

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Meeting Notice

19 November, '14

### 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: [www.vietnamvetschapter324.com](http://www.vietnamvetschapter324.com)

National web page: [www.vva.org](http://www.vva.org)

## Future Meetings

**2014**

17 December

**2015**

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

## Chapter 324 Officers

President - Pat Ciofani 702-7734

Vice Pres. - Oliver Williams 358-4416

Secretary - Dennis Symanski 453-3600

Treasurer - Pat Moore 354-2533

Director - Ron Coppersmith 262-255-2832

Director - John Morgan 871-9274

Director - Joe Murray 262-389-7325

Director - Mike Ducette 262-968-5508

## Vietnam POW/MIA Returned to Wisconsin

Army Staff Sgt. James L. Van Bendegom, was buried with full military honors on veterans day. PFC Van Bendegom, 18, of Kenosha, Wis. was assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 12th Infantry Regiment, 4th Infantry Division. On July 12, 1967. Van Bendegom and other members of his 4th Infantry Division were on patrol when they engaged a hostile force in the Ia Drang Valley, Pleiku Province.

PFC Van Bendegom was wounded and treated by a medic. He was left behind when his unit's position was overrun, and he was captured. According to other U.S. POWs released during Operation Homecoming, it was rumored that PFC Van Bendegom was taken from Pleiku Province into Cambodia and was treated at a field hospital. His name did not appear on the PRG died in captivity list.

He was declared dead/body not recovered in May 1973. In April 1989, a U.S. field team in Vietnam interviewed former officers assigned to the B-3 Front, the People's Army of Vietnam theater headquarters in command of operations in Pleiku Province. They were unable to provide any information on PFC Van Bendegom.

During 1992, U.S. investigators in Vietnam received information describing the death of three Americans in captivity. One death was correlated to PFC Van Bendegom.

## New chapter web page

<http://www.vietnamvetschapter324.com>

**Christmas Party at December 17 meeting – mark your calendar**

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 324**  
**October 15, 2014**

**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**

**Prayer – Mike DuCette**

**Minutes of the September 17, 2014 meeting reviewed and accepted**

**Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$7056.30 balance**

**Communications** – Thank you letters from Stand Down, Elks Club, and National Arts Festival for donations

**Attendance** – Dennis Szymanski, Patrick Ciofani, Pat Moore, Mike DuCette, John Morgan, Paul D. Balge, David Titter, John Zutz, Ron Coppersmith, Milan Mursec, Joe Herbert

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**VVA /AVVA Membership Update – Joe Herbert** – No Change

**Fund Raising** – We received 3 dates for 2015 at Miller Park – June 11 and August 14-15

**Website** – Moved and passed to spend \$500 to create and run website to be administered by Doc Dentice

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Ron Hutchinson Donations** – More memorial donations were received from Ron Hutchinson's funeral. An article will appear in the newsletter explaining this story

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Letter From State Council** – A letter was received from State Council explaining requirements for chapters to stay in good standing

**HMONG Event Nov. 7<sup>th</sup>** – An event celebrating 10 years of the HMONG American Peace Academy will be held Nov. 7<sup>th</sup> – Moved and passed to donate \$500 to support this school

**Christmas Party** – Moved and passed to have a Christmas Party instead of our regular December meeting – Families will be invited – Details to follow

**Candy Cane Lane** – Join us on December 12<sup>th</sup> from 6-8 at 94<sup>th</sup> and Manitoba as we join with Chapter 1 to collect donations for the MAAC Fund

**Veterans Day Parade Nov. 8<sup>th</sup>** – We will assemble at 4<sup>th</sup> and State at 9am for the parade

**Latino Vets** – An event will be held Nov. 13<sup>th</sup> from 5:30-7:30 at the War Memorial to honor Latino Vets

**Adjournment – 7:44 pm**

**Huey Helicopter UH-1N Officially Retired**

Gareth Jennings IHS Jane's Defence Weekly Sep 04, 2014

The US Marine Corps has officially retired the last of its Bell UH-1N 'Huey' helicopters after more than 40 years of service, it was announced on 3 SEP 2014. A 'sundown' flypast of the last UH-1N to be operated by Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron (HMLA) 773 took place at Naval Air Station Joint Reserve Base New Orleans, Louisiana, on 28 AUG during which the helicopter was accompanied by its Bell UH-1Y Venom successor. Having entered service in 1971 the UH-1N flew its final combat operation in Afghanistan in 2010, since when it has been used for training and liaison duties. In all, 205 such helicopters were delivered.

