

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

March 2009

MARCH MEETING: VA'S MEDICAL RESEARCH

The guest speaker for the March 19th membership meeting is Patricia Robertson, Chapter AVVA member and VA employee. She will discuss the VA's Research and Development Program that is improving veterans' lives through health care research. The multi-dimensional program's discovery and innovation is benefiting veterans and all Americans.

Her discussion will provide an overview of past research achievements at the VA; the types of research (laboratory, animal, and, of course, humans/veterans), protections of veterans who volunteer for research studies, funding for VA research, and current research priorities. She is looking forward to the opportunity!

Come early with your family and a veteran to enjoy a great dinner and meet your fellow members. See you at the meeting.

REP. CONNOLLY SUPPORTS VETERANS By Bruce Waxman



Jim Thur (l) and Bruce Waxman (r), chapter members, met with new Congressman Gerald Connolly (c) of Northern Virginia to discuss veteran issues and veteran legislation. Photo by Congressman Connolly staff.

On February 18, chapter members Bruce Waxman and Jim Thur, along with Rick Weidman, VVA Executive Director of Policy and Government Affairs, went to Capitol Hill to meet with James Walkinshaw, Chief of Staff for Congressman Gerry Connolly. Jim Thur, who is the Regional Director, Wounded Warrior Program for Northern Virginia, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, gave a background presentation regarding the demographics of the veteran population in our geographic area, with emphasis on the availability of services from the federal Department of Veterans Affairs. Bruce spoke briefly about the role of our chapter on behalf of veterans locally and how he had come to learn of Representative Connolly's interest in and commitment to veterans during the election campaign. Rick then took over and explained the importance of economic issues to veterans, particularly the need to

strengthen enforcement of veteran's preference for federal employment and getting federal agencies to make better utilization of veteran owned businesses.

After the hour long meeting with Mr. Walkinshaw, the VVA contingent was asked to spend a few minutes with the Congressman. Mr. Connolly expressed his interest in helping VVA with our legislative agenda and asked for a list of our top 10 items. In addition, he agreed to co-sponsor HR 1016, the Veterans Health Care Budget Reform and Transparency Act of 2009. It was agreed that VVA 227 and the Congressman would keep in touch.

BILL DUMSICK IN RECOVERY

Bill Dumsick, Chapter President, is recovering from an accident. He is home now. Visitors are welcome, but you should call first at 703-968-0686. Byron Sheldon is acting president until Bill can return to duty.

ART JUDGES NEEDED NOW!

The chapter's Vince Kaspar Program for the Arts is in need of an art judge for this year's entries. If you or a friend possesses art knowledge and would like to judge the entries, please contact Bruce Waxman, program coordinator, at bruce.waxman@vva227.org. The students are recognized at the May membership meeting.

URBAN TERRORISTS STRIKE VETERAN'S CAR



The gruesome remains of a chicken lie on top of the car of a Vietnam veteran.

Urban terrorists that bring back visions of the Klu Klux Klan appear to be alive in the Fairlington Village area of Arlington County. A chapter member's car has sustained several egg attacks and a dead chicken attack. The attacks are attributed to the car's bumper stickers and vehicle license plate. The license plate identifies the owner as a Vietnam veteran. The veteran reported that a neighbor's daughter's car with similar political messages had its tires slashed, and the car is being parked elsewhere. Police are investigating the incidents without any leads.

If you are aware of similar attacks, please immediately notify the Arlington County police. This vigilante intimidation is NOT AMERICAN for any reason and needs to be stopped now!

NEED A BUDDY!

As we enter a new chapter in our lives, the newsletter is offering a marriage saving proposal or a friendship service. Since many of us are empty nesters and retired, we may be looking for activities to pursue. You can email, grunt69@gmail.com or call, 703-255-0353, your buddy request, and it will be published on a space available for a golfing partner or part time work. A one time employment offer will be published too. So here goes our new campaign, "*Need A Buddy!*"

- **Fly Fishing:** One day or overnight trip to Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, West Virginia, or points West. Len Ignatowski, 703-255-0353. I am in quest of fishing the top 100 streams in the U.S.

"GO GREEN" CAMPAIGN

The chapter's "Go Green" campaign is paying dividends in two ways, preserving our environment and providing chapter income. A total of 35 printer ink cartridges were recycled through the Staples Rewards program that generated \$105 in cash rebates for 2008. Much of the credit is due to Roger Stevens, the state council webmaster. He donated two bagfuls of ink cartridges to the chapter's program. Thank you, Roger.

Many books have found a new home through the Vince Kaspar Used Book Program that is managed by Charlie Klein. Donated books are given to the Hole in a Wall, a used bookstore in Falls Church. The chapter receives the proceeds from the sale of the books. Email Charlie Klein, CJKLEIN227@hotmail.com, to make your donation.

In addition, all BEST BUY Stores are accepting consumer electronic products for proper disposal. The chapter is not endorsing this program, but providing this information. Call Best Buy for details and restrictions.



