

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

18 October, 2017

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings 2017

15 November, 20 December

2018

17 January, 21 February, 21 March, 18 April

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

Choroidal Melanoma Rate 17 Times Higher for Vets

Steve Andrews, NBC WFLA News Channel 8, September 4, 2017

A Dade City Florida couple wants to know why a rare eye cancer is showing up at an alarmingly high rate in veterans than in the general population. According to numbers that the Department of Veterans Affairs provided to Mark and Beth Rutz through a Freedom of Information request, veterans were diagnosed with Choroidal Melanoma at a rate nearly 17 times higher than non-veterans.

Mark Rutz lost an eye to Choroidal Melanoma, a rare cancer that can spread rapidly through the body. "It's frightening and people need to be aware, because it's out there," said Mark's wife Beth. Mark served in Vietnam in 1970-71. He was told Agent Orange won't hurt you. "I remember a guy going through basic in-doc over in Vietnam, picking up a quart jar of Agent Orange and drinking from it," said Mark. Now we know Agent Orange causes several types of cancer.

About 1,900 people in the U.S. are diagnosed each year with Choroidal Melanoma. "It's rare in the general population," explained Mark. Based on those numbers, the disease should only show up in about 126 veterans per year, but the numbers provided by the VA are staggering.

From 2008 to 2010, thousands of new cases were diagnosed each year at VA facilities. In 2008, the VA diagnosed 2,092 cases of Choroidal Melanoma. In 2009 it was 2,237 and in 2010, 2,067 cases were diagnosed. "They're going way up into the 2,000's at the VA facilities, how is that even possible?" asked Beth Rutz.

"What I know is, it's not rare for veterans, for Vietnam veterans," added Mark. The numbers have gradually dropped in the years after 2010. Beth believes that is because less and less Vietnam veterans are still alive. She believes the VA has a moral and ethical obligation to investigate why so many veterans developed this disease.

In mid-August, the Blinded Veterans Association asked Congress and the VA to conduct a comprehensive medical study on Vietnam-era veterans with eye cancer to determine if there is any association with exposure to Agent Orange or any other toxins. "People are losing their eyes. They're losing their vision, there's grandfathers, great grandfathers," Beth explained. Mark Rutz has his own take on what's happening. "Old Navy guys and Army guys are just screwed," he said.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
September 20, 2017

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 pm 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, Jeff Landowski, John Zutz, Joe Herbert, David Titter, John Morgan, Joe Murray

Minutes of July 19, 2017 reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$4085.86 in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert

Website – See Pat Moore to post items of interest

OLD BUSINESS

Miller Park Fund Raiser - \$2900 was raised – Thanks to those who participated

NEW BUSINESS

State Council Meeting – September 23rd

Awards Breakfast – October 29th – Moved and passed to purchase table of 8 at \$104 – Moved and passed to recognize Joe Murray and Chuck Theusch for their contributions and to purchase awards for them

Vote to change By-Laws – Moved and passed unanimously to change Article V Section 2 of our By-Laws to change the number of members needed for a Quorum from 6 members and 2 officers to 2 members and 2 officers.

For the Good of the Chapter

Adjournment – 7:40

Raffle – John Zutz – Gift Card Joe Herbert – VVA Membership Book Joe Murray – Gift Card

VA throws suicide stats out the back door on Friday at 5 p.m.

Thomas E. Ricks

Veterans are about 20 percent more likely than nonveterans to kill themselves, according to a Veterans Affairs press release issued on Friday afternoon at the close of business. (Traditionally, that's when Washington public affairs types put out bad news they don't wish to discuss. Mainly they hope to see it tucked into Saturday newspapers that no one reads.)

Also, the suicide rate for female veterans is 250 percent that for female non-vets.

The document itself states that the study is

a comprehensive analysis of suicide rates among all U.S. Veterans," it reads

"The numbers are staggering," commented retired Gen. Peter Chiarelli, who led Army efforts to reduce suicides among current soldiers.

One data point I found startling was this:

"Rates of suicide were highest among male OEF/OIF/OND veterans ages 18 to 29 and decreased with age" — referring to Operation Enduring Freedom, Operation Iraqi Freedom, and Operation New Dawn.



Volunteers Sought for Vietnam Veterans Memorial

Together We Served Newsletter | Mike Christy | September 2017

When the Vietnam Veterans Memorial was dedicated in Washington, D.C. in 1982, a promise was made to never forget those who served and sacrificed their lives in the Vietnam War. Etched in its black granite walls are the names of 58,318 service members who were killed or remain missing. The Wall honors their courage, sacrifice, and devotion to duty and country. Since its inception, The Wall has become a sacred place for loved ones and visitors to pay their respects. By separating the war from the warrior, The Wall began a process of national healing.

