

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America

Meeting Notice

20 November, '13

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

2013

18 December

2014

15 January, 19 February, 19 March, 16 April, 21 May,
18 June, 16 July, 20 August, 17 September,
15 October, 19 November, 17 December

Chapter 324 Officers

President -

Vice President - Pat Moore 354-2533

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Kent Draper 963-0375

Director - Pat Ciofani 702-7734

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray 262-389-7325

Director - Oliver Williams 538-4416

Ms. Veteran America Uses Title To Talk About Sexual Violence

by Denyse Gordon NPR October 13, 2013 7:49 AM

In 2012, Air Force reservist Denyse Gordon was crowned Ms. Veteran America. Soon after she earned her title, she decided to dedicate her year as queen to talking about sexual abuse in the military, something she herself experienced.

"When I was crowned the winner, I knew that I wanted to make every veteran proud, and I knew that in order to do that, I had to be transparent," Gordon tells NPR's Rachel Martin. "I needed to be able to help someone with my story."

Gordon first experienced harassment early in her career, from a high-ranking civilian in her squadron who touched her and spoke to her inappropriately. She told her superiors, who questioned her story and warned her that coming forward could affect the perpetrator's retirement. She felt blamed and never filed a complaint.

Later in her career, a man in another branch of the military physically assaulted Gordon. "He was an officer, and I was enlisted," she says. "So if you tell, you get in trouble, and I didn't want to feel the scrutiny that I felt at my first base, so there was no way I was telling. There was no way." So she buried

it, stayed in the military and threw herself into her schoolwork, earning multiple degrees.

Gordon says she blames the men who harassed and assaulted her, but not the military as an institution. "There are individuals that are flat out not going to believe you. And it's a hard pill to swallow when it's your superiors, when it's your close friends because if they feel if you come forward you will ruin unit cohesion, you will ruin that esprit de corps," says Gordon. "And I hope one day that the leadership would put so much pressure on any offenders that they would think twice, three times before even venturing into that arena."

"This email popped up, and it said, 'Ms. Veteran America Pageant.' And my nose kind of went up in the air because it's — I'm in my boots, you know, I have my gun. I'm combat. But I said, hmm ... why, not, you know? What could happen?"

[10 minute, 49 second interview at URL above]
<http://www.npr.org/2013/10/13/232718358/ms-veteran-america-uses-title-to-talk-about-sexual-violence>

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324
October 16, 2013

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

A Moment of Silence was observed for our brothers and sisters no longer with us and for all POW/MIA's and their families and for the men and women serving our country.

Pledge of Allegiance

Chaplain's Prayer

Member Self-Introductions – Dennis Szymanski, Dennis Pawlak, John Morgan, Ron Coppersmith, Joe Campbell, Joe Herbert, Joe Murray, Milan Mursec, John Zutz, Paul D Balge, Pat Ciofani, Pat Moore

Minutes of September 18, 2013 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report

Communications

Guest Speaker Dennis Pawlak gave a report on the Milwaukee Veterans Court and reported that veterans ordered to get treatment are required to purchase their own monitoring bracelets as ordered by the court. It was moved and passed to donate \$200 to Wisconsin Community Services to be used to purchase these monitoring bracelets for needy vets.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – **Joe Herbert** – Total membership steady at 130

Fund Raising – 3 dates have been secured for 2014 at Miller Park

Website – Joe Murray is going to contact a relative about helping us get a website started

OLD BUSINESS

Acupuncture – FREE – Mondays from 3 – 6 in room 415 of the War Memorial

NEW BUSINESS

Veterans Day Parade – November 9th at 11:00 am – Staging starts at 9 am at 4th and State – Free parking and shuttle busses to and from the Harley Museum – Moved and passed to donate \$45 to purchase a center piece for the dinner.

Americanism Awards Breakfast – Oct 27th – We will honor Kent Draper our past treasurer and Max Seipert,



the young boy who made national news by donating his savings to the Greenfield Police and Fire Department – Moved and passed to spend \$120 for a table of 8 and up to \$100 for plaques for Kent and Max.

Christmas Party – Our normal Dec. meeting will be our Christmas Party – Details will follow.

For the Good of the Chapter – Wisconsin Lutheran High School will hold its annual Veterans Day breakfast on Nov. 11 at 7:30 with a service to follow at 8:30.

Adjournment – 8:05

Veteran ID available

Juneau WI: Mark Grams Dodge County Veterans Service Officer announced starting Dec. 2, veterans may voluntarily request through the Wisconsin DOT a veteran identifier on their Wisconsin driver's license or state-issued identification card.

Veterans who choose to get the identifier must first verify they are eligible before they apply for a new card. The word "VETERAN," marked in red, will appear on the front of a driver's license or identification card at a veteran's request in order to give veterans access to certain programs and services for which certain veterans are eligible.

