

# 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 2011



John Rowan (r), VVA President, presents the Member of the Year award to Len Ignatowski. Photo by Bruce Waxman

## LEN IS #1 By Bruce Waxman

In between conducting business on the second day of the 2012 VVA convention, in Reno Nevada, VVA National President John Rowan went to the microphone in the plenary session to announce the VVA Member of the Year. As he began to read from the winning nomination, I recognized the words, "Since 1988, he has been the editor of his chapter's outstanding chapter newsletter, which circulates to a broader community, including local, state and federal elected officials, the Department of Veteran Affairs and beyond. He created an email system (known as the "Minuteman Alert") for notifying members about urgent matters, where a special event is about to happen, where volunteers are needed or where donations can make an immediate impact."

Having helped to draft the 10 page nomination of Chapter 227's Len Ignatowski, these words were familiar. I turned to Len, who was sitting next to me, and shouted "that's you," while I grabbed his arm. Len never cracked a smile, as he gave his best

impression of a deer in the headlights of a car, even as he walked up on the stage to accept the award. We have the photos to prove it. In accepting the award, Len thanked his wife, Diane, as well as recognizing that his achievement was also a team effort.

As stated in the lengthy nomination by Chapter 227 President Byron Sheldon, "[Len] is the super glue that inspires and holds together our chapter since he joined VVA in March 1987. His guidance and wealth of knowledge about VVA matters, locally, at the state level and nationally are invaluable to the Officers and the Board of Directors responsible for successfully managing the affairs of our chapter." Len recognition marks a VVA 1st. He is the second chapter member to receive this honor. Lou James received the award in 1995.

The chapter congratulates Len. We are proud that you have been recognized at the national level.

## THE WALL MEMORABILIA

The September 15th membership meeting speaker is Duery Felton, a Vietnam veteran, who will speak on his duties as the official curator of the memorabilia left at The Wall and some of the unusual items left there. His duties are to secure the items, catalog them, and place them in storage at the National Park Service Museum Resource Center. He served as a radio operator in the 1st Infantry Division in III Corps in 1967.

Come early to meet fellow members and enjoy a great dinner. Family members and guests are always welcome. Our meetings are alcohol and smoke free. The meeting starts at 7:30 P.M.

## SIX IN A ROW

The chapter's attendance at the Nationals vs. Mets baseball game on July 31 made it six wins in a row for our game attendance, but it took nine innings to do it. Our streak was in jeopardy when the Mets tied the game at 2 to 2 with a two out home run in the top of the 9th inning. The Nationals won it with some scrappy base running and hitting in the bottom of the 9th inning. Final score, Nationals 3, Mets 2.

Special thanks to Bill Bohuslaw for serving as Ticket Master. He has developed a special relationship with the Nationals ticket office in that the seats are great along the 3rd base line in the shade. The Nationals recognized our attendance with a special message on the scoreboard screen.

Bill, who is former Long Island native, is a lifelong Mets fan, but he cheered for the home team anyway.



Ben Buckley (L) and Bill Shugarts (R) bid farewell to their new friend and former adversary at The Wall.

## THE WALL HEALS “ALL”

On March 16, 2011, Bill Shugarts and Ben Buckley waited for the arrival of the Lyons PTSD Class at The Wall on a clear spring morning. Two Asian looking businessmen with roses approached them. They appeared to be looking for a name on The Wall. Bill, who serves as a National Park Service Volunteer at The Wall took the initiative and asked if he could be of assistance. One said that he simply came to pay his respects to the fallen soldiers. Bill noticed that the man spoke with a Vietnamese accent and he asked if the visitor had served in the war. The man answered “yes”. Bill asked “what ARVN unit that he served.” The man politely answered, “I served in the North Vietnamese army.”

