

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

21 September, 2022

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.
Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

21 September

Future Meetings

21 September, 19 October, 16 November,
21 December

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net

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Secretary: Dennis Symanski dski06(at)hotmail.com

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Treasurer: Pat Moore irishpatat(at)sbcglobal.net

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

Director: John Morgan asa600(at)aol.com

414-871-9274

Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org

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

324 Christmas Party - 7pm, December 21

Members, family, and friends invited

Elks Club, 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

RSVP to Pat Moore - Contact info above



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
September 21, 2022

Meeting called to order at 7:00 pm by President Pat Ciofani

Minutes of July 20, 2022 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$4020.14 in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Pat Ciofani

Website – Contact Pat Moore to post items of interest to the chapter

OLD BUSINESS

Review of 2022 Brewer fund raising efforts

NEW BUSINESS

State Council Meeting Sept 24th

Discussion of potential donations from our fund raising

Christmas Party – Moved and passed to have our Christmas party instead of a meeting on December 21st

Adjournment 7:30 pm

A quick look at the legendary Charles “Chargin” Beckwith

In 1952, the Green Bay Packers drafted “Chargin’ Charlie” Beckwith from the University of Georgia. But seeing as how the Korean War was already in its second year, Chargin’ Charlie declined the offer for a different green uniform.

Commissioned as 2nd Lieutenant, Charles Beckwith served a few years on the Korean Peninsula, in war and later peacetime. It was after Korea that he joined the 82d Airborne, and later, U.S. Army Special Forces.

Beckwith’s first mission was to train the Royal Lao Army in 1960 but his mission to deploy with British SAS to Malaysia as they fought a Communist insurgency is one that forever changed military history.

It was there that Beckwith came down with a mean case of Leptospirosis — a bacterial infection that causes kidney failure and pulmonary hemorrhaging. Doctors did not expect Beckwith to survive.

In fact, they called it one of the three worst cases they’d ever seen. Beckwith was given three weeks to live — and he did.

He survived the infection and his time with the Special Air Service inspired him to develop the American Army’s version of such an elite unit. In 1963, he formed the specialty unit code-name Project Delta,



personally selecting the men best suited to conduct long-range recon operations in Vietnam.

But his time in Delta — and on Earth — was nearly cut short in Vietnam in 1966. Beckwith was shot in his abdomen with a .50-caliber round. He was taped up, but essentially left for dead.

But death still didn’t come.

Beckwith not only recovered, he continued with his military career, fighting in a series of battles from the Tet Offensive in 1968 until the end of the war in 1973.

It was in the mid-70s that Beckwith’s elite unit idea finally became a full reality. He was given the authority and formed the 1st Special Forces Operational Detachment – Delta in 1977. The new elite unit focused on anti-terror and hostage recovery ops, based on the model of the British SAS.

Unfortunately for Beckwith and Delta, their first mission was Operation Eagle Claw, the doomed hostage rescue of Americans held in Iran. After the catastrophic failure of Eagle Claw, Beckwith retired from the Army.

Pentagon Contractors in Afghanistan Pocketed \$108 Billion Over 20 Years

JESSICA CORBETT, Common Dreams, August 9, 2022

Pentagon contractors operating in Afghanistan over the past two decades raked in nearly \$108 billion—funds that “were distributed and spent with a significant lack of transparency,” according to a report published Tuesday.

“These contracts show the shadowy ‘camao economy’ at work in Afghanistan,” said report author Heidi Peltier, director of programs for the Costs of War Project at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International and Public Affairs.

“Military contracting obscures where and how taxpayer money flows, who profits, and how much is lost to waste, fraud, and abuse,” she added. “It also makes it difficult to know how many people are employed, injured, and killed through military contracting.”

Based on Peltier’s review of public contracting databases—USASpending.gov and the Federal Procurement Data System—just over a dozen U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) contractors got more than \$44 billion, or about 41% of the almost \$108 billion, from 2002 to this year.

As the document details:

- In addition, thousands of smaller companies earned billions in contract spending, and about one-third of the contracts (in dollar terms) went to companies that are listed as “undisclosed” or “miscellaneous” in the data. These designations result from the contracts being given to foreign companies without a “DUNS” number, or they are undisclosed with national security or protection as a claimed rationale for secrecy. Whatever the reason, this creates an opacity that makes it impossible to know who exactly received U.S. taxpayer funds, what work was performed, how much profit was earned, and whether the intended purposes of the contracts were served.

- Inadequate oversight, coupled with the issue of sub-contracting, results in a system in which the U.S. government pays contractors who then leave a trail of spending that is nearly impossible to follow.

- “A number of companies performed services in Afghanistan under multiple different business names,” the analysis notes. “A generous interpretation of this is that the businesses pursuing such practices were in fact performing different services. A less generous interpretation is that businesses can obscure how many contracts they are receiving as well as circumvent issues of ineligibility by operating under different names.”

