

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - 240552 - Milwaukee WI. 53224.

In Service to America



Meeting Notice

17 MAY 2023

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.
Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.
Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

17 MAY, 2023

Future Meetings

21 June, 19 July, Aug 16, Sept. 20, Oct 18,
Nov 15

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

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.

NOMINATIONS WILL BE OPEN

ELECTIONS WILL BE HELD AT THE MAY MEETING

A Vietnam vet's ghost story

EVERETT COX, Dirt-mag, 03 APR 2023

<https://www.dirt-mag.com/stories/news-views/a-vietnam-vet-s-ghost-story-YE2402188>

TO THE EDITOR,

I made 22 paper masks to tell a ghost story. Memorial Day is in remembrance of our military war dead. There are other war dead we want to forget. These are our veteran suicides. No one knows how many veterans kill themselves every day. It depends on who you ask and how the count is done. The number 22 has become the longstanding symbol of veteran suicides. Many believe it is much higher. Until that last breath, their deaths may be slow deaths, taking months, years, even decades.

The first step in becoming a soldier, sailor, airman or Marine is to die. Die to self. We learn to die for our country.

That first step is also the first step to becoming a ghost. It is the willingness to face death, the willingness to die. That ghost may haunt us for our whole life. War wounds, visible and invisible, may sap the lifewish and strengthen a deathwish.

For many, their war is not over until their last breath. Please remember that on Memorial Day. Please remember 22 dead vets a day. If you know a vet at risk, please call the national suicide hotline number: 988 (press 1 for the veteran hotline).



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

April 19, 2023

Meeting called to Order by Vice president Pat Moore at 7:00 pm

A Moment of Silence was observed

Minutes of the March meeting were reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$657.00 was received from National - \$4310.49 balance in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Fund Raising – Our Fund Raising dates are May 28th, June 11th, July 23rd and August 27th

Web Site – Contact Pat Moore to post items of interest for the chapter

BUSINESS

Due to small attendance, elections were postponed until May

For the Good of the Chapter

We welcome new member Dave Lang

Adjournment 7:30 pm

Masks optional at Milwaukee VA starting May 8

Starting Monday, May 8, masks will be optional in all Zablocki facilities (including all community-based outpatient clinics), except in the following high-risk areas of the Milwaukee VA

Medical Center:

Inpatient areas (ICU, 3C, 4C, 5C, 6C, 7C, 9A, 9C)

Emergency Department

Procedure areas

Hematology/Oncology Clinic

Dialysis

Radiation/Oncology

Spinal Cord Injury Center

Domiciliary

Community Homes

ZIHP Clinic

Neurology/PMR Clinic

1AN Clinic (Room 1260)

Also, masks are required:

If a Veteran, caregiver or family member asks an employee to wear one.

For anyone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 or other viral respiratory infections.

For anyone who has had close contact or exposure to someone with COVID-19 in the past 10 days.

For anyone who was in an area where an outbreak occurred.

For employees who have not received the COVID-19 vaccine.

The Zablocki VA Health Care System is following VHA's COVID-19 Operational Plan to include masking requirements based on health protection levels (low, medium and high) and health-care facility conditions. VHA's green (low), yellow (medium) and red (high) response levels correspond with CDC's Level of Community Transmission.

These levels are noted on the Locations page of the Milwaukee VA website; each facility has a "COVID-19 health protection" indicator which spells out masking and other safety precautions.

Hospital admission

Coming for an inpatient stay at the Milwaukee VA Medical Center sometime soon?

Here's some helpful reminders to ensure your stay is a positive one:

-Veterans being admitted to the hospital should leave personal belongings at home, except for essential items such as hearing aids, dentures, glasses, cell phones, and mobility devices.

-Valuables can be deposited for safekeeping.

-Anything not deposited for safekeeping will be your own responsibility to prevent loss or theft during your stay.

For this and additional helpful information on how to prepare for your visit to the Milwaukee VA Medical Center, please visit your website at: <https://www.va.gov/milwaukee-health-care/locations/clement-j-zablocki-veterans-administration-medical-center/>

FUNDRAISING FOR CHAPTER 324

ALL HANDS ON DECK

Chapter fundraising consists of four Sunday afternoons distributing Orange Blossoms (think poppies, but orange) at American Family Field prior to a Brewers Game.

Dates this year are: **May 28th** vs. Giants 1:10pm, **June 11th** vs. Athletics 1:10pm, **July 23rd** vs. Braves 1:10pm, and **August 27th** vs. Padres 1:10pm.

Parking lots open three hours before game time. General parking will cost \$15. Parking will be reimbursed by the Chapter. Meet near the Yount statue on the Home Plate side of the stadium. Sandwich and liquid provided. The Brewers will provide you with two complimentary tickets for the games.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

MORE PEOPLE GENERATE MORE DONATIONS

The Pentagon fails its fifth audit in a row

by Connor Echols, Responsible Statecraft, NOVEMBER 22, 2022

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 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, giving 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 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 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 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,” Lautz wrote.