After the initial shock, Bill and Ben quickly developed a bond with their former adversary. The three veterans understood the real cost of a war, the loss of loved ones and close friends, and the elusive answer, “Why?” Like most of us, the visitor was a draftee that fought against American and ARVN units. Ben served as an infantry company commander in Vietnam, and Bill served in a transpiration unit that supplied

Americal Division forward base camps. Bill, who has visited Vietnam after the war as a businessman, is amazed how open the people are about the war and their willingness to heal their war losses. The Vietnamese people especially the younger ones, have a high regard for us and want to build a strong relationship with us. . . After placing roses at The Wall, the veterans departed as friends. Thanks to email, Bill maintains contact with the veterans.

Later, Bill had a second encounter with a former enemy, a VC soldier, with similar results. From these two visits, it appears that The Wall provides the opportunity for both adversaries to heal our war wounds and to develop a lasting friendship.



Dave Sciacchitano tells the story of the Three Soldiers statue to the visiting students. Photo by Len Ignatowski

## THE WALL REMEMBERS

On May 13, Dave Sciacchitano and Len Ignatowski welcomed the AP American History class from The Epiphany School in New Bern, North Carolina and their teacher, Raelenne Haerberle. She requested our presence to share our thoughts on the war and to answer any questions. Her stepfather, Marty Rufh, is an air force Vietnam veteran. The students were on a D.C. visit. Dave served in an air force tactical support unit, while Len served with an army engineering unit.

The visit was a chapter first in that it was done in the late evening quietness and fading light at The Wall, which added a unique relevance. The visit included The Wall, The Women’s Memorial, and the Three Soldiers statue.

Len started his discussion on The Wall’s history by asking the students to find Eugene Toni’s name on Panel 7W because Eugene had asked Len if his name had been removed. The students were stunned by the request, but Len quickly added that Eugene and several other names were

inscribed on The Wall by mistake. Several students had grandfathers or family that served in Vietnam, but none talked about it. The group expressed their gratitude for sharing our Tours of Duty, and some young ladies with tears in their eyes hugged the two veterans as they were leaving. Thanks Dave for arranging the meeting.

## NATIONAL CONVENTION

Bruce Waxman, Len Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, and Paul Stancliff represented the chapter at the recent VVA National Convention in Reno, Nevada. The convention excitement centered on the races for president, vice president, treasurer, and secretary. A runoff vote was needed to determine the secretary’s position. John Rowan was re-elected as president, Fred Elliott as Vice President, Wayne Reynolds as Treasurer, and Bill Meeks as Secretary. The new officers have prior national experience.

Virginia members were recognized for their service with Charlie Montgomery, Virginia state council president, receiving the VVA Presidential Commendation Medal, VVA’s highest award, Marc Leepson, former VVA 227member, for VVA Excellence in the Arts Award, and Len Ignatowski for Member of the Year. Wes Guidry and Marc Leepson deserve a great deal of credit for having informative speakers and a great banquet program that started with a humorous welcome from Pat Sajak of the Wheel of Fortune show, a Vietnam veteran, and a friend of VVA.

## VETERAN OUTREACH



**BACK TO SCHOOL HELP:** Len Ignatowski (L) presents ten \$50 VISA cards to Martha Valdez, VASH Case Manager. The cards will be distributed to VASH veterans with school age children to assist in back to school expenses. A large bag of young men's clothing from Dave Sciacchitano was given too. Thank you, Dave. Ms. Valdez is one of those unsung VA employees who treat her VASH veterans with motherly love and firmness. Photo by Diane Ignatowski



**THE LAMB CENTER PARTNERSHIP:** On August 11, Bruce Waxman (R) presents a \$1500 grant for homeless veteran assistance to Dave Larrabee, Director, The Lamb Center, an inter-denominational daytime homeless service center. Dave is a veteran too. The grant funds are from the Elks Lodge 2188 Veteran Assistance Fundraiser in May 2011. Our partnership with the Lamb Center stipulates that the funds assist homeless veterans. Photo by Patty Brown.



Sgt. George Cintron is laid to rest at Arlington National Cemetery as chapter members and family rendered a final salute to another departed brother. Photo by Len Ignatowski

## FINAL SALUTE

In response to Christine Avalo's internet appeal to support her father's funeral at Arlington National Cemetery on August 4th, George Toriello, a California Vietnam veteran, contacted the chapter. She is the daughter of George Cintron, a Vietnam veteran, who served with the 82nd Airborne and received a Purple Heart and CIB.