As part of the H-1 upgrade program, the UH-1N is being replaced by the UH-1Y (the other part of that program will see the AH-1W SuperCobra replaced by the AH-1Z Viper). Although based on the same UH-1 airframe, the newer UH-1Y is a larger and altogether more capable platform than its predecessor in terms of range, payload, speed, ballistic protection and crash survivability. It is also cheaper to operate and has a smaller logistical footprint. A total of 160 UH-1Ys (of which 10 will be remanufactured airframes) will now be delivered by 2018.

# Male Breast Cancer On the Rise Among VA Patients

VHA Update | Mitch Mirkin | Oct. 02, 2014

A recent study led by Dr. Anita Aggarwal, an oncologist at the Washington, DC, VA Medical Center, is the most extensive look yet at the prevalence of the disease among VA patients. She and her colleagues combed the VA Central Cancer Registry to learn more about how many men in VA have the disease and how it compares with breast cancer among female Veterans who receive care in VA.

Aggarwal presented the findings at a meeting of the American Society for Clinical Oncology in early June. “In the general population, it’s very rare,” points out Aggarwal, noting that less than one percent of breast cancer cases occur in men.

She says it’s on the rise, though, with data showing a 26 percent increase from 1975 to 2010. Scientists don’t yet have a handle on why that is, but they do know that men with breast cancer are typically diagnosed at a later stage than their female peers. “With men, there’s a delay in detection,” says Aggarwal. “There’s less awareness, no screening. And men don’t palpate their breasts every month, as do many women. All these factors combine.”

Males have many similarities with female breast cancer. Men not only have breasts, but they also have milk ducts. And that’s where the majority of male breast cancer originates. It’s a form of the disease called invasive ductal carcinoma. And just as the BRCA genes, among others, can help predict which women are at risk for hereditary breast cancer, the same is true of men.

It turns out that men who test positive for the BRCA 1 or BRCA2 mutations are also at higher risk. But men are far less likely to proactively get the test. Some do if they have a family history of breast cancer. The similarities extend to treatment. As with women, surgery is one option, especially when the cancer is still localized to the breast and hasn’t spread.

“Because they only have a small amount of breast tissue, in most cases they end up getting a mastectomy [removal of the entire breast] instead of a lumpectomy [removal of only the cancerous lump],” says Aggarwal. And although men and women have a different hormone mix, men do have some estrogen and progesterone. So men whose breast cancer is driven by those hormones can get hormone therapy similar to that given to women.

The side effects, though, can be more

troubling for men. “Men can get hot flashes from the hormone therapy and this is very distressing to them — they don’t want to go out in public with this, because they see hot flashes as a woman’s condition,” says Aggarwal. For men it is a tough medical and emotional battle “They get very distressed,” she says. “In my experience, the first questions they will ask are, ‘Why do I have breast cancer? Are you sure that’s what it is?’ They tend to get depressed and socially isolated.”

This is just one facet of the emotional turmoil that men with breast cancer may endure, suggests Aggarwal. The psychosocial aspects of the disease can be especially difficult for male Veterans when they also have posttraumatic stress disorder or another mental health condition. Fortunately, there is help on the emotional front. Aggarwal notes that at her VA medical center and others, support groups for breast cancer patients attract men as well as women.

By the same token, men with breast cancer can attend general cancer support groups. Much of the information will be the same, and they still have the opportunity to bond with other men who face potentially life-threatening cancers whether prostate, lung, colon or other forms.

Aggarwal is now seeking to connect with oncologists and others in VA who work with breast cancer patients to do a more extensive study. “I would like to do a nationwide male breast cancer study,” she says. “It would need to be a wide collaborative effort, since the total number of cases at any one VA or in any one region would be too small. We could look at epidemiology, chemical and radiation exposure, biology of the cancer and psychosocial factors.”

