

# 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!”*



In Service to America

September 2010

## “BARE FEET, IRON WILL”

Ltc. James (Jim) Zumwalt, USMC (Retired), Vietnam veteran, chapter member, and author will discuss his recent book, “Bare Feet, Iron Will” at the September 16th membership meeting. The book describes the bravery and tenacity of our enemy from their perspective. Gen. Giap stated that his country lost over one million soldiers during the American involvement. Jim has previously spoken to the membership on other war related topics. He gained the confidence of the Vietnamese military leaders from trips with his father, Admiral Elmo Zumwalt, regarding Agent Orange. His father was a chapter member too. His perspective of the enemy’s view may shed some light on how to deal with the current wars that our military are fighting.

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

## NEARLY 40 YEARS IN THE MAKING



Byron Sheldon, Len Ignatowski, Ron Markiewicz, Bruce Waxman, and Congressman Connolly (1 to r) posed with Ron’s two service medals. John Jenkins, Prince William County Supervisor and Vietnam veteran (Back row)

Byron Sheldon, Len Ignatowski, and Bruce Waxman Represented the chapter at the belated medal presentation to Ronald E. Markiewicz in the office of Congressman Gerry Connolly on July 19, 2010. He was a young Lt. and Huey pilot with the 71st Aviation Co., 14th AV Bn, 23rd Infantry.

Congressman Connolly presented the Distinguished Flying Cross and Silver Star to Ron after a nearly forty year wait. The two medals recognized the two battlefield heroics of this young and brash army helicopter pilot on March 21 and 24, 1971.

The Silver Star was awarded for his bravery in resupplying a trapped ARVN unit and extracting four wounded ARVN soldiers. Enemy ground fire disabled his aircraft in that Ron successfully landed the aircraft and formed a defensive perimeter until help arrived. Despite being wounded, he carried the wounded ARVN marines to the rescue helicopter.

Three days later he rescued a downed U.S. helicopter crew that was surrounded by enemy forces, and he was wounded during the rescue. Despite his wounds, he safely returned to base and commandeered another helicopter to support the

military operation. This action earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. The heroism recognition delay was attributed to the unit’s pending stand-down and a storm which destroyed the unit’s administrative tent. The diligent work by the unit’s historian and his company commander resulted in Ron receiving his overdue medals for exceptional bravery.

At Congressman Connolly’s invitation, Bruce Waxman had the honor to read the unit citations for the presentation. Desi Arnaiz and John Jenkins of VVA Chapter 617, also attended the ceremony. Our presence fulfills our pledge, “Leave No Veteran Behind.” Many thanks to Congressman Connolly for hosting the official medal presentation and inviting Chapter 227.

## SILVER ANNIVERSARY

The chapter celebrates our 25th Anniversary on October 23rd at 6:00 PM at the Holiday Inn, Rosslyn (same hotel as the dance). The ticket cost is \$30 with a cash bar and a three entrée selection. Hotel parking is free. See order form in the newsletter. All former officers, directors, and founding members, are strongly urged to attend. If you can provide photographs of past activities, mail them to Len Ignatowski, 2408 Oak Vale Court, NW, Vienna, Va. 22181. The guest speaker is Rick Weidman, Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs for VVA, who will discuss VVA history, our accomplishments, and future challenges. Rick has earned the respect of congressional, executive branch, and DVA leaders for his no nonsense approach to solving veteran issues. Order your tickets now. Questions, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353. See you at the dinner.

## DVA NORTHERN VA. WORKSHOP ASSISTS HOMELESS VETERANS

By Bruce Waxman

The Washington, DC VA Medical Center held the first Community Homelessness Assessment Local Education Networking Group meeting (CHALENG) specifically for Northern Virginia on July 22 at the Fairfax Government Center. Vice President Bruce Waxman represented the chapter.

Garnet Nelson, LCSW, chaired the meeting and, along with DVA's Kevin Morton, gave an overview of the DVA's efforts and plans to eradicate homelessness among veterans within five years. Jim Thur, a 227 chapter member, who is the Northern Virginia Director of the Wounded Warrior Project of the Commonwealth's Department of Veterans Services, presented excerpts from the report of the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission on "Reducing Veteran Homelessness in Virginia." A copy of the report, which documents the problem, can be read at <http://jlarc.state.va.us/meetings/June10/HomelessVetsbrf.pdf>. The DVA representatives included Martha Valdez, a DVA staffer in Alexandria, who places eligible homeless veterans in long term housing. She gave an award to Carol C. Erhard, from the Fairfax County Department of Housing and Community for Carol's leadership in processing 35 HUD vouchers to house homeless vets. Tom Saxman, a formerly homeless veteran, spoke about his experiences with homelessness and how he was assisted by the DVA.