George Tysons, Rotary Club President, gives a Rotary Club coffee to Chuck Harris (I) for his presentation. Photo by Rotary Club.

SUITS FOR VETERANS

The Suits for Veterans campaign continues to grow from the hard work of Chuck Harris. On February 18th, he spoke about the "Suits for Veterans" program at the Crystal City Pentagon Rotary Club of Arlington meeting. He discussed the program's history and how the cash and suit donations support the program. Chuck had to return to his army day schedule since the meeting started at 0730 hours. He was also invited to speak to another Rotary Club.

Clothing donations are exceeding expectations, but the program is in need of cash donations to provide the \$ 500 gift cards to the recovering warriors. Fully 100% of each cash contribution purchases gift cards; all donations may be tax deductible as VVA Chapter 227 is a 501(c)19 charity organization. Mail the check to the chapter's address.

The "Suits for Veterans" is fulfilling our pledge, *"Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another."*

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

2009 chapter elections will be conducted at the April 16th membership meeting. If you are interested in serving a Tour of Duty as a chapter leader, call Len Funk, Nominating Chairperson at 703-820-8118. As of March 1st, the candidates are the following:

President: Byron Sheldon **Vice President:** Open **Secretary:** Open **Treasurer:** Chuck Harris
Directors: Len Funk, Len Ignatowski, Bruce Waxman, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, and Bill Bohuslaw.
AVVA Representative: Margaret Stern

SERVING AS A CIVILIAN NURSE IN VIETNAM

Marilyn Funk hit a home run as she pinch hit for Ron Spector, who was ill, the scheduled February guest speaker. She spoke of her Tour of Duty as a volunteer nurse for the Salvation Army in Saigon during 1969 to 1970. She and her husband, a Defense Security Agency employee, went to Vietnam on a two year Tour of Duty. As a recent nurse graduate and not willing to be a stay-at-home wife in a trailer at an oil depot south of Saigon, she volunteered to work as a nurse for the Salvation Army medical clinic.

Besides having to work in primitive medical conditions, her day started and ended with an 8 km drive from Saigon in a jeep, dressed in a white nurse's uniform. The medical team consisted of one Vietnamese doctor, two nurses, American, British, or Australian, four Vietnamese aides, and one Vietnamese driver. They operated two medical clinics in Saigon. The illnesses were primary health issues related to lack of hygiene, poor living conditions, lack of soap and safe drinking water, no immunizations, and poor diet. Cancer and other major medical illnesses were rare. At every opportunity, home-made cookies and cakes were traded for simple items like valium, Tylenol, and penicillin and scavenging forays for medical and other supplies were sought from the American units. Theft was a major problem in the clinics, even used medical supplies such as used syringes were taken.

The patients walked many miles to receive the limited and free medical treatment. To show their appreciation, the patients offered food and helped with general housekeeping and minor repairs. The VC did not attack the two clinics. Heat, lack of clean water, mosquitoes, and flies were the real enemies. She enjoyed her Tour of Duty, and her only regret was that she failed to take any photographs of her patients and the life changing memories that she still cherishes.

CHAPTER WELCOMES VETS

Bruce Waxman initiated a new chapter veteran outreach program when we welcomed a group of veterans from the VAMC at Lyons, N.J. to The Wall on February 18th. The visit was part of their PTSD treatment. The group included Vietnam, Panama, 1st Gulf War, the Iraq, and Afghanistan war veterans.

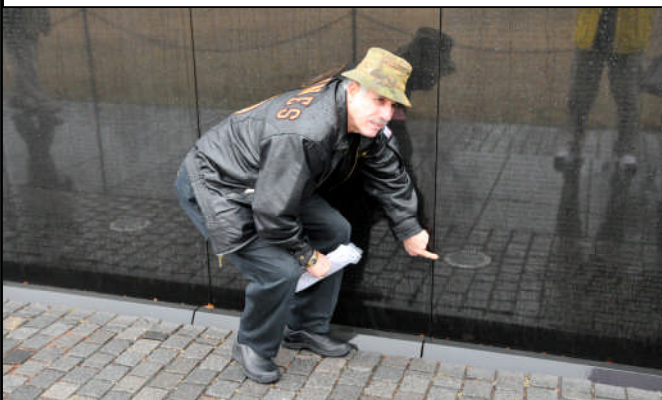
Despite freezing rain, Bruce Waxman, Bill Lynch, Bill Shugarts, Susan Custis, Wayne Gatewood, Len Ignatowski, Lois Beck, and David Rabadan welcomed the veterans. Members from Chapter 958 of D.C. and Chapter 641 of Silver Spring also responded to our invitation. VVA National sent a photographer and staff.

After the group laid a wreath at The Wall apex and group photographs were taken, everyone mingled with the visiting veterans. Dave Rabadan and Lois Beck were looking for possible veterans from their N.J. home town. The Vietnam veterans searched The Wall for lost friends, while the newer veterans looked on with respect since none of their comrades were on The Wall. The younger veterans expressed a desire to visit Arlington National Cemetery, and Bruce agreed to see if the request could be arranged. After sharing personal experiences and thoughts and many hugs, the visiting veterans departed for their bus ride home. As with all such reunions, each veteran felt that each received more than they gave.