Pardoning Vietnam Draft Dodgers Was a No-Win Situation for Jimmy Carter

By Blake Stilwell, Military.com, 2-14-23

The election of 1976 was the first presidential election since the end of the Vietnam War. The war had been over for Americans since 1973; North Vietnam defeated South Vietnam, reuniting the country by force in 1975. Still, Georgia Gov. Jimmy Carter believed the fates of thousands of war resisters, draft evaders and des



erters were the war's "unfinished business."

In August 1976, Carter addressed the American Legion National Convention in Seattle, where he announced the promise of a blanket pardon for those who evaded the draft during the war in his first week in office. Deserters would be considered on a case-by-case basis. True to his word, it was his first official act as president of the United States.

The result was a presidential proclamation that left everyone feeling slighted, left out or otherwise betrayed.

Between August 1964 and March 1973, 209,517 American men violated the Military Selective Service Act were charged with failing to register with local draft boards or leaving the country to avoid military service, relocating to places like Canada or Sweden. Another 360,000 were never formally charged. Returning to the U.S. meant a likely prison sentence, so 50,000 of the 100,000 evaders who left the country stayed in Canada permanently.

Carter's predecessor and opponent in the 1976 election, Gerald Ford, offered conditional clemency, allowing evaders to avoid prison time by working in public service for two years. What to do about these war resisters was still a controversial issue in 1976.

Advertisement

Ford's clemency program faltered due to low participation. Only 15% of the evaders eligible for clemency actually applied, meaning a better solution

was necessary. Carter wanted to "get the Vietnam War over with" by issuing the blanket pardon. Researchers L. Amber Roessner and Lindsey Bier break down why a pardon failed to achieve Carter's stated goal.

A pardon was still a touchy subject, even within the Democratic Party. Party leaders were vocal opponents, while only a slim majority, 56%, of Americans supported it. Veterans groups saw the evaders as unpatriotic lawbreakers, and even expelled members for supporting them. Carter, a Navy veteran and member of the American Legion, called his support for the pardon "the hardest decision of his campaign."

He was a supporter of the Vietnam War until 1973, when he claimed the war "lacked moral principle." During his campaign, Carter said he wanted the war to be over "in the hearts and minds of Americans" and "heal the domestic wounds of Vietnam."

Carter was a dark-horse candidate from the beginning, and few Americans knew who he was when he announced his bid for the presidency. In March 1976, he told *The Washington Post*, "I don't have the desire to punish anyone, I'd just like to tell the young folks who did defect to come home."

His stance on the issue was derided by journalists and politicians, while drawing wide support on opinion pages and letters to the editor from everyday Americans. Even *The Wall Street Journal's* editorial board applauded Carter for "his ability to treat the topics of abortion and amnesty with the complexity they deserve."

Carter's political opponents, like vice-presidential candidate Bob Dole, were against any kind of blanket amnesty, criticized Carter's support for it and campaigned against it. Others criticized Carter's plan, because it didn't go far enough: It did not address the problem of deserters or veterans with less than honorable discharges.

The election of 1976 was one of the closest in modern U.S. history, with Carter edging out Ford by 57 electoral votes. As president-elect Carter, he heard more voices than ever who wanted him to adhere to his campaign promise, and more voices compelling him to extend the pardon to deserters, those who resisted the war after seeing combat in Vietnam.

On Jan. 21, 1977, the day after his inauguration, Carter issued Executive Order 11967,

Continued next page

Pardon continued granting a pardon to all Vietnam War draft dodgers. It included those who failed to register for the draft, but did not address the fate of deserters. After the pardon was issued, polling revealed only 20% of Americans supported the executive order. Some reporters commented that it would set a precedent for future military desertions during wartime; others believed it fell short of healing the wounds caused by the war. The U.S. military continued to search for deserters, such as Allen Abney, who deserted from the Marine Corps in 1968 and was arrested in 2006.

Veterans and veterans groups expressed

outrage and resentment. Deserters and supporters of deserters were disappointed. Only 85 of those deserters who were eligible for the case-by-case pardon actually returned to the U.S. Many stayed in their new homes abroad.

The United States ended the draft in 1973 under President Richard Nixon, switching to the all-volunteer force the U.S. has today. Ford ended the Selective Service registration requirement for male citizens between ages 18 and 25 in 1975. It was Carter who reimplemented mandatory registration for males between ages 18 and 26 in 1980.

The Wall That Heals Visits Wisconsin – 2023 **Rhineland May 18 – 21 Crivitz June 1 - 4**

WOOD NATIONAL CEMETERY

ANNUAL MEMORIAL DAY

VOLUNTEER GRAVESITE FLAG PLACEMENT

SATURDAY, MAY 27, 2023 AT 9AM
(MEET AT CEMETERY OFFICE, BUILDING 1301)

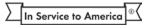


GRAVESITE FLAG REMOVAL
TUESDAY MAY 30, 2023 @ 8:30AM

VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATED!



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:

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