

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

20 November, 2019

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings:

2019: 18 December **2020:** 15 January, 19 February

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

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Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org

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

You might have missed the October newsletter. You're not the only one. The editor's computer took a dive and couldn't be revived in time to do the work. As you can see, there has been some success in reviving it. This may be a rocky undertaking. Wish me luck.

MEMBERS AND THEIR FAMILIES INVITED
VVA324 PARTY

Merry Christmas

Rejoice the spirit of christmas with friends,
family and colleagues.

18 DECEMBER
6 PM
ELKS LODGE
5555 W. GOOD HOPE
RSVP TO PAT MOORE

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

October 16, 2019

Communications

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 Moore, John Morgan, John Zutz, Paul Balge, Pat Ciofani, Elena Sherr (guest)

Meeting was suspended to allow Ms Sherr, representing Horizon Home Care and Hospice, to give a presentation on “We Honor Veterans” hospice program. We were also asked to help make Vietnam Veteran key chains and were asked for input in planning a veterans event that we could jointly participate in.

Meeting was resumed after her presentation Minutes of the September 18, 2019 meeting were not available due to computer problems

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$2753.77 in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting – Pat Ciofani

Education Outreach – Pat Ciofani met with UWM veterans and students

Fund Raising – A May and September 2020 date were secured for our Miller Park Fund Fund Raiser

OLD BUSINESS

State Council Meeting – September 21, 2019

Rewards Breakfast – October 27, 2019

Veterans Day Event – November 16, 2019 – War Memorial and Pottawatomie Casino

NEW BUSINESS

Web-Site - \$196.00 was paid to keep our domain name - \$200 was paid to Jeff Entice to manage our site

Christmas Party – December 18, 2019 at 6:00 pm - Moved and passed to spend up to \$700 for our annual Christmas Party

Adjournment – 7:50 pm

ON PTSD

by Darren Sydney Freeman

A soldier with PTSD fell into a hole and couldn't get out. When a SNCO walked by the Soldier called out for help, but the SNCO yelled back, “Suck it up son, dig deep and drive on,” then threw him a shovel. The Soldier did as he was told and dug that hole deeper.

A Senior Officer went by and the Soldier called out for help again. The Officer told him “use the tools your SNCO has given you”, then threw him a bucket. The Soldier used the tools and he dug the hole deeper still and filled the bucket.

A psychiatrist walked by. The Soldier called, “Help! I can't get out!” so the psychiatrist gave him some drugs and said, “Take this. It will relieve the pain and you will forget about the hole.” The Soldier said “thanks” and followed his advice, but when the pills ran out he was still in the hole.

A well-known psychologist rode by and heard the Soldiers cries for help. He stopped and asked, “How did you get there? Were you born there? Did your parents put you there? Tell me about yourself, it

will alleviate your sense of loneliness.” So the Soldier talked with him for an hour, then the psychologist had to leave, but he said he'd be back next week. The Soldier thanked him, but he was still in the hole.

Another Soldier, just like him, happened to be passing by. The Soldier with PTSD cried out, “Hey, help me. I'm stuck in this hole!” and right away the other Soldier jumped down in there with him. The Soldier with PTSD started to panic and said, “What are you doing? Now we're both stuck down here!” But the other Soldier just smiled and replied, “It's okay, calm down, brother. I've been here before..... I know how to get out.”

No matter what you're going through, you are never alone.

But don't be too proud to SHOUT OUT!,
‘HELP I'm stuck in this Hole’

We all get stuck in a hole from time to time but all it takes is to ask your mates for help and we will be there even if we have to jump in that hole with you.

Delayed Decision on Additional Agent Orange Diseases

VFW Demands Answers from White House, VA

October 23, 2019

WASHINGTON – Military Times today reported that White House officials, including Office of Management and Budget Director Mick Mulvaney, are responsible for the delayed decision on additional Agent Orange diseases.

“In light of today’s news regarding the continued delay to add four presumptive diseases to the Agent Orange list, the VFW is extremely upset and dissatisfied with the backdoor political games that are being played in Washington as the lives of our veterans are at stake,” said VFW National Commander William “Doc” Schmitz. According to the story, White House officials challenged the authority of former Secretary of Veterans Affairs David Shulkin and impeded enactment of three additional health conditions to the list of diseases eligible for Agent Orange benefits. The article included an excerpt

written by Shulkin and sent to Mulvaney requesting support for his effort to expand the list of Agent Orange presumptive diseases.

“What we are seeing this week only underscores the need for Congress to take up comprehensive toxic exposure legislation for veterans during this term,” said Patrick Murray, deputy director of VFW National Legislative Service. “Every time we send our men and women to war we end up deliberating for decades as to whether or not they were exposed to toxic chemicals.”

“The White House and VA must do the right thing and approve these Agent Orange presumptive conditions immediately,” said Schmitz. “We cannot, and will not, stand by and allow another veteran to lose their life because of the bureaucracy of Washington. The time for waiting is over.”

