

# 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

May 2008

## ***A TIME TO HONOR AND A TIME TO REMEMBER***

May is a month to show pride as a Vietnam War veteran and an opportunity to serve again.

The membership meeting on May 15<sup>th</sup> features our community involvement through the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Vince Kaspar Awards for Excellence in the Arts and the 20<sup>th</sup> year for the HILT Scholarship. The Kaspar awards recognize local high school students for poetry and art. The poetry winners will read their poems, while the art will be on display. A \$1000 check will be presented to the Arlington County Public Schools for the successful summer school program for new immigrant children. The program is designed to accelerate their assimilation into our culture.

Sunday, May 25<sup>th</sup>, has two programs. The chapter, in partnership with the Vet Center, will host an information booth at the *Viva Vienna!* Fair. A vet center counselor may be available to answer veteran benefit questions, while the Living Wall will be present to recruit new members and to answer questions about the war. Volunteers are needed to staff the booth from 11:00 am to 5:00 pm. Joe Celesnik is the Event Coordinator. Any ??, call 703-938-7669.

The second day's event is the Annual Family Cover Dish Barbecue at Len and Diane Ignatowski's home, starting at 6:00 pm. Their address is 2408 Oak Vale Ct. NW, Vienna. Beverages, hamburgers, and hot dogs will be provided. You are asked to call Diane at 703-255-0353 for a dish selection and a head count. Please call to insure that adequate food will be available. Family, guests, and fellow veterans are all welcome to this great feast and veteran camaraderie.

Memorial Day has several important events. First, members assemble at the Flag Pole to carry the wreath to The Wall's apex to conduct a memorial service for our fallen comrades at 8:30 a.m. After the service, members are invited to gather for an informal breakfast. The Memorial Day ceremony at The Wall starts at 1:00 p.m. Family and guests are especially invited to participate in this special veteran healing.

Mark your calendars to attend these chapter activities to support the war healing and to help the community understand our war and the real cost of any war.

## **VN. WAR POW SWEARS IN NEW LEADERSHIP**



Admiral Shumaker (l) swears in the new officers and directors at the April 17<sup>th</sup> membership meeting. Photo by Ed LaClare

Admiral Robert H. Shumaker, USN (retired), swore in the new chapter leadership for another Tour of Duty at the April 17<sup>th</sup> membership meeting. The ceremony marked the second time that a navy POW swore in the new officers and directors. Lcdr. Everett Alvarez, Jr., did the honors in April 2006.

Two members assumed new leadership roles. Byron Sheldon is vice president, while Chuck Harris is the new treasurer. Both members have been assuming increasing responsibilities. Bruce Waxman

returns as secretary, while Jonathan Olson remains as Master of Arms for life. Bill Dumsick was re-elected as president, and the directors are Len Ignatowski, Charlie Klein, Len Funk, Bill Bohuslaw, Paul Stancliff, and Joe Celesnik. Special thanks to Joe Celesnik for serving as vice president, to Ed LaClare for his eight years of exceptional service as treasurer, and to Jim Hewitt as a director.

## POW LESSONS FOR ALL TO BENEFIT



Adm. Shumaker proudly wears his new VVA baseball cap.  
Photo by Len Ignatowski

Admiral Robert (Bob) H. Shumaker, USN, Ret., shared his Vietnam War POW experience and life lessons learned to a standing room only at the April 17<sup>th</sup> membership meeting. He was the second naval aviator POW in the war. His seven life lessons that he learned and that we all can use in our daily lives are:

1. Know yourself, strengths and weaknesses.
2. Your body can survive on a limited amount of food.
3. Your body is tougher than you may think! Maintain an upbeat attitude.
4. Be tolerant of others. Nobody is perfect, especially you.
5. Friendships are important
6. Communication is important. Your brain needs fresh information and daily mental exercise.
7. Priority is to be a proud American.

His imprisonment was filled with bitter and humorous memories. His refusal to participate in a propaganda film resulted in physical punishment that re-injured his ejection back injury and prolonged his solitary confinement. His first interrogation resulted in answering a question on how many chickens he owned. The POW had an understanding that it was ok to break during torture as long that you did your best and it was better to live for another day in captivity. Each new POW brought current news about the war and life. The stress was relieved by helping other prisoners, conducting of classes (Bob taught *basic* French), maintaining the secret communications network using the prison's plumbing, and holding Saturday night movies. Senator John McCain was the great movie teller. A stealth prisoner escape occurred with the release of the only sailor POW. He had fallen overboard and swam to the North Vietnamese shore, where he was captured. His photographic memory was used to remember all the POW names. On his release he provided that information to the DOD, but he used his back pay to buy a special bus ticket and visited each POW family.