The report emphasizes that the almost \$108 billion that Peltier focused on is “in addition to the trillions of dollars spent on DOD contracts performed in the U.S. over that period.”

The contractors examined by Peltier were paid for construction, lodging, office supplies, refrigeration equipment, transportation, waste disposal, and weapons maintenance in the war-torn country. They operated various facilities—such as dining and troop housing—and were contracted for accounting, fuel, food, guard, and surveillance services.

During the nearly two-decade U.S. occupation, the analysis states, “contractors provided all types of goods and services that were essential to the U.S. military presence in Afghanistan, including services (such as weapons maintenance and fuel supply) that made the U.S. military dependent on and arguably vulnerable to the performance of contractors.”

“Most contracts for work in Afghanistan ended or were rescinded by August 31, 2021, when U.S. troops fully withdrew,” the report says. “Some contractor presence may remain, though it is difficult to know which companies and how many employees could still be working in service of the U.S. government in that country.”

Transparency is a major focus of the document, which highlights that “lack of oversight by the Department of Defense, combined with waste, fraud, and abuse on the part of both contractors and government employees, resulted in billions of misallocated and misspent taxpayer dollars.”

The analysis cites reports by the DOD Inspector General (DODIG) and Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction (SIGAR). In one case involving insufficient voucher reviews for a major contract from 2015 to 2017, the new report notes, “one-fifth of them had questionable or undocumented expenses, totaling over \$536 million.”

In another case, SIGAR found that “a subcontractor of Lockheed Martin submitted fraudulent invoices that resulted in overbilling the Department of Defense millions of dollars.”

Peltier’s report also points to government watchdogs’ findings of “incomplete and shoddy construction of school buildings, warehouses, and other facilities” as well as “bribery of U.S. officials to secure contracts.”

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contractors continued

SIGAR, in its quarterly report to Congress this past January, “conservatively estimated nearly 30% of U.S. appropriations for Afghanistan reconstruction from 2009 to 2019 was lost to waste, fraud, and abuse.” The Pentagon was responsible for the bulk of that spending.

The Brown analysis explains that “the overpayment of illegitimate expenses, and the lack of oversight of contracts by DOD was compounded by yet another problem: In some cases, contractors were hired to perform oversight of other contractors, in lieu of the oversight that should have been performed by DOD.”

Peltier told Responsible Statecraft—which exclusively reported on the new document—that the DODIG “also found oversight by the DOD itself to be insufficient or poorly executed, so really the oversight problems are both ‘the fox guarding the hen house’ as well as internal issues (which in some cases are because of corruption, and in other cases just poor execution).”

The researcher suggested that to help prevent abuse, “there should be a committee or other body to make determinations of whether certain contracts can

legitimately be labeled as ‘undisclosed.’”

“I would recommend the DOD reduce its contracting overall and return to providing more services in-house,” Peltier added, referencing “services like weapons maintenance and security, but also things like food services and lodging, in order to have more command in fulfilling its own needs and reduce the use of contracts and the opportunities for waste, fraud, and abuse.”

In a statement Tuesday, Stephanie Savell, co-director of the Costs of War Project, put Peltier’s findings about Pentagon contractor spending into a broader context.

“One hundred billion is an enormous amount of money, but it’s also just a drop in the bucket when it comes to the full costs of the post-9/11 wars,” Savell noted. “Nearly a million people have lost their lives in these wars and U.S. taxpayers have paid over \$2.3 trillion for the war in Afghanistan alone—and over \$8 trillion total for the post-9/11 wars in other places as well.”

“It’s shocking,” she said, “that the U.S. government hasn’t had a serious reckoning with the U.S. militarized counterterrorism model and its human and financial costs over the past two decades.”

Sgt. Reckless | USMC War Horse

Sgt Reckless was a Marine Corps Horse who served heroically in the Korean War. Sgt Reckless was



featured in The Saturday Evening Post and Life Magazine for her heroic actions during the war. Sgt Reckless was promoted to Staff Sergeant by the Commandant of the US Marine Corps after the war ended and served out her final days with the 1st Marine Division at Camp Pendleton, CA.

Life Magazine named her as one of 100 American Heroes. Go to <https://biggeekdad.com/2011/07/sgt-reckless> to view the video on Sgt. Reckless. ss and <http://www.sgtreckless.com> to read more.



Air Force pilots have always wondered why Navy planes need tail hooks. Well, here's the answer. After a tough day of flying on an aircraft carrier, the planes are always washed, and they use the hooks to hang the planes over the side to dry.

Now you know...

During the day the jets hang upside-down and motionless under the eaves of the carrier. As the sun sets they take off in hunt of the migs on which they feed.



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Life Membership for all veterans \$50:

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Anyone Else:

- Associate Member - 1 year \$20 • Associate Member 3 year \$50 • Associate Life Member \$250
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Phone (_____) _____ E-mail _____

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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