

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - 240552 - Milwaukee WI. 53224.

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

15 November, 2023

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.
Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

15 November, 2023

Future Meetings

Dec. 20

2025

Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 15

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net
414-702-7734

Vice Pres: Treasurer: Pat Moore irishpatat(at)sbcglobal.net
414-354-2533 Cell: 414-731-6029

Secretary: Dennis Symanski dski06(at)hotmail.com
414-453-3600

Director: John Morgan asa600(at)aol.com
414-871-9274

Director: Bob Rugg
414-323-4852

Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org

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

VVA324 Christmas Party

at the Dec. meeting time.

Contact Pat Moore to reserve your spot.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

October 18, 2023

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

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Attendance – Pat Moore, Lavern Martin, Pat Ciofani, Ed Boyes, John Zutz, Dave Lamb, Dennis Szymanski

Minutes of the September 20, 2023 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$5440.31 balance in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Pat Ciofani

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

NEW BUSINESS

Daughters of the American Revolution – Pins and certificates were presented by the DAR to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War

Audit of Chapter Checking Account – Annual audit is being done by Pat Ciofani

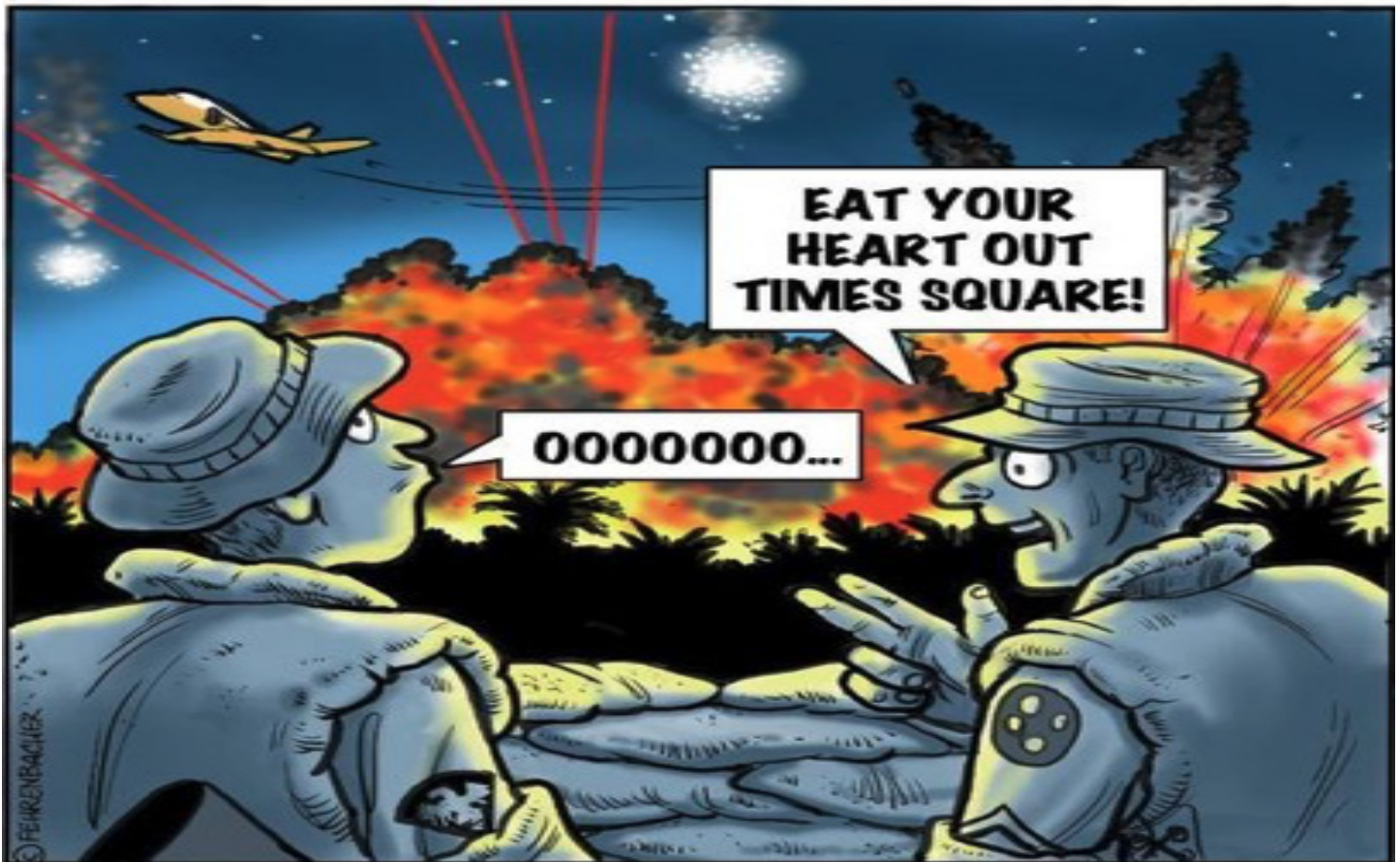
Veterans Day Events – Discussion of upcoming Veterans Day Events in the area