This new identifier is a way for veterans to quickly identify themselves to organizations and businesses.

In order to ensure a smooth process at the DMV, veterans must first verify their eligibility with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs in Madison before they apply for a new driver's license or ID card.

Effective immediately, veterans may start the process of verifying their eligibility for the identifier. The eligibility process MUST be completed BEFORE veterans go to the Wisconsin Department of Transportation Division of Motor Vehicles to apply for a new identification or driver's license.

About 30,000 of the state's nearly 400,000 veterans will be automatically eligible for the identifier because they have already applied for certain state or federal benefits and have met the criteria for the definition of Wisconsin veteran. All others

must complete the certification process. Veterans are encouraged to start the certification process as soon as possible so they do not experience any delays at the DMV.

To verify eligibility, veterans should call 1-800-WIS-VETS (947-8387).

Those who have already met the criteria for the definition of Wisconsin veteran will be told they may proceed to the DMV and apply for a new driver's license or identification card.

Veterans who have not yet been identified as a Wisconsin veteran may apply for certification using an expedited online form at <http://www.wisvets.com/> or they may download a form and mail it to the organization. Once officials have verified the individual is eligible, the veteran will receive notice they may then proceed to the DMV and apply for a new driver's license or identification card.

Veterans are reminded that the time to complete the process for certification will vary depending on a veteran's specific circumstance. An expected processing time will be posted on the certification site so veterans can estimate when they will receive their verification. Veterans should plan accordingly and begin the verification process at their earliest convenience. Effective immediately, veterans may start the process of verifying their eligibility for the identifier.

The usual driver's license and identification card renewal and/or duplicate fees apply.

As U.S. withdraws, American military gear sold as scrap

By Kevin Sieff, October 20, Washington Post

http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/with-us-withdrawal-from-afghanistan-american-military-gear-sold-as-scrap/2013/10/19/910e68fe-359d-11e3-89db-8002ba99b894_story.html?hpid=z4

BAGRAM, Afghanistan — The armored trucks, televisions, ice cream scoops and nearly everything else shipped here for America's war against the Taliban are now part of the world's biggest garage sale. Every week, as the U.S. troop drawdown accelerates, the United States is selling 12 to 14 million pounds of its equipment on the Afghan market.

Returning that gear to the United States from a landlocked country halfway around

the world would be prohibitively expensive, according to U.S. officials. Instead, they're leaving behind \$7 billion worth of supplies, a would-be boon to the fragile Afghan economy.

But there's one catch: The equipment is being destroyed before it's offered to the Afghan people — to ensure that treadmills, air conditioning units and other rudimentary

Continued on Next Page

Military Gear Continued

appliances aren't used to make roadside bombs.

“Many non-military items have timing equipment or other components in them that can pose a threat. For example, timers can be attached to explosives. Treadmills, stationary bikes, many household appliances and devices, et cetera, have timers,” said Michelle McCaskill, a spokesman for the Pentagon's Defense Logistics Agency.

That policy has produced more scrap metal than Afghanistan has ever seen. It has also led to frustration among Afghans, who feel as if they're being robbed of items like flat-panel televisions and armored vehicles that they could use or sell — no small thing in a country where the average annual income hovers at just over \$500.

In a nation nicknamed the “graveyard of empires,” foreign forces are remembered for what they leave behind. In the 1840s, the British left forts that still stand today. In the 1980s, the Russians left tanks, trucks and aircraft strewn about the country. The United States is leaving heaps of mattresses, barbed wire and shipping containers in scrap yards near its shrinking bases.

“This is America's dustbin,” said Sufi Khan, a trader standing in the middle of an immense scrap yard outside Bagram Airfield, the U.S. military's sprawling headquarters for eastern Afghanistan.

The scrap yard looks like a post-industrial landfill in the middle of the Afghan desert, a surreal outcropping of mangled metal and plastic. There's a tower of treadmills 50 feet high and an acre of American buses, trucks and vans, stripped of seats and engines. An ambulance is perched unsteadily atop a pile of scrap, like it fell from the sky. A mountain of air conditioning units sits next to a mountain of truck axles.

Some of the scrap still shows signs of its previous owners — vehicles spray-painted with American names, mattresses sunken from 12 years of use, bumper stickers from Hawaii or Oklahoma.

A torrent of scrap

The Bagram scrap yard is owned by Feda Mohammad Ulfat, who helped build the neighboring base more than a decade ago, transporting gravel and concrete. Now, Ulfat is helping to dismantle the base, taking in thousands of pounds of American scrap metal every day.

“I never imagined we'd be getting this much stuff,” he said.

Not all of the equipment reaching scrap yard was deliberately damaged: Some was already broken after a decade of use. Ulfat decided several years ago that he would invest in it anyway.

