral director that you are a veteran and, in some cases, determines the level of services you are eligible for. If you do not have a copy of your DD-214, log on to www.ebenefits.va.gov where you will be able to find and print a copy, as well as review your disability rating.

Second is a copy of your award letter from the VA. This document shows what your disabilities are and their percentages. If you are a 100 percent permanent and totally disabled veteran, the letter will save your significant other a lot of headaches when it comes to filing for Dependent Indemnity Compensation. It also gives the physician who fills out the death certificate a list of conditions that should be named as contributing factors to the veteran's death.

By having the doctor list a service-connected condition as a contributing factor on the death certificate, the widow will not have any difficulty getting the DIC claim approved. As a 100 percent permanent and totally disabled veteran, you are authorized a free death insurance policy providing you filed for that benefit within two years after you received your rating award letter. Locate the phone number for the insurance agency and keep it with the policy.

Then you need to compile all the documents listed below. The items and all pertinent information should be kept in a folder. • Will, • Do Not Resuscitate statement, • Obituary, • Funeral wishes, • Passwords for computers and other items, • List of people to contact other than family (old military buddies, etc.)

Contact your nearest Casualty Assistance Office, for help filing whatever documents are necessary for retirement pay and other issues. If your significant other is not a member of a Veterans Service Organization, locate the nearest VSO that helps with filing DIC claims and performs graveside honors.

This list is by no means complete. However, it will give you a starting point and provide critical information necessary to take care of the most time-sensitive items. AVVA offers a Paper Safe. Most funeral homes have guides, and will provide additional guidance. Take the time and make this one of your priorities.

Dissenting POWs: From Vietnam's Hoa Lo Prison to America Today

Book by Tom Wilber and Jerry Lembcke, Monthly Review Press, 2021.

Review by W.D. Ehrhart

Does anyone ever notice those ubiquitous black-and-white POW/MIA flags anymore? You see them everywhere: post offices; federal, state, and municipal buildings; many banks and other privately owned properties; even at all the rest stops on the New Jersey Turnpike.

I'd be willing to bet that almost no one under the age of 40 has any idea what those flags are supposed to represent, or how and why they got where they are. Indeed, even most people over 40 probably don't know or have long since ceased to think about it.

But for over a quarter of a century, the issue of American prisoners of war and missing in action in Vietnam (POW/MIA) was seldom far from the headlines. It became the *raison d'être* for Richard Nixon's continuation of the war, and the argument for refusing to grant diplomatic recognition to Vietnam for another two decades.

Bruce Franklin's *MIA, or Mythmaking in America* convincingly detailed how the myth of the POW/MIA became mythology. And Elliot Gruner's *Prisoners of Culture* explained how the POWs were transformed from survivors into heroes. Both books were published in 1993, and neither was a bestseller, but soon after they were published, the Clinton administration extended diplomatic recognition to Vietnam, and the POW/MIA issue faded into obscurity.

But now comes a new book that illuminates a side of the POW story that has been largely neglected: the story of POWs who willingly and voluntarily opposed and spoke out against the war while they were still in captivity. The accepted understanding of those men is that they were cowards, traitors, brainwashed, or seeking to curry favor with their captors. The authors argue otherwise.

Tom Wilber is the son of one of these "dissenting POWs," Commander Gene Wilber. Jerry Lembcke is the author of the myth-busting book *The Spitting Image* (1998). They have produced an important book that challenges the argument that dissenting POWs were somehow psychologically damaged, weak, or otherwise compromised, but were instead motivated by conscience, morality, and logic.

Wilber and Lembcke explain how senior

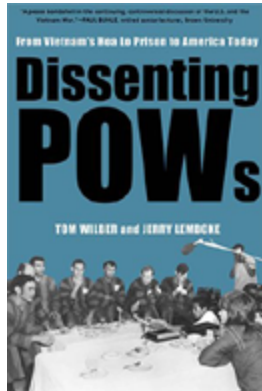
ranking officers (SROs), all of them career military men, took control of their subordinates in the camps, and demanded adherence to what these men saw as their "duty" to sacrifice and suffer for the United States of America. As navy commander and future US senator Jeremiah Denton admitted years later, "We forced them to be brutal to us."