The audience included service providers, government staff members and representatives of veteran's organizations. In addition to 227, Chapter 617 was represented by Desi Arnaiz. Attendees were surveyed about veterans needs and how well the DVA was meeting them. Also, the DVA representatives indicated that there was grant money available to local service organizations for programs to assist homeless veterans.

A Q&A session was held at the end of the meeting during which attendees, using specific examples, criticized the DVA for difficulty in obtaining services and problems with coordinating services between the DVA and local organizations. The DVA representatives promised to report back to the VAMC regarding the feedback received from the audience.

Since the CHALENG event, Bruce has been in touch with Ms. Nelson, Mr. Thur, Ms. Erhard and staff at FACETS, a local organization that serves the homeless in Fairfax County, to determine ways in which the chapter can be of assistance, as well as to express our first hand problems with the delivery of services to homeless veterans. DVA staff presented two ideas by which 227 could assist. One was to provide gas cards to enable local providers to transport homeless veterans to VA medical facilities. The DVA would certify that the provider made the trips and the cost of gas used. Chapter 227 would buy gas cards to give to the providers. The second was to provide mentors to homeless veterans. These vets need someone to talk to and interact with, other than their previous homeless colleagues on the streets. Otherwise, there is a risk that they will go back to the street to be with their friends. Prospective volunteer mentors should contact Bruce at [bruce\\_waxman@vva227.org](mailto:bruce_waxman@vva227.org). If we implement mentorships, we will ask the DVA for training and guidance for the mentors.

## FIVE IN A ROW!

The Nationals Major League Baseball Team provided another enjoyable Sunday afternoon as part of the Veterans Appreciation Game on August 15th. The chapter returned the favor by providing the 10th player support for a 100% attendance victory (five straight years, five straight victories). 5 Wins – 0 Losses.

The final score was Nationals 5, Diamondbacks 3. The game highlights were watching Strasburg pitch for five innings and Zimmerman's line drive home run into the left field seats.

A total of 32 members and family attended the great victory.

Special thanks to Bill Bohuslaw for managing the annual chapter event. He is an avid baseball fan including a childhood allegiance to the New York Mets and now a part-time Nationals fan.

Bill and definitely the Nationals are looking forward to our return for another victory in 2011, while a rumor is that the Nationals management is considering making an offer to the chapter for our game attendance.

**DMZ To Delta® DANCE**  
**November 10, 2010**

Mark your calendar to attend this great chapter event now!



Bill and Natalie Bohuslaw (front row) and Charlie Klen and Jonathan Olson (second row) enjoy another Nationals victory at the Veterans Appreciation Day Game. The victory is #5 for our attendance. Photo by Nick Parella.

# LYONS VAMC PTSD UNIT VISIT by Bruce Waxman



PTSD CLASS PLAQUES AT THE LYONS VAMC. Photo by Bruce Waxman.

While driving on the Interstate in New Jersey with my wife (Dr. Sarah Elpern – more later about the “Dr.”), en-route to the Hudson River Valley, we passed a sign that read Lyons, NJ VA. The Lyons, NJ VAMC is the home of the PTSD unit that VVA 227 has been greeting at The Wall every 6 weeks since February 2009.

So, on the morning of our return trip, we called Rodney Smith, the VA staffer who runs the PTSD unit and is in charge of the trips to DC. He was excited to hear from us and agreed to meet us at the hospital for a tour. Actually, he met us at the exit from the Interstate just to be sure we didn’t get lost!

Upon arriving at the hospital we noticed that it has many buildings covering many acres. It even has its own fire department and a golf course! Our first stop was the PTSD Unit. As we were entering the building, we were joined by John, a neighbor and traveling buddy of Rodney’s, who is also a Vietnam Vet and was in the PTSD unit previously. He was at the hospital to volunteer and for an appointment. We walked around the PTSD ward and met some of the nurses, as well as patients, some of

whom have been on the visits to The Wall. We saw their spacious rooms, their recreation/TV area, and the kitchen they use to prepare meals (they prefer it to the cafeteria). We admired the plaques, made over the years by the residents that line the walls of the ward.

When Rodney found out that Sarah (a/k/a “Dr. Elpern”) is a very experienced clinical psychologist, he tried to recruit her to work at the hospital! We also went to a psychiatric unit, which has patients from all over the US because it is one of the best in the VA system. We stopped outside to say hello to a staff unit that treats female veterans for sexual trauma. Finally, Rodney took us past a building that houses nearly 100 homeless vets and a geriatric building that has hundreds of veterans.

