

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”

March 2013

LIFE AS A COBRA PILOT IN IRAQ

The guest speaker for the March 21st membership meeting is Maj. Dan Sheehan, USMC Ret, who served two Tours of Duty in Iraq, and is the author of “After Action” which relives his combat experience as a Cobra helicopter pilot in Iraq in 2003. His second tour was as a forward air controller with a special operations unit in Iraq in 2004. He left the Marine Corps in 2007. His appearance provides an excellent opportunity to compare the evolution of the Cobra helicopter use between the Vietnam and the Iraq Wars.

Come early to enjoy a great meal and meet your fellow members! Spouses and family are always welcome. Better yet, bring a fellow veteran with you. No drinking of alcoholic beverages are allowed during the meeting.



Byron Sheldon, Chapter President, presents a VVA baseball cap as a token of our appreciation to Pam Cain for sharing her life as the daughter of a Vietnam MIA. Photo by Len Ignatowski

LIFE AS AN “MIA” DAUGHTER

Ms. Pam Cain, the daughter of Col. Oscar Mauterer, USAF, provided a personal insight of growing up not knowing whether her father was dead or alive. Pam’s father volunteered for Vietnam as an A1-E pilot. The aircraft was an initial workhorse for close combat support and for downed pilot rescues behind enemy lines. While returning from a combat mission in Laos, he had to bail out on February 15, 1966. His wing man observed that he landed safely in the jungle, but the subsequent rescue mission failed to find him.

She can still remember the scene at her home when the family was officially notified of her father’s status as Missing In Action. She was twelve years old. The family adapted to their new environment with little military support and sporadic hate telephone calls. The family would buy Christmas, Birthday, and Father’s Day presents for the day that he would return home. In 1980, the Pentagon officially declared all Vietnam’s MIAs as Killed in Action (Body Not Recovered) except for one MIA as a symbolic gesture. Although the family slowly accepted his death, there was always that little bit of hope.

Her family received some closure in 2010, when three government analyses confirmed that a found photo was her father, taken after his last flight. Speculation is that he was captured and died in captivity of local Communist forces. A 2011 search team surveyed the crash site, but the site excavation has been delayed. The survey crew did not detect any human remains.

Although her grieving has not stopped, she is involved with the MIA issue with the League of Families and the Ride to The Wall motorcycle ride from Los Angeles to D.C. for Memorial Day. She strongly urges members to support the new POW/MIA organization, Help Bring Them Home, (<http://www.bringthemhome.org/>) which addresses all wars. She requested that members sign the petition at this website in support of having a full accounting of our military POW/MIA and to fully fund the Joint Prisoners of War, Missing in Action Accounting Command (JPAC) and the Defense Prisoner of War Missing Personnel Office (DPMO). As with previous speakers, she emphasized that time is essential in recovering the remains of our MIA’s. Byron Sheldon presented her with a VVA baseball cap as a token of our appreciation, especially since she flew from Seattle to share her story.

STATE COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP

The Virginia VVA state council is offering two \$500 scholarships for a veteran and a veteran family member. See eligibility and application on the council website at <http://www.vva-vasc.org/scholarship.pdf>. Grandchildren are eligible. A raffle selects the scholarship winner.

CHAPTER BRIEFS

- **Chapter Website:** The chapter website, vva227.org, has a new photograph section. Visit it to learn more about the chapter and refer other veterans to it if they are interested in joining the chapter.
- **Preserving our legacy:** The chapter donated two Vietnam War art prints to the Texas Tech University's Vietnam Archives. One print, "When the Wall Weeps" depicts rain drops on the The Wall, and the second painting, "The Great Reunion", has the faces of deceased Vietnam War veterans in a heavenly setting. Marj Watson, chapter AVVA member, is the artist of both paintings. She donated several prints of each painting to the chapter when she moved to Texas. The university expressed their gratitude and the paintings will become part of the university's special academic collection on the Vietnam War history.
- **Memorial Day Family Barbecue host needed.** A host is needed for the Annual Family Barbecue on Sunday, May 26. The chapter provides a \$300 grant for the purchase of meats and refreshments. Call Byron Sheldon to offer your home and services at 703-850-3498.
- **Memorial Day events:** Mark your calendar to attend our Memorial Day remembrance events: Viva Vienna!, