

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - 240552 - Milwaukee WI. 53224.

In Service to America



## Meeting Notice

15 February, 2023

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.  
Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.  
Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.  
**15 February, 2023**

Future Meetings

15 February, 15 March, 19 April, 17 May, 21  
June, 19 July

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

### NOTICE: NEW MAILING ADDRESS

**We had problems with the Post office  
so we were forced to rent a new box, - a new  
address.**

**P O Box 240552, Milwaukee WI. 53224.**

## Cannabis Mitigates Symptoms of Treatment Resistant PTSD

BY NORML, FEBRUARY 9, 2023

Tel Aviv, Israel: The use of cannabis prior to bedtime is associated with improved sleep in patients with treatment-resistant post-traumatic stress (PTS), according to data published in the journal *Frontiers in Psychiatry*.

Israeli researchers evaluated cannabis use in a cohort of 14 subjects with combat-related traumatic stress. Subjects had previously tried various conventional treatments without success. All of the patients were naïve to cannabis prior to enrolling in the study. Study participants consumed cannabis in the evenings in an outpatient setting for a period of at least six-months.

Investigators reported: "After treatment with cannabis, total sleep score, subjective sleep quality, and sleep duration significantly improved. ... Total PTSD symptom score and its subdomains (intrusiveness, avoidance, and alertness) showed [also] improvement." By contrast, cannabis treatment was not associated with reducing patients' frequency of nightmares.

None of the patients reported any side-effects from cannabis, nor did any elect to cease using

cannabis prior to the end of the study period.

"To the best of our knowledge, this is the first published study examining long-term cannabis efficacy in chronic combat treatment-resistant PTSD patients," authors concluded. "The study's findings show an overall improvement in sleep quality and duration, as well as a decrease in PTSD symptoms. ... Future research should clarify the long-term effects of cannabis on different groups of patients suffering from PTSD."

Israelis suffering from post-traumatic stress have been legally able to access cannabis since 2014. Currently, about 10 percent of all Israelis authorized to access medical cannabis use it to treat symptoms of PTS.

Other studies have similarly reported improvements in sleep duration and in insomnia in patients with and without PTS. The enactment of adult-use marijuana legalization has also been correlated with a decrease in the sale of over-the-counter sleep aid medications.

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 324**  
**January 18, 2023**

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

**Minutes of November 16, 2022 reviewed and accepted**

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

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Christmas Party** - \$426.00 paid for our annual Christmas party

**Post Office Box** – Our post office box was locked down because the check written and delivered in Oct.

was lost by the post office. The situation has since been remedied.

**Allied Vets Dues** – Annual dues of \$40 will be paid at the January 26<sup>th</sup> meeting

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Elections** – Elections will be held in April. In order for the chapter to survive, we need members to step forward and get involved.

**Adjournment** – 7:45

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**Black Veterans Struggling More Financially Than White Veterans**

By Rebecca Kheel, 15 Nov 2022, Military.com

More than one-quarter of veterans are struggling to afford basic costs of living, and Black veterans are struggling more than white veterans.

That's the picture of a pair of studies released recently paint of veterans' financial status. Although the studies show disparity based on race in the veteran community, veterans as a whole are doing better financially than the general population.

One study, released by Rand Corp., found that Black veterans have a higher quality of life than Black Americans who never served in the military, but that they're still behind economically compared to white Americans, regardless of military service.

Separately, an analysis of census data released by the United Way of Northern New Jersey's United for ALICE project found that 27% of all veterans are struggling to afford basic necessities of modern living. When broken down by race, 35% of Black veterans face financial hardships, compared to 25% of white veterans, according to the analysis.

"There continue to be gaps by race and ethnicity among veterans, but those gaps were a little bit smaller than the overall population," Stephanie Hoopes, United for ALICE's national director, said in an interview. "What is the veteran support and experience that's helped close some of those gaps, and why aren't they able to fully close them? Those are a couple of really interesting questions I think that the research raises."

Based on the Census Bureau's 2019 American

Community Survey, the most recent year available to the organization, 6% of veterans are living below the federal poverty level, according to United for ALICE's analysis released Friday.

Another 21% of veterans are below the Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed -- or ALICE -- threshold, according to the analysis. That means those veterans make more than the federal poverty line but still can't afford housing, child care, food, transportation, health care, a smartphone plan and taxes.

The COVID-19 pandemic likely exacerbated the financial hardships, according to United for ALICE, which also analyzed responses to the Federal Reserve Board's Survey of Household Economics and Decisionmaking in late 2021. In that data set, 29% of veterans below the ALICE threshold reported being worse off than a year before and 33% said they were worse off than two years before.

Still, the number of veterans below the federal poverty level and ALICE threshold is lower than the 35% of people below those lines who never served in the military, according to the analysis. That's because veterans are more likely to own homes, be employed full time and have access to health insurance through the Department of Veterans Affairs or Tricare, Hoopes said.

But because federal assistance is often tied to the poverty line, there still appears to be a gap in

Continued next page

## Black Vets continued

assistance available to veterans below the ALICE threshold, she said. For example, while 29% of veterans in poverty have accessed the food stamp program known as SNAP, just 12% of ALICE veterans can access it.

“There’s this gap of people who are still struggling and yet aren’t eligible for things like food stamps to disability assistance to some of the health care benefits that are available,” Hoopes said.

While Black veterans are struggling more financially than white veterans, the disparity is higher among non-veterans. According to the analysis, 51% of non-veteran Black Americans are below the federal poverty line and ALICE threshold, compared with the 35% of Black veterans.

Meanwhile, Rand released a study Wednesday

looking specifically at how military service affects the quality of life for Black Americans.

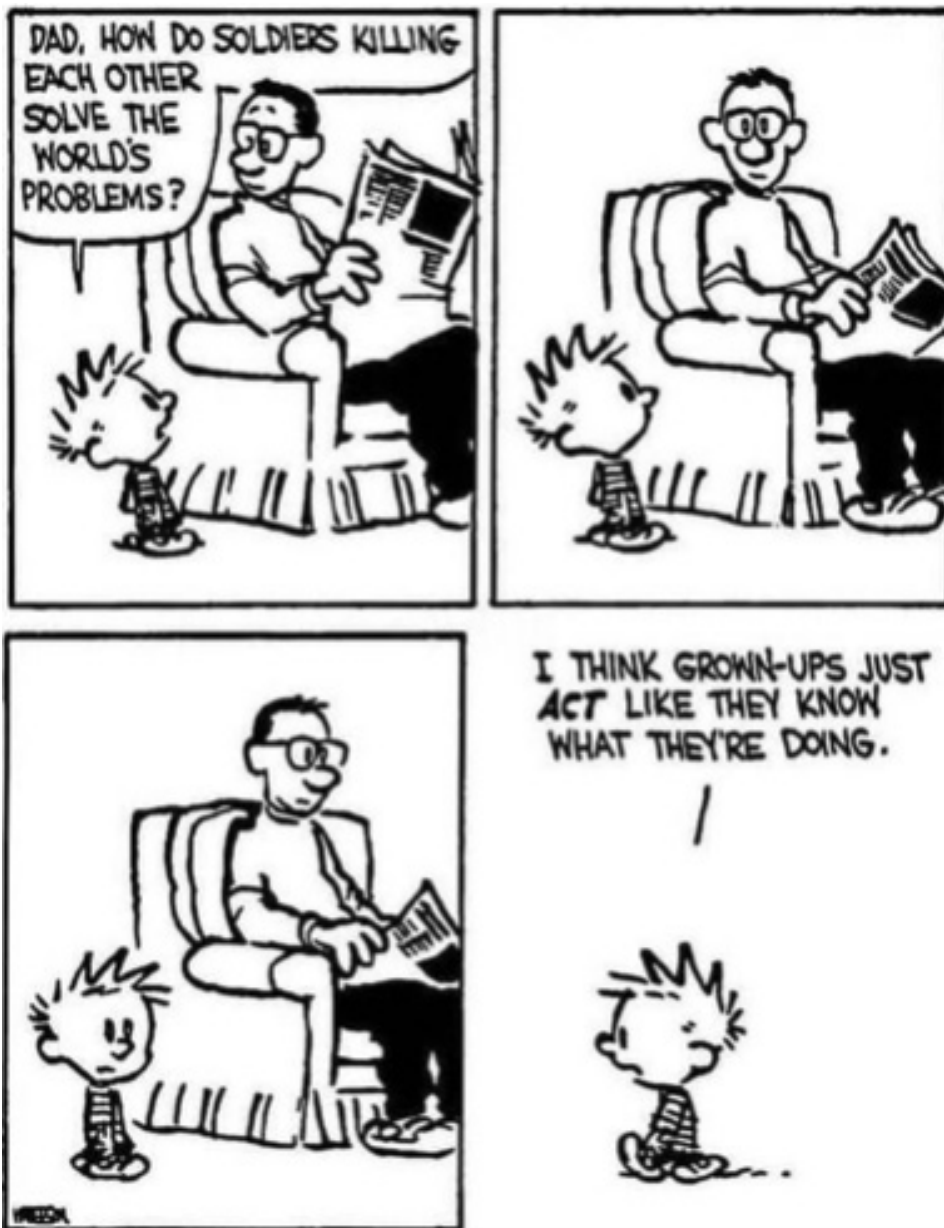
The Rand study, which looked at several data sets including the 2021 American Community Survey, found that, while military service was associated with some better outcomes for Black Americans, there is still economic inequity compared to white Americans, regardless of military service.

