

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

*In Service to America*



## Meeting Notice

19 December, 2018

**Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.  
# Christmas Party #**

### **Future Meetings: 2019**

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

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

## Chapter Officers

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

**Christmas Party - 6 p.m. December 19, 2018, Elks Lodge  
Members and Friends are invited. RSVP to Pat Moore**



**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 321**  
**November 21, 2018**

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 and for all POW/MIA's and their families.

Pledge of Allegiance

Attendance – John Morgan, Pat Moore, Pat Ciofani, Dave Titter and Paul Balge

Minutes of October 17, 2018 meeting reviewed and accepted.

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore reported a balance of \$ 3,815.14

Communications – Letter from Honor Flight of Wisconsin for thank you of \$500.00 donation .

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

VVA/AVVA Membership Update – No Report

Allied Veterans Meeting - Next meeting November 29.

Volunteering at the VA

Fund Raising -

#### OLD BUSINESS

#### NEW BUSINESS

VVA membership change to one class of membership “life membership”.

Moved and past \$100.00 donation for Christmas with the Vets.

Members of the Daughters of the American Revolution may be attending the chapter Christmas Party. The DAR donated \$50.00 to the chapter.

Dave Titter gave a review of his talk to the DAR during Veterans Day weekend

#### FOR THE GOOD OF THE CHAPTER

Chapter Christmas Party December 19. 2018

Adjournment – 7:30 pm

## **15% of Military/Veteran Families Face Food Insecurity**

TREA Newsletter | October 2, 2018

According to a report released earlier this year by the Military Family Advocacy Network, hunger is a real problem for some military families. According to a survey they did of over 5,600 military veterans, active duty members and families last year, about 15 percent of military and veteran family respondents face “food insecurity,” the policy language used to describe people who worry about how they are going to feed their families or afford food. This news is not going to help Army recruiting.

Dealing with military food problems is

complicated because it involves larger topics such as pay and allowances. Military personnel are eligible for the government's primary food assistance program called SNAP, or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program - commonly called “food stamps.” But that program, too, is difficult to change because it is part of the Farm Bill that Congress deals with each year, totally separate from either of the defense bills. No doubt it is the young, first term enlisted personnel who are dealing with the hunger issue. So in addition to recruiting, we wonder if retention is also suffering.

# Drunk driving among veterans is up nearly 60 percent since 2014

By: [J.D. Simkins](#), Military Times, Nov.30, 2018

Drunk driving and binge drinking among the American veteran population has spiked considerably in recent years, a recent [study](#) by the [American Addiction Centers](#) found.

Observing behavioral risk factor data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the AAC took a closer look at the rising occurrence “of binge drinking among veterans, drunk driving incidents, and the emotional and physical trauma that could be leading to this substance misuse among” the military population, the authors wrote.

Veteran rates of binge drinking, defined as “consuming more than four drinks within a two-hour period for women and five drinks for men,” have climbed from about 14 percent in 2013 to just under 16 percent in 2017, a trend that contributes significantly to both [mental and physical health issues](#).

Dissecting that data further revealed trends in sub-sections of the veteran population. For example, while the overall increase of veteran binge drinking during the 2013 to 2017 research period came to 1.6 percent, binge drinking among female veterans increased nearly 3 percent, double the increase by male veterans.

## DRUNK DRIVING

One fallout of the increasing number of binge-drinking service members has been the prevalence of drunk driving, a widespread issue in the U.S. that accounted for nearly 30 deaths per day in 2016. With this demographic’s propensity for drinking to excess, “there’s no denying that American veterans contribute to the nationwide epidemic of drunk driving,” the study claims.

“Since 2014, the percentage of U.S. vets identified as driving while drunk increased from 1.6 percent to 2.5 percent,” a nearly-60 percent spike.

Broken down by location, veteran drunk driving occurred most often in California, Kentucky and Washington, D.C., while Virginia, Alaska and Utah were states with the lowest occurrence rate.

Furthermore, rates of drunk driving were significantly higher among male veterans than women.

Despite the surge of veterans driving while intoxicated, “some officials are trying to pass legislation that would allow veterans to [avoid](#)

[conviction](#) in charges associated with DUI,” the report said.

## MENTAL HEALTH

The psychological wellbeing of troops returning from wars in Iraq and Afghanistan is increasingly a focus of mental health studies that center on post-traumatic stress disorder.

Nearly three million service members have deployed in support of American war operations since 2001. For those returning from war in Iraq or Afghanistan, approximately 11 to 20 percent suffer from PTSD. [Some studies](#) suggest that number is as high as 30 percent.

