

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

December 2008



HOLIDAY PARTY

Make Charlie Ride the Hood!

Bill and Cheryl Dumsick are hosting the Holiday Party on December 6, 2008, at 6:00 pm in their home at 13606 White Stone Court, Clifton, Virginia. Directions are on Page 3. Beverages and meat dishes are provided, while members bring a covered dish. Call Cheryl (703-968-0686) for a dish selection.

A very warming Holiday Party tradition is to bring a wrapped child's gift with the gift's gender and age marked on it and a child's winter clothing item from gloves to jackets. The gifts and clothing serve as an emergency supply for the Sullivan House in Arlington County. Jonathan Olson delivers the gifts and clothing. Our goal is to completely fill his car with our generosity so that

Charlie Klein, his car pooler, has to ride on the car's hood. Please attend and bring those gifts so Charlie will have to ride on the car hood.

See you at the party with your armful of gifts and a covered dish, and don't forget, there is no December membership meeting. Let's make this tradition the greatest one yet by making the holidays a little more pleasant for the less fortunate.

CHAPTER AWARDS THREE CASH GRANTS

Three cash grants were approved at the November board meeting. The first grant is to the Virginia War Memorial for \$100. The Virginia Center has an excellent education program and museum of Virginia citizen-soldiers. The second grant for \$250 is to the Vacations for Veterans, which provides free vacations to wounded soldiers at Walter Reed. The husband and wife team, who are both former Marine officers, manage this successful program on a shoe-string budget from their home. The final grant for \$200 is to the Memorial Day Writers Project tent rental on the mall for Veterans Day. This program allows veterans and friends to express their feelings through poetry and short essays. Vince Kaspar, a deceased chapter member, was a primary founder of this veteran healing program. Cathie Solomonson and Mike McDonnell are active leaders in the current endeavor.

MEMBERS SPEAK AT VETERANS' PROGRAMS

On November 6th, Bruce Waxman spoke at the 7th Annual "Tribute to Heroes" at the Rocky Versace Plaza and Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Alexandria, Va. Capt. Versace, an Alexandria native and a West Point graduate, was awarded the Medal of Honor posthumously for his service in Vietnam. His VC captors executed him for his three escape attempts and his successful resistance to interrogation while suffering from his combat wounds. Besides local elected officials and Congressman Jim Moran in attendance, the program featured immigrant students who read their letters of appreciation to military veterans for their service to insure their freedom in America. Bruce told the students about Felix Herrera, who arrived as a young immigrant child from Central America and is now an Arlington County Public Schools teacher and an army reserve officer with Tours of Duty in Iraq and Afghanistan. Felix credits the chapter's summer school scholarship for contributing to his American success story. Bruce challenged the students to emulate Felix's accomplishments in achieving their American dream.

Len Ignatowski spoke to 10th graders at South Lakes High School in Fairfax County on November 5th. He shared his Tour of Duty and answered a wide range of questions about the war and his experience. Len was surprised to learn that the sponsoring teacher, Bob Smith, is a fellow Vietnam veteran, whose unit was practically a neighbor of Len's unit at Long Binh. Bob's listing the name of fellow military veteran teachers generated a very surprised reaction from the students. Len's presentation was part of the school's successful Veterans Recognition Week.

Bryon Sheldon and Roy White served as hosts at the November dinner for our wounded warriors from Walter Reed Hospital.

The chapter thanks Bruce, Len, Roy, and Byron for taking the time to honor our fellow veterans and informing the public of our service and sacrifices.

ART JUDGES NEEDED

For personal considerations, Marj Watson, the chapter's artist in residence, is stepping down as the coordinator of the Vince Kaspar Prizes for Excellence in the Arts. She has judged the art entries from the program's inception. Marj, an associate VVA member, will be missed. Her work on behalf of the Kaspar prizes was outstanding.

An example of the program's success is a recent thank you from Aaron Eby, a 2007 winner. He is working on a statue for the Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis, Indiana, while attending the Schuler School for Fine Art in Baltimore. To keep this successful project alive, one or more artists are needed to judge the student art entries. We are hopeful that we will find them among our current VVA/AVVA family, but expressions of interest from others are welcome, especially from local artists. If you can help with the judging, please contact Bruce Waxman, program coordinator, at bruce.waxman@vva227.org.

DMZ to Delta® DANCE IS A SUCCESS

The dance was a success in many ways despite a low attendance. Dance attendees expressed their appreciation to the chapter for providing a great time and shared a concern about the dance's future. The dance floor was full for most of the night. The current economic condition is probably the major reason for the low attendance. Many regrets stated the national economic condition as the reason for not coming to D.C. for Veterans Day, but they will come when things get better. Invitations with complimentary tickets were extended to the Gold Star Mothers and Walter Reed patients.

The dance did show the membership commitment to this chapter hallmark veteran program of providing an inexpensive and friendly environment for visiting veterans. Over thirty members donated ticket purchases and made cash donations from \$30 to \$300. For the second year, SAIC Corporation, made a \$1000 donation in support of chapter programs. As of November 22nd, the dance profit is over \$1,900. Donations are still being accepted.

