

THE JOURNEY

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227

The Dean K. Phillips Memorial Chapter

“Serving Veterans and the Community in Northern Virginia”



In Service to America

“Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”

July 2012

WE ARE STILL #1

Due to an administrative oversight, the state council did not select a Chapter of the Year and a Member of the Year at the convention on June 23, 2012. Since the chapter earned the honor as Best Chapter in 2010, we can still claim the honor. The chapter nominated Bruce Waxman for Member of the Year and itself for Chapter of the Year. Congratulations to Bruce for being the chapter's nominee for his exceptional work on the Welcome Home, Vietnam Veterans state and county proclamations and on homeless veteran issues.

ROCK & ROLL VIETNAM by Ron Ball

The June 21st membership meeting speaker was Hugo Kessing, who spoke about the music of the Vietnam War era. He earned a PhD in psychology with a dissertation on music's effect on youth. He taught at the University of Maryland for over 15 years. He was a civilian teacher in Vietnam during the early 70's and a DJ on AFVN radio in Turkey. Hugo has been involved with providing musical advice and assistance to VVA National for several years.

Hugo recounted that he bought his first 45 rpm record in 1956. It was a recording by the Platters. He set out to create an entertaining and educational series of music about Vietnam. The end product received very good reviews from sources such as Rolling Stone and the New York Times. Hugo proceeded to take us through the 13 CD collection, playing excerpts from each one. Accompanying the music was a slide show of record covers and pictures of performers and events from the time period. The CDs each have a theme and follow the war from its early days when Vietnam was a virtual unknown country to the years after the war was over. Many of the songs were familiar but mixed in were some obscure music by unknown as well as known artists such as Bob Seger's song about the "yellow berets". There were songs from the early 60s when there was support for the war and the soldiers as in "Where have all the Flowers Gone?" and Barry Sadler's "Ballad of the Green Berets". Following this period there are songs covering the draft and protests. Country Joe McDonald was an early supporter and inspiration for Hugo's efforts. Music progressed to the peace song era and music by little known GI performers. Hugo explained that there was a period in the early 70s when not much new music was being published. There followed a period of anger type songs directed at draft dodgers and Jane Fonda types. The last two disks contain songs written and performed by vets directed at vets. The music is pretty much understood by Vietnam vets but probably not by civilians and younger persons. Also included in the final disks is music honoring nurses and females that were in country during the war.

The presentation was well received, bringing back memories to everyone there as witnessed by the singing accompaniments to many of the songs.

HOMELESS VETERANS

April Ballard, local Veteran Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) Case Manager, spoke at the June 7 board meeting about the VA program to place homeless veterans and families in housing. She shares a 72 case load with Martha Valdez that includes six Northern Virginia jurisdictions of Fairfax County, Arlington County, Prince William County, Loudoun County, and the Cities of Alexandria and Manassas.

The greatest obstacle is overcoming the poor credit ratings of the veterans in getting rental lease approvals, but many landlords are willing to make exceptions for the veterans. Other needs range from providing life essentials from dishes to transportation.. Several ways that the chapter can help were discussed from providing financial grants to using the Minuteman Alert to meet their needs. She anticipates that the program will increase as more vouchers become available. One positive note is that veterans who are living in the woods are entering the program and getting other help now.



April Ballard, local VASH Case Manager, discusses the program at the chapter June board meeting. Photo by Len Ignatowski



The Suits for Vets Unsung Heroes are Lynn Fitzpatrick, Jos A. Bank (JAB), Jeannie Lehowicz, Walter Reed Hospital POC, Boudi Hayek, JAB, and Paul Provost, JAB.

SUITS FOR VETS

The MITRE employee Memorial Day Suits for Vets campaign raised \$ 5,500. The amount was divided between \$5,000 for \$500 gift cards to Jos A. Bank and \$500 for \$ 50 Target gift cards to meet other clothing needs of wounded warriors. The Northern Virginia Senior Softball League donated \$1,000 as part of their continual program support too.

The donations are only part of the program. Boudi Hayek, Manager of the Jos A. Bank store in Reston and his team of sales staff and tailors, provide the other part of the program’s success. The sales staff guides each warrior in their clothing selections from shoes to suits for the best professional appearance, while the tailors provide a proper fit to each warrior’s physical features. The sales staff includes Michael Kern, a Marine Vietnam veteran. Women warriors receive special attention at local women clothing stores too.