After the visit, we went to lunch, where we talked about ourselves and our families. Rodney told us that he is a Navy veteran, comes from a military family and that he attended college on a football scholarship. He was one of the first graduates of Temple University in physical therapy, which was also where “Dr. Elpern,” went as an undergraduate. So, they reminisced about the old days in Philadelphia. It was a great day for making friends and to see the wonderful work that Rodney and his colleagues do at the Lyons, NJ VAMC.

## VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA CHAPTER 227 25TH ANNIVERSARY DINNER

October 23rd at 6:00 PM

Holiday Inn Rosslyn

1900 North Ft. Myer Drive, Arlington, Va.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Entrée Selection:	Breast of Chicken with Champagne Sauce	_____ x \$ 30.00 = \$ _____
	Roast Prime Rib of Beef	_____ x \$ 30.00 = \$ _____
	Grilled Pacific Salmon with Dill Sauce	_____ x \$ 30.00 = \$ _____
	Can’t Make It, But Here is an Anniversary Present . . . . .	\$ _____
	<b>TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$ _____</b>

Mail order form and check payment to: Len Ignatowski, 2408 Oak Vale Court, NW, Vienna, Va. 22181. Make check payable to VVA Chapter 227.

## NEW SECRETARY: RON BALL

The board approved Ron Ball as the chapter secretary at the board meeting on September 2, 2010. Ron's Tour of Duty was as an MP with the 199th Light Infantry Brigade. He represents a wealth of untapped knowledge since he served as Vice President and Director of Chapter 670 in Columbus, Ohio, before moving to Vienna, Va. His appointment provides a fourth member to the Executive Board, President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer, that has authority to make limited emergency or time sensitive financial and policy decisions. Since transferring to the chapter, Ron attended our monthly membership meetings, and served as a host to the Wounded Warriors Dinner and the Lyons VAMC Class visits. Plus, his wife, Deborah, makes a great chocolate dessert!

## “FALL FESTIVAL” NEEDS HOSTS

Joe and Sharon Celesnik will sponsor a chapter information booth at the Fairfax City “Fall Festival” on Saturday, October 9th, with a rain date of October 10th. Hosts are needed from 10:00 am to 5:00 pm. The booth provides the opportunity to share our Tour of Duty and to recruit new members. If you have any questions, call Joe at 703-938-7669. It is a great way to meet fellow chapter members and to inform the public about our military and community service.

## CHAPTER SHORTS:

- **WOUNDED WARRIORS DINNER:** Bob Dadiomoff, Gus Howard, and Len Ignatowski served as hosts at the July and May Wounded Warriors dinner that is sponsored by VVA. Anyone interested in serving as a host, contact Len Ignatowski for details. Phone: 703-255-0353 or email [grunt69@gmail.com](mailto:grunt69@gmail.com). Due to the restaurant's desire to remain anonymous, more details cannot be published.
- **SCHOOL SPEAKER'S PANEL:** Tom Stryer is chairman of the chapter's famous School Speaker's Program. If you know a teacher who would welcome two members to share their Tour of Duty with their students, contact Tom at 703-323-9032. The format includes two veterans, one combat and one support role to provide different perspectives of the war to the students. Our program is available to all grades, including college and community groups. If you are interested in being a speaker, notify Tom.
- **DMZ TO Delta® Dance sponsors:** The dance provides the opportunity for your business to advertise your service or products at the dance. The fee of \$50 entitles your company's business literature to be distributed on each table at the dance. The dance is on November 10th and is at the Holiday Inn at Rosslyn.
- **Hosts Needed for Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit:** Contact Bruce Waxman or just show up on September 29th at The Wall at 11:00 AM to welcome our fellow veterans from the Lyons VAMC PTSD classes. The remaining dates are November 10th and December 22nd. The veterans' military service range from the Vietnam War to the current conflicts. All are being treated for combat PTSD.
- **4 MORE TO GO:** The chapter needs four more members to surpass the next largest chapter with 236 members. We are currently the largest chapter in Virginia and still 20th largest in VVA as of August 31, 2010. The roster includes only Vietnam veteran members, not our AVVA membership.
- **LEESBURG TO HONOR VIETNAM VETERANS:** The chapter has accepted the Town of Leesburg's invitation to participate in their Veterans Day ceremony that honors Vietnam veterans. Chuck Harris is the chapter's representative for the event. Tentative time is 10:00 am on November 11th at The George C. Marshall International Center. More details to follow, but mark this event on your calendar.
- **STATE COUNCIL MEETING:** The Virginia State Council meeting will be held at the American Legion Post 330, 14222 Rixeyville Road, Culpeper. The meeting starts at 9:00 am on September 18th, and all members are invited. The meeting is open to all members. AVVA members have their own meeting agenda.
- **INTRODUCTION TO PTSD:** VaDVS is hosting a three hour workshop on PTSD at the Germanna Community College, Culpeper campus, Daniel Technology Center, 18121 Technology Dr. on Sept. 21st from 9:30 am to 12:30 pm. The fee is \$10. Register online at <http://www.vcu.edu/partnership/vwwp/> and click on New Training Events.