Special thanks to Len and Diane Ignatowski, Max and Fran Knouse, Joe and Sharon Celesnik, Bob and Ardis Mills (who traveled from Pittsburg, Pa.), Paul and Cyndy Stancliff, Bruce and Sarah Waxman, Margaret Stern, Bill Bohuslaw, Charlie Klein, and Jonathan Olson for helping at the dance. An extra special thanks to Len and Diane Ignatowski for managing the dance since 1999.

IS IT TORTURE?

Richard Mesa's discussion on waterboarding as torture generated a lively and informative discussion at the November 20th membership meeting. Rich is a double veteran of the army and navy. As part of his navy flight crew survival training, he successfully endured waterboarding. He considers it to be torture, not an enhanced interrogation technique.

Members expressed a diverse range of comments with a high degree of respect. Time and space don't allow a detailed summary, but here are a few comments:

- Speaker: His waterboarding training experience was not torture, but a simulated death experience.
- Member: Our waterboarding policy exposes our troops to the same treatment as POWs.
- Member: Undermines American values and respect.
- Speaker: Proponents' justification is that waterboarding does not cause physical injury to the prisoner.
- Member: Army intelligence officers training did not include torture techniques during the Vietnam War.
- Member (Served 8 Tours of Duty): As a MACV advisor, more reliable intelligence was obtained from humane treatment of prisoners, especially ones rescued from ARVN POW camps and VC/NVA defectors.
- Member: How reliable is the information obtained from torture? Does it raise the resistance level and provide false information.
- Speaker: A U.S. court decision ruled that confessions obtained under torture will be excluded from their trials.
- Member: How high in the command structure was torture authorized at Abu Ghraib prison.
- Speaker: Torture is not a political or intellectual issue, but a moral issue which our churches have not addressed.
- Speaker: Torture was not used against Japanese POWs despite their harsh treatment and execution of American POWs during WWII.
- The U.S. Constitution's 8th Amendment, Article 5 of the U.N. Convention, the Geneva Convention, and American military field manuals prohibit torture of prisoners.
- Member: Is torture a legitimate weapon under desperate times?

The meeting concluded with Mark Evitts, a new member, donating his 50/50 winnings to the chapter's Suits for Veterans program. Thanks, Mark. And don't forget to come to our traditional Holiday Party!

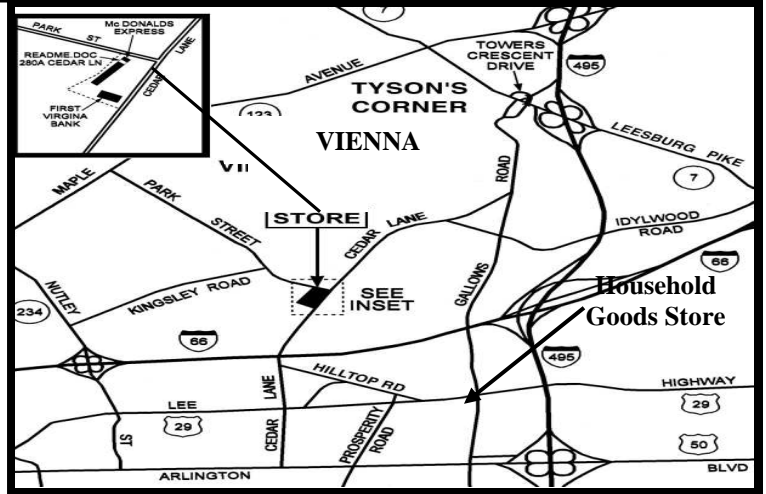
CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

December 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
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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 703-255-0353
Speaker's Panel: Len Ignatowski
Meeting Guest Speaker: Len Funk 703-820-8118
DMZ To Delta@Dance: Len Ignatowski
Suits for Veterans: Chuck Harris 703-729-5665



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

CHAPTER OPERATIONS PLAN

Dec.

- 04: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
06: Holiday Party: Hosts: Bill and Cheryl Dumsick. Bring a wrapped child's gift and winter clothing.
12-14: Virginia State Council Meeting: POC: Paul Stancliff
18: **No membership meeting**
22: *Happy Hanukkah*
25: *Merry Christmas*

Jan.

- 01: *Happy New Year*
08: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
15: Membership Meeting: Speaker: Ward Nickisch, "Our Continued Search for Our Country's MIA's"

HOLIDAY PARTY DRIVING DIRECTIONS

- Take I-66 to Centreville
- Exit 53, Rte. 28 South Centreville
- Left Turn at New Braddock Road, Rte. 620, East
- Right Turn on to Union Mill Road
- Right Turn on Springstone Drive
- 1st Left turn on to Sandstone Way
- 1st left turn on to White Stone Court 13606 (driveway is at the end of the cul de-sac)
- **Lost: Call Bill or Cheryl at 703-968-0686.**

HOLIDAY PARTY

DECEMBER 6TH

**Share the Holiday Spirit
with your fellow veterans and their families
Come to the Holiday Party
and
bring a child's gift and winter clothing**

HAVE A SAFE AND HAPPY HOLIDAY

**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”.**