

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”

May 2013

HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN?

As you heard, “Fall In” many times in your military career, and now the call is repeated for our Memorial Day events. The weekend provides ample opportunities for you to fulfill our pledge, “Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”. Bring your family and other veterans too.

The wreath laying at The Wall is our most honorable event on Monday, May 27th. Meet at the flag pole at 8:00 AM. Our service is unique in that everyone has the opportunity to remember a fallen brother or sister. The family breakfast follows at the Metro Diner on Route 29 at 4711 Lee Highway, just off of Glebe Road. At noon, the Town of Vienna is honoring town and nearby Vietnam veterans with a special ceremony as part of Viva Vienna. The Memorial Day Writers Project is hosting their special poetry and music programs near The Wall from 11:30 to 5:00 PM.

The traditional family barbecue is on Sunday, May 26th, at 6:00 PM at the home of Len and Diane Ignatowski. Call Diane at 703-255-0353 for a dish selection. Address is 2408 Oak Vale Court, NW, Vienna, Va. Chapter provides beverages and the main dish, barbecue hot dogs and hamburgers by Chef Max Knouse. This event is for the family and fellow veterans. Bring a new veteran?

Bill Dumsick is managing our veteran outreach booth at Viva Vienna from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Sunday, May 26th. Your help is needed to answer questions.

So, FALL IN!, for our Memorial Day weekend events!



Where are you? AWOL? No excuse, Sir!
Photo by Len Ignatowski

VINCE KASPAR AWARDS NIGHT

The May 16th membership meeting features the 17th Annual Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts presentation which recognizes outstanding high school talent in poetry and art in partnership with the Memorial Day Writers Project. The program honors the contributions of Vince Kaspar, a chapter member and one of the Memorial Day Writers Project founders, in using poetry and writing to relieve the painful memories of their Tour of Duty. The program is the chapter’s hallmark for our community outreach. Bruce Waxman, who missed his true life calling of being a comedian, will host the event.

Come early to enjoy a great meal and meet your fellow members! Spouses and family are always welcome. Better yet, bring fellow veterans with you. You never know who you might meet at the meeting. No drinking of alcoholic beverages is allowed during the meeting.

SPEAKER’S PANEL RESURRECTION

Tom Stryer’s hard work is resurrecting our Speaker’s Panel after several years of dormancy due to the retirement of Vietnam War era teachers. Our war is catching the attention of today’s teachers. On April 19th, Tom Stryer, Len Ignatowski, and Chuck Harris shared their Tour of Duty with 342 students and four teachers of Cooper Intermediate School in the Fairfax County Public Schools. Brad Nadeau, a 7th Grade history teacher, requested our appearance. The other teachers were Dan Farney, Roberta Ricci, and Jeff Ahern. The Tour of Duty comprised five classes. The next engagement is at Wilson High School in Washington, D.C.

8 IN A ROW??

The chapter’s traditional family baseball game will be the Mets vs. Nationals game on Sunday, July 28th at 1:35 PM. The ticket price is \$9. Mail your check payment to Bill Lynch, ATTN: VVA Baseball Game, 6322 Applegarth Ct., Alexandria, Va. 22312. Questions, call 703-256-4484. Ticket order deadline is July 5th. Please include your phone and email address. Will our attendance make it “8” straight wins for the Nationals. Bring the family, friends, and fellow veterans for a great time.

The chapter is presenting a plaque to the Nationals at home plate before the game for their continuous military support.

MY IRAQ “TOUR OF DUTY”

Harold Bonacquist, the guest speaker at the April 18th membership meeting, shared his personal perspective of the current Iraq War as an in-country civilian State Department participant. He served as a Provincial Action Officer on a team whose mission was to restore government services and teach democratic principles in Diwaniyah Province from June to October 2007. He volunteered from a sense of national service since he missed the Vietnam War due to a high draft number. Due to poor security in the area, he conducted his duties from a base camp, 80 km from his Iraqi government officials. Not the most ideal way of conducting business. The team was flown to the town or drove with heavy armed escorts.

His initial pessimism has turned into a ray of optimism starting with the military surge in 2007. He believes that failure to win the peace was in that there was no plan for winning the peace. Compounding the post-combat era were misunderstandings that despite Iraq's modern and secular society, its people still held to ancient culture and social values. One's loyalty was first to one's religion (Kurdish, Sunni, and Shiite), your tribe, and to the country. The culture had no conception of democracy.

To enshrine democratic principles in government and society requires a long time commitment which was not supported by the short Tour of Duty for our military and civilian agencies. We should not expect a democratic Iraq similar to ours in a few years. It just is not practical considering its social and cultural values.

Another hard lesson learned was the failure to follow the successful Powell doctrine of using overwhelming force to win the military battles and the hearts and minds of the defeated people. The lack of adequate military forces for the peace battle allowed the defeated army to prepare for an insurgency against the new government and our forces. This security threat impeded reconstruction efforts and turned us from liberators to occupiers. The Iraq War demonstrated that the military is the only effective instrument to win the peace in that it possesses the force to suppress violence and the nation building capabilities from construction to government services.

The new world of modern communications from cell phones to the internet has changed the way that the hearts and minds of the people are won. Political agreements cannot be secured at cocktail parties or high level government meetings, but by interfacing directly with the people in the streets. The latter has a higher security risk, but it is the only sure way.

