

# Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - 240552 - Milwaukee WI. 53224.

In Service to America



## Meeting Notice

20 September 2023

5555 W. Good Hope Rd.

Board Meeting 6:30 p.m.

Chapter Meeting 7 - 8 p.m.

**20 September, 2023**

Future Meetings

Oct 18, Nov 15, Dec. 20

**2025**

Jan 17, Feb 21, Mar 20, Apr 17, May 15

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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Director: Bob Rugg  
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Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org

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



# Last Fundraiser Tomorrow

**FUNDRAISING FOR CHAPTER 324**

**SUNDAY, AUGUST 27**

## **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.

**August 27th** vs. Padres 1:10pm.

Parking lots open three hours before game time. SAVE MONEY, buy parking in advance at <https://www.mlb.com/brewers/ballpark/transportation/parking>. 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**

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA**  
**Milwaukee Chapter 234**  
**July 19, 2023**

**Meeting called to Order at 7:00 pm by Vice President Pat Moore**  
**Pledge of Allegiance**  
**A Moment of Silence was observed for all POW'S and MIA'S and their families and for all our brothers and sisters no longer with us**  
**Attendance – Dennis Szymanski, Pat Moore, Laverne Martin, Dale Darrow, John Morgan, Ed Boyes**  
**Minutes of the June meeting reviewed and accepted**  
**Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$5346.91 balance in our checking account**  
**Fund Raising – July 23<sup>rd</sup> and Aug 27<sup>th</sup> at the stadium**

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Wauwatosa July 4<sup>th</sup> Parade – We had 2 vehicles in the parade**

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Heritage Day Parade – July 30<sup>th</sup> in South Milwaukee**

**Stand Down – Moved and passed to donate \$200 to the next Stand Down**

**NO AUGUST MEETING**

**Adjournment – 7:30**

## **Soldiers Home Tours**

Walking tours are back for 2023! Please stay tuned as we will add more dates when we know them. We are so excited to be back!

**Register on line for one of our free regularly scheduled tours!**

<https://www.milwaukeepreservationalliance.org/soldiers-home-walking-tours.html>

Please note: advanced registration is required to attend any Soldiers Home Walking Tour. Registration will end at 10:00am the Friday before each tour. Future tours will continue through early Fall and will be added as dates are finalized.

**Tour Logistics**

Each tour is 90 minutes long, approximately 1 mile, and will cover a variety of fascinating information including the history, architecture, and preservation stories of these historic buildings. Tours run rain or shine. No stairs are necessary, but there is some sloped and rough pavement. We are pleased to offer these tours for FREE, but you are welcome leave a donation during the registration process to ensure these tours remain accessible to all. All donations directly support MPA's work to ensure the remaining vacant buildings on the Soldiers Home campus are preserved as well as our broader advocacy to preserve Milwaukee's built and cultural heritage.

Established just after the Civil War, this 90-

plus acre district rests on the grounds of the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center and represents Milwaukee's role in furthering veteran care in America. One of only 43 National Historic Landmarks in Wisconsin, it is the most intact Soldiers Home in the country and the only one with the majority of its surrounding recuperative village remaining. This special campus is a true national treasure, and we can't wait to share it with you!

For 30 years, Old Main sat empty, but today, thanks to the work of many partners, it is an award-winning restoration that provides permanent supportive housing to veterans and their families at risk of homelessness. We worked hard to ensure Old Main and 5 other buildings on this National Historic Landmark campus were restored in service to veterans, and we're thrilled to be able to offer walking tours of the Soldiers Home grounds, including a stop in the newly restored Old Main to see the incredible preservation work and take in the building's history exhibit.

**Walking Tour App**

Did you know we also have an app for a self-guided tour around the Soldiers Home? Download the free Soldiers Home walking tour app for your smartphone! Just search "Milwaukee Soldiers Home" on the App Store or Google Play.

# VA Hospitals Rate Higher Than Civilian Facilities in New Survey

By Patricia Kime, Military.com, 27 Jul 2023

More than two-thirds of 114 Department of Veterans Affairs facilities received four- or five-star ratings, outperforming private hospitals by 26 percentage points, according to data released Wednesday.

It was the first quality assessment of VA hospitals by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, a federal agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. CMS publishes annual Overall Quality Star Ratings for hospitals in the U.S. based on mortality rates, patient safety, hospital readmissions, patient experience, and timely and effective care.

Among the 4,654 hospitals CMS assessed nationwide, roughly 10% received five-star ratings and 17% received four-star ratings. Nearly 19% got three stars, 14% received two stars and 5% received the lowest rating, one star. The remaining 34% were not rated -- the result of either not meeting the qualification thresholds or the level of metrics needed to assess them.

