

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Party Notice

17 December, '14

**Elks Lodge**

**5555 W. Good Hope Rd.**

**Doors Open 6 p.m.**

**Food Served 7 - 8 p.m.**

**You must RSVP by Dec. 10 to:**

Pat Ciofani 414-702-7734

or Pat Moore 414-354-2533

Chapter web page: [www.vietnamvetschapter324.com](http://www.vietnamvetschapter324.com)

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

## Future Meetings

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

*Merry Christmas &  
Happy New Year!*

*Chapter 324 members and families are invited to:*

*Our Chapter 324 Christmas Party*

*You must RSVP to attend - See notice above*

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 324**  
**November 19, 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**

**Minutes of October 15, 2014 meeting reviewed and accepted**

**Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore** - \$6347.40 balance in our checking account

**Communications**

**Attendance** – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Ciofani, Oliver Williams, Patrick Moore, Paul D Balge, David Titter, John Morgan, Joe Herbert, John Zutz

**COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**VVA Membership – Joe Herbert** – We have 90 veteran members – VVA has over 73,000 members nationwide with 630 active chapters

**Website** – Our website [www.vietnamvetschapter324.com](http://www.vietnamvetschapter324.com) is up and running – Pat Moore is our editor – contact him with anything you would like posted

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Hmong Anniversary Event** – Went well

**Veterans Day Parade** – Thanks to all who participated

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Chapter Christmas Party** – In place of our Dec.17 regular meeting, we will have a Christmas Party for members and their families.

**Candy Cane Lane Dec. 12<sup>th</sup>** – Our Chapter will again participate in this MAAC fund fundraiser – join us from 6 – 8 Friday evening at 94<sup>th</sup> and Manitoba as we collect donations for the MAAC Fund

**State Council Meeting – Dec. 6<sup>th</sup>**

**Vet Center Food Certificates** – Moved and passed to purchase 8 \$25 food certificates to be distributed to needy vets through the Vet Center

**Christmas With The Vets** – Moved and passed to donate \$100 for this event at the VA

**Adjournment – 7:35**

## **Suicide Top Troop Death Cause in 2012 & 2013**

Greg Zoroya, USA Today, November 03, 2014

War was the leading cause of death in the military nearly every year between 2004 and 2011 until suicides became the top means of dying for troops in 2012 and 2013, according to a bar chart published this week in a monthly Pentagon medical statistical analysis journal. For those last two years, suicide outranked war, cancer, heart disease, homicide, transportation accidents and other causes as the leading killer, accounting for about three in 10 military deaths each of those two years.

Transportation accidents, by a small margin,

was the leading cause of military deaths in 2008, slightly more than combat. The fighting in Iraq and Afghanistan accounted for anywhere from one out of three deaths in the military — in 2005 and 2010 — to more than 46 percent of deaths in 2007, during the height of the Iraq surge, according to the chart. More than 6,800 troops have died in Iraq and Afghanistan since 9/11 and more than 3,000 additional service members have taken their lives in that same time, according to Pentagon data.

## A True Christmas Miracle - The Christmas Truce, 100 Years Ago

Out of all of the many stories that came out of the First World War, the tale of the Christmas Day truce and the football match between opposing soldiers in No-Man's-Land is one that has been told so often it has passed into legend. But is it a legend with a basis in truth?

Over the decades, a lack of official recognition of the event led to doubt that it ever actually took place. But in recent years, evidence - in the form of letters written by the troops on both sides to their families - has emerged. They suggest that not only did the ceasefire take place,



**English and German troops fraternize in no-man's land**

but that it was more than an isolated event - and that accounts of a single outbreak of seasonal goodwill between British and German soldiers on Christmas Day 1914 is only part of the wider story.

By Christmas Eve, 1914, the already battle-weary soldiers occupying the trenches at Ypres were reluctantly facing the fact that the optimistic belief of, 'It'll all be over by Christmas,' had not come to pass.

In an attempt to keep morale up, German troops were seen decorating the trees around their trenches with candles and heard singing Christmas carols in their native German. In reply, the British soldiers sang carols in English, and the two sides began to shout greetings to one another. In this spirit, it was eventually agreed that, if they were to approach one another in No-Man's-Land, neither side would fire upon the other.

Just hours before, these soldiers had been firing on one another, yet now they met to talk and

laugh and exchange small gifts of food, alcohol and tobacco. And the guns remained silent that night, and throughout Christmas Day, in some areas remaining so until New Year's Day.

Many of the Germans had previously worked in Britain, often as waiters and cab-drivers, so communication between both sides was easier than it might otherwise have been, and a festive atmosphere prevailed.

But it was not all jollity. The ceasefire allowed each side the opportunity to retrieve their dead comrades from No-Man's-Land for burial, and soldiers from both sides mourned their fallen and prayed together.