Harold's discussion resulted in a lively Q&A period. One memorable answer came when a veteran asked whether Vietnam was worth our sacrifice; another veteran responded, only if the mistakes of our war are not repeated in future wars. It must be repeated that his appearance and comments reflect his own assessment of the situation and the chapter thanks him for taking the time to share them with us.

DANCE IS ON!

The contract for the 25th Anniversary DMZ to Delta dance for a new home has been signed. The dance is set for the traditional November 10th date. Our new home is the Holiday Inn Alexandria SW, which has the same amenities including close proximity to a Metro station. Mark your calendar for attending this chapter event.

The dance is in need of silent auction products which can range from Vietnam War memorabilia to hotel or meal gift certificates. If you can provide an item, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353.

LYONS VAMC COMBAT PTSD VISITS

The chapter hosting the visits of the Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class visits to The Wall and to Arlington National Cemetery is in need of additional member support. Ben Buckley has managed the program for the last four years, and Bill Shugarts has been the official photographer. Chapter members, Len Ignatowski, Bruce Waxman, and Paul Stancliff and Bill Gray of Chapter 641 are avid supporters. More member participation is needed to insure the program's continued success. The veterans range from the Vietnam War to today's conflicts. A father (Vietnam) and a son (Iraq) were in class together. The next visit is May 29th. If you have the time, come on down and help fulfill our founding principle, *“Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”*

FUNDING BOOSTS

- **Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts:** Charlie Klein's "Used Book Program" with the Hole in the Wall store and his work with AMEN is earning funds for the Vince Kaspar Arts program. The sale of used books has earned \$81, plus a fellow AMEN employee donated \$ 500 to the program. Thanks, Charlie, for your continuous effort and chapter service. To donate used books call Charlie at 703-509-9469.
- **Suits for Vets:** The Northern Virginia Senior Softball League continued its support of the Suits for Vets campaign with a \$375 donation. Thank you, senior softball players.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

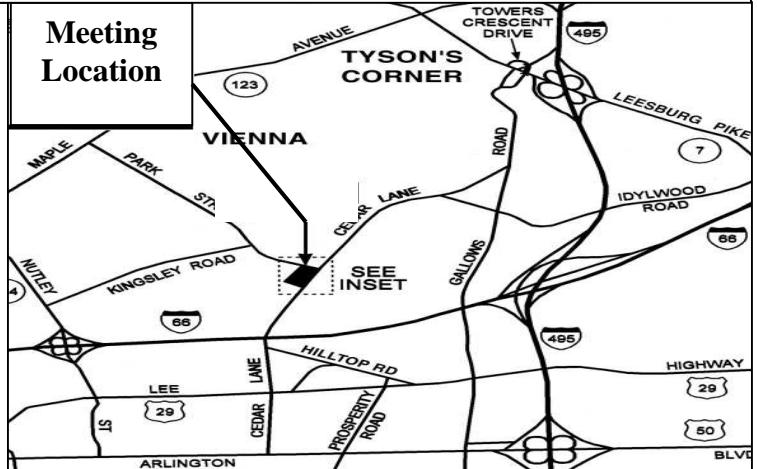
May 2013



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

May 2013:

- 16: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: “Vince Kaspar Awards for Excellence in the Arts” presentation
- 26: Viva Vienna information booth 10 AM to 5 PM: Bill Dumsick is the program manager.
- 26: Family Barbecue 6:00 PM: Len and Diane Ignatowski home, 2408 Oak Vale Ct. NW, Vienna, Call for dish selection 703-255-0353
- 27: Memorial Day Wreath Laying at The Wall 8:00 AM: Meet by the flag pole. **FALL IN!**
- 27: Town of Vienna salutes to Vietnam veterans at Viva Vienna! At noon.
- 27: Post Wreath Laying Breakfast: Metro Diner, Lee Highway and Glebe Road, Arlington
- 27: Memorial Day Writer’s Project 11:30 AM to 5:00 PM @ The Wall: Use of poetry and music to express your feelings on the war.
- 29: Lyons PTSD Class Visit: Meet at the flag pole @ 11:00 AM. POC: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179

June 2013

- 06: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 20: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: An American Immigrant’s Amazing Life under Three Political Systems” Alexey Ivanchukov

July 5th: Deadline for purchasing Nationals baseball game tickets

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

HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATION – “It Works for Us!”

The VVA Household Goods program provided over \$ 3000 of annual income. You can help in three ways.

- Donate household goods and clothing by calling 1-800-459-8387 to schedule a pick-up, or drop off the items at the Unique Thrift Store on 2956 Gallows Road (the old Levitz Store) and buy something.
- 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. One member’s teenage son enjoys shopping for clothes and bedroom decorations at the store which has great prices. The store hours are Mon. – Sat.: 10 AM to 8 PM, and Sun.: 11 AM to 6 PM.
- Drop-off sheds, similar to the ones that are at shopping centers, are available. If you can provide a location, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353. Every donation helps!

MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS

- *Viva Vienna!* Veteran Outreach:
May 26th @ 11:00 am to 5:00 pm
Vienna, Virginia
- Family Barbecue: May 26th
- Wreath Laying at The Wall: May 27th
- Post Wreath Laying Family Breakfast: May 27th
- Viva Vienna Vietnam Veterans Recognition: May 27th
 - Memorial Day Writers Project: May 27th
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- Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit: May 29th

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ® INC.
CHAPTER 227
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Address Service Requested



OUR MISSION

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