For example, while Black veterans reported earning more than \$10,000 annually above the incomes of Black Americans who hadn’t served, they still had lower incomes than white male veterans and non-veterans, according to the report. Black female veterans did earn more than white female civilians, though.

The need for food assistance is also lower among Black veterans than Black non-veterans, but higher than all white Americans, according to the report. For men, 11.7% of Black veterans receive SNAP benefits, compared with 17.9% of Black non-veterans, 4.8% of white veterans and 6.2% of white non-veterans.

The pattern also holds for homeownership. Rand found 58.8% of Black veterans owned homes, which is higher than the 39.9% of Black non-veteran homeowners but lower than the 70.5% of white non-veteran and 79.9% of white veteran homeowners.

“Our preliminary exploration of outcomes from nationally representative surveys suggests that, for many Black Americans, military service is associated with many positive aspects compared with the life they might have had without ever serving,” the report said. “However, it is still striking that, in general, Black Americans do worse than their white counterparts across many of the outcomes we examined. Improving the health and well-being of Black people and other marginalized individuals should be an important priority toward a more just society.”



# VA to Get 22% Budget Boost In Government Spending Deal

By Rebecca Kheel, Military.com, 20 Dec 2022

The Department of Veterans Affairs' medical budget will see a 22% increase this coming year under the sweeping government spending bill released early Tuesday morning.

Lawmakers are set to approve \$118.7 billion for veterans medical care for 2023, which is \$21.7 billion more than was approved for 2022 and is equal to the amount requested by the VA earlier this year.

Combined with funding for the Veterans Benefits Administration, medical and prosthetic research, construction programs and the electronic health record system, the bill gives the VA a total of \$134.7 billion in discretionary funds, which is \$22.5 billion above 2022 but \$328.7 million below the administration's request.

Separately, the spending bill, known as an omnibus, also includes \$5 billion in so-called mandatory spending for a new account called the Cost of War Toxic Exposures Fund that was created to implement the PACT Act, the bill passed earlier this year that expanded benefits and health care for veterans exposed to toxins during their military service.