**VETERAN'S HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255**

**24 HOURS/ 7 DAYS A WEEK \*\*\*\*\* DON'T HESITATE! CALL NOW!**

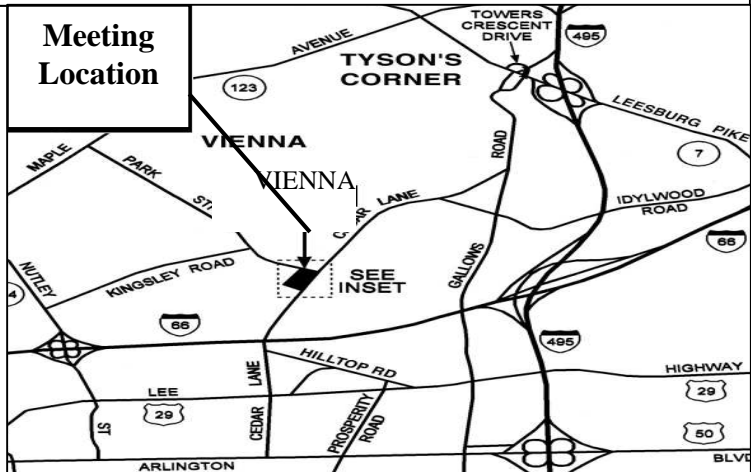
# CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

# SEPTEMBER 2010



## 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 Funk, Len Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Ron Ball, and Tom Stryer.
- AVVA Representative:** Diane Ignatowski 703-255-0353
- Newsletter Editor:** Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353
- School Speaker's Panel:** Tom Stryer
- 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

### Sep:

- 16: Membership Meeting: LTC. James Zumwalt, USMC (Ret), chapter member, will discuss his book, "Bare Feet, Iron Will"
- 18: State Council Meeting: 9:00 AM, Am. Legion Post 330, 14222 Rixeyville Rd., Culpeper, Va. All members are invited.
- 29: Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit: 11:00 am at The Wall

### Oct.

- 07 Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 09: Fairfax City "Fall Festival" Information Booth, # 356, 10 am to 5 pm. POC: Joe Celesnik, Hosts are needed
- 21: *Introduction to PTSD* Workshop 9:30 to 12:30: Details in newsletter
- 21 Membership Meeting: Roger Neighborgall, WW II veteran, "U. S. Rangers Assault on Point Du Hoc, Omaha Beach"
- 23 25th Chapter Anniversary Dinner: Speaker: Rick Weidman. "Past, Present, & Future of VVA"

### Nov.

- 04 Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 10: Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit: 11:00 AM at The Wall
- 10: DMZ to Delta Dance 8:00 PM, Holiday Inn Rosslyn
- 11: Veterans Day: *Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another!*
- 11: Leesburg, Va. Veterans Day Service Honors Vietnam Veterans. Members invited. See newsletter for details
- 18: Membership Meeting: Joan Evans, Asst. Secretary for Congressional and Legislative Affairs, "State of DVA"

### Dec.

- 02: Board Meeting 7:30 pm: American Legion Post 270, 1355 Balls Hill Rd., McLean, Va.
- 11: Holiday Party – Host: Bill and Cheryl Dumsick Home. Details to follow.
- 16: **NO DECEMBER MEMBERSHIP MEETING Have a safe and happy holiday!**
- 22: Lyons VAMC PTSD Class Visit: 11:00 AM at The Wall

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



# SEPTEMBER 16th MEMBERSHIP MEETING

## *“BARE FEET, IRON WILL”*

View the NVA perspective of the war through their eyes

# 25th CHAPTER ANNIVERSARY DINNER

*As the old song lyrics say, “Celebrate, Celebrate!”*

October 23, 2010

Order Your Tickets Now!

# LYONS VAMC PTSD VISIT

September 29th at 11:00 am

They need you!

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”