

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

18 December, 2019 - Christmas Party

Elks Lodge 5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

Future Meetings:

2020: 15 January, 19 February

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani [rezmel\(at\)sbcglobal.net](mailto:rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net)

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414-870-7012

Director: John Morgan [asa600\(at\)aol.com](mailto:asa600(at)aol.com)

414-871-9274

Membership: Joe Herbert Joe's a Luddite

414-873-7341

Newsletter: John Zutz [john\(at\)zutz.org](mailto:john(at)zutz.org)

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

All members are invited to:

the Chapter 324 Christmas Party

bring a significant other -

bring your whole family.

Good food: Chicken, potatoes,

onion rings, pizza and more.

RSVP to Pat Moore

before Dec 13

(Pat's contact info is in the Chapter Officer area

at the top of this page)



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA
Milwaukee Chapter 324, November 20, 2019

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 Ciofani, Paul Balge, John Morgan, Dennis McCormack, Pat Moore, John Zutz
Minutes of the October 16, 2019 meeting reviewed and accepted
Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$2245.94 balance in our checking account Communications

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fund-Raising – May 9th and September 4th are our 2020 dates at Miller Park Website – Pat Moore will be looking into some issues some members are having with our website being blocked to them – It seems to

be a problem with those running Norton anti-virus

OLD BUSINESS Update on Horizon Home Care – Pat Ciofani made Vietnam Veteran key chains for them and followed up with Elena Sherr on future involvement with them in an upcoming veterans event
Chapter Christmas Party – December 18th at 6:00 pm
NEW BUSINESS

Christmas With the Vets – Moved and passed to donate \$100 Candy Cane Lane – Friday December 6th
State Council Meeting – December 7
For the Good of the Chapter – Report on the Veterans Health Coalition and their efforts to help with suicide prevention – Inviting Veterans Organizations to become involved – Update on planned Respite House in Milwaukee
Adjournment – 7:40

PTSD Treatment Works in Clinical Trials

60 Overtime, Heather Abbott & Matthew Polevoy Seck, November 6, 2019

Results from a new clinical trial of active-duty service members have shown that an injection in the neck called stellate ganglion block, or SGB, is an effective treatment for post-traumatic stress disorder. The Army-funded trial shows that SGB injections reduced PTSD symptoms at a rate about twice that of a placebo. JAMA Psychiatry published the results 6 NOV. “Finally, we have the definitive randomized controlled trial to demonstrate that stellate ganglion block not only works, but works well enough to be incorporated across the board into PTSD treatment plans,” said U.S. Army physician Colonel Jim Lynch. He is a senior author of the study, which was conducted at the non-profit research institute RTI International. “This is a monumental day for the countless victims of PTSD.”

During an SGB procedure, a doctor injects a local anesthetic deep into a cluster of nerves in the neck called the stellate ganglion. These nerves help regulate the body's “fight or flight” response, which becomes erratic in people with PTSD.

60 Minutes correspondent Bill Whitaker first reported on the possible SGB breakthrough in June. He spoke with Dr. Sean Mulvaney, a former Navy SEAL who administers the SGB shot in a private clinic. Mulvaney told 60 Minutes Overtime that he's had a tenfold increase in patients looking for an SGB since Whitaker's report aired. He said he has now performed 149 SGB injections in 4 months, including on EMS staff and in childhood trauma cases. “Many of these folks are just fixed,” Mulvaney said. “They weep openly in my office after treatment. They tell me they would not have believed they could feel this way again.” He also told us he's treated several veterans who were on the brink of suicide. “Now they tell me they are now not going to kill themselves.”

Mulvaney has been asked to help doctors clear the backlog at the Long Beach VA, one of only about a dozen military medical centers where the SGB treatment is offered. Since Whitaker's piece, the Long Beach VA received over 100 requests for treatment. One patient still waiting is Sergeant First Class Jonathan Zehring. Whitaker met Zehring after his first SGB treatment, but Zehring is still waiting for his second injection. Marine Sergeant Henry Coto has had more luck. He told Whitaker when he first tried SGB, he was at a breaking point. “I thought if I keep going the same way I was going, I- there was only two ways that was going to end — dead or in jail,” Coto told Whitaker on the broadcast in June. At the time, Coto found improvement from two injections. Today, he is looking forward to his third SGB shot next week. “My kids are enjoying their new dad,” he said.