The truce remained in place until the higher echelons on both sides insisted on resuming the conflict. The whole thing was an embarrassment to the commanders, who were keen to prevent news of the goodwill between the enemy forces from reaching the public at home!

To ensure a similar event could not occur the next year, Christmas Eve artillery bombardments were ordered. This could not prevent smaller outbreaks of civility, while the German and French soldiers battling near the village of Vosges saw out Christmas of 1915 in a similarly friendly manner.

And, as for the football match that was supposed to have taken place, which has since been immortalised in song and on film, several of the troops' letters mention games being played in the trenches (sometimes using a bale of hay or a crate in place of a ball).

Before his death in 2001, Bertie Felstead, one of the the last remaining survivors of that famous match between opposing sides recalled that a spontaneous game did take place. Scores of troops from both sides joined in for a match that probably lasted only half an hour and during which no-one kept score.

## Carol Ann Duffy: The Christmas Truce

UK Poet Laureat Carol Ann Duffy wrote this poem in remembrance of the soldiers in the German and British trenches in World War 1, who declared a momentary unilateral truce in the slaughter at Christmas 1914, in recognition of what united them as human beings, rather than the war that divided them as killing machines.  
Source: (<http://www.stopwar.org.uk/poetry/carol-ann-duffy-the-christmas-truce>)

Christmas Eve in the trenches of France, the guns were quiet.  
The dead lay still in No Man's Land –  
Freddie, Franz, Friedrich, Frank . . .  
The moon, like a medal, hung in the clear, cold sky.

Silver frost on barbed wire, strange tinsel, sparkled and winked.  
A boy from Stroud stared at a star  
to meet his mother's eyesight there.  
An owl swooped on a rat on the glove of a corpse.

In a copse of trees behind the lines, a lone bird sang.  
A soldier-poet noted it down – a robin holding his winter ground –  
then silence spread and touched each man like a hand.

Somebody kissed the gold of his ring;  
a few lit pipes;  
most, in their greatcoats, huddled,  
waiting for sleep.  
The liquid mud had hardened at last in the freeze.

But it was Christmas Eve; believe; belief thrilled the night air,  
where glittering rime on unburied sons  
treasured their stiff hair.  
The sharp, clean, midwinter smell held memory.

On watch, a rifleman scoured the terrain –  
no sign of life,  
no shadows, shots from snipers, nowt to note or report.  
The frozen, foreign fields were acres of pain.

Then flickering flames from the other side danced in his eyes,  
as Christmas Trees in their dozens shone, candlelit on the parapets,  
and they started to sing, all down the German lines.

Men who would drown in mud, be gassed, or shot, or vaporised  
by falling shells, or live to tell, heard for the first time then –  
Stille Nacht. Heilige Nacht. Alles schläft, einsam wacht ...

Cariad, the song was a sudden bridge from man to man;  
a gift to the heart from home,  
or childhood, some place shared ...  
When it was done, the British soldiers cheered.

A Scotsman started to bawl The First Noel

and all joined in,  
till the Germans stood, seeing  
across the divide,  
the sprawled, mute shapes of those who had died.

All night, along the Western Front, they sang, the enemies –  
carols, hymns, folk songs, anthems, in German, English, French;  
each battalion choired in its grim trench.

So Christmas dawned, wrapped in mist, to open itself  
and offer the day like a gift  
for Harry, Hugo, Hermann, Henry, Heinz ...  
with whistles, waves, cheers, shouts, laughs.

Frohe Weihnachten, Tommy! Merry Christmas, Fritz!  
A young Berliner, brandishing schnapps,  
was the first from his ditch to climb.  
A Shropshire lad ran at him like a rhyme.

Then it was up and over, every man, to shake the hand  
of a foe as a friend,  
or slap his back like a brother would;  
exchanging gifts of biscuits, tea, Maconochie's stew,

Tickler's jam ... for cognac, sausages, cigars,  
beer, sauerkraut;  
or chase six hares, who jumped  
from a cabbage-patch, or find a ball  
and make of a battleground a football pitch.

I showed him a picture of my wife. Ich zeigte ihm  
ein Foto meiner Frau.  
Sie sei schön, sagte er.  
He thought her beautiful, he said.

They buried the dead then, hacked spades into hard earth  
again and again, till a score of men  
were at rest, identified, blessed.  
Der Herr ist mein Hirt ... my shepherd, I shall not want.

And all that marvellous, festive day and night, they came and went,  
the officers, the rank and file, their fallen comrades side by side  
beneath the makeshift crosses of midwinter graves ...

... beneath the shivering, shy stars  
and the pinned moon  
and the yawn of History;  
the high, bright bullets  
which each man later only aimed at the sky.



In Service to America

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

**Time Valued Material**  
**Correction Service Requested**  
**Forwarding Postage Guaranteed**

## **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