

Vietnam Veterans of America

Chapter 324 - PO Box 18631 - Milwaukee, WI 53218



Meeting Notice

19 June, 2024

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

17 July, 2024

Future Meetings 2024

September 18, October 16,
November 20, December 18

Chapter web page: www.vietnamvetschapter324.com

National web page: www.vva.org

Chapter Officers

President: Pat Ciofani rezmel(at)sbcglobal.net
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414-354-2533 Cell: 414-731-6029

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Director: John Morgan asa600(at)aol.com
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Director: Bob Rugg
414-323-4852

Newsletter: John Zutz john(at)zutz.org

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

324 fundraiser Sept 8 and Sept 29
Come out and help raise money for
our work.

VVA-324 Fundraising at AMFAM Field

Parking lot opens about 10am. Meet near the Yount statue near home plate..

This is the only fundraiser by the chapter. We need your help. More people equals more donations.

Distribute Orange Blossoms, attract donations.

Think of veterans (like your father) giving poppies in front of the grocery store. That's what we do.

For particulars please contact Pat Moore.

Last dates: September 8th and 29th

The Milwaukee Brewers are pleased to announce the continuation of Military Sundays for the 2024 season. Any active-duty military member or veteran can receive up to two free Terrace Level tickets by showing their military ID at the ticket office prior to any Sunday home game.

This offer is available only on the day of the game. the ticket office opens at 10 a.m subject to availability.



VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA

Milwaukee Chapter 324

July 17, 2024

Meeting called to Order at 7:00 pm by President Pat Ciofani
Minutes of the June 19, 2024 reviewed and accepted
Treasurer's Report – Pat Moore - \$4750.06 in our account

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Allied Veterans Meeting Update – Pat Ciofani
Fund Raising – June 30th Brewers fund raiser - \$1088 raised which we split with our American Legion Family giving us \$544
Website – Contact Pat Moore with items of interest to post

OLD BUSINESS

Election and Financial Forms have been received by State and National
VVA State Council Meeting – Pat Ciofani – Voted to reduce number of State meetings from 4 to 2 starting in 2025 – There will be 3 meetings during election years

NEW BUSINESS

Brewer Fund Raiser July 28th - \$590 was raised with our share being \$295 – Next Brewer fund raiser is Sept. 8th

NO AUGUST MEETING

Adjournment – 7:30 pm

VA Hospitals Earn High Marks in New Federal Ratings

. Military.com, September 04, 2024

A new quality assessment of U.S. hospitals by the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services gave nearly 58% of Department of Veterans Affairs medical centers the highest four- or five-star ratings -- down 9% from 2023.

The VA scores were still significantly higher than private medical centers, only 40% of which earned four or five stars. The department announced Tuesday that its hospitals also outperformed non-VA facilities on patient satisfaction surveys, which gave 79% of VA hospitals four or five stars, compared with 40% of non-VA hospitals.

Despite the drop in overall scores from last year, VA Under Secretary for Health Dr. Shereef Elnahal told reporters Friday that the ratings were “great news” for veterans and the VA employees who treat them.

“We’re offering more care to more veterans than ever before, and we are exceeding on all metrics, both patient experience metrics and overall hospital quality and patient safety metrics, when we are comparing apples to apples with civilian-sector hospitals,” Elnahal said.

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, or CMS, examines hospital mortality, safety of care, readmission rates, patient experience, and timeliness and effectiveness of care to award stars on a five-point scale.

This year, 35 VA hospitals earned a five-star

quality rating, one more than last year, and 15 of the 35 also earned five stars on CMS’ patient survey ratings. “Veterans [are] able to see how VA hospitals are comparing to other options they may have in the civilian sector,” Elnahal said. “[If] they have Medicare or private health insurance, they can get care at both options. What this will allow is for them to compare, including -- if they qualify for community care, as supported by VA -- choices in the civilian sector.”

The new star ratings, which can be found on the Care Compare website, mark the second year the VA was included in the database by CMS, a federal agency within the Department of Health and Human Services. The agency gave star ratings to 109 VA facilities, with the remaining VA hospitals or medical centers not being rated, either because they don’t meet qualification thresholds or the level of metrics needed to assess them.