Ghosts of War in a Wisconsin Forest

By BRYAN BOX, November 11, 2019

Every day, I start the shift by throwing on my marking gear. It's not as heavy as my kit in Afghanistan, just an easy 40-odd pounds with the paint. Instead of a blaze orange cruiser vest like the ones my co-workers use, I still take the old tactical vest I wore over my armor back then. The mag pouches hold the Relaskop I use to measure tree height, and the dump pouch holds my clipboard of data cards, with room to spare for the wild mushrooms and onions I collect. Add to that my four-gallon backpack paint sprayer and I'm ready to go.

Sometimes I think about the blood on the vest. You can't see it anymore; everything I own is splattered with timber-marking paint nowadays. We use water-based paint for marking in pine stands, and oil-based for hardwoods. The water-based paint wears off of hardwood bark after only a few years. My best friend bled on me during a firefight. He had been hit in the fingertip by something minor enough to not notice, but because it was during a fight, the Army would call your family and freak them out no matter how quaint the injury. The paint manufacturer uses citrus oil, so by the end of the day, my beard smells like an orange from the overspray. We didn't tell our NCOs he had been hurt. He's been dead five years. He shot himself.

After spending six years overseas, I came back and couldn't deal with the hectic lower-48 lifestyle, so I went to Alaska. When I first became a forest ecologist, I'd wanted to do research, make the world a better place through learning. But I learned quickly that none of it mattered if policymakers ignored your work. Last year, I decided I needed to be involved in direct management, and took a job in the Wisconsin northwoods. It took 18 months to finally get VA appointments for my TBI and PTS. The doctor tried several medications to help me. One of them made me certain I was having a heart attack. Thinking I was dying, I made peace with God on the floor of my one room cabin. Next time I saw him, the doctor told me to just smoke cigarettes to dull the anxiety. He said he couldn't do anything for my other symptoms.

I spend my time working in Wisconsin's second-growth forests, administering timber sales and marking trees for harvest. Old growth takes a long time to regenerate, so I help the process along by cutting to favor the old growth species. In a hundred

years or so, I hope my grandkids will walk through the forest and think well of what I did. The next VA doctor told me he thought I was just a drug addict looking to score Xanax when he saw my medical allergies. So I chew nicotine gum like a fiend to keep the edge off.

Each forester has a signature in the trees they select to cut, and those they leave behind. The Alaska VA just threw their hands up after that and left me to my own devices. On my marking crew, I have a guy that leaves trees with cavities for wildlife like bats and birds, and a guy that prefers to leave certain species like the American basswood, which readily hollows out to make an animal habitat as well as producing a small edible seed for birds. I had to be a lab rat in a medical experiment to get care for my brain injury. Every morning I inject the hormone my damaged pituitary gland can no longer produce. Me, I prefer leaving mast species like black cherry and oak, which drop massive amounts of fruit and nuts for wildlife, as well as our forest's old growth species like white pine, yellow birch, and eastern hemlock. Sometimes when we're in training or office meetings, just the sound of that many people breathing and fidgeting around me drives me up the wall. Afterward, I find myself alone out in the forest, crippled by the realization that I'll never be able to cope with close proximity to people again.

Forests aren't static; each one has disturbance regimes that reset them, segment by segment, until the whole thing is new again. I can't get the time off work to drive two hours to the local VA frequently enough for mental health services, and the local civilian doctors are useless for combat trauma. Back home in Alaska, fire and beetles did the job. Here, we have periodic wind storms. A thunderstorm passed through today, dropping walnut-sized hail and blowing trees down around me. I thought I might die as I hid under a big sugar maple. I realized that I couldn't remember precisely how many friends wound up in flag-draped coffins, but that more had died by suicide than from enemy action.