In the wake of the apparent weakness of American POWs during the Korean War—largely mythology itself—for senior career military men like Denton, James Stockdale, and Robinson Risner "torture became a way to confirm their worth as American warriors When the torture they wanted from the Vietnamese wasn't forthcoming, they provoked it. When that didn't work, they inflicted their own damage." As Stockdale later wrote, he wanted his wife and his sons to be "proud" of him.

When a few SROs opted out of that masochistic approach, these men ostracized them and threatened them with court-martial in post-captivity, a threat that Stockdale and others tried unsuccessfully to carry out. They did, however, win the cultural war to portray the Vietnamese as sadistic, inhuman monsters who routinely and with relish resorted to torture, and few former POWs dared to challenge their version of captivity.

The public perception of that experience was powerfully fostered by the National League of Families of American Prisoners in Southeast Asia, the ubiquitous metal bracelets sold by the Victory in Vietnam Association (later renamed Voices in Vital America), and the Hollywood film industry through dozens of movies starring the likes of Sylvester Stallone, Chuck Norris, and Gene Hackman, not to mention the incredibly successful campaign to create and display the POW/MIA flag.

Like Franklin's and Gruner's books, *Dissenting POWs* is not going to make the New York Times Bestseller List, nor will it alter most people's perceptions of the American POW experience during the Vietnam War. But at least, for the sake of posterity and accurate history, the book exists for those who care to know. It illuminates an entirely neglected aspect of that sorry episode in American history that the Vietnamese call the American War.



Destroying the Village in Vietnam

W.J. Astore, <https://bracingviews.com/2021/08/02/destroying-the-village-in-vietnam>

One day, a village of roughly 1200 people in South Vietnam ceased to exist. The U.S. Air Force destroyed it, and the report read “Target 100% destroyed, body-count 1200 KBA (killed by air) confirmed.”

It wasn't an “enemy” village. It was a village that had failed to pay its taxes to a South Vietnamese provincial commander, a lieutenant colonel and ostensibly a U.S. ally. He wanted the village destroyed to set an example to other recalcitrant villages, and the U.S. Air Force did what it does: It put bombs and napalm on target.

At Seventh Air Force headquarters, the brass knew this village's “crime.” As a brigadier general said to then-Lieutenant Colonel James Robert “Cotton” Hildreth, “Damn, Cotton, don't you know what's going on? That village didn't pay their taxes. That [South Vietnamese] lieutenant colonel ... is teaching them a lesson.”

It's a “lesson” that made Cotton Hildreth, who later became a major general, “really sick” and “very bitter” about his role as a combat pilot in the Vietnam War. Later, in an oral interview, he admitted “I don't talk about this [the war] very much.” One can understand why.

At the time, Hildreth brought his concerns to General William Momyer, the Seventh Air Force Commander, but Momyer offered only platitudes, saying that Hildreth was “doing some good, somewhere,” by dropping bombs and napalm and other ordnance on Vietnam and the Vietnamese people.

We know this story only because Cotton Hildreth was willing to share it after being retired from the Air Force for fifteen years. A few days before this village was obliterated, Hildreth and his wingman, flying A-1 Skyraiders, had been ordered to destroy the village with napalm. They refused to do so after making low and slow passes over the village, only to be greeted by children waving their arms in friendship. In “The Wingman and the Village,” Hugh Turley's article about this in the Hyattsville Life & Times (July 2010), Hildreth admitted his wingman had dropped napalm away from the village first, and Hildreth then did the same. The wingman in question, old for a pilot at age 48 and a grandfather, had seen a woman running with two children from her hut. He'd made a snap decision to disobey orders.

As the wingman told Hildreth when they returned to base: “Sir, I have three small grandchildren at home, and I could never face them again if I had followed those orders.” The unnamed wingman was later reassigned to a non-combat role.

When Hildreth was asked later if he'd have destroyed the village if he'd been flying an F-105 “Thud,” which flew higher and much faster than the A-1 Skyraider, he admitted he likely would have, because “you don't see the people.”

What can we learn from this story? This atrocity? That it's very easy to kill when you never see the people being killed. That it's easy to follow orders and much harder to disobey them. That the Air Force brass at headquarters knew they were complicit in mass murder but that it meant more to them to keep one South Vietnamese provincial commander happy than it meant to keep 1200 innocent people alive.

One day in a long and atrocious war, Cotton Hildreth and his wingman decided they'd put humanity first; that they wouldn't destroy a defenseless village despite orders to do so. It didn't matter. That village and those people were destroyed anyway a few days later. It was just another day in a war allegedly fought to contain communism but which instead led to uncontained barbarity by a so-called democratic alliance.