CMS does not assess specialty hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, or some inpatient care facilities, such as psychiatric hospitals. In addition to the 35 VA hospitals that earned five stars, 27 earned four stars, 23 earned three stars, 14 earned two stars and 10 earned one star -- up from nine last year but with fluctuations on the one-star list.

Elnahal said the VHA considers these metrics, alongside its internal monitoring systems, when reviewing hospital performance.

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VA continued

“What we do is offer focused attention and support from our headquarters, national improvement office, to those medical centers scoring at the lowest levels on this scale and on our internal scale,” Elnahal said. “What this does is it highlights essentially more medical centers that maybe our internal system isn’t flagging, and ultimately allows us to get an up-to-date picture as more comprehensive of where we are on this.”

The facilities receiving the lowest ratings were the VA Southern Arizona Health Care System in Tucson; Bay Pines VA Health Care System and West Palm Beach VA Medical Center in Florida; Overton Brooks VA Medical Center in Shreveport, Louisiana; VA New Jersey Health Care System; Syracuse VA Medical Center and VA New York Harbor Health Care System in New York; VA Pittsburgh Health Care System; Providence VA Medical Center in Rhode Island; and VA Caribbean Health Care System in San Juan, Puerto Rico.

New to the one-star list were the VA medical centers in Tucson, New Jersey, Syracuse and New York Harbor Health Care. Those that received one star on last year’s list but have since increased their ratings include the James J. Peters VA Medical Center in The Bronx, New York; New Mexico VA Health Care System in Albuquerque; and the Memphis VA Medical Center, Tennessee, all of which are now two-star facilities.

A one-star rating signifies that the facilities 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 data for this year’s star ratings was collected between July 2019 and March 2023, according to the VA. According to CMS, its reviewers rated 4,658 hospitals in the U.S., and of those, just 8% received five stars. Star ratings are “limited in scope,” CMS officials said, by the data sources from which they are derived.

Among the criticisms of

the rankings from advocacy groups and industry associations such as the American Association for Physician Leadership, 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 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. VA officials have noted, however, that surveys of veteran patients not only show positive response to VA services but that trust in VA health care remains high.

“Our most recent outpatient survey results show that 92% of veterans trust the care that they get in our clinics and ambulatory settings, so both inpatient and outpatient trust are at all-time highs, and we are beating the private-sector averages on inpatient trust,” Elnahal said.

In a statement released Tuesday, VA Secretary Denis McDonough said the metrics help the VA convey its message that it provides quality health services.

“We’ve made millions more veterans eligible for VA health care under the PACT Act -- and now, we want to make sure that every one of them gets timely access to the world-class care they deserve,” McDonough said. “Whenever a veteran sets foot in a VA facility, we want them to know that they are getting the very best care this nation has to offer -- and we won’t ever settle for anything less.”



‘Primitive War’ Pits American GIs Against Dinosaurs During the Vietnam War

By Blake Stilwell, Military.com, September 03, 2024

As if booby traps, underground tunnels and Viet Cong ambushes weren’t dangerous enough for U.S. troops fighting in Vietnam, the soldiers in the new movie “Primitive War” have something else to contend with: dinosaurs.

The new horror thriller from writer-director Luke Sparke (“Occupation”) takes viewers back in time to September 1968, the height of the Vietnam War. A detachment of American soldiers called Vulture Squad are sent into the bush to rescue a U.S. Army Special Forces team that went missing during a mission in North Vietnam. Alone in the jungle, the expert search-and-rescue force learns that a number of prehistoric thunder lizards somehow survived their mass extinction event and now live in the wilderness of Vietnam. And, soon enough, the members of Vulture Squad become prey.

The movie is based on writer Ethan Pettus’ sci-

fi military book series of the same name and features Tricia Helfer (“Battlestar Galactica”), Ryan Kwanten (“True Blood”), Jeremy Piven (“Entourage”), Nick Wechsler (“The Boys”), Jeremy Lindsay Taylor (“The Diplomat”) and Anthony Ingruber (“Indiana Jones and the Dial of Destiny”).

