

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218

In Service to America

Meeting Notice

15 June, 2022

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

15 June 2022

Future Meetings

20 July, 17 August, 21 September

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

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

VVA324 Fundraising – Your Help is Needed

The Brewers have given us an extra date for our fundraising

Tuesday, June 7th

First pitch 7:10 pm we can get on the lot at 3pm

You've seen guys out distributing poppies and getting donations. We distribute orange blossoms in the stadium parking lot. The more people we have the more donations we can generate.

We will set up a table near home plate around the iron workers statues.

We will reimburse you for your parking. We will have water. If you want to bring a sandwich we will have a cooler available.

Hope to see you at the game.

Future Brewer Fundraiser Dates

Sunday July 24th Brewers vs Rockies starts at 1:10 – lot opens at 9am

Monday July 25th Brewers vs Rockies starts at 7:10 – lot opens at 3pm

Free Brewers Tickets

The Milwaukee Brewers are (again) offering military members and veterans free tickets to Sunday home games. It's an easy process. Show proof of military/veteran status at any ticket window starting at 10 am on the day of the game to receive up to two tickets in terrace level seating.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

May 18, 2022

Meeting called to Order by President Pat Ciofani
Minutes of April 20, 2022 meeting reviewed and accepted

Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$2035.81 balance in our checking account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – We provided cookies and soft drinks for last meeting

Fund Raising – We received an additional date at American Family Field – We now have added June 7th, along with July 24th and 25th for our fund raising opportunities.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Chapter 324 Suspension – Necessary financial and election reports were again sent to VVA National and our suspension has been lifted

Stand Down June 18th at Old 84th Div HQ – We discussed making a donation to this Stand Down but it was determined that our last check had not been cashed. Until this is cleared up, we will hold off on further donations

Adjournment – 7:30 pm

Origin of the War Story

By Larry Winters

From our beginning, we humans have survived because we learned to become storytellers. For example, if you were being stalked by a saber-toothed tiger and got away, you had a story needing telling. Once told, your story may have saved lives in your tribe or clan.

Please understand that the saber-toothed tiger story was not a war story; it was the story of a giant beast needing to eat. War stories were born when human groups, for various reasons food, land, and sex, began taking the lives of other tribes or clans to get what they wanted.

The gestation and evolution of warriors' stories always involved power in its multiplicity of forms. Warriors consistently amplified the stories they told their tribe. Every human holds the fear of death at our core. When the story has the killing of another human, the life-taker needs to exaggerate the battle to justify their need to kill the enemy. Nothing has changed since the first campfire story was told by cavewomen and men.

A soldier needs to become supercharged with energy by fearing losing his own life to face another human with the same brawn, hatred, and determination to kill him. But, unfortunately, or fortunately, our imaginations help facilitate making our look-alike enemy into a demon we must kill first, and the safety is often hard to put back on.

Warrior training uses war stories to stretch the

warrior's psyche and morality to push them onto a battlefield. But, after they return home, it can take a lifetime to find a new story ending that will hold love.

Yet, the culture, the media, and the public are addicted to war stories, and murders are the most lucrative themes in the entertainment industry. The problem is that fear rides far into our imaginations without being splattered with human blood. Or hearing the knife-edge human scream in actual death. Then there is the deep, sucking away sound of your lifetime of trust built by those who sent you to War. Or the silent wail you let out when you get home to find nothing but the empty chrysalis of your soul.

Stories use metaphors to illuminate hard-to-explain truths. The War story is as important today as it was for our earliest ancestors. Why? Because a war story holds the healing of the warrior who knows the level at which War has pushed away peace. Only when the warrior tells the war story can it reach the depth to liberate personal and national peace.

When War stories are censored by the media, such as the fears of a screaming family member whose loved one we killed with drones is muted, or when the muffled weeping of a Marine who lost his buddy to an IED never reached those he was protecting.

We must feel War with all our senses to know of peace. The veterans' voice holds the truth that exposes our nation to the realities of War and a sure pathway to peace.

The Navy's First Medical Ship In 35 Years Will Be Unlike Any Before

BY HOWARD ALTMAN, THE WAR ZONE, APR 29, 2022

While not a one-to-one replacement for either of the Navy's huge medical ships, the new vessels will go places they can't. By February of 2028, the Navy hopes to have a catamaran-hulled medical ship that its manufacturer says will have a top speed of at least 30 knots and a range of 5,500 nautical miles at 24 knots.

In its Fiscal Year 2023 justification book released last week, the Navy said an Expeditionary Medical Ship (EMS) variant of the Spearhead class Expeditionary Fast Transport will serve that role.



It would be smaller and faster than its two current hospital ships, the USNS Comfort and the USNS Mercy.

It's not a one-to-one replacement for those ships - which the Navy tells The War Zone it will continue to sustain. But the sea service wants to be able to provide emergency medical care in locations that the Comfort and Mercy cannot reach because of their size and speed.