Some of his friends thought he was crazy, but Ulfat had an idea: The expensive American gear could be melted and reconstituted as raw material for an Afghan building boom. He'd gotten rich on dozens of other contracts with the U.S. military, and he assumed this would be no different.

When he first signed the contract, the scrap metal was only trickling in. But over the past six months, America's drawdown has reached a fever pitch in eastern Afghanistan, with dozens of bases being closed. Suddenly, a torrent of scrap metal was delivered to Ulfat's farm. He had to buy more land. Scrap was piled atop scrap. He now spends up to a half-million dollars a month on gear that has been shredded or flattened.

When U.S. officials first began planning for their exit, the idea was to ship home the majority of their equipment, especially expensive military gear like mine-resistant vehicles. That calculus has changed.

POW/MIA - The Big Lie

Stars & Stripes 10 Oct 2013

The Department of Defense unit charged with recovering servicemembers' remains abroad has been holding phony "arrival ceremonies" for seven years, with an honor guard carrying flag-draped coffins off of a cargo plane as though they held the remains returning that day from old battlefields.

The Pentagon acknowledged 9 OCT that no honored dead were in fact arriving, and that the planes used in the ceremonies often couldn't even fly, and were towed into position. The story was first reported on nbcnews.com.

The ceremonies at Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam in Hawaii are held up as a sign of the nation's commitment to its fallen warriors. They have been attended by veterans and families of MIAs, led to believe that they were witnessing the return of Americans killed in World War II, Vietnam and Korea.

In a statement sent to NBC News, the Pentagon wrote: "Part of the ceremony involves symbolically transferring the recovered remains from an aircraft to a vehicle for follow-on transportation to the lab.

Many times, static aircraft are used for the ceremonies, as operational requirements dictate flight schedules and aircraft availability. This transfer symbolizes the arrival of our fallen servicemembers. It is important to note that recovered remains ceremoniously transferred from the aircraft to the [bus] have been in the lab undergoing forensic analysis to determine identity. When remains first arrive in Hawaii, JPAC cannot confirm if the remains are those of an American servicemember."

NBC writes that the ceremonies have been known among some of the military and civilian staff at the base as The Big Lie. The Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command, or JPAC, has come under intense scrutiny in recent months after two scathing reports were released this summer. In July, The Associated Press ran a story exposing a 2012 internal JPAC report that found the agency to be "acutely dysfunctional" with some missions that amounted to little more than paid vacations for staffers.

A second investigation released weeks later by the Government Accountability Office found that Pentagon efforts to account for fallen troops missing overseas were inefficient and in need of overhaul, according to congressional sources. In 2010, lawmakers mandated JPAC to reach an annual goal of recovering at least 200 fallen troops from overseas battlefields by 2015, but it had failed to

build the capacity to do so, the GAO found. Currently the Hawaii-based command averages less than 70 individuals per year.

Much of the inefficiency found by the GAO researchers comes down to a turf war between JPAC and the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing Personnel Office, which shares some of the same responsibilities, Congressional sources said.

According to the NBC report, here's what the audience was shown: A C-17 military transport aircraft was parked, its ramp down, outside a hangar at the base. After generals and dignitaries were introduced, a military chaplain said a prayer, the audience sang "The Star-Spangled Banner," and "Taps" was played. Then an honor guard carried flag-draped transfer cases, which look like coffins, down the ramp and placed them in the back of blue buses, and driven away.

The emcee thanked the audience for "welcoming them home." The script continued, "After removal from the aircraft, the remains will be taken to the Joint POW/MIA Accounting Command's Central Identification Laboratory. There, JPAC scientists will begin the identification process."

Citing eyewitnesses and photographs taken behind the scenes, NBC wrote that what actually happened is very different: Before 6 a.m., the honor guard assembled behind the JPAC headquarters on the base. They loaded transfer cases onto the buses and drove to the hangar. The honor guard loaded the transfer cases into the pre-positioned C-17, then rehearsed for the ceremony. They then returned to the plane, and waited.

The public was allowed in for the 9 a.m. ceremony: invited politicians, media, families of the missing and veterans. Employees from JPAC were bused over to fill out the crowd. Then the show began, with tears and salutes as the remains were marched to the buses, then driven off to the lab to "begin the identification process."

Jesse Baker, an 81-year-old Air Force veteran of World War II and Korea living in Honolulu, told NBC News that he has been to more than 50 of these ceremonies. He said he's always been under the impression that the plane had just arrived carrying recovered remains.

Baker tried to make sense of why the DOD would work so hard to trick him and other veterans.

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



In Service to America

Vietnam Veterans of America #324
PO Box 18631
Milwaukee, WI 53218

Time Valued Material
Correction Service Requested
Forwarding Postage Guaranteed