Another federal study is already underway, by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to determine whether male breast cancer is linked to toxic exposures at Camp Lejeune in North Carolina, a Marine base where the water supply was chemically contaminated from the 1950s through the 1980s. The results are expected in 2015. Meanwhile, VA’s Public Health website <http://www.publichealth.va.gov/exposures/camp-lejeune> has health care eligibility information for Veterans and family members who may have been affected.

# Why doesn't the US observe Armistice Day?

Rory Fanning The Guardian Tuesday 11 November

<http://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/nov/11/us-observe-armistice-day-more-comfortable-war-than-peace>

On Tuesday, the United States should be celebrating its 95th Armistice Day, pausing as a nation to think about the terrible costs of war – including the loss of so many lives. Unfortunately, we replaced it with a very different holiday.

On 1 June 1954, less than a year after America exited the Korean War in defeat, the US congress got rid of Armistice Day, which was established in 1919, and started Veterans Day. In place of what had been a celebration of peace, Congress instituted an annual veneration of those who fought. America would ever after celebrate not the beauty of peace, but its purveyors of violence in World Wars I and II, Korea, Vietnam, the Dominican Republic, Lebanon, Grenada, Kosovo, Somalia, Libya, Iraq, Afghanistan and more.

Governments had meant to do the opposite in 1919: if you go back and read the newspapers of the time closely enough, you can almost hear the collective sigh of relief and jubilation on the first Armistice Day. Millions celebrated peace and renounced war on that November day, a year after the violence in Europe had ended: after the mustard gas stopped burning off soldiers' skin; after Gatling guns stopped mowing down

young boys from mostly poor and working class families; after fighter planes stopped streaking the sky; and after bloody bayonets were wiped clean. In the wake of so much carnage, it was then clear to millions of people that wars were not about valour or romantic ideals, but about empire, which benefits a few at the expense of many.

It took only two more wars fighting for empire before the Americans buried that day's history as a celebration of peace.

Kurt Vonnegut, a World War II veteran,

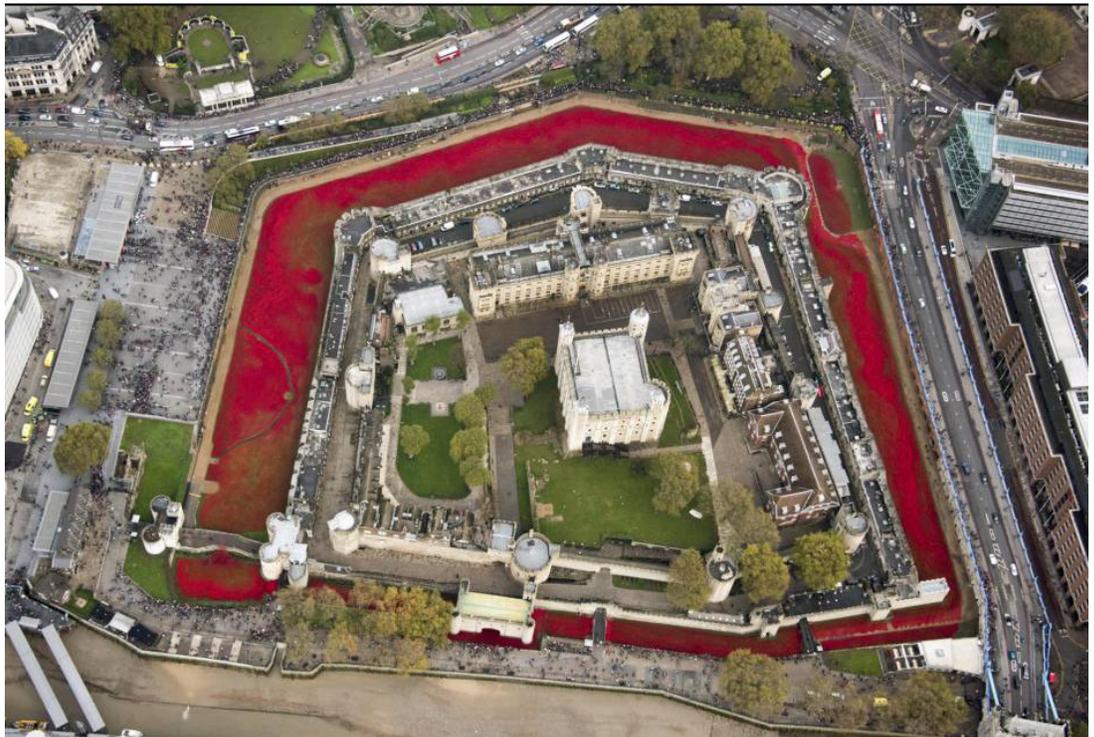
wrote in 1973: "Armistice Day has become Veterans' Day. Armistice Day was sacred. Veterans' Day is not. So I will throw Veterans' Day over my shoulder. Armistice Day I will keep. I don't want to throw away any sacred things.

