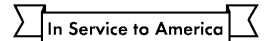


# THE JOURNEY

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227  
*The Dean K. Phillips Memorial Chapter*  
*"Serving Veterans and the Community in Northern Virginia"*

*"Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another!"*



March 2010

## WELCOME HOME! *Be There!*

Fairfax County and the Virginia legislature will officially declare March 30th as "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day".

Chapter members and family and veterans of all eras are invited to attend the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors session on March 23, 2010, when the chapter receives the Board's proclamation recognizing March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in the county. In keeping with the Vietnam Veterans of America founding principle that "Never again shall one generation of veterans abandon another," other local veteran organizations are welcome to attend and participate in the ceremony.

The chapter will host a reception at 8:15 am before the Board meeting starts at 9:00 am. The board meeting is in the Auditorium at the Government Center at 1200 Government Center Parkway, Fairfax, Va. 22035. You and your fellow veterans are strongly urged to attend this event to show our appreciation for this recognition and to demonstrate that we can mobilize our constituency. Please attend this monumental event, even if you don't live in Fairfax County. You are encouraged to wear VVA clothing that shows that you are a member.

Please RSVP to Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or [grunt69@gmail.com](mailto:grunt69@gmail.com).

The Virginia House of Delegates and Senate have each approved a resolution declaring March 30th as Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in Virginia. Delegate David Bulova (D-37th District) and Senator Chap Peterson (D-34th District) are the original patrons in each legislative body. The resolutions are HJ 136 and SJ 42. George Corbett, Virginia State Council Secretary, testified at the House and Senate hearings, urging support for the resolution. At this time it is not known whether a formal presentation will take place for either resolution.

Jose G. Ramos, a Vietnam veteran and a California VVA member, originated the idea, and the U.S. Congress passed a resolution declaring March 30th as a National Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day in 2007. Jon Voight, movie actor, is the official spokesman. Jose expressed his gratitude to our chapter for our solidarity with this movement. Bruce Waxman, Chapter Vice President, led the action to get these Virginia recognitions.

## MARCH MEETING: DIEN BIEN PHU

The March 18th member meeting guest speaker is Fred Frey, who served as a Marine Corps platoon leader with the 3rd Bn of the 7th Marines in 1966-67 in South Vietnam. He will discuss the battle of Dien Bien Phu where the Vintminh defeated a French colonial force and ended French colonial rule in Indo-China in 1954. The French army defeat marked the beginning of our involvement with the newly created South Vietnamese government. The epic battle will be discussed with maps and photographs of the area from his 2008 visit to Vietnam. The question, "Could things have been different for us if the French army had won the battle?" will be included.

Come early with your spouse and bring a friend to enjoy a great dinner and meet fellow members.

## 2010 CHAPTER ELECTIONS

The chapter election of new officers and directors shall be at the April 15th membership meeting. The chapter bylaws were revised for two year terms for officers and directors to allow time for the implementation of their programs. We are gathering momentum on several fronts, and new member involvement is critical to our successful growth. If you want to serve your fellow veterans and our community again, this is the way to go. Ron Ball has already offered to serve as a first time director.

The secretary position is open. The minimal time commitment is the monthly board meeting, and most of your duties can be performed at home. If interested, offer to serve as a director and see how you like it. Call Len Funk, Nominating Chairperson at 703-820-8118 to toss your hat in the ring. As of March 1<sup>st</sup>, the candidates are the following:

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

## WINTERHAVEN STANDDOWN 2010

Jim Thur, Bill Lynch, Bruce Waxman, and Len Ignatowski worked as volunteers at the D.C. Veterans Hospital 2010 Winterhaven Standdown on January 23rd. The VA sponsored program for veterans in need was a great success thanks to the volunteers and community business support. The program offered a one stop opportunity for veterans and family to determine their state and federal veteran benefit eligibility, basic health and dental checkups, and free amenities such as men's haircuts, women's hair care services, clothing, coffee, donuts, and lunch. Len Ignatowski and Bruce Waxman helped Sharon Hodge of VVA National Office manage the first time women and children clothing service. The service started at 0800 hours with the unpacking of boxes of clothing followed by assisting veterans and their children in selecting clothing until 1700 hours. Everyone was please with the items that they received. Special thanks to ZIP Cleaners for cleaning the donated clothing. This new service reflects the changing dynamics of a growing women veteran population who are not immune to the same economic and medical issues facing men veterans. Bill Lynch worked with members of VVA Chapter 641 of Silver Springs in distributing men's clothing. Jim Thur represented the Virginia Wounded Warriors' Veteran Assistance Program. Special kudos to Sharon Hodge of the VVA National office who served as a volunteer and demonstrated a high degree of personal commitment to veterans with her very spirited personality. Her enthusiasm was almost overcome when for a few minutes at the end of the stand down, it appeared that her coat was given away. We are fortunate to have her working for us. Thanks, Sharon.