Penis-and-scrotum transplant patient reports near-normal erections, orgasms

The update is good news for others in need of sensitive transplants.

BETH MOLE - 11/7/2019, <https://arstechnica.com/science/2019/11/penis-and-scrotum-transplant-patient-reports-near-normal-erections-orgasms/>

More than a year after undergoing a 14-hour operation to transplant a penis, scrotum, and lower abdominal wall, a severely injured veteran reports that he has regained normal sensation and function of his new body parts.

“I feel whole again.” Wounded vet receives first penis-scrotum combo transplant

The young man now has “near-normal” erections, the ability to achieve orgasms, and normal sensation in the shaft and tip of his transplanted penis, according to his medical team at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. He urinates while standing up with a “strong stream” and no issues with urgency or straining. (The transplant did not include donor testicles, to avoid the possibility of fathering non-genetically related children.)

The doctors reported the update on their patient November 7 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*.

The man-who wished to remain anonymous-was the first to undergo such a complex genital transplant and only the third in the world to have a successful penis transplant (a fourth has since been carried out). The transplant repaired a traumatic injury from an improvised explosive device (IED), which

destroyed the man’s penis and scrotum and caused substantial tissue loss in his lower abdominal wall. It also led to above-knee amputations of both legs.

The transplant of organs and tissues from a closely age-matched donor was an immensely difficult one, requiring surgeons to develop a whole new revascularization technique to ensure a proper blood supply. But it appears successful by all measures.

Since the transplant, the man has improved on self-reported pleasure scores, as well as reporting an improved self-image and “feeling whole” again. The man has returned to school, is living independently with leg prostheses, and is “very satisfied” with his transplant and his outlook for the future.

The success of the man’s transplant is encouraging news for the others in need of such a sensitive reconstruction. According to the Department of Defense Trauma registry, 1,367 men—nearly all under the age of 35—returned from Iraq and Afghanistan with genital injuries through 2013.

The surgical team at Johns Hopkins planned to undertake 60 penis transplants. They estimate that this first, complex transplant cost \$300,000 to \$400,000, though surgeons performed the operation for free.

Politicians created a separate one for blacks

GI Bill opened doors to college for many vets,

November 9, 2019

Joseph Thompson Assistant Professor of History, Mississippi State University

When President Franklin Roosevelt signed the GI Bill into law on June 22, 1944, it laid the foundation for benefits that would help generations of veterans achieve social mobility.

Formally known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944, the bill made unprecedented commitments to the nation's veterans. For instance, it provided federal assistance to veterans in the form of housing and unemployment benefits. But of all the benefits offered through the GI Bill, funding for higher education and job training emerged as the most popular.

More than 2 million veterans flocked to college campuses throughout the country. But even as former service members entered college, not all of them accessed the bill's benefits in the same way. That's because white southern politicians designed the distribution of benefits under the GI Bill to uphold their segregationist beliefs.

So, while white veterans got into college with relative ease, black service members faced limited options and outright denial in their pursuit for educational advancement. This resulted in uneven outcomes of the GI Bill's impact.

As a scholar of race and culture in the U.S. South, I believe this history raises important questions about whether subsequent iterations of the GI Bill are benefiting all vets equally.

Tuition waived for service

When he signed the bill into law, President Roosevelt assured that it would give "servicemen and women the opportunity of resuming their education or technical training ... not only without tuition charge ... but with the right to receive a monthly living allowance while pursuing their studies." So long as they had served 90 consecutive days in the U.S. Armed Forces and had not received a dishonorable discharge, veterans could have their tuition waived for the institution of their choice and cover their living expenses as they pursued a college degree.

This unparalleled investment in veteran education led to a boom in college enrollment. Around 8 million of the nation's 16 million veterans took advantage of federal funding for higher education or vocational training, 2 million of whom pursued a

college degree within the first five years of the bill's existence. Those ex-service members made up nearly half of the nation's college students by 1947.

Colleges scrambled to accommodate all the new veterans. These veterans were often white men who were slightly older than the typical college age. They sometimes arrived with wives and families in tow and brought a martial discipline to their studies that, as scholars have noted, created a cultural clash with traditional civilian students who sometimes were more interested in the life of the party than the life of the mind.



Black servicemen from WWII faced limited options and denial as they sought GI benefits after the war.
National Archives

Limited opportunities for black servicemen

Black service members had a different kind of experience. The GI Bill's race-neutral language had filled the 1 million African American veterans with hope that they, too, could take advantage of federal assistance. Integrated universities and historically black colleges and universities – commonly known as HBCUs – welcomed black veterans and their federal dollars, which led to the growth of a new black middle class in the immediate postwar years.