The two existing hospital ships are each nearly 900 feet long, with a displacement of nearly 70,000 tons and are capable of a top speed of 17 knots.

The Navy's justification book has scant details on the specifications of the ship, currently referred to simply by its planned hull number EPF 17. However, from the description it does offer, as well as those of a medical variant of the EPF series provided by the shipbuilder, Austal, it seems likely that the resulting vessel will be about a third to almost half of the length of the Navy's existing hospital ships and nearly twice as fast.

The last of a series of ships the Navy expects to procure from the Austal shipyard in Mobile, Alabama, the service said the Flight II ships in the class will be 338 feet long with a displacement of 2,400 metric tons.

Austal officials declined to comment on EPF 17 since it is not yet under contract. The company's website highlights an Expeditionary Fast Transport-Medical Variant design that calls for a vessel to be 417 feet long and displace 3,100 metric tons, with a draft of just 13 feet.

Austal said its catamaran, which can reach 30 knots according to its website, "boasts several major advantages over the current hospital ships."

That ship will be "faster to allow for quicker response time and its shallow draft hullform allows for direct access to shallow, austere ports," Austal claims. "The flexible interior design is ideal for reconfiguring spaces for operating and recovery efforts and the flight deck is large

enough to accommodate the V-22."

Austal states its proposed medical variant will have room for 28 crew and 50 medical personnel: three operating rooms: six intensive care unit beds, 12 recovery beds, 20 intermediate care beds, 30 light care beds, and seating for 170. It will have one or two V-22 landing spots as well as platforms for transferring patients from watercraft, with the ability to launch and recover boats of up to 12.5 meters long.

EPF 17 will provide expanded Role 2 Enhanced Medical Transport capabilities, Jamie Koehler, a spokeswoman for the Naval Sea Systems Command, told The War Zone Thursday afternoon. "These expanded capabilities are currently being assessed."

Having Role 2 Enhanced Medical Transport capabilities means a ship will be able to provide diagnostic, specialist and hospital care "essential to stabilize and prepare patients for strategic evacuation," according to NATO's Allied Joint

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Navy Medical continued Doctrine for Medical Support. It also includes, but is not limited to, surgery, x-ray, laboratory, blood bank, pharmacy, and sterilization services.

The Navy expects to award a contract for the vessel in September. Construction is expected to begin in December 2026, with the ship anticipated to enter service 14 months later. The expected cost for engineering and construction is about \$330 million, Koehler said.

The Navy said it needs this new class of ship to ensure that future joint forces “will be responsive, deployable, agile, versatile, lethal, survivable, and sustainable.”

Compared to the Comfort and Mercy, EPF 17 offers smaller afloat medical capabilities to support future expeditionary and distributed concepts of operations that the Marines and Navy are now developing.

The decision to select EPF 17 as the Emergency Medical Ship came after the Navy considered retiring one or both of its purpose-built hospital ships.

Several years ago, the Navy established a formal team to see if smaller ships might be able to provide some of those medical services.

At the time, a number of proposals existed, including a conversion or purpose-built medical derivative of the San Antonio-class amphibious ship, a modular hospital package for the service’s new giant Expeditionary Sea Bases, or, what the Navy ultimately went with - a variant of Spearhead-class Expeditionary Fast Transport.

The EPF series of ships, originally known as Joint High Speed Vessels, “will provide combatant commanders high-speed intra-theater sealift with inherent cargo handling capability and the agility to achieve positional advantage over operational distances,” the Navy said.

EPF 17 will not be the only vessel in this class able to provide medical services.

EPFs 14, 15 and 16 will have modifications enabling them to conduct a Role 2 Enhanced Medical Transport mission. Those ships will contain two operating rooms, 10 ICU beds and 23 acute ward beds, Koehler told The War Zone. But they are not meant as replacements for the Comfort and Mercy, Koehler said.

“The Navy continues to expand its afloat medical capability through construction of EPF Flight

II and sustainment of the two Role 3 T-AH hospital ships,” she said. “EPF Flight II is not a replacement of the hospital ships as the two platforms provide different levels of medical care and capacity.”

The new EPF Flight II modified ships EPF 14, EPF 15 and EPF 16 will cost about \$260 million each for engineering and construction costs, Koehler said.

The keel for the future USNS Cody, the first of those and designated as EPF 14 in the Navy’s justification book, was laid at Austal on Jan. 26.

“The new capabilities of this variant of EPFs fulfills a critical need for the Navy and Marine Corps,” Tim Roberts, Strategic and Theater Sealift program manager, Program Executive Ships, said in a Navy media release at the time. “Ensuring that the fleet has fast access to the right medical care increases both the safety and readiness of our Sailors and Marines.”

EPF 14 will have a cruise speed of more than 35 knots.