The last flashback was set off by a noise that reminded me of my friend screaming in agony as he burned alive.

We do our best to harvest trees in a manner similar to how a wind storm knocks them down. In

continued next

Forest continued

our hardwood stands, we create small openings in the canopy to expose and warm up the soil so that oak seedlings have a chance to grow. There's another guy at work here from my old unit, and he's all I have to depend on if things get tough. If we didn't, the shade-tolerant sugar maple would take over, and make the stand a food desert for wildlife. Sometimes when I'm marking timber, I'll have a flashback and just stand there, staring off into space for God knows how long. I don't know if my co-workers have noticed. Historically, our hardwood stands were oak-dominant. The sugar maple only became a major component after loggers slicked the landscape in the 1900s. The last flashback was set off by a noise that reminded me of my friend screaming in agony as he burned alive.

For some species, we also have to churn up the soil. Yellow birch seeds can't germinate without bare soil, so after a timber sale, I find small patches of churned soil from the logging equipment and toss down a few seeds. When Kevlar burns, the flames are green. Yellow birch are excellent for wildlife habitat, because they stay alive when they hollow out. When Dave and Adrian died instead of me, my commander and gunner killed by an IED, I blamed myself for years. It feels good to help yellow birch come back as a major component of the forest.

The largest and most stately of our old growth species is the white pine. They're a supercanopy tree in the current forest, standing alone like sentinels over the smaller hardwoods. I often wonder whether or not it's ethical for me to have relationships now, but I know it will only get worse if I'm isolated. The largest white pine I've ever cruised had 105 feet of sawtimber and a total height of 120 feet, without so much as a knot for the first 40 feet. Three of my friends killed themselves in a six-week stretch in 2014; another died in 2015. I talked a fifth out of suicide, but he went off-grid soon afterward. I don't know if he's still alive. I marked all of the trees around that white pine so that she could drop cones after the timber sale and start a small grove there at the edge of the swamp, where nobody would bother them.

This morning, as I was preparing to throw on my sprayer and mark some high-speed skid trails that I could use to help seed more yellow birch and oak, I stopped and sat there on the tailgate of my truck, watching the wind play through the leaves of the upper canopy. When I saw him last, my best friend proudly showed me the pistol he eventually

used to kill himself. The flicker of quaking aspen and basswood leaves, the flipping of the sugar maple, and the rustle of the red oak. Spending my life working for the Forest is helping me to heal. My new purpose is to guard and tend our nation's living crown jewels for the benefit of all.

I'd like to imagine the entity is one of my dead friends, come to walk with me under the emerald canopy.

A pioneer of American forestry told his rangers in 1905 that they should "do the greatest good for the greatest number in the long run." Sometimes, when I'm out marking alone, I'll catch something out of the corner of my eye, and get the sneaking feeling that I'm being watched. After spending so much time in the mountains of RC-East, I learned to never ignore the sensation. Often I'll find it's a deer, a bear or—if I'm really lucky—one of our wolves. Or I'll find tracks later. Sometimes I don't find anything; I'm just left with the feeling of a presence. I wonder whether it's my brain injury doing something sparky, but I'd like to imagine the entity is one of my dead friends, come to walk with me under the emerald canopy.

Occasionally, the memories of lost brothers and their fatherless children knock me to my knees and I find myself bawling against an oak tree. But I get up and keep going. Basswood grows in tight clumps of up to five or more stems—so tight, that we can't cut one stem down without damaging the others. So when we're out marking for harvest, the golden rule is to either mark the whole clump for cutting, or none of them at all.

Driving around a week or so ago with the other 173rd vet in my shop, we talked about our passed friends, and how having passion for something greater in our lives after the Army has perhaps saved us. We knock off work, go home, and think of better ways to mark trees. We take side jobs so that we can cut more trees. And volunteer for overtime constantly. And think about ways we can carry more paint, or better protect regeneration from deer browsing. Doing good forestry is like being the pen and writing a love letter to the forest. Fate, I have learned, is a haphazard forester—marking clumps for destruction, then cutting unevenly, leaving some stems behind, vulnerable to rot. But under the right conditions, the stumps can sprout anew, and the hollowed-out stems that remain can find new purpose.

