

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

“Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”

May 2012

VINCE KASPAR AWARDS NIGHT

The May 17th membership meeting features the 16th Annual Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts presentation which recognizes outstanding high school talent in poetry and art in partnership with the Memorial Day Writers Project. The program honors the contributions of Vince Kaspar, a chapter member and one of the Memorial Day Writers Project founders, in using poetry and writing to relieve the painful memories of their Tour of Duty. The program is the chapter's hallmark for our community outreach.

Marj Watson, who is moving to Texas, will be making her last appearance for some time. Come early with your spouse and a friend to enjoy a great dinner and to meet your fellow members. You never know who you might meet at the meeting.

2012 ELECTIONS

The 2012 election of officers and directors was conducted at the April 19th membership meeting. The new officers and directors, who are serving a two year term, are: President: Byron Sheldon, Vice President: Bruce Waxman, Secretary: Ron Ball, and Treasurer: Chuck Harris. The directors are Len Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Tom Stryer, Ron Ball, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, Chris Beverly, and Paul Stancliff. Jonathan Olson was appointed as the Sgt. of Arms. Diane Ignatowski is the AVVA Representative. Ed LaClare administered the oath of office to the new officers, directors, and AVVA representative.

Special thanks to Len Funk, who did not seek re-election, for his years of service as chapter president, director, and Speaker's Panel participant. He will continue to serve as the Guest Speaker chairman and Speaker Panel participant. A special welcome to new directors, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, and Chris Beverly, who will contribute new ideas. Diane Ignatowski was re-elected as the AVVA Representative. With the new leadership and strong membership support, the chapter's success can continue.

MY FATHER, A WWII FIGHTER PILOT

Ed LaClare, chapter member, presented a very vivid real live experience of the life of a P-38 Lighting fighter pilot in southern Europe during WW II through the letters and artifacts of his father, Col. Ed LaClare, USAF (Ret).

Col. Ed LaClare entered the army air corps prior to WW II. He was an aeronautical engineer for a California aircraft company when he realized that none of the engineers knew how to fly. So Ed joined the army air corps and learned to fly in bi-wing trainers, waving scarf and leather cap in an open cockpit. Upon graduation, he was assigned as a pursuit (aka fighter) pilot. The new pilot and newly married man shared many an exciting tale, including a low altitude parachute jump due to a mid-air collision. A large tree that snagged his parachute saved his life. Ed had the parachute D-ring and the pilot chute.

With the outbreak of WWII, his father's assignment was to ferry P-38's from California to North Africa. He was transferred to Eddie Rickenbacker's WW I famous squadron, which initially escorted bombers from Italy. As the war progressed and the invasion of southern France approached, the squadron conducted attacks against enemy airfields, trains, and critical fixed targets. His father's most memorable flight was when the squadron attacked a train which later was identified as two supply trains parked next to each other. The total destruction of the two supply trains and a few miles of track accomplished what a previous day's attack on a nearby bridge failed to do, stop supply and troop movement to the invasion front. The trains were transporting Royal Tiger tanks, ammunition, and artillery shells. His father was expressing regrets over extending the attack due to the loss of four aircraft and the serious injury of one pilot. However, French resistance fighters saved the downed pilots in France. The attack was relived through gun camera clips that were shown at the meeting. Fifty years later, a French man from the local village, who witnessed the attack as a young teenager, tracked down Col. LaClare and the two remaining living pilots as part of the French village's effort to record the attack for history. Col. LaClare is credited with shooting down one enemy fighter on a bombing mission and received the French Croix Guerre with a Palm and Silver Star for his WW II service. He was one of three pilots selected to fly the new American P-80 jet fighter over Italy towards the end of the war. He joined the new air force, flew jet combat missions in the Korean War, and completed twenty years of service. Ed ended the presentation with a sentimental comment as if his father was leaving the room for his last P-38 flight into the sky, and his son would answer any questions. His presentation showed a strong father-son bond and provided a vivid perspective of life as a WW II fighter pilot. A unique note on Ed's family heritage is to name a son, Edward, but with a different middle name to avoid a junior. Thanks Ed, and especially to his father for sharing these personal and military memories with us.

MEMORIAL DAY EVENTS POSTPONTMENT

To The Members and Friends of Chapter 227,

Due to a number of unexpected personal events and events that are beyond the control of the board, with regret I am notifying all that the Chapter's annual Wreath Laying at the Wall and the Memorial Day Barbeque is cancelled for this year. Hopefully, as we progress in the next year, events will be such that we can again join together for this event.

Sincerely,

Byron S. Sheldon
President

Editor's Note: Viva Vienna Information Booth will still be held from 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM on Sunday, May 27.



SPEAKERS PANEL KICK-OFF

On April 12, 2012, Byron Sheldon shared his two Tours of Duty with students of the Reston Bible Church Tech (Home School) program. The group consisted of ten high school juniors and seniors. The agenda included a general overview of the Vietnam War and a Q&A period. Byron provided a variety of books and movies of the war and military medals, and a handout of war statistics.

Tom Stryer, Chairman of the Speaker's Panel, expects more speaking engagements to be requested after the Vietnam War is taught in late May in the local public and private schools.