The EPFs are operated by the Military Sealift Command and the USNS Cody is the first ship in naval service named after Cody, Wyoming.

Starting with USNS Cody, the Flight II configuration “will enhance current EPF capabilities by including a combined forward resuscitative care capability with a limited Intensive Care Unit and medical ward, while maintaining most of the original requirements of the ship,” the Navy said in its January media release. “Flight II EPFs will be able to stabilize postsurgical cases for evacuation without the requirement to first route them through a higher facility.”

USNS Cody is expected to go into service in August, 2024, according to the justification book. USNS Point Loma is expected to go into service in August, 2025.

The Comfort and Mercy, huge white ships with large red crosses, have served well over the years. And with room for 1,000 patient beds, they offer a capability no other navy in the world enjoys.

But with the U.S. increasing its focus on countering China in the vast Pacific, and with the Marine Corps moving toward more a more distributed doctrine, the Navy needs more flexibility and agility than what these large ships can deliver.

Mercy and Comfort will be around for a while, according to the Navy’s latest 30-year shipbuilding plan, which does not have the ships being retired until the mid to late 2030s. They will be replaced by similar vessels at around the same time.

Hundreds of Sailors Being Moved Off Carrier After Surge of Suicides

By Konstantin Toropin, Military.com, 29 Apr 2022

The commanding officer of the USS George Washington told his crew Thursday that the Navy will begin to move sailors off of the aircraft carrier following a string of suicides and complaints from service members about conditions aboard the ship, whose projected departure from the shipyards has been pushed back once again.

Capt. Brent Gaut announced that the ship will move 260 sailors “to an offsite barracks-type living arrangement on Norfolk Naval Shipyard in Portsmouth” -- specifically, a Navy Gateway Inn and Suites -- starting Monday, according to a recording of the announcement reviewed by Military.com.

“We’ll be able to expand that number at about 50 additional beds per week as we figure out exactly what is needed,” Gaut continued.

The Navy confirmed the plan when asked by Military.com and a spokesperson added that the moves will continue “until all Sailors who wish to move off-ship have done so.”

The move comes at the end of a month that saw three sailors aboard the ship die via suicide, after a previously undisclosed string of suicides going back to at least July of last year.

Military.com has been able to confirm at least five suicides by sailors assigned to the ship in the last 10 months -- the Navy has disputed the cause of death for one of those sailors -- and eight in total since November 2019.

It also follows an April 22 visit to the ship by the Navy’s top enlisted official, Master Chief Petty Officer of the Navy Russell Smith, in which the crew was told the service is largely powerless to improve conditions.

Smith told a sailor who had asked about living conditions that the Navy “probably could have done better to manage your expectations coming in here” before informing the crew that raising concerns should be done “with reasonable expectations and then understanding what ... what this is like.”

“What you’re not doing is sleeping in a foxhole like a Marine might be doing,” he added.

According to the commanding officer, the ship currently has 422 sailors living on board. Since sailors typically do not receive an allowance for housing until the E-5 rank, those living on board a ship while it’s in a shipyard tend to be the most junior crew members.

Gaut couched the development as the result of his team’s focus on improving the crew’s quality of life, mental health and morale.

The captain noted that sailors will still have to sleep aboard the ship when they stand duty -- a Navy practice in which a portion of the crew remains aboard the ship overnight to be ready to respond to emergencies. Gaut also said sailors will be able to keep living aboard if they so choose.

Gaut said that this arrangement will end about four months before the ship leaves the shipyard, before giving the crew a date that delays the delivery of the carrier to 2023. The Navy requested that Military.com not publish the specific date out of concerns about operational security.

The delay is at least the third for the ship since it pulled into the shipyard at Newport News. In 2019, the ship was scheduled to be done in 2021, but a year later that had changed to 2022.

Danny Hernandez, a spokesman for Newport News Shipbuilding, said that work on this ship “is nearing completion and our shipbuilding team is laser-focused on redelivering a fully recapitalized carrier to the fleet as early as possible.”

The news comes as details about who has died aboard the aircraft carrier and how are slowly coming to light amid mixed messages reported by the crew.

Sailors reported to Military.com that Gaut told the crew on April 11 that the ship had had nine suicides in nine months. Another death followed on April 15; Gaut told the crew it also was a suicide. The Navy has yet to confirm or deny that Gaut relayed those numbers to the crew.

When Military.com reached out to the Navy last week, Lt. Cmdr. Robert Meyers, a spokesman for Commander Naval Air Force Atlantic, said that the service was aware of only seven deaths -- not necessarily suicides -- aboard the ship in the last 12 months.

The Navy did not provide details on who those sailors were and referred Military.com to local law enforcement for cause of death.

A later Navy statement said that the three April deaths were “apparent suicides” while the other four 2021 deaths were as follows: a suicide in December; a “health-related death” in October; an “undetermined” death in July; and another “health-related death” in May.



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