A [wealth of research](#) points to PTSD, specifically the depression resulting from trauma, as one of the primary contributors of binge drinking among veterans and active-duty personnel.

“The percentage of depressed veterans who at some point have been involved in an episode of binge drinking has increased substantially between 2014 and 2016,” the authors wrote, with over 25 percent of “American veterans who self-identified as depressed” linked to binge drinking.

These veterans suffering from depression “are more than twice as likely to be linked with drunk driving” than those without mental health concerns, the study found.

Unfortunately, the cyclical impact of such an abusive, self-medicating coping mechanism is “more likely to exacerbate the conditions of PTSD rather than” remedy them, the study claims.

## A DRINKING CULTURE

A recent Department of Defense Health Related Behaviors Survey revealed about one-third of active-duty personnel met characteristics of hazardous drinking and alcohol use disorder, with 30 percent of military respondents reporting at least one episode of binge drinking in the month leading up to the survey.

For Marines, that number was an astonishing 42.6 percent.

Such actions should be sharply addressed by placing greater emphasis on command disapproval of alcohol abuse, the Rand report claimed. Researchers also recommended scaling back on-base alcohol and sales policies.

# Wall Education Center Plans Scrapped

Richard Sisk , Military.com, September 21, 2018

In a stunning move, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund announced 21 SEP that its long-stalled plan to build an education center next to the iconic “Wall” is being scrapped for lack of funding and general interest. Following a meeting of the fund’s board of directors, Chairman John Dibble said agreement had been reached to “terminate efforts to construct a physical building on the National Mall.”

In a statement, he said, that “funding simply has not materialized” for the project, which originally was to have dealt with the history, context and legacy of the Vietnam War, and later was expanded in concept to include the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Instead of an underground center next to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the fund said it will now focus education efforts on mobile exhibits, online resources and “partnerships with military museums to teach visitors about the Vietnam War and honor those names that appear on the Memorial.”

The decision by the board of directors followed a lengthy article by Task and Purpose on the internal struggles over the purpose of the Education Center, the failure to generate private donations, and the public’s loss of interest in the project. The concept for the education center was announced in 2000 by Jan Scruggs, an Army veteran who served in Vietnam, the founder and president of the Memorial Fund and the prime mover in the project that resulted in the Wall listing the names of the more than 58,000 killed in Vietnam. The memorial was dedicated in 1982. The project eventually won approval from Congress and the Washington Fine Arts Commission for land next to

the memorial to be used for the education center.

At a symbolic groundbreaking in 2012, Scruggs said the center would also serve as a temporary memorial for the fallen of Iraq and Afghanistan. “The veterans of Vietnam know what it is like to wait for a memorial -- a healing place -- to be authorized and constructed. Today’s heroes shouldn’t have to wait. Our goal is to have the education center at the Wall open in time to welcome home our last troops returning from Afghanistan,” he said.

The goal for an actual groundbreaking was set for 2020, but funding dried up. The center was projected to cost about \$84 million, but funding pledges reportedly stalled at about \$45 million, and that figure was in doubt. Scruggs retired as president of the fund in 2014. It will now have to make arrangements to return the five-acre parcel of land to the National Park Service.

In its statement, the fund said it had received a total of \$45 million in donation commitments, and \$5 million of that had yet to be received. About \$23 million has already been spent on construction design, exhibit planning, awareness building, and preliminary work necessary for specific exhibits, it said. About \$17 million in donations had been limited to actual construction, it added, and those contributions might be returned after discussions with donors. In his statement, Dibble said, “We know many veterans and supporters are disappointed in this outcome. We also are disappointed that the early enthusiasm and support did not result in a completed building.”

## Military Snipers - USCG Outshoots USMC 2nd Year in a Row

Shawn Snow, MarineCorpsTimes, October 22, 2018

For the second year in a row the Army’s 75th Ranger Regiment beat out nearly 30 military, civilian and foreign sniper teams at the 2018 International Sniper Competition held aboard Fort Benning, Georgia. The Corps’ two-man team hailing from the Quantico, Virginia, Scout Sniper Instructor School placed 10th overall, **just behind the Coast Guard’s Special Mission’s Training Detachment**. It’s the second year the Marine team has been bested by the Coast Guard. The last time the Corps won the competition was in 2009.