General Eric Shinseki, U.S. Army (Ret) Secretary of Veterans Affairs, and his wife, Patricia, visited the standdown. During their visit to the women and children clothing station, Mrs. Shinseki immediately provided the lady's touch in helping several women veterans select the right clothing from coats to blouses. Her spontaneous assistance showed a real sincerity in helping veterans. Their visit was not just a public relations event, but a real expression of service and concern in helping veterans and their families. While his wife was helping, the General talked to Len, Bruce, and the lady veterans in the room.

All in all, the chapter again fulfilled our pledge, *"Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another!"*



Gen. Shinseki thanks Len Ignatowski for helping at the standdown. Len invited him to attend a chapter meeting. Photo by Bruce Waxman



Bruce Waxman (C) and Mrs. Patricia Shinseki (R) assist a lady veteran in selecting a new blouse for her wardrobe. Mrs. Shinseki provided the lady's touch in the decision making. Photo by Len Ignatowski

## VETS HELPING VETS: The New Generation

Our informal dinner for wounded soldiers and families from Walter Reed Hospital continues for the third year. The hotel host wants to remain anonymous for providing the free dinners, and no photographs are permitted except by the honored guests. Len Ignatowski and D.R. Butler served as hosts, and the chapter invited Josh Lawton-Belous, President of the Veterans Society of George Mason University. D.R. is the faculty advisor to the organizations and is a Vietnam army helicopter pilot veteran too.

During the roll call, Josh expressed his group's commitment to helping fellow veterans become successful students and to fulfill their dreams. He announced that if any of the guests are interested in employment with a leading software company, he would be more than happy to assist the veteran on applying for a job. The company is willing to train to do the job.

Before the dinner, Josh discussed the many pro-active programs that his group is involved in, helping students cut through paper work when deployment orders interfere with their education, to maintaining a trust fund to assist veteran-students who run into financial problem. The new GI education bill is a good one, but it has certain financial pitfalls.

So it appears that the present generation of veterans has already seized our pledge by helping their comrades in arms even before the war is over. Congratulations to Josh and his fellow veteran-students at George Mason University.

If you are interested in serving as a host, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or email him at [grunt69@gmail.com](mailto:grunt69@gmail.com).



Nancy Lynch (l) tries on her new VVA baseball cap which Bruce Waxman presented to her after her discussion on her Vietnam mailbag column. Photo by Len Ignatowski

## VIETNAM MAILBAG

Nancy Lynch, the February membership meeting speaker, provided a very unique civilian perspective of the Vietnam War. She spoke about her newspaper column, Nancy's Vietnam Mailbag, for the Wilmington Morning News of Wilmington, Delaware, from 1968 to 1972. The three days a week column served as a vital link between Delawareans serving in Vietnam and their fellow citizens in Delaware. The column had an open format where any subject could be communicated from individual anti-war sentiment to the poor working conditions. The column was not censored. The column exposed the real individual and daily hardships of combat to the readers. Her column resulted in Delawareans discovering that a fellow Delawarean was serving in their unit. She said that the column did not receive any negative complaints from the readership.

Nancy read several letters from the first one to the last one including a letter from a pilot who died in Vietnam. The last letter read was from a Lt. Ignatowski, our very own. Len had introduced her to the membership. Nancy and he attended the University of Delaware about the same time, and he read her column while in college and in the army from Ft. Benning to Vietnam.

The 900 letters and her personal experience with her column and with returning veterans are summarized in her book, "Vietnam Mailbag: Voices from the War 1968-1972". The book earned the 2009 Independent

Publisher Book Award for the best regional non-fiction in the Middle Atlantic States.

To the best of her knowledge, her column was the only one of its kind in the United States. The letters and other war artifacts have been donated to the State of Delaware archives to document and honor Delawarean service in the Vietnam War especially the sixty-five who were killed in Vietnam.

In addition to her column, the Wilmington Morning News provided a free newspaper subscription and postage to all Delawareans serving in Vietnam. This act of patriotism and generosity was done six days a week for the duration of the war. A special thanks to Nancy and the Wilmington Morning News for their service to Vietnam veterans. Nancy enjoys a special relationship with the VVA chapters in Delaware and nearby Maryland. Len understands that the newspaper is providing the similar service to Delawareans serving in Iraq and Afghanistan.