VETERAN OUTREACH

- **SPECIAL HELP NEEDED:** Assistance is needed to erect the new VVA National information tent on The Mall for the Memorial Day weekend. Tentative set-up is Friday afternoon, May 25th. Call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353.
- **MINUTEMAN ALERT SUCCESS:** The Minuteman Alert earned a double victory when a chapter member donated a Telesensory text reader to an injured service member via our relationship with The *Aleethia* Foundation. The transfer took place at The Lamb Center on April 21st. Margaret Thomas and Hal Koster of the Foundation donated three shopping bags and one box of shampoo of travel size toiletries to The Lamb Center in honor of Chapter 227. Our networking works!
- **ANOTHER VETERAN NEED MET:** April Ballard, VASH Case Manager, reported that a Vietnam veteran was encountering financial difficulties in the process of gaining custody of his granddaughter. The chapter provided a \$50 credit card gift card to help meet the immediate needs of the 2 year old daughter until she became eligible for public assistance.
- **STATE COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP:** The Virginia VVA State Council will award two \$500 scholarships at the June convention. Details and application are on the council's website at <http://www.vva-vasc.org/scholarship.pdf>. Deadline is May 31, 2012. A scholarship recipient is determined by a random name drawing.



Charlie Klein delivers a box of used books for sale. Photo by Jonathan Olson.

UNSUNG HERO

Charlie Klein is our first "Unsung Hero". Besides serving on the board since he joined the chapter in the late 80's, he is a key element in our veteran and active duty military outreach effort. Through his work with the AMEN social organization, he reviews all assistance requests that come from individual veteran and other appeals to determine if other public assistance is available or to recommend approval. He is an annual participant at the Viva Vienna and past Arlington County Fair booths and other chapter activities. He manages the dance's silent auction with great success. On his own initiative, he obtained "hole in the wall books" business to support the Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts" program by selling chapter donated used books. 100% of the book sales goes to the chapter. This program not only helps pay for the program expenses, but contributes to the chapter's "Go Green" campaign in recycling books. Thanks a million, Charlie.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

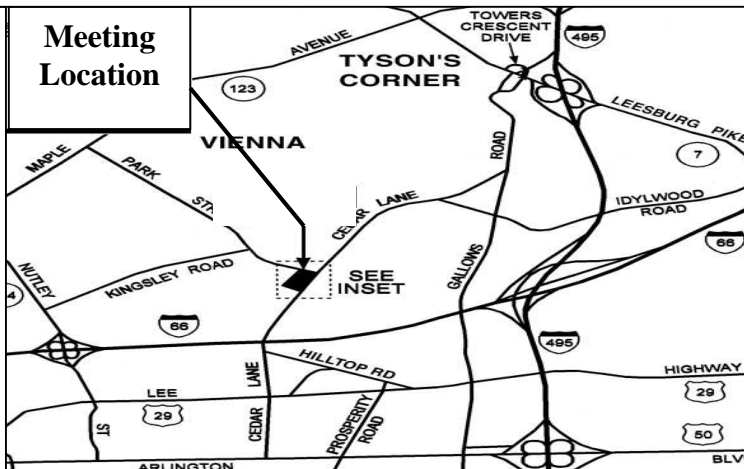
May 2012



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 Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, Chris Beverly, 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
Lyons PTSD Visit: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179

Meeting Location



CHAPTER INFORMATION: 703-968-0686

CHAPTER WEB SITE: 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

May 2012:

- 03: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 16: Lyons PTSD Class Visit: Meet at the flag pole @ 11:00 AM. POC: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179
- 17: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: "Vince Kaspar Awards for Excellence" in the Arts presentation
- 27: Viva Vienna information booth 10 AM to 5 PM: Joe and Sharon Celesnik are the program managers.
- 27: Family Barbecue: **Postponed for this year**
- 28: Memorial Day Wreath Laying at The Wall: **Postponed for this year**
- 28: Memorial Day Writer's Project 11:30 am to 5:30 pm @ The Wall: Use of poetry and music to express your feelings on the war.

June 2012

- 07: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 21: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Dr. Hugo A. Keesing, "Next Stop is Vietnam" The history of music in the Vietnam War.
- 23: Virginia VVA State Council Convention and Meeting: Richmond, Va.
- 27: Lyons PTSD Class Visit: 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

HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATION – "It Works for Us!"

The VVA Household Goods program provided over \$4100 of income in 2010. You can help in three ways.

- Donate household goods and clothing by calling 1-800-459-8387 to schedule a pick-up, or drop off the items at the Unique Thrift Store on 2956 Gallows Road (the old Levitz Store) and buy something.
- Shop at the store which offers an excellent source for home furniture and decorations for children's new apartments or your second home. Clothing and other items are like new. One member's teenage son enjoys shopping for clothes and bedroom decorations at the store which has great prices. The store hours are Mon. – Sat.: 10 AM to 8 PM, and Sun.: 11 AM to 6 PM.
- Drop-off sheds, similar to the ones that are at shopping centers, are available. If you can provide a location, call Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353. Every donation helps!

MEMORIAL DAY

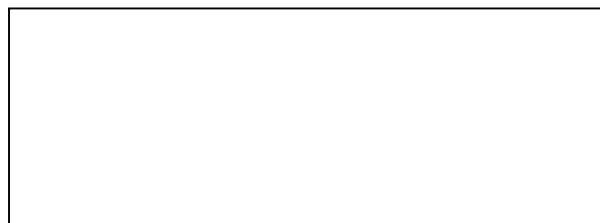
Viva Vienna Fair

May 27th @ 10:00 am to 5:00 pm
Vienna, Virginia

- Family Barbecue: May 27th (Postponed)
- Wreath Laying at The Wall: May 28th (Postponed)
- Memorial Day Writers Project: May 28th

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ® INC.
CHAPTER 227
DEAN K. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CHAPTER
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Address Service Requested



OUR MISSION

To “Serve Veterans, Their Families,
Our Community and Our Country”