Among VA hospitals, nearly 30% received five stars; 37% got four stars; 15% were given three stars; 11%, two stars; and 8%, or nine facilities, one star.

At least 23 Veterans Health Administration medical centers were not rated by CMS because they did not meet the criteria for inclusion. CMS does not rate facilities that have a low number of cases or incidents that are specific to its assessment criteria.

It also does not assess specialty hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers and some inpatient care facilities, such as psychiatric hospitals.

The high number of four- and five-star marks for Veterans Health Administration hospitals follows another complimentary report released in June by CMS, in which 72% of VA facilities received four- or five-star ratings for patient experience. The measure, known as the Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems, is based on surveys and assesses patient satisfaction with their care.

VA officials said Tuesday that the department has worked with CMS for five years to be included in its annual ratings, participation they said would let veteran patients compare VA facilities with private-sector hospitals.

Gerard Cox, VA's assistant under secretary for health for quality and patient safety, said the

department has been working since 2019 to become a "high reliability organization," meaning it has been focused on improving operations, promoting expertise and preventing failure.

He said the high ratings for both CMS databases may be connected to that focus.

"We're pleased to see that these CMS star ratings validate the impact of some of that work, but it also only energizes us further to make sure that we are providing the safest and most effective care to veterans," Cox said in a press call with reporters Tuesday.

Still, the VA had nine facilities that earned a one-star rating, signifying that they performed well below the average for specific measurements such as death rates for patients with heart failure, surgical complications and pneumonia, readmission rates for certain ailments, hospital acquired infections, patient satisfaction and more.

The facilities receiving the lowest rating were the James J. Peters VA Medical Center, Bronx, New York; Bay Pines VA Health Care System and West Palm Beach VA Medical Center, Florida; New Mexico VA Health Care System, Albuquerque; VA Pittsburgh Health Care System; Providence VA Medical Center, Rhode Island; Lt. Col. Luke Weathers Jr. VA Medical Center, Memphis, Tennessee; Overton Brooks VA Medical Center, Shreveport, Louisiana; and VA Caribbean Health Care System, San Juan, Puerto Rico.

Among the criticisms of the rankings is that they don't take into account the socioeconomic status of patients or the surrounding community, which may not have access to routine health care and have worse health outcomes during treatment for acute and chronic conditions.

CMS also crunches the numbers in a way that may put smaller facilities or hospitals that have a low number of cases or incidents that meet its eligibility criteria at a disadvantage when it comes to the ratings.

Nonetheless, VA Under Secretary of Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal said the department, which maintains an internal rating system of its own, has already identified and worked with many of the facilities that need help.

The VA hopes those improvements will be "reflected in future iterations of the star ratings," he added.

# US Now Aiding Vietnam in Finding their Missing in Action

By Richard Sisk, Military.com, 7 Jul 2023

Half a century after the last American combat troops left Vietnam, the U.S. has taken the first steps in a major but little-noticed policy shift to solidify relations with its former adversary by helping the Vietnamese account for and identify their war dead.

Under a July 2020 Vietnam Wartime Accounting Initiative Memorandum of Understanding between the U.S. and Vietnam, the State Department's U.S. Agency for International Development was given the formidable task of providing technical assistance and archival research to Vietnam on as many as 300,000 Vietnamese missing.

"The United States appreciates all the support that Vietnam has provided over the last 35 years in accounting for missing U.S. service members," then-U.S. Ambassador to Vietnam Daniel Kritenbrink said at the Hanoi signing of the memorandum between USAID and the Vietnam Office for Seeking Missing Persons (VNOSMP).

That reasoning would have been unthinkable when Americans recoiled at the brutal treatment of U.S. prisoners of war by Vietnam and urban legends proliferated about the possibility that Hanoi was still holding living POWs long after the war.

Kritenbrink added that the U.S. is now "committed to supporting the people of Vietnam as they seek to identify and ultimately reunite remains of combatants with their loving families."

By helping the Vietnamese, the U.S. also stands to gain in the search for America's missing from Vietnam, according to officials of the Defense POW/MIA Accounting Agency.

"It's a win-win situation for us," said Dr. Gregory Berg, lab case manager for the DPAA's scientific analysis directorate. At a June 28 DPAA media roundtable, Berg said that the Vietnamese in conducting searches inevitably "will stumble upon something that's not theirs. There's a good chance they're going to find one of our missing."

In one of the first steps under the new policy, a team of officials and students from Texas Tech University working with USAID is currently in Hanoi to share with the Vietnamese information from the vast archive maintained at the school's Vietnam Center and Sam Johnson Vietnam Archive, including the captured letters and diaries of Vietnamese troops.