Monthly Basic Pay and Allowances

Effective: 1 July 1969

| Rank | Cumulative Years of Service ^{1/} | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Personal Money Allowance | Basic Allowance for Subsistence | Basic Allowance for Quarters | | | | |
|---|---|----------|----------|--------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|-------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| | Under 2 | Over 2 | Over 3 | Over 4 | Over 6 | Over 8 | Over 10 | Over 12 | Over 14 | Over 16 | Over 18 | Over 20 | Over 22 | Over 26 | With Dependent | Without Dependents | | | | | | | | | |
| CNO ^{2/} | 2,807.10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 333.33 | 47.88 | 201.00 | 160.20 | | | | |
| O-10 | 1,810.20 | 1,874.10 | | | 1,945.80 | 2,094.90 | 2,244.90 | 2,394.60 | 2,544.30 | 2,694.00 | 2,843.70 | 2,993.40 | 3,143.10 | 3,292.80 | 3,442.50 | 3,592.20 | 3,741.90 | 183.33 | 47.88 | 201.00 | 160.20 | | | | |
| O-9 | 1,604.40 | 1,646.40 | 1,681.80 | | 1,724.10 | 1,795.80 | 1,945.80 | 2,094.90 | 2,244.90 | 2,394.60 | 2,544.30 | 2,694.00 | 2,843.70 | 2,993.40 | 3,143.10 | 3,292.80 | 3,442.50 | 41.67 ^{3/} | 47.88 | 201.00 | 160.20 | | | | |
| O-8 | 1,453.20 | 1,496.70 | 1,532.40 | | 1,646.40 | 1,724.10 | 1,795.80 | 1,945.80 | 2,094.90 | 2,244.90 | 2,394.60 | 2,544.30 | 2,694.00 | 2,843.70 | 2,993.40 | 3,143.10 | 3,292.80 | 47.88 | 47.88 | 201.00 | 160.20 | | | | |
| O-7 | 1,207.20 | 1,289.70 | | | 1,347.00 | 1,425.30 | | 1,496.70 | 1,646.40 | 1,759.80 | 1,874.10 | 1,945.80 | 2,024.10 | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 201.00 | 160.20 | | | | |
| O-6 | 894.60 | 983.40 | 1,047.60 | | | | | 1,083.30 | 1,254.30 | 1,318.50 | 1,347.00 | 1,425.30 | 1,546.20 | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 170.10 | 140.10 | | | | |
| O-5 | 715.50 | 840.90 | 898.20 | | | | | 926.10 | 975.60 | 1,040.70 | 1,118.70 | 1,182.90 | 1,218.30 | 1,261.20 | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 157.50 | 130.20 | | | | |
| O-4 | 603.60 | 734.40 | 783.90 | | 798.00 | 833.70 | 890.40 | 940.50 | 983.40 | 1,026.30 | 1,054.80 | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 145.05 | 120.00 | | | | |
| O-3 | 561.00 | 627.00 | 669.60 | 741.60 | 776.70 | 804.90 | 848.10 | 890.40 | 912.00 | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 130.05 | 105.00 | | | | |
| O-2 | 449.70 | 534.00 | 641.40 | 662.70 | 676.50 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 120.00 | 95.10 | | | | |
| O-1 | 386.40 | 427.80 | 534.00 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 110.10 | 85.20 | | | | |
| O-3E ^{4/} | | | | 741.60 | 776.70 | 804.90 | 848.10 | 890.40 | 926.10 | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 130.05 | 105.00 | | | | |
| O-2E ^{4/} | | | | 662.70 | 676.50 | 698.10 | 734.40 | 762.90 | 783.90 | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 120.00 | 95.10 | | | | |
| O-1E ^{4/} | | | | 534.00 | 570.30 | 591.60 | 612.90 | 634.20 | 662.70 | | | | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 110.10 | 85.20 | | | | |
| W-4 | 571.20 | 612.90 | | 627.00 | 655.20 | 684.00 | 712.50 | 762.90 | 798.00 | 826.50 | 848.10 | 876.30 | 905.40 | 975.60 | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 145.05 | 120.00 | | | | |