## CHAPTER BRIEFS

- **HAITI EARTHQUAKE RELIEF:** In response to emails from Nancy Solomonson about Marty Cacioppo, a Vietnam veteran and Operation Smile volunteer, service on the U.S.S. Comfort for the Haiti earthquake relief, a special collection at the membership meeting resulted in a \$44 donation to Project Smile with a stipulation that the money be used for the earthquake response. Due to military medical needs, civilian volunteers were asked to augment the ship's staff. Marty has been invited to join the chapter and be a future speaker about his Tour of Duty on the U.S.S. Comfort. His volunteer service shows that we, veterans, are like the battery rabbit commercial. We keep on serving, serving!
- **BIRTHDAY CHALLENGE:** A member's family decided to honor his Vietnam service by donating \$64 to the Suits for Vets program in lieu of another tie or shirt gift. So if your closet is full of ties and shirts that you do wear, ask your family to make a monetary birthday donation to the Suits for Vets program in your honor.
- **HOMELESS VETERAN UPDATE:** The chapter wants to thank all members who responded to the appeal to assist homeless veterans with their transition to apartments. Donations have ranged from dinnerware to furniture. Martha Valdez wants to express her appreciation for our support. The chapter has contacted a nationwide business to donate household items to the VASH veterans. Also, a voucher program with a local store is being finalized to allow VASH clients to purchase household items and clothing. The vouchers are being provided free to the chapter.
- **HOUSEHOLD GOODS INCOME:** The VVA household goods program has provided an income of \$4168 for 2009. You are strongly encouraged to make donations to the program.

If you need items for the vacation home or a starting college graduate apartment, shop the local store, Unique Thrift Store, 2956 Gallows Rd, Merrifield (Old Levitz store location), VA 22031. The store hours are M-S: 10 am to 8 pm, and Sun. 11am to 6 pm. The store is considered the largest thrift store in the metropolitan area with a wide selection of items.

## CHAPTER GOES GREEN

As part of the chapter's civic responsibility, our "Go Green" campaign is working well to enhance the environment that we live in, but your help is still needed too.

First, the chapter participates in the Staples Rewards printer ink cartridge recycling program. The chapter earns \$3 for each cartridge returned to Staples. During 2009 41 ink cartridges were returned. Roger Stevens, a member of Chapter 81, was the largest donor with over 15 cartridges. Thanks, Roger. So if you have a business or just a home computer, drop-off the empty ink cartridges at any Staples store, and have the donation recorded under Ignatowski, VVA Chapter 227, or Acct. No. 3042519359.

The email delivery of the chapter newsletter saves trees. Another advantage of email is that the photographs are in color. The publication cost has been reduced from over \$ 2,000 to about \$700 a year. This means more funds for our veteran and community programs. As of March 1st, 75% of the members are enrolled in email delivery. *So what are you waiting for!*

## STUDENT INTERVIEWS

The chapter wants to thank all members who participated in the online student interviews regarding their military service. The interview requests come from local students of Robinson H.S. to students in England and Australia. The VVA National office distributes the request via the VVA Chatline, and our Minuteman Alert invites our members to participate. The interview content ranges from the mundane topics such as what did you have in your pockets to specific subjects as our music and the African American soldier experience. Most student requests are on a tight schedule, so the Minuteman Alert is the quickest way to announce the request. If you want your Tour of Duty recorded as part of history and provide a better understanding of the war; send your email address to Len Ignatowski at [grunt69@gmail.com](mailto:grunt69@gmail.com) now.

## “WIN-WIN” STAPLES REWARDS PROGRAM

You can immediately benefit from your participation in the STAPLES Rewards program for the chapter. Your copying at a STAPLES business center earns the chapter a 10% rebate, plus *you receive an immediate 10% discount* on your order by using our account (Ignatowski, VVA Chapter 227, or #3042519359).



Ben Buckley, arm raised, welcomes veterans from the Lyons VAMC PTSD Class to The Wall. Photo by Bill Shugarts.

## LYONS PTSD VISIT

Ben Buckley, Bill Shugarts, Bruce Waxman, Len Ignatowski, and Paul Stancliff welcomed another Lyons VAMC PTSD class to The Wall on January 20th. Jugs of hot coffee and fresh donuts were provided to combat the chilly rain.