Bob was very impressed with the membership diversity and appreciated our gift of a VVA baseball cap. He picked the winning 50/50 ticket, but Dennis Stephens's winning streak of two was stopped. However, Carl Allen, his friend and fellow Vietnam War veteran, did win. Strange! Thanks to Buddy Rogers for distributing copies of an article on the life and military service of Dean K. Phillips in the 11<sup>th</sup> Special Forces Group newsletter. Buddy served with Dean Phillips in the special forces reservist company after their Vietnam War service. Tom Brown and the admiral had a reunion. Tom had purchased Bob's used VW bus during a Pentagon Tour. Paul Stancliff made a special effort to attend the meeting and personally thanked the membership for their expressions of concern during his recent illness. He is home under out-patient treatment. The Martinsburg VA Hospital deserves a special salute for their great medical treatment for Paul. All in all, the meeting was another success story. Remember to put our May activities on your calendar now.

## OPERATION JUMP START – Veterans Helping Veterans

Remember the days when a car with a dead battery could be started by pushing the car and popping the clutch. Operation Jump Start is our new veteran's assistance program; since it helps veterans get a jump in their recovery road from homelessness. A \$25 grant will be given to each new Compassion House resident to purchase personal and miscellaneous items upon their arrival. The Compassion House is a successful transitional veterans home near Culpeper, Va. The first \$25 check has already been provided to the house's newest resident.

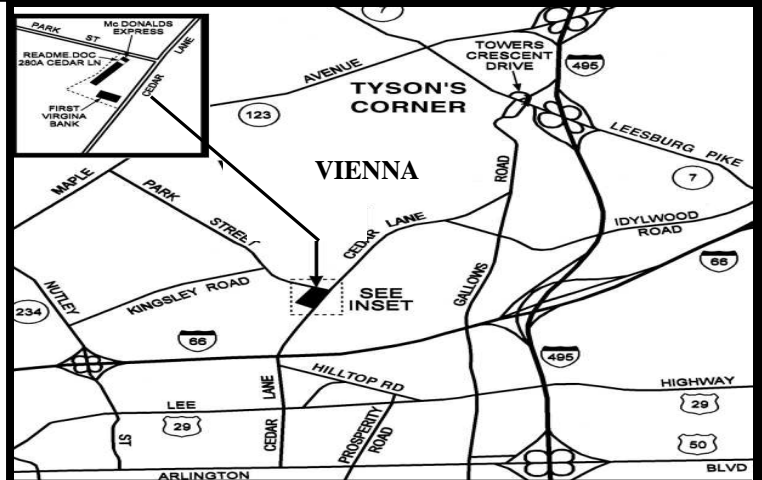
## STATE COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP

The Virginia State Council is awarding a \$500 scholarship. Members and family are eligible. Instructions and applications are on the state council webpage at [www.vva-vsc.org](http://www.vva-vsc.org). The deadline is June 1, 2008.



## OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

**President:** Bill Dumsick – 703-968-0686  
**Vice President:** Byron Sheldon – 703-471-5018  
**Secretary:** Bruce Waxman  
**Treasurer:** Chuck Harris  
**Master of Arms:** Jonathan Olson  
**Board of Directors:** Paul Stancliff, Len Funk, Len Ignatowski, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, and Bill Bohuslaw.  
**VVA Va. State Council POC:** Paul Stancliff  
**AVVA Representative:** Margaret Stern  
**Newsletter Editor:** Len Ignatowski  
**Speaker’s Panel:** Len Ignatowski  
**Meeting Guest Speaker:** Len Funk 703-820-8118  
**DMZ To Delta@Dance:** Len Ignatowski



### 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 INFORMATION: 703-968-0686**

**CHAPTER WEB SITE: [www.vva227.org](http://www.vva227.org)**

**VVA Inc. THRIFT STORE (HOUSEHOLD GOODS  
 COLLECTION): 1-800-459-8387**

## CHAPTER OPERATIONS PLAN

### **May:**

- 01: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 15: Membership Meeting 7:30 pm: Vince Kaspar Awards for the Arts & ESOL/HILT Summer School Grant presentations
- 25: Viva Vienna! Information Booth. POC: Joe Celesnik (703-938-7669). Staff is needed from 1100 to 1630 hours
- 25: Memorial Day Family Barbecue 6:00 pm: Hosts: Len and Diane Ignatowski, 108 Oak Vale Ct. NW, Vienna, PH: 703-255-0353. Call Diane for a dish selection.
- 26: Chapter Wreath Laying and Service at The Wall at 8:30 am. Mark you calendar now!
- 26: The Wall Ceremony 1:00 pm: Speaker TBA

### **June:**

- 05: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 19: Membership Meeting: Speaker: Maj. Gen. Ronald Silverman, Army Reserve, will discuss his command of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Task Force Medical Command in Iraq. He is a Vietnam War veteran.
- 20-21: State Council Convention, Roanoke, Virginia.

## VVA’S HOUSEHOLD GOODS STORE IS HERE!

The Unique Thrift Store, our retail store, at 2956 Gallows Road, (former Levitz store), Merrifield, Virginia.

### **IMPORTANT**

**FOR “VVA” TO GET CREDIT, ITEMS “MUST” BE PICKED-UP.**

**Call 1-800-459-8387 for a donation pick-up.**





**MEMORIAL DAY 2008**  
*Will You Be There?*

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



**OUR MISSION**

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