“We had to destroy the village to save it” is a catchphrase from that war that is of course a contradiction in terms. Destruction is destruction. Death is death. No one was saved. Small wonder that Hildreth was so sick, so bitter, and spoke so rarely of his experiences in Vietnam.

A Note on Sources: Oral interview with retired U.S. Air Force Major General James Robert “Cotton” Hildreth on 9/19/96. Hildreth recounts his experience beginning at the 21-minute mark of the interview.

I first learned of Hildreth's interview from David Martin, who wrote about it in 2015, calling it the largest single known atrocity of the Vietnam War. Such atrocities were commonplace, given the wanton use of destructive power by the U.S. military in Vietnam. This is a theme developed by Nick Turse in his book, “Kill Anything that Moves: The Real American War in Vietnam.” (2013)

Hugh Turley, “The Wingman and the Village,” in “Hugh's News,” Hyattsville Life & Times, July 2010.

MODERN RECOVERY: VETERANS & PSYCHEDELIC-ASSISTED THERAPY

In collaboration with Psychedelic.Support

https://vetsolutions.org/e-course/?fbclid=IwAR3e4nF_Caw-obqDaR5dmU1RNZYKJ91DTgp3oinurWVQV5q6Y5zMpRyokPI

Course Description:

Through interactive eLearning, this course provides an in-depth summary of how psychedelic therapy can positively impact veteran health, and how veterans seeking treatment with psychedelics can make the most of their experiences. Explore the most recent scientific research about treatments using ibogaine, psilocybin, ayahuasca, MDMA, ketamine, and 5-MeO-DMT for conditions commonly affecting veterans, such as traumatic brain injury (TBI), post-traumatic stress/post-traumatic stress disorder (PTS/PTSD), and drug and alcohol addiction. You will learn how psychedelics may work in the brain to heal neural circuits and improve cognitive functioning, how to integrate psychedelic experiences, and how to support family members before, during, and after psychedelic experiences.

This course covers the basics of psychedelics, how they work, and what is now known about their benefits and risks for treating conditions that commonly affect veterans and their families. Designed in collaboration with our educational partner Psychedelic.Support, researchers and integration coaches will provide you with the tools you need to make more informed treatment choices for you or for the veteran in your life.

This course is for veterans and their families who want to understand current scientific research on psychedelics and how it applies to veterans, and for anyone else interested in learning about psychedelics and veteran mental health. The course does not require any previous knowledge. This course is presented in collaboration with our friends at Psychedelic.Support.

Self-paced course includes:

Interactive eLearning course

- Videos, animations, and detailed graphics of complex topics

- Take-home resources related to veterans and psychedelics, including questions to ask yourself before, during, and after a journey

- Interviews with VETS coaches and psychedelic therapists about the impact of psychedelic experiences for veterans

- Exclusive sit-downs with VETS co-founders Marcus and Amber Capone about their experiences with psychedelic-assisted therapy

Course Curriculum:

- Lesson 1: Psychedelics 101

 - Learn psychedelic terminology and the history of psychedelics.

- Lesson 2: Veteran Health & Psychedelic Research

 - Understand common mental and physical challenges that veterans face and what current psychedelic research applies to these conditions.

- Lesson 3: How Do Psychedelics Work?

 - Explore how psychedelics interact on the brain, body, and behavior.

- Lesson 4: The Ins & Outs of Psychedelic Substances

 - Gain in-depth knowledge on psychedelic substances and their uses in medical and non-medical settings.

- Lesson 5: Taking a Psychedelic Journey

 - Learn about the importance of preparing for a psychedelic journey, the different types of settings where psychedelics are commonly taken, and harm reduction techniques.

- Lesson 6: Psychedelic Integration & Aftercare

 - Dive deep into the significance of integration and care after a psychedelic experience. Learn skills for practicing integration and connect to resources for obtaining aftercare.



Vietnam Veterans of America #324
PO Box 18631
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Life Membership for all veterans \$50:

VVA is only offering LIFE memberships at \$50. If you have been getting a 1 year membership for \$20 you will need to pay \$50 at your next renew or be dropped from the VVA. If you paid \$50 at your last renewal you will become a LIFE member automatically without any further payment. NEW members will only have the \$50 LIFE membership when they join. (with a DD214 submitted).

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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