Yet, the underfunding of HBCUs limited opportunities for these large numbers of black veterans. Schools like the Tuskegee Institute and

Continued next page

Racism continued

Alcorn State lacked government investment in their infrastructure and simply could not accommodate an influx of so many students, whereas well-funded white institutions were more equipped to take in students. Research has also revealed that a lack of formal secondary education for black soldiers prior to their service inhibited their paths to colleges and universities.

As historians Kathleen J. Frydl, Ira Katznelson and others have argued, U.S. Representative John Rankin of Mississippi exacerbated these racial disparities.

Racism baked in

Rankin, a staunch segregationist, chaired the committee that drafted the bill. From this position, he ensured that local Veterans Administrations controlled the distribution of funds. This meant that when black southerners applied for their assistance, they faced the prejudices of white officials from their communities who often forced them into vocational schools instead of colleges or denied their benefits altogether.

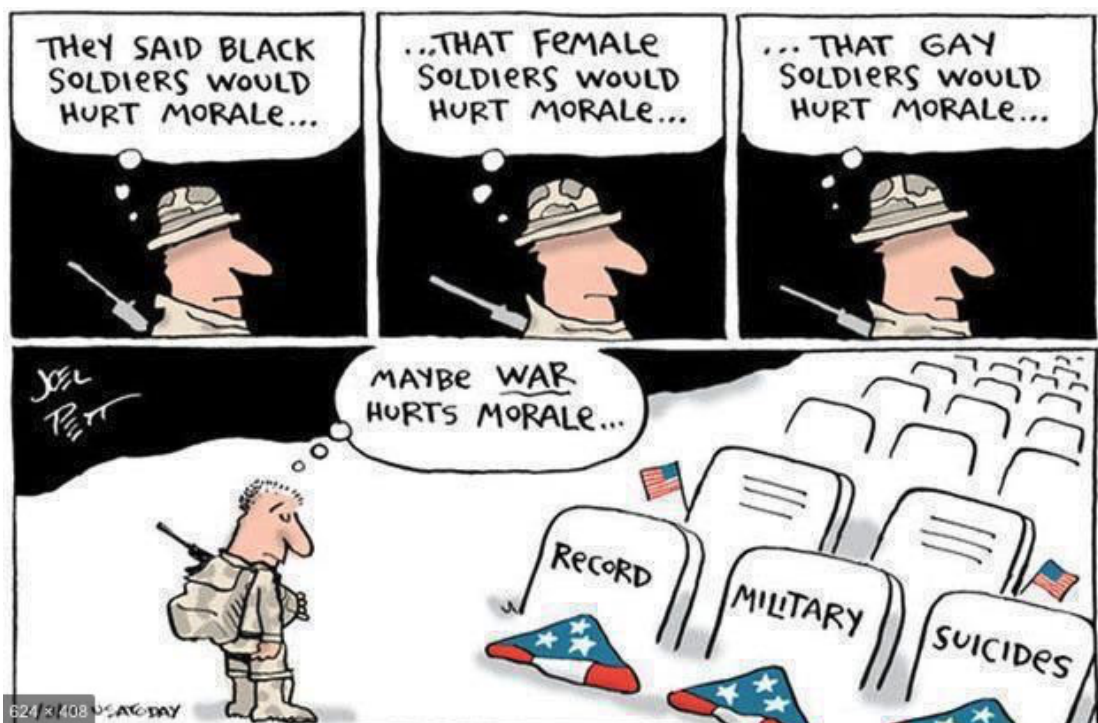
Mississippi's connection to the GI Bill goes beyond Rankin's racist maneuvering. From 1966 to 1997, G.V. "Sonny" Montgomery represented the state in Congress and dedicated himself to veterans' issues. In 1984, he pushed through his signature piece of federal legislation, the Montgomery GI Bill, which recommitted the nation to providing for veterans' education and extended those funds to reserve units and the National Guard. Congress had discontinued

the GI Bill after Vietnam. As historian Jennifer Mittelstadt shows, Montgomery's bill subsidized education as a way to boost enlistment in the all-volunteer force that lagged in recruitment during the final years of the Cold War.

Social programs like these have helped maintain enlistment quotas during recent conflicts in the Middle East, but today's service members have found mixed success in converting the education subsidies from the Post-9/11 GI Bill into gains in civilian life.

This new GI Bill, passed in 2008, has paid around US\$100 billion to more than 2 million recipients. Although the Student Veterans for America touts the nearly half a million degrees awarded to veterans since 2009, politicians and watchdogs have fought for reforms to the bill to stop predatory, for-profit colleges from targeting veterans. Recent reports show that 20% of GI Bill disbursements go to for-profit schools. These institutions hold reputations for notoriously high dropout rates and disproportionately targeting students of color, a significant point given the growing racial and ethnic diversity of the military.

In August 2017, President Trump signed the Forever GI Bill, which committed \$3 billion for 10 more years of education funding. As active duty service members and veterans begin to take advantage of these provisions, history provides good reason to be vigilant for the way racism still impacts who receives the most from those benefits.





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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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