The store supplements the MITRE fundraising by informing customers of the program and allowing them to donate the balance of their gift cards and their old suits to the program. The chapter salutes this combined action team that allows our new veterans to start their civilian careers on the “right foot.”

CHAPTER BRIEFS:

- **VASH SUPPORT:** Five \$50 gift cards to the Unique Thrift Store were provided to new VASH clients from a family of four to single veterans. April Ballard, VASH Case Manager, stated that the gift cards assist the veterans in purchasing essential clothing and high quality household items for their new homes.
- **VIVA VIENNA!** Joe and Sharon Celesnik managed our successful outreach booth at the fair May 27th. Len Ignatowski, Charlie Klein, John Runyon, Jonathan Olson, and Byron Sheldon provided additional support by answering questions and distributing membership applications. The cookie jar collected \$ 63 for the Suits for Vets program. Thanks for all who helped in this chapter tradition.
- **SPEAKERS PANEL:** Tom Stryer and Len Ignatowski shared their Tour of Duty to students of Lanier Middle School, Fairfax County Public Schools, on June 12 as part of the school’s 60’s program. They spoke to 8th grade students of Mr. Eric Draper’s English class and Mr. Bill Byrne’s American history class. Tom served as a navy officer in the brown water navy in the delta, while Len served with an army engineering unit in MR III.
- **MDWP SUPPORT:** A \$200 chapter grant was given to the annual Memorial Day Writers Project tent near The Wall on Memorial Day. Several chapter members helped create this successful venue that provides the opportunity for veterans and friends to express their war emotions and experiences through poetry, lyrics, and music.
- **COMBAT PTSD VISITS:** Thanks to Ben Buckley, Bill Shugarts, Tom Worrell, Bruce Waxman, and Len Ignatowski for serving as hosts for the May, June and July visits from the Lyons VAMC, N.J. Bruce Waxman brought two fellow Vietnam veterans, Charles Cook, SGM USMC, and Reggie Irby, USAF, to the June visit. The veterans from the Vietnam War to today’s conflicts visit The Wall and Section 60 of Arlington National Cemetery as part of their therapy. The next visit is August 8th. If you can, be there to welcome our fellow brothers and sisters into our family.
- **TOP 25:** The chapter returns to the Top 25 Largest Chapters with 245 members. The 24th largest chapter has 248 members. Let’s aim for 275 members by our October 2012 anniversary. Give a membership for a birthday or just because
- **DONATE YOUR USED BOOKS:** The Hole in the Wall used book store in Falls Church made a \$75 donation to the Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts Awards program from the sale of donated chapter books. The program not only provides funds for the program, but is part of the chapter’s “Go Green” environmental enhancement program. Charlie Klein is the program POC, and he can be contacted at 703-509-9469 or CJKLEIN227@hotmail.com to donate your books.
- **24th DMZ to Delta® Dance:** The chapter will host the dance on November 10, 2012. A large turnout is expected since the 30th Anniversary of The Wall will be celebrated. Buy your tickets early and make your hotel room reservation early too. The ticket order form is on the chapter website or mail your payment to the chapter address at P.O. Box 5653, Arlington, Va. 22205. The dance tickets are still \$30, and make checks payable to VVA Chapter 227.
- **HOUSEHOLD GOODS BAGS:** VVA household goods collection bags for distribution to family, friends, and neighbors are available from the chapter. Call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