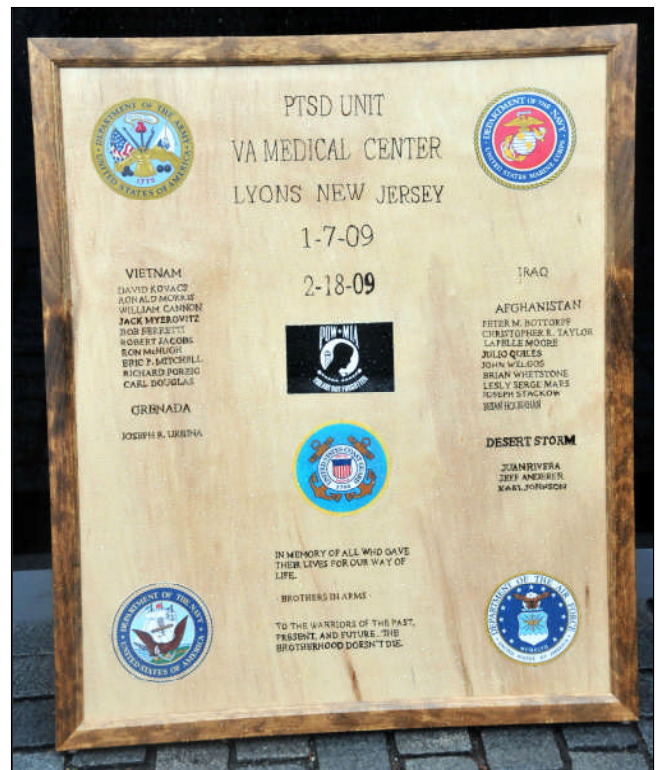
Current plans are to provide a welcome for future groups that will be arriving on April 1, May 13, June 24, August 5, September 16, October 28, and December 9, 2009. Members who want to support this special veteran outreach can contact Bruce by email at bruce_waxman@vva227.org or calling at 703-323-0269. Special salutes go out to Susan Custis and Bill Shugarts, new members via the at-large member roster. An extra special thanks to Bill Shugarts for obtaining The Wall calendars, taking photographs, and doing name rubbings for our visiting brothers-in-arms.



Veterans share a moment of silence at The Wall in freezing weather as our brothers at Valley Forge did.



A veteran finds a friend's name on The Wall



PTSD Unit # 1-7-09 of the VA Medical Center, Lyons, N.J. reporting for duty, sir!

All photos by VVA Chapter 227

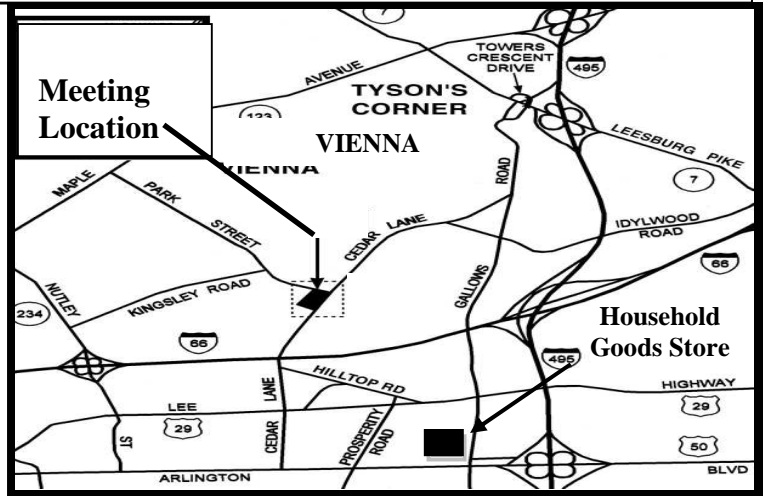
CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

March 2009



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 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
Operation Sugar Plum: Fran Knouse 703-242-2308



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

Mar:

- 05: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 07: Va. State Council Meeting: Lynchburg, Va.
- 19: Membership Meeting: Speaker: Pat Robinson, "How the VA's research and development programs are helping our military veterans."

Apr:

- 01: Welcome visiting PTSD Treatment Class from VAMC, Lyons, N.J., Time: TBA, POC: Bruce Waxman
- 02: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 16: Membership Meeting: Chapter Elections & Guest Speaker: March Leepson "Desperate Engagement", a local civil war battle that saved Washington D.C. from a confederate attack.



WELCOME HOME!

New Chapter Members: #235 Mike Morris #236 Gus Howard

BE A MINUTEMAN!

To receive current chapter news and events, join the Minuteman Alert by providing your email to the chapter.

Sent your email address to Len Ignatowski at grunt69@gmail.com

CHAPTER ELECTIONS

APRIL 16, 2009

**Contact Len Funk
to serve your Country, your fellow veterans,
and your community again.**

**“Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon
Another”**

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 Vietnam Veterans, Their Families,
Our Community, and Our Country”**