The VA funding is part of a \$1.7 trillion deal reached by House and Senate Democrats and Senate Republicans to fund every federal agency for the remainder of fiscal year 2023, which started in October. Congress is expected to pass the bill by Friday, ending the months the government has been running on a stopgap spending measure that kept the government open by extending 2022 funding levels, but prevented spending on new programs and initiatives.

The bill will also provide \$858 billion for defense, matching the level authorized in the defense policy bill Congress cleared last week.

The funding for VA medical accounts includes \$13.9 billion for mental health care, \$2.7 billion for homeless assistance programs, \$1.9 billion for the caregiver program and \$840.5 million for women's health care.

While the omnibus boosts VA spending, a policy priority for many veterans was left out of the bill: the Afghan Adjustment Act.

The proposal would provide a pathway for Afghans evacuated to the United States last year

to apply for green cards after undergoing security screenings. Veterans and Afghans have been camping outside the Capitol and visiting lawmakers' district offices to push for the measure's inclusion in the omnibus, but Republicans objected to including it in the bill over what they argue was insufficient security vetting of the evacuees.

While the Afghan Adjustment Act was not included, the omnibus does include an extension of the Special Immigrant Visa, or SIV, program for Afghans who helped the U.S. military after an extension was left out of the defense policy bill, raising fears the program would end in a year. The omnibus extends the SIV program through 2024 and adds another 4,000 visas.

Within the \$858 billion for defense is \$278.1 billion for operations and maintenance. That includes \$1.8 billion more than requested for sustainment, restoration and maintenance accounts, the funding used to fix issues such as moldy barracks.

The bill also includes \$19 billion for military construction, including \$2 billion for military family housing. The housing funding includes money to "increase oversight of privatized housing," which has also had issues with mold, according to a Democratic House summary of the bill.

The defense money also has funding to support the 4.6% pay raise for troops that was confirmed in the defense policy bill.

The bill itself includes no language on extremists in the military, but the report accompanying the bill directs the Pentagon to brief relevant congressional committees on actions taken related to extremists or criminal groups. The report does not carry the weight of law, but directions for briefings are typically honored.

The omnibus also includes \$45 billion for military and humanitarian aid for war in Ukraine, expected to be the last major infusion of U.S. cash for a while after Republicans take control of the House in January. The funding, which adds to the \$65 billion Congress has allocated since the war began in February, includes \$11.8 billion to replenish U.S. weapons being sent to Ukraine and \$7 billion to support U.S. troops stationed elsewhere in Europe.



# The Pentagon fails its fifth audit in a row

Connor Echols, Responsible Statecraft, NOVEMBER 22, 2022

Last week, the Department of Defense revealed that it had failed its fifth consecutive audit.

“I would not say that we flunked,” said DoD Comptroller Mike McCord, although his office did note that the Pentagon only managed to account for 39 percent of its \$3.5 trillion in assets. “The process is important for us to do, and it is making us get better. It is not making us get better as fast as we want.”

The news came as no surprise to Pentagon watchers. After all, the U.S. military has the distinction of being the only U.S. government agency to have never passed a comprehensive audit.

But what did raise some eyebrows was the fact that DoD made almost no progress in this year’s bookkeeping: Of the 27 areas investigated, only seven earned a clean bill of financial health, which McCord described as “basically the same picture as last year.”

Given this accounting disaster, it should come as no surprise that the Pentagon has a habit of bad financial math. This is especially true when it comes to estimating the cost of weapons programs.

The Pentagon’s most famous recent boondoggle is the F-35 program, which has gone over its original budget by \$165 billion to date. But examples of overruns abound: As Sens. Jim Inhofe (R-Okla.) and Jack Reed (D-RI) wrote in 2020, the lead vessel for every one of the Navy’s last eight combatant ships came in at least 10 percent over budget, leading to more than \$8 billion in additional costs.