In an interview from Hanoi with Lubbock, Texas, TV station KCBD, Steve Maxner, director

of the Texas Tech Vietnam Center, said that, in combing through the archives, "We knew that there would be diaries and materials. The challenge then is transitioning that from a document you find in microfilm and then finding the family."

At a ceremony in early June in Hanoi, the Texas Tech team was able to deliver six sets of materials, including letters and diaries, to the families of six fallen and still missing Vietnamese troops, Maxner said.

"Those families, just like American families are suffering, have heartache and longing to understand what happened," Maxner said.

USAID has also enlisted the help of the Unseen Legacies of the Vietnam War Project from Harvard's Kennedy School in setting up a searchable database "to facilitate location and identification of Vietnamese war dead,"

A team from the project was in Vietnam in the spring to begin work and was expected to return in the fall, a spokesperson told Military.com.

"In addition to our core work reviewing documents to facilitate the location and identification of Vietnamese war dead, the Unseen Legacies team will also share information and participate in training on our research and discovery process to enable teams in Vietnam to conduct similar efforts in the future," the spokesperson said.

The ultimate goal of USAID's initial \$2.4 million project was "to build local government systems to implement a comprehensive identification program, as opposed to a case-by-case identification approach," a USAID spokesperson said in an email statement to Military.com.

USAID is also looking to equip a lab in Vietnam by 2025 for DNA analysis to aid in identification of recovered remains, according to the statement.

In support of the USAID project, the U.S. Institute of Peace, with the authorization of Congress, has begun a multiyear project to promote greater dialogue between the U.S. and Vietnam on war legacy issues and reconciliation.

In a phone interview, Wells-Dang said that "the numbers are staggering," with as many as 300,000 North Vietnamese troops missing in action, and "nobody knows how many South Vietnamese," or Army of the Republic of Vietnam (ARVN), are missing.



## Researchers Say:

# Military Service the ‘Single Strongest’ Predictor of Violent Extremism

By Konstantin Toropin, Military.com, 7 Jun 2023

A new study has found that a history of military service is a common characteristic among perpetrators of mass casualty attacks in the U.S. -- and veterans involved in those attacks are far more likely to be successful.

The National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, known as START, -- a research group at the University of Maryland -- analyzed a database of thousands of extremist crimes going back to 1990 and discovered that, in that group, people with military backgrounds “are 2.41 times more likely to be classified as mass casualty offenders than individuals who did not serve in the armed forces.”

While around three out of four plots that were noted in the database were foiled, “the rate of successful mass fatality crimes involving perpetrators with military backgrounds is nearly two times higher” when compared to civilians.

Veterans and service members aren’t more likely to radicalize to the point of violence compared to civilians but, when they do, “they are more likely to plan for, or commit, mass casualty crimes, thus having an outsized impact on public safety,” according to the START researchers.

Military experience “is the single strongest individual-level predictor” of whether a person will commit a mass casualty event.

The new analysis comes as the Pentagon and the services try to grapple with extremism within the ranks. Following the violent insurrection at the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and the subsequent arrests, the extent of the military’s problem with extremism became much more visible than ever before.

Just months after the insurrection, the first active-duty service member -- a Marine officer -- was arrested by federal investigators for his role in the day’s destruction.

Since then, however, more active-duty, reservist and National Guard service members, as well as scores of veterans, have been arrested, charged and convicted with crimes ranging from trespassing all the way to seditious conspiracy.

The START researchers did not include data from Jan. 6 in their analysis, however, because of the “variation in the extent of the offenders’ premeditation

and their criminal behaviors.”

However, they say that their data shows that, between 1990 and 2022, 170 people with military backgrounds plotted 144 unique mass casualty terrorist attacks in the U.S.

Diving into that group, the researchers found that the leading two ideologies among the group were anti-government militias and white supremacists.

In fact, more than 70% of those were linked to far-right domestic extremist groups and movements, including anti-government groups and militias such as the Boogaloo movement and the Oath Keepers. Only 15% were indicated connected to Islamist extremism.

The study also found that almost 80% of the offenses happened after the person left the armed forces, with nearly half having been out of the military for a decade or more. Just under one-third received something other than an honorable discharge -- researchers noted that was a significantly higher percentage when compared to an estimated 16% of other-than-honorable discharges among all vets.

In response to the findings, the report recommends that the military step up data collection on incidents to help with future analysis and to add more civic education during a service member’s initial training; as part of their professional military education; and as a central feature of the Transition Assistance Program, or TAP, the mandatory training given before separation from service.

The report argues that there need to be stronger “efforts to combat the recruitment of service members and veterans into violent extremism by implementing inoculation training and providing service members the tools they need to identify and effectively resist extremists’ manipulation tactics.”



At July 4 Parade



Vietnam Veterans of America #324  
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## 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 # \_\_\_\_\_

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