A Minuteman Alert was immediately posted for members to attend the funeral, while Bruce Waxman arranged for lodging. Megan Gray, Hotel Dance Coordinator, provided a special room rate with a free breakfast. Byron Sheldon and his wife, Diane, transported Christine and her friend, to the cemetery. Bill Lynch offered to take them to lunch, but the offer was declined. Len Ignatowski took photographs of the graveside service at Christine's request. George Toriello paid the balance of the cremation cost, bus tickets from NYC, and a flag box for her. Two members made cash contributions. Bruce Waxman, Chris Bevelry, Byron and Diane Sheldon, Bill Lynch, Lois

Beck, Ed and Marge LaClare, Len Ignatowski, Dave Sciacchitano, Charlie Klein, and Harry Jones attended the service. Several members of Chapter 641 of Silver Spring, Md. attended the service too. The motorcycle Patriot Guard escorted Sgt. Cintron to the grave. Sgt. Cintron's son, George Jr., who is a navy veteran, and his wife attended the service.

Ms. Avalo expressed her sincere gratitude for our support after the funeral. If you want to fulfill our founding principle, "Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another" on matters with a short response time, provide your email address to Len Ignatowski at [grunt69@gmail.com](mailto:grunt69@gmail.com).

## “DMZ TO Delta”<sup>®</sup> DANCE is on!

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. ® Chapter 227

**DATE: NOVEMBER 10, 2011**

**TIME: 8:00 PM TO MIDNIGHT**

**HOLIDAY INN ROSSLYN at Key Bridge**  
**1900 N. Ft. Myer Dr., Arlington, Va.**

I want to order \_\_\_\_\_ tickets at \$30 per person \$ \_\_\_\_\_

I cannot attend, but I want to purchase \_\_\_\_\_ guest tickets \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Gold Star Mother, guest veteran)

I want to make a donation since I can't attend \$ \_\_\_\_\_

TOTAL PAYMENT: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail my tickets to the following address:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ **Email for future mailings:** \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE: \_\_\_\_\_

Ticket orders received after October 20, 2011 will be held at the Will Call Desk, which opens at 7:00 pm. Questions, call 703-255-0353 or visit our website at [www.vva227.org](http://www.vva227.org).

Please make your check payable to **Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc. Chapter 227**, and mail your ticket order to:

Vietnam Veterans of America, Inc.® Chapter 227

P.O. Box 5653

Arlington, Va. 22205

**SPECIAL HOTEL ROOMS: \$109 plus taxes      RESERVATION DEADLINE: October 10, 2011.**  
**Call 1-800-368-3408, ask for Reservation Code: VIE**

## CHAPTER BRIEFS

- **AARP DULLES CAR SHOW on September 11th from 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM:** Veteran and Community Outreach. Staffing needed. Bring canned food for Food Bank. POC: Bruce Waxman 703-323-0269
- **FAIRFAX CITY FALL FESTIVAL COMMUNITY OUTREACH BOOTH on October 8th from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM.** Call Joe Celesnik (703-938-7669) for questions. Vet Center staff will answer benefit questions at the booth.
- **HOLIDAY PARTY HOST NEEDED:** A host for the Holiday Party in December is needed. Call Byron Sheldon(703-850-3498) to offer your home for this annual chapter event. A grant of \$300 is provided for party expenses (meat, beverages, etc.)
- **SUITS FOR VETS:** The chapter paid for the cleaning of 40 donated items at a cost of \$105. Please clean your donated clothing to avoid the cleaning cost. Special thanks to Chuck Harris for his super effort in collecting the donated clothing and serving as the chapter's representative for this program.
- **CLOTHES CLEANER NEEDED:** The Suits for Vets program is in need of a business that will clean the donated clothing at a reduce price or free. Call Chuck Harris at 703-463-7326 if you can help.
- **SPEAKERS NEEDED:** The chapter is in need of meeting speakers for February through June 2012. The speaker can be you about your Tour of Duty or someone that you know on a topic of interest (Vietnam War, veteran outreach program, other wars (WW II, Korean, Iraq, etc.)). Call Len Funk at 703-820-8118.
- **CONNECTION NEWSPAPER RECOGNIZES CHAPTER EFFORTS:** The Connection newspaper published an article about the chapter veteran and community outreach programs in the August 17-23 edition. Many thanks to Donna Mantz, the reporter, for following up on a contact about chapter activities by Len Ignatowski.
- **VIVA VIENNA COOKIE JAR:** The fair's cookie jar earned \$35.44 for the Suits for Vets. Thanks to Joe and Sharon Celesnik for the cookie jar and for managing the booth registration and operation.