Christmas Party – December 20th – 6 pm – Moved and passed to spend up to \$600 for our annual Christmas Party

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the family and friends of member Paul Balge who passed away recently

Adjournment – 7:45 pm

IN-COUNTRY



**NEW YEAR'S EVE IN VIETNAM.
(OR MOST ANY OTHER NIGHT!)**

Kurt Vonnegut's Prescient Insight Into Veterans' Trauma

By Tom Roston, *The Nation*, NOVEMBER 11, 2021

Before the sun rose February morning we first spoke on the phone, Tim O'Brien was doing dishes in his home in Austin, Texas. He was thinking about *The Things They Carried*, which he wrote 30 years ago, and how it no longer belongs to him. "I feel divorced from my book," he told me later that day. "The book is there on the shelf and it's not mine anymore. It once was when I was writing it. But I don't remember writing the sentences or the words or taking this or that clause out. A book starts to belong less and less to the author and more and more to the world."

O'Brien reminds me that it's delicate and dicey writing about the relationship between a book and its author. "I don't think any writer is ever comfortable with any declaration about a book that he or she has written," O'Brien says. "Especially when you can't declare it to yourself. How can someone else know what it is you wrote if you don't?"

"My books are in some ways mysteries to me," he says.

But that's how it should be. As much as I've tried to pull out the threads on [Kurt Vonnegut's 1969 novel] *Slaughterhouse-Five* to determine its relationship to war trauma, a book can never be just one thing. That includes what its author intended. It also often includes its genre; the best war novels aren't just about war.

As it turns out, a warped sense of time and a splintered sense of self does more than describe the impact of war; it also provides a pretty good primer on life in the 21st century. "Vonnegut is getting more and more astute in diagnosing the American pathologies that are getting worse and worse and yet he's doing it from a greater remove," says writer Steve Almond. "It's right there in front of us. We have these powerful devices and screens that disembody us and take us out of the place and also out of the present. You can be in your house right next to somebody and they are somewhere else."

"*Slaughterhouse-Five* can be seen as a parable of the divided self," he adds. "We are constantly in more than one place at one time. And that disrupts a coherent, singular narrative where we can know ourselves. We are off fleeing the chaos of our inner lives."

By fracturing reality, time, memory, and Pilgrim's identity, Vonnegut aestheticized one of the primary effects of trauma, dissociation, in which there

is a disconnection or lack of continuity between one's thoughts. "Normal, nontraumatic memories are owned and integrated into the ongoing story of the self," David Morris writes in *The Evil Hours*. "In contrast, the traumatic memory stands apart, like a feral dog, snarling, wild, and unpredictable."

But it's not just the clinically diagnosed traumatized person that Vonnegut depicted. Almond notes that Vonnegut was very concerned with our "big brains," and how our innovations in science and technology could endanger all of us. Vonnegut passed away in 2007, before our smartphones and social media became the mediums through which we see ourselves, literally and figuratively, but check this out: Reliving the experience (flashback), avoiding the event, having negative thoughts, experiencing hyperarousal, having troubled sleep, blaming self or others, social withdrawal, loss of memory—all of the attributes of PTSD could easily describe my 16-year-old daughter's daily intake of Instagram.

No wonder PTSD has become a signature mental disorder of our age. There is more than mere correlation happening here: If there are similar attributes to being glued to a screen and to experiencing PTSD, then they will reinforce each other in individuals and the culture at large. There is a symbiotic relationship.

What I find remarkable about *Slaughterhouse-Five* is that Vonnegut used his insight, observational powers, and narrative skills to convey the impact of war trauma, and then the book takes a life of its own and transcends its place in history by anticipating the PTSD diagnosis. But it doesn't do it by magic or time travel. It is because Vonnegut captures the delicate relationship between the human condition, pain, memory, and time. By doing this, he tells us who we are and he deciphers how our culture is changing.

PTSD is, after all, a "product of culture as much as a hard-wired biological fact," writes David Morris, who references Otto Fenichel, one of the pioneers of modern psychology, who wrote that neuroses, or what we'd now call mental disorders, are not a physical inevitability like aging; they emerge within a context. "Neuroses are social diseases," he wrote, "corresponding to a given and historically developed social milieu. They cannot be changed without corresponding change in the milieu."

Continued next page

Vonnegut Continued

Vonnegut was a part of that change. PTSD can be construed as an “invention,” according to McGill University’s Allan Young, a medical anthropologist. This is not to say that it isn’t real, but, as quoted in Morris’s *Evil Hours*, “the disorder is not timeless, nor does it possess an intrinsic unity. Rather, it is glued together by the practices, technologies, and narratives with which it is diagnosed, studied, treated, and represented and by the various interests, institutions, and moral arguments that mobilized these efforts and resources.”