The multiday competition that tests a range of sniper skills from long range marksmanship to

stalking, isn’t the only sniper competition where the Army has recently beaten the Corps. In April, two Army snipers took the top honors at the 2nd Marine Division’s Marine Corps Scout Sniper Basic Course. The two Army snipers, took the high scores in shooting and stalking when they graduated from the Corps’ sniper course at Camp Geiger on Marine Corps Air Station New River, North Carolina. It’s a bit of a sore spot for the Corps, whose sniper history and lore can be traced back to legends like Vietnam War-era sniper Gunnery Sgt. Carlos Hathcock, who had 93 confirmed kills. Staff Sgts. Brandon Kelley and Jonathan Roque with the 75th Ranger Regiment scored the most points in the 2018 International Sniper Competition.

# Debunking Stereotypes Around Veterans and PTSD

By Lauren Katzenberg, NY Times, Nov. 16, 2018

Last Friday, while speaking to reporters about the Thousand Oaks shooter, [President Trump insinuated](#) that the gunman's actions may have been a result of military-related mental-health issues. "He saw some pretty bad things," Trump said. "And a lot of people say he had the PTSD. That's a tough deal."

People within the military and veterans community were angered by the president's comments, which risked reinforcing stereotypes about veterans being ticking time bombs, susceptible to committing violent crimes. We asked readers to tell us about stereotypes they have encountered about veterans and post-traumatic stress disorder and the ways in which they have challenged them. Below is a selection of responses.

## • People Dismissive of the Severity of His Illness

My husband has PTSD. Together, we own a small business, so we have many opportunities to show what PTSD can look like. People expect him to look unkempt, confused and messy in dress and appearance. When he doesn't fit "the look," people, including health care providers, can be dismissive of the severity of his illness, so we are to be more open about our private struggle. While we have so far been reluctant in sharing too much, we are increasingly trying to discuss these issues with our children, as well as their teachers and peers. — Niki Leffingwell, Missoula, Mont.

## • Most of Us Are Dealing With PTSD Pretty Well

I keep my PTSD to myself for the most part, because people seem to clam up when I let it out. What people don't realize is that most of us are dealing with PTSD pretty well, even if it sometimes takes drugs and therapy to get by. But it is sometimes very hard to watch the world go about its business as if nothing ever happened, when there's a whole group of people who are suffering in relative silence and watching the rest of the world be happy and get rich. — Roger Johnson

## • We Serve Our Nation Out of Uniform, as We Did Before

I am a combat veteran who, by virtue of my role in health care, saw the impact of violence and war every day I was deployed in Iraq and Afghanistan. I have PTSD, yet I have an incredibly meaningful life after service without issues of violence. I have many friends who have served as well and who also have PTSD. We continue to serve our nation out of

uniform, as we did before. Many of us have shifted to saying "PTS" to eliminate the "disorder" and move to the cause of the stress. That's a simple but practical example that anyone can do to take a stigma and help eliminate it. — Richard Morton, Ponte Vedra, Fla.

## • We Are Just as Human as You Are

I see no connection between the service and violent crime myself, but I can easily see how uninformed people can make that knee-jerk connection. Just because you have familiarity with a tool, people can presume you are prone to using it, and this is not true. We are just as human as you are; we just have a different and more professional experience with life and death, all of us. I talk about what it was I did, particularly the places and events, because those bring meaning to people who have an ability to listen. I draw intentional comparisons between the military and the first responders whom people are around everyday and trust with their safety and security. It's no different, this relationship, save for the fact that the police, E.M.T.s, doctors and car companies kill far more people than the military does, year in year out. — Chris McFarland, Toms River, N.J.

## • I Am Open and Honest About My Experiences

I believe a lot of people see combat veterans as "damaged goods." They look at servicemen and servicewomen as a certain warrior class, and once veterans are done with their time in service, they are seen as a liability. I am open and honest about my experiences. My past has made and almost broke me. I have received inpatient mental-health therapy and given speeches with the president of the United States in attendance. I received a diagnosis of PTSD, but with help from the V.A., I was able to work for a United States senator and finish my undergraduate degree. I currently work for the National Park Service, am married, have a beautiful son and am enjoying life. — Joe Bykowski, Westhampton, Mass.

## • I've Had People Ask if I'm Scared He Will Hurt Me

I'm married to a decorated disabled combat veteran with PTSD. I've had people ask if I'm scared he will hurt me, ask if I'm afraid he will "snap" and make statements implying that they believe because he's been in a war zone and has PTSD that he must have violent tendencies. I always respond that the only thing I ever fear is that he will take his own life. Veterans are more likely to die by suicide than to harm others. — Page G. Whorl, Cambridge, Md.



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**PO Box 18631**  
**Milwaukee, WI 53218**

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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)

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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, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218