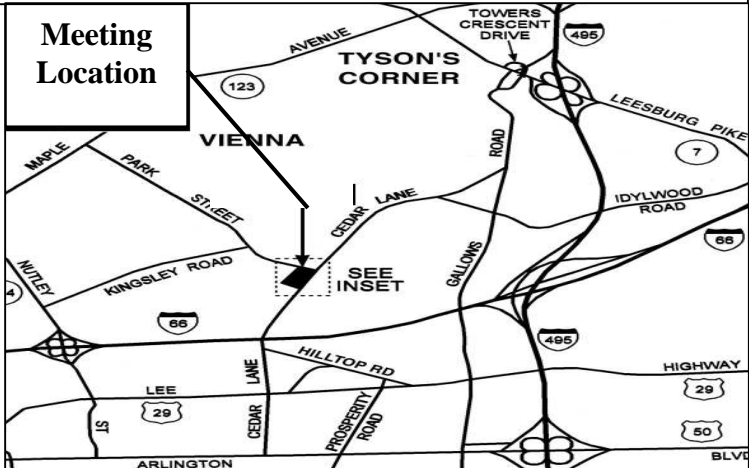
# CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

September 2011



## 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, and Tom Stryer.
- AVVA Representative:** Diane Ignatowski 703-255-0353
- Newsletter Editor:** Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353
- School Speaker's Panel:** Tom Stryer 703-323-9032
- 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

### September

- 07: Lyons PTSD Class Visit to The Wall: Meet at the flag pole @ 11:00 AM. POC: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179
- 11: AARP Dulles Car Show @ Herndon, Va., 11:00 AM to 3:00 PM: Information booth, POC/?: Bruce Waxman 703-323-0269
- 15: Membership Meeting: 7:30 PM Speaker: Duery Felton, "The Wall Memorabilia Collection"
- 24: State Council Meeting: Best Western Lee-Jackson Inn & Conference Center, 711 Millwood Avenue, Winchester, Va. , 9:00 AM

### October

- 06: Board Meeting: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va., 7:30 PM
- 08: Fairfax City Fall Festival 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM: Veteran and community outreach. Volunteers needed. Vet Center staff will be present.
- 12: Lyons PTSD Class Visit to the Wall: Meet at the flag pole @ 11:00 AM. Contact Ben Buckley 703-978-9179
- 20: Membership Meeting & 26th Chapter Anniversary: Arlington National Cemetery Assessment and Findings by Carl J. Beisel, SAIC Corp

### November:

- 03: Board Meeting: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va, 7:30 PM
- 10: DMZ to Delta@ Dance: ORDER YOUR TICKETS NOW!
- 11: Veterans Day
- 17: Membership Meeting: Speaker and topic to be announced
- 23: Lyons PTSD Class Visit to The Wall: Meet at the flag pole @ 11:00 AM. POC: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179

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

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

### VVA CAR DONATION PROGRAM

**1-800-Help Vets**

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



# **AARP DULLES CAR SHOW**

**September 11, 2011**

**Veteran and Community Outreach**

# **SEPTEMBER 15th MEMBERSHIP MEETING**

**Duery Felton: Curator of The Wall Memorabilia**

# **FAIRFAX CITY FALL FESTIVAL**

**October 8, 2011**

**Veteran and Community Outreach**

# **DMZ To Delta ® DANCE**

**November 10, 2011**

**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”**