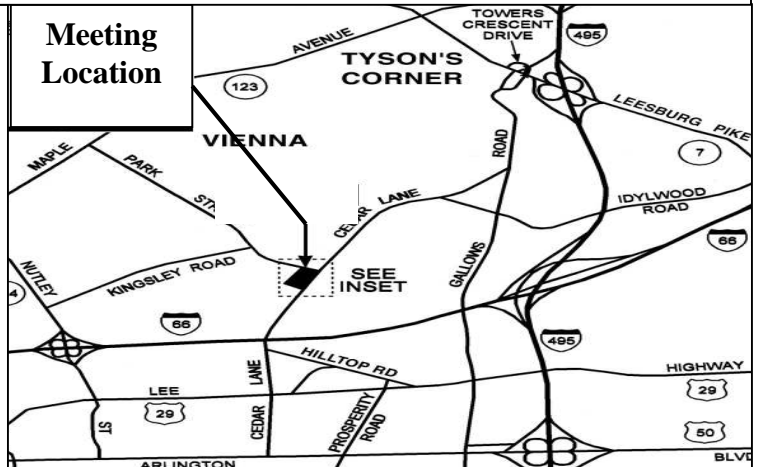
July 2012



OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

President: Byron Sheldon – 703-850-3498
Vice President: Bruce Waxman – 703-323-0269
Secretary: Ron Ball
Treasurer: Chuck Harris
Sergeant at Arms: Jonathan Olson
Board of Directors: Paul Stancliff, Len Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, Chris Beverly, and Tom Stryer.
AVVA Representative: Diane Ignatowski 703-255-0353
Newsletter Editor: Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353
School Speaker's Panel: Tom Stryer 703-323-9032
Meeting Guest Speaker: Len Funk 703-820-8118
DMZ To Delta@Dance: Len Ignatowski
Suits for Veterans: Chuck Harris 703-729-5665
Lyons PTSD Visit: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179

Meeting Location



CHAPTER INFORMATION: 703-968-0686

CHAPTER WEB SITE: www.vva227.org

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane
 Vienna, Virginia (Park St. & Cedar Lane)
 Pre-Meeting Dinner (Optional): 6:45 PM
 Meeting Time: 7:30 PM Phone: 703-698-8010

CHAPTER OPERATIONS PLAN

July 2012

04: Independence Day: Have a safe and enjoyable holiday and remember the true meaning of this day.
 05: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
 19: No membership meeting

August 2012

02: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
 05: Nationals vs. Mets Baseball Game. *Lets make it "7" in a row!*
 08: Lyons Combat PTSD Class Visit: Meet at the flagpole by The Wall at 11:00 AM. Ben Buckley 703-978-9179
 16: No membership meeting

September 2012

06: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
 19: Lyons Combat PTSD Class Visit: Meet at the flagpole by The Wall at 11:00 AM. Ben Buckley 703-978-9179
 20: Membership Meeting: Speakers: WW II Women's Army Corps veterans. SSgt Carolyn Fix and Major (ret) Fran Towson.

VETERAN'S HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255

**24 HOURS/ 7 DAYS A WEEK
 DON'T HESITATE! CALL NOW**

VVA CAR DONATION PROGRAM

1-800-Help Vets

2ND STORE OPENS- POTOMAC MILLS - TO SERVE US HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATION – "It Works for Us!"

- The quarterly Household Goods rebate check of \$ 896 was received on June 25th.
- SAVERS Thrift Store has opened a store at 14427 Potomac Mills Road. Store hours are Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 9 pm and Sunday 10 am to 6 pm.
- The second store is Unique Thrift Store at 2956 Gallows Road (the old Levitz Store)
- To schedule a pickup, call, 1-800-459-8387 or deliver the items at either store.
- Shop at the store which offers an excellent source for home furniture and decorations for children's new apartments or your second home. Clothing and other items are like new, and some items even have the original sales tag attached.

**NO MEMBERSHIP MEETING
FOR
JULY AND AUGUST**

Have a safe and enjoyable summer!

LYONS COMBAT PTSD CLASS VISIT

August 8th

Meet at the flagpole by The Wall at 11:00 AM

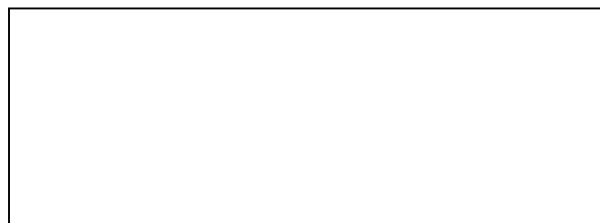
DMZ to Delta® Dance

November 10, 2012

Mark your calendar and buy you tickets now!

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ® INC.
CHAPTER 227
DEAN K. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CHAPTER
P.O. Box 5653
Arlington, Virginia 22205-0653

Address Service Requested



OUR MISSION

**To “Serve Veterans, Their Families,
Our Community and Our Country”**