“I was captivated by the imagery surrounding Ethan’s book and the story it told. I’ve worked hard on capturing that essence but also the grittiness, horror aspects and military edge,” Sparke told Deadline during pre-production. “My vision is to feel like the characters have walked out of the film ‘Platoon’ and into the jaws of the greatest predators the planet has ever known.”

Pettus said he came up with the idea for “Primitive War” when he was in high school after reading Tim O’Brien’s beloved short-story collection “The Things They Carried.”

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Primitive continued

My only exposure to the Vietnam War was history classes and occasionally seeing the war movies that my dad liked to watch,” Pettus told Military.com. “[‘The Things They Carried’] opened my eyes in a way that no book ever had, being able to actually viscerally perceive what people were going through during the conflict.”

Sparke’s feature-length film adaptation is just the latest iteration of Pettus’ popular creation.

Since launching the original idea for “Primitive War” on Indiegogo in 2022, Pettus has expanded the concept to a second book in the series and a tabletop mini game. He also has a spinoff anthology book called “Dispatches” with disparate chapters set in some often-forgotten conflicts of the Cold War, like the 1976 Guangxi Massacre, Operation Dragon King in Burma in 1978 and the Angolan Civil War.

“It’s trying to shine a light on these forgotten bits of important history,” Pettus said. “Part of the reason why I wanted to write about war with dinosaurs is, I wanted to get people that normally would never have any interest in these conflicts to have a window into these wars and the experience of people in these conflicts.”

Despite its Vietnam War background, the movie is being compared to “Jurassic Park,” but the series is much more than an R-rated take on the concept of dinosaurs returning to a modern-day setting. The dinosaurs of “Primitive War” are an allusion to what humans go through in combat, be it the nightmarish memories that haunt them through post-traumatic stress disorder or fear of what they might have to do to survive.

“The dinosaurs, they’re living metaphors throughout the books because they can be metaphors for so many different things,” Pettus said. “The violence of the dinosaurs in the first novel and the way that they attack people reflect what most soldiers feared most back then, which was getting shot in the gut. At the same time, they’re predominantly like ambush predators. So thinking about the conflict in Vietnam, and how so many of the battles fought were hit-and-run tactics.”

“I may not be the most accurate when it comes to military technology and everything, but the best feedback I’ve ever gotten has been from actual veterans that served in modern conflicts,” he added. “People who were in Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria and even Vietnam, have reached out to me to tell me

that I did a better job of explaining or describing the experience of PTSD than anything else that they had ever read.”

The “Primitive War” movie does not yet have a release date. It is currently in post-production. Ethan Pettus’ first “Primitive War” comic is currently available on Amazon, in paperback, Kindle and audiobook.

“I’m trying to capture the meaning of conflict and what conflict means to the people that are in it and what that experience is like for them,” Pettus said. “I’m trying to create a window for people who normally would never have any interest to find out for themselves. I have nothing but the utmost respect for the American military, for anybody that has ever been in a conflict and suffered from it or seen suffering from it firsthand. I’m just trying to get more people interested in that reality, people who normally would never think twice about it.”

To the Future (poem)

By W. D. Ehrhart

On behalf of my species, I’m sorry
for the mess we’ve made of this
planet. It must have been a nice
place before we got here. Even as scary
as the dinosaurs were, they didn’t
cause their own demise the way
we’ve engineered collective suicide.
What else to call it? How could we avoid
the warning signs? Talk about denial.
But we did. Year after year. For decades.
Until it was too late. And then all hell
broke loose, the mad scramble to evade
the hurricanes, tornados, flooding,
glaciers melting, ice caps shrinking,
oceans rising, burning forests,
burning prairies, burning cities.
Those with the guns took what remained
of food and water—as if their might could
somehow alter the laws of physics—
‘til they too were drowned or starved
or broiled alive. Whatever you are,
wherever you are, if you’re reading this,
I send my apologies, and wish you
wisdom greater than ours.



Vietnam Veterans of America #324
 PO Box 18631
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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)

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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**