| W-3 | 519.30 | 563.40 | | 570.30 | 577.20 | 619.50 | 655.20 | 676.50 | 698.10 | 719.10 | 741.60 | 769.80 | 798.00 | 826.50 | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 130.05 | 105.00 | | | | |
| W-2 | 454.80 | 491.70 | | 506.10 | 534.00 | 563.40 | 584.70 | 605.70 | 627.00 | 648.60 | 669.60 | 690.90 | 719.10 | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 120.00 | 95.10 | | | | |
| W-1 | 378.90 | 434.70 | | 470.70 | 491.70 | 513.00 | 534.00 | 555.90 | 577.20 | 598.50 | 619.50 | 641.40 | | | | | | 47.88 | 47.88 | 110.10 | 85.20 | | | | |
| Cumulative Years of Service ^{1/} | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | Basic Allowance for Quarters | | | |
| Rank | Under 2 | Over 2 | Over 3 | Over 4 | Over 6 | Over 8 | Over 10 | Over 12 | Over 14 | Over 16 | Over 18 | Over 20 | Over 22 | Over 26 | Without Dependent | One Dependent | Two Dependents | Over 2 Dependents | | | | | | | |
| E-9 ^{5/} | | | | | | | 648.90 | 663.90 | 679.20 | 694.20 | 709.50 | 723.60 | 761.70 | 835.80 | 85.20 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | | | | | | | |
| E-8 | | | | | 544.50 | 559.80 | 574.50 | 589.80 | 604.80 | 619.20 | 634.50 | 672.00 | 746.40 | 85.20 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | 120.00 | | | | | | | |
| E-7 | 342.30 | 410.10 | 425.40 | 440.40 | 455.40 | 469.80 | 484.80 | 500.40 | 522.60 | 537.30 | 552.30 | 559.80 | 597.30 | 672.00 | 75.00 | 114.90 | 114.90 | 114.90 | 114.90 | 114.90 | 114.90 | | | | |
| E-6 | 294.90 | 358.20 | 372.90 | 388.20 | 403.20 | 417.90 | 433.20 | 455.40 | 469.80 | 484.80 | 492.60 | | | | 70.20 | 110.10 | 110.10 | 110.10 | 110.10 | 110.10 | 110.10 | | | | |
| E-5 | 254.70 | 313.80 | 328.80 | 343.20 | 365.70 | 380.70 | 395.70 | 410.10 | 417.90 | | | | | | 70.20 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | | | | |
| E-4 ^{6/} | 214.20 | 268.50 | 283.50 | 305.70 | 321.00 | | | | | | | | | | 70.20 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | 105.00 | | | | |
| E-3 | 155.10 | 216.30 | 231.30 | 246.30 | | | | | | | | | | | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | | | | |
| E-2 | 127.80 | 179.10 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | | | | |
| E-1 +4mos | 123.30 | 163.80 | | | | | | | | | | | | | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | | | | |
| E-1 -4mos | 115.20 | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | 60.00 | | | | |

Notes:

1. If no amount is shown for a pay grade under cumulative years of service, the amount immediately to the left applies.
2. Basic pay is \$2,807.10 regardless of cumulative years of service.
3. While serving as U.N. member \$225.00.
4. Applies to officers with more than 4 years active duty as an enlisted member.
5. While serving as the Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy, basic pay is \$1,016.10 regardless of cumulative years of service.
6. BAQ amounts applies to E-4 with over 4 years of service. E-4 with less than 4 years of service BAQ is without dependent \$55.20, with 1 or 2 dependents \$83.10, Over 2 Dependents \$105.00



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:

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)

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, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218