This year marks the 35th Anniversary of The Wall. In commemoration of the Anniversary, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund (VVMF) is honored to host the 2017 Reading of the Names of the more than 58,000 service members inscribed on The Wall in Washington, D.C. The Reading of the Names will take place at The Wall for 65 hours over a four-day period beginning with an opening ceremony on Tuesday, Nov. 7 at 3:00 p.m. Volunteers will read names for approximately eight hours from 4 p.m. on November 7 to 12 a.m. on Nov. 8. Participants will then read the names for 19 hours daily from 5 a.m. until 12 a.m. on November 8, 9, and 10. Volunteer readers can sign up for a specific name on The Wall or for a timeslot in which they are available to read.

VVMF is asking the public to join them in this monumental event, as a reader or as a spectator, in honor of their sacrifice. Registration is now open for

2017's reading times at <http://www.vvmf.org/ROTN>. One of the best ways to honor our fallen is to say their names and share their story. Behind every name on The Wall is a person, a life cut short, and a family changed forever. By saying their names, we are saying we will never forget them.

Remember Pfc. Dan Bullock, the 15-year-old Marine who forged his birth certificate to join the U.S. military and became the youngest American service member to die in the war. Remember Navy chaplain Lt. Vincent Capodanno, who was administering comfort and last rites to Marines when he went to aid a wounded corpsman and was killed by enemy fire. Say the name of Army nurse 1st Lt. Sharon Lane, one of eight women to die in Vietnam, and the only one to die from hostile fire. These brave men and women left behind friends, brothers, sisters, and parents. They had the same hopes and dreams as the rest of us. It is only fitting that we come together at the place our nation has set aside to remember them.

It has been 35 years since The Wall was dedicated, but it remains just as important that we never forget. Never forget their names. Never forget their faces. Never forget what they gave for their country. It's important that we educate current and future generations about the Vietnam War and its impact, legacies, and lessons learned. Join VVMF in keeping the promise that The Wall was built on - the promise to never forget.

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TRIFUNCE CENTURY AGENCY

U.S. MILITARY SERVICE GENDER IDENTIFICATION QUIZ..

- Male pilot
- Female pilot
- Transgender pilot
- Male soldier
- Female soldier
- Transgender soldier
- Male flag
- Female flag
- Transgender flag
- Male sacrifice for country
- Female sacrifice for country
- Transgender sacrifice for country
- Male sailors
- Female sailors
- Transgender sailors
- Male medal for bravery
- Female medal for bravery
- Transgender medal for bravery

100 years of using war to try to end all war - try something else?

DAVID SWANSON

<http://noglory.org/index.php/articles/588-100-years-of-using-war-to-try-to-end-all-war>

This April 4th will be 100 years since the U.S. Senate voted to declare war on Germany and 50 since Martin Luther King Jr. spoke out against the war on Vietnam (49 since he was killed on that speech's first anniversary). Events are being [planned](#) to help us try to finally learn some lessons, to move beyond, not just Vietnam, but war.

That declaration of war on Germany was not for the war that makes up the single most common theme of U.S. entertainment and history. It was for the war that came before that one. This was the Great War, the war to end all wars, the war without which the conditions for the next war would not have existed.

As well recounted in Michael Kazin's *War Against War: The American Fight for Peace 1914-1918*, a major peace movement had the support of a great deal of the United States. When the war finally ended (after the U.S. had actually been in it for about 5% the length of the war on Afghanistan thus far) just about everybody regretted it. The losses in life, limb, sanity, property, civil liberties, democracy, and health were incredible. Death, devastation, a flu epidemic, prohibition, a permanent military and the taxes to go with it, plus predictions of World War II: these were the results, and a lot of people remembered that they had been warned, as well as that the ending of all war had been promised.

The peace activists had warned the U.S. government to stay out of the war (not out of foreign relations, just out of mass-murdering foreign relations). And they had been right. The regret was intense and lasting. It lasted right up until the worst result of World War I came along in the form of World War II. At that point, regret was replaced with forgetting. World War I was erased from popular history, and its [child on steroids](#) was celebrated rather than mourned, and has been celebrated with growing reverence ever since.

The massive peace movement that [outlawed war in 1928](#), had been widespread, [mainstream](#), and aggressive before 1917 as well. Antiwar Congress members had entered into the Congressional Record a sample of the flood of letters and petitions they had received urging that the U.S. stay out of war. Peace groups had held marches and rallies, sent delegations to Europe, met with the president, and pushed to require a popular vote before the launching of any war, believing that the public would vote war down. We'll never know, because the vote was never taken. Instead, the United States jumped into the war, thereby



preventing a negotiated settlement and creating a total victory followed by vicious punishment of the losing side — the very fuel for Nazism, as well as for Italian fascism, Japanese imperialism, and the Sykes-Picot carving up of the Middle East so beloved by that region's residents to this day.