For example, Morris pinpoints the development of the flashback symptom, the telltale sign of PTSD. He finds the roots in the dawn of the moving image. Early-20th-century filmmakers coined the term to refer to jumps backward within a movie. And according to London’s King’s College researchers, flashbacks were nearly nonexistent among soldiers who fought before the age of film. Morris notes that Civil War veterans tended to describe their involuntary episodes of mental images, of “seeing things,” as phantasmic visitations. Those were the days when people attempted to speak to the dead through seances.

“It is tempting to wonder if film, television, and increasingly, video games don’t provide the lion’s share of our modern traumatic vocabulary,” Morris writes. “Teaching us how to see our memories in the way that photography taught us how to see (and not see) sunsets.”

Vonnegut poked at the deep connection between cinema, trauma, and memory in *Slaughterhouse-Five*, on the night that Pilgrim is abducted by the Tralfamadorians, when he watches a war movie and becomes unstuck. Pilgrim watches the movie backward so that American bomber pilots fly their planes backward from an English airstrip, backward over Germany, where their bombs are returned to their bays and the fires below are extinguished and the bombs are returned to the factories where they are dismantled and the American soldiers are returned to being fresh-faced high school kids.

It’s such a poignant, elemental, and entirely relatable

sequence, one which may not have been entirely original—science fiction writer Philip K. Dick had implemented a similar device in his 1967 novel, *Counter-Clock World*, and there are reverse-chronology examples dating back to the *Aeneid*—but in the context of Billy Pilgrim’s disassembling mental state is nonetheless particularly touching.

It is a widely beloved moment in the book. I was most moved by the story that Fred Greybar, a former marine and Chicago suburban native who fought in Vietnam in 1968, told me. I met Greybar in Indianapolis 50 years to the day that he flew out of Da Nang. He recalled his father having warned him before he enlisted that “in six months you are going to be sitting in a swamp with a gun in your hand and not wanting to be anywhere near there,” Greybar said. “He was off by four months.”

After Greybar came home from Vietnam, he was confused by what he had just experienced. He appreciated how his parents pushed him to put the war behind him by going back to college while he worked a nightshift as a machinist. He was assigned to read *Slaughterhouse-Five* for a class. One night while on a break at work, he took the novel to read in a bathroom stall. He read the scene of Billy Pilgrim’s war movie being reversed—and, by extension, imagined everything he had just experienced in Vietnam also being erased—and wept an unstoppable stream of tears there on the john.





Experience live events through Vet Tix with friends and family
October 25, 2021

Attending live events, such as concerts, sports, performing arts and family themed events is how many of us relax with entertainment. These experiences are especially significant to Veterans and those who serve our country in uniform. Quite often, our Veterans and service members have missed out on various life events, such as birthdays, anniversaries and holidays with family and friends. Those are experiences that we can't get back, however we quite often commit to making up for it when we're back with our loved ones.

Vet Tix is a national nonprofit organization that provides free event tickets to give something to those who gave. Vet Tix supports Veterans and service members by honoring their service and providing positive family and life experiences during and after their years of service to our country, delivering experiences to last a lifetime. Becoming a member is free; to join, one just has to be a Veteran (all eras), a member of the military, or the immediate family member of a service member who was killed in the line of duty.

The cost of attending live entertainment events can range anywhere from over \$200- \$500 for a family or four, making these All-American events far too expensive for many of the families to attend.

Vet Tix receives donated tickets from professional and collegiate sports teams, concert and performing arts venues, artists/performers, private donors who aren't going to use their tickets, entertainment promoters from motor sports, rodeos, festivals and more. It receives tickets to many major concert tours, performing arts such as Hamilton, and even major sporting events such as the NFL Super Bowl.

Created in 2008 by U.S. Navy Veteran Michael Focareto III, Vet Tix has distributed over 16 million tickets to over 200,000 events throughout the United States. "Vet Tix is able to continue to achieve our mission of 'giving something to those who gave,' due of the generosity of or amazing donors. We're grateful for their continued support," Focareto said.

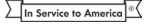
"I loved seeing Hamilton at The Pantages theater! The performance was outstanding, with amazing seats. It's been very gratifying to be a member of Vet Tix," said an Army Veteran.

Vet Tix has received over one million testimonials from its members, referred to as VetTixers who share their experiences by thanking the over 30,000 donors for creating lifelong memories. Quite often, they've shared their stories of success in addressing personal challenges through attending events provided by Vet Tix. "People don't realize that this is truly more than a ticket to an event, it's a ticket to the rest of our life," said Adrienne, a U.S. Army Veteran.

Thousands of Veterans who are registered with VA are enjoying the experiences and opportunities Vet Tix provides. To become a VetTixer, create an account for free at Vettix.org. Once your status is verified through Vet Tix and VA's verification portal, ID.me, you, too, can experience events through Vet Tix with friends and family. Tickets are free, however there is a nominal delivery fee. If you're a caregiver of a Veteran, have them sign up; many VetTixers bring their caregivers to events through Vet Tix as a way to thank them for what they do.



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:

Veterans:

Life Membership for all veterans \$50 (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)

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 completed application to:
VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, **P O Box 240552, Milwaukee WI. 53224**