And another major overrun is poised to happen soon, according to a recent report from the Congressional Budget Office.

The Navy plans to expand its ship production in an effort to maintain an edge over China, with a particular focus on a new attack submarine and destroyer ship. The Pentagon has proposed three versions of this plan at an average cost of \$27 billion per year between 2023 and 2052, a 10 percent jump from current annual shipbuilding costs.

But the CBO says this is a big underestimate. The independent agency’s math says the average annual cost of this shipbuilding initiative will be over \$31 billion, meaning that the Navy is underestimating costs by \$120 billion over the program’s life.

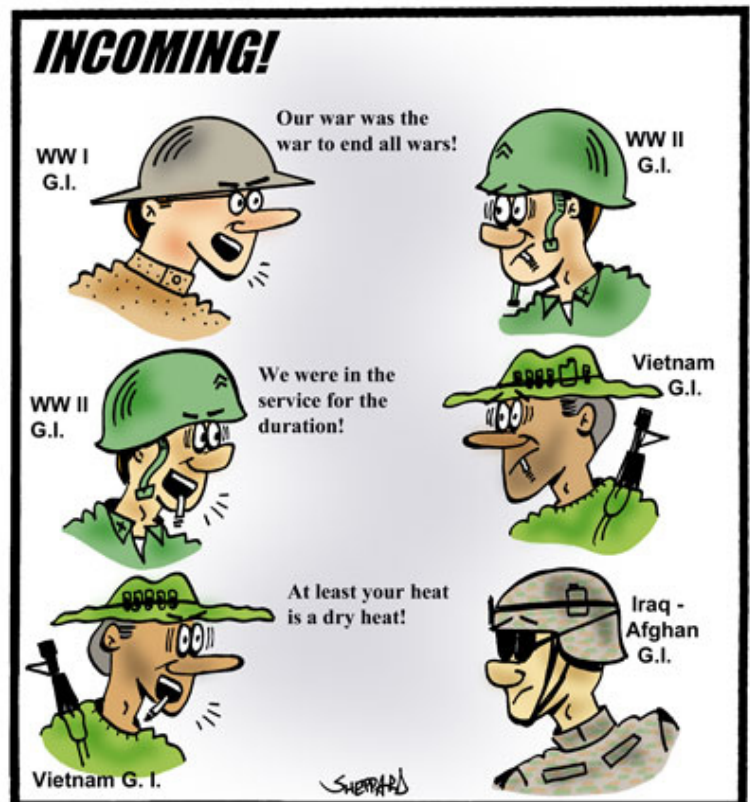
As Mark Thompson of the Project on Government Oversight recently noted, these overruns

“shouldn’t come as a shock” to anyone who has paid attention to DoD acquisitions in recent years. “But it does suggest a continuing, and stunning, inability by the Navy to get its ducks, and dollars, in a row,” Thompson wrote. So will the Pentagon manage to get its financial house in order any time soon? It’s possible, if a bit unlikely.

Despite the long odds, a bipartisan group of lawmakers led by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.) proposed a bill last year that could help make that happen. The legislation would cut one percent off the top of the budget of any part of the Pentagon that fails an audit. That means that, if the proposal had already passed, 20 of the agency’s 27 auditing units would face a budget cut this year.

Unfortunately, momentum around that bill appears to have fizzled out, leaving the Pentagon’s accountants as the last line of defense. Per Comptroller McCord, the DoD hopes to finally pass an audit by 2027, a mere 14 years after every other agency in the U.S. government blew past that milestone. That may coincide with another historical moment, according to Andrew Lautz of the National Taxpayers Union.

“[W]e could reach a \$1 trillion defense budget five years sooner [than the CBO estimates], in 2027,”



All wars suck



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## Sign Up Now With Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 324

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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
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I would like to help Chapter 324 by donating \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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 VVA Chapter 324 - Membership, PO Box 18631, Milwaukee, WI 53218