Ben Buckley, who is from Roselle, N.J., welcomed the Visitors on behalf of the chapter and with a special message that they are now part of America's proud military heritage from Valley Forge to the two current wars. He recited two statements by President Lincoln that are engraved on his memorial that addressed the sacrifices that we have made and are making as he spoke. One could tell that his message resonated with the new and Vietnam veterans in the group.

Then the Iraq and Afghanistan veterans visited Section 60 at Arlington National Cemetery where their comrades are buried. Chaplain Bob Mikol, Vietnam veteran, of the Lyons VAMC conducted a memorial service.

One very noticeable trait of our nation's new fallen heroes are their increasing religious diversity. Besides the traditional religions, other represented religions were Muslim, American-Indian, Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, and many more. The military and veteran cemeteries recognize 37 different personal beliefs including atheism.

The next Lyons PTSD Unit visit is set for March 3rd at 11:30 AM at The Wall. Hosts are needed to welcome the veterans. Call Bruce Waxman at 703-973-4436. It is a great way to spend your lunch if you work downtown.

### VETERANS HOTLINE

1-800-273-8255 Available 24/7

If you are a veteran in an emotional crisis and need help,  
CALL RIGHT NOW

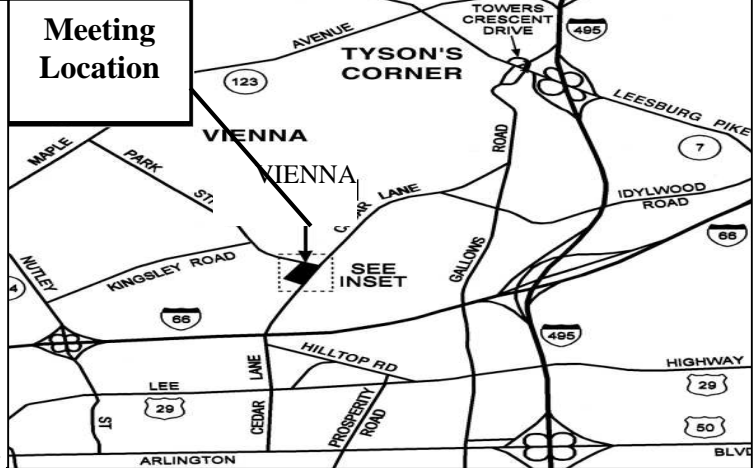
# CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

March 2010



## OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

- President:** Byron Sheldon – 703-850-3498
- Vice President:** Bruce Waxman – 703-323-0269
- Secretary:** Vacant
- Treasurer:** Chuck Harris
- Sergeant at Arms:** Jonathan Olson
- Board of Directors:** Paul Stancliff, Len Funk, Len Ignatowski, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, and Bill Bohuslaw.
- Past President:** Bill Dumsick
- AVVA Representative:** Margaret Stern
- Newsletter Editor:** Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353
- School 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



**CHAPTER INFORMATION: 703-968-0686**

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

Mar.

- 03: Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit @ 11:00 am at The Wall. Call Bruce for questions at 703-323-0269.
- 04: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: NOTE: Neighbors Restaurant
- 18: Membership Meeting: Fred Frey, Vietnam veteran, "The Battle of Dien Bien Phu" with recent photographs of the battlefield.
- 20: State Council Meeting @ Roanoke: Len Ignatowski and Paul Stancliff are the chapter delegates.
- 23: "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" proclamation by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors  
 Chapter Sponsored Reception 8:15 am. Board Session: 9:00 am. RSVP to Bruce Waxman, 703-323-0269
- 30: National Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans Day

Apr:

- 01: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: (Tentative Location) American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 14: Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit @ 11:00 am at The Wall. Call Bruce for questions at 703-323-0269.
- 15: Membership Meeting: Chapter elections & Judy McCarthy, "Operation Spycraft"

## HOMELESS VETERAN OUTREACH

Mrs. Martha Valdez, Case Manager, VASH program at the Alexandria Vet Center, is in urgent need for household goods for homeless veterans who are placed in apartments. The veteran generally arrives with only the clothes on her or his back and what is in their cars or suitcases. Her cases include women veterans. Mattresses, box springs, and beds are top priority items. Other essential items range from silverware and dishes to towels. Her phone number is 202-745-8000 X1941 or 1942.

## WHY ARE YOU NOT IN ONE OF OUR PHOTOGRAPHS?



# **“RETURN TO DIEN BIEN PHU”**

**Membership Meeting**

**March 18th**

**PTSD CLASS VISIT – Be A Host**

**March 3rd**

**WELCOME HOME,  
VIETNAM VETERANS**

**Fairfax County Government Proclamation**

**March 23rd – *Be There!***

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”**