An antiwar exhibit that toured the U.S. in 1916 included a life-sized model stegosaurus that represented the fatal consequences of having heavy armor but no brains. The idea of preparing for war in order to achieve peace, which today is simple commonsense, was widely found to be a great source of humor, as Washington cynically pursued "preparedness." Morris Hillquit, an eloquent socialist

— something of a Bernie Sanders without the 21st-century militarism — asked why European nations, having fully armed themselves to avoid war, hadn't avoided it. "Their antiwar insurance turned out to be a bad case of over-insurance," he said. You prepare for war, and you get war — remarkably enough.

Woodrow Wilson won reelection on an antiwar platform, and could not have won it otherwise. After he opted for war, he was unable to raise an army to fight his war without a draft. And he was unable to sustain a draft without imprisoning people who spoke against it. He saw to it that conscientious objectors were brutally tortured (or, as we would say today, interrogated). Yet people refused, deserted, evaded, and violently fought recruiters by the thousands. The wisdom to reject war was not lacking. It just wasn't followed by those in power.

The understanding that war should be ended, which reached its peak perhaps in the 1920s and 1930s, saw something of a comeback during what the Vietnamese call the American War. Martin Luther King did not propose a different war or a better war, but leaving behind the entire war system. That awareness has grown even as the Vietnam Syndrome has faded and war been normalized. Now, the U.S. popular mind is a mass of contradictions.

In a [recent poll](#), 66% of people in the United States are worried that the U.S. will become engaged in a major war in the next four years. However, the U.S. is engaged in a number of wars right now that

must seem pretty major to the people living through them, wars that have created the greatest refugee crisis so far on the planet and threatened to break similar records for starvation. In addition, 80% of the U.S. public in the very same poll say they support NATO.

There's a 50/50 split on whether to build yet more nukes. A slim majority favors banning refugees who are fleeing the wars. And over [three-quarters](#) of Democrats believe, for partisan rather than empirical reasons, that Russia is unfriendly or an enemy. Despite the warnings of the wise for over a century, people still imagine they can use war preparations to avoid war.

One thing that could help keep us out of more wars is the Trump face now placed on the wars. People who will hate Russia because they hate Trump may at some point oppose Trump's wars because they hate Trump. And those getting active to support refugees may also want to help end the crimes that create the refugees.

Meanwhile, German tanks are again [rolling](#) toward the Russian border, and instead of soliciting denunciations from groups like the Anne Frank Center, as recently done to combat Donald Trump's anti-Semitism, U.S. liberals are generally applauding or avoiding any awareness.

One thing is certain: we will not survive another 100 years of this. Before then, we will have to try [something else](#). We will have to move beyond war to nonviolent conflict resolution, aid, diplomacy, disarmament, cooperation, and the rule of law.

American Legion adopts resolution supporting medical marijuana

By NIKKI WENTLING, STARS AND STRIPES, August 24, 2017

RENO, Nev. — The American Legion adopted a resolution Thursday urging the federal government to allow Department of Veterans Affairs doctors to discuss and recommend medical marijuana in states where it's legal, adding to the group's efforts to get cannabis in the hands of veterans it could help.

According to the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Ohio has the fourth highest rate of overdose deaths in the nation, behind West Virginia, New Hampshire and Kentucky. It's also one of the 29 states that permit some form of cannabis use. Rob Ryan of Blue Ash, Ohio said he's heard from veterans "over and over and over again" who use marijuana as an alternative to addictive opioids.

"When the American Legion says something, Our state congressmen listen. Hopefully, this will have the same impact at the federal level," Ryan said. "People should not be afraid to talk to their doctors."

Ryan shepherded the resolution through his local American Legion post, and then took it to the county, district and state level before it was discussed in Reno this week. Sue Sisley, a psychiatrist studying marijuana's effects on veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder, called it a "game changer."

The American Legion first acted in support of medical marijuana last summer, when it decided to put its weight behind an effort to remove marijuana from the list of Schedule I drugs to allow for more research. Schedule I drugs include heroin, LSD and Ecstasy, and are designated as having no medical use.

In May, VA Secretary David Shulkin said he was open to new evidence showing marijuana could be used to treat veterans. But VA policy implemented in 2011 prohibits its health care providers from sharing their opinions with veterans about marijuana or recommending it for medical use.



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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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I would like to help Chapter 324 by donating \$ _____

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