Armistice Day was sacred because it was intended to evoke memories of fear, pain, suffering, military incompetence, greed and destruction on the grandest scale for those who had participated in war, directly and indirectly. Armistice Day was a hallowed anniversary because it was supposed to protect future life from future wars," said Vonnegut.

Veterans Day, instead, celebrates "heroes" and encourages others to dream of playing the hero themselves, covering themselves in valour. But becoming a "hero" means going off to kill and be killed in a future war – or one of our government's current, unending wars.

I am more angry and frustrated with each passing Veterans Day – this is my tenth since leaving the US Army Rangers as a conscientious objector – because it gets clearer and clearer that Veteran's Day

**See Armistice Day on the next page**



**"Bloodswept Lands and Seas of Red" an installation of 880,000+ ceramic poppies fill the moat surrounding the Tower of London, on the 100th anniversary of the start of the "Great War," in memory of British and Colonial troops lost.**

## Armistice Day continued

is less about honouring veterans than it is about easing the guilty consciences of those who have sent (and continue to send) others to kill and die for reasons that have very little to do with democracy or freedom. I can't seem to shake the feeling that the day is more of a slap in the face than a pat on the back to those who served, despite the endless thank yous, parades, and concerts supposedly held in our honour.

This might be the biggest Veterans Day yet: Metallica, Rihanna, Eminem and Bruce Springsteen are headlining a huge Concert for Valor on the National Mall in Washington DC, sponsored by Chase Bank, Starbucks and HBO. Hundreds of smaller parades, ceremonies, sporting events and concerts will be held across the country in the shadow of the 14th year of the Global War on Terror.

The Armistice-turned-Veterans Day celebrations will be held in a country that has 668 military bases around the globe. They will be held in a country that has conducted military operations in two-thirds of the world's countries since 9/11. They will be held in a

county that spends three quarters of a trillion dollars each year on its military – more than the next thirteen countries combined. They will be held in a country that has taken hundreds of thousands of lives around the world these past 14-years, and which shows no sign of slowing down.

What do the millions of people in Afghanistan, Iraq and many other countries who have lost loved ones to America's wars think of these celebrations? What should veterans coping with Post-traumatic Stress Disorder, dealing with traumatic injuries or struggling

with chronic unemployment think of these events? What do the families of those soldiers and veterans who have taken their own lives feel?

I suspect it'll be difficult to even hear those questions in your head while Metallica is shredding on stage – and maybe that's the point.

Still, many soldiers are beginning to question America's wars and their tolls at home and abroad. According to journalist Matt Kennard, more than 40,000 US soldiers have declared their own personal Armistice Days by becoming conscientious objectors since 9/11 – and I was one of them.

Once I left the military as a conscientious objector and began speaking about it, the personal "thank-yous" from strangers started to dry up – apparently, it's more



**"Bloodswept Lands and Seas of Red," WWI Memorial installation**

heroic to kill people under orders than to demand that you be allowed to stop. But there are many ways to cover yourself in valour and act the hero, even if there's only one way sanctioned by a federal holiday.

If we really wanted to honour veterans, we would abolish Veterans Day and replace it with a day that celebrates peace, not war. Peace is a better way to honour the sacrifice of veterans like me than a day designed to recruit the next generation of soldiers we'll have to thank for their service in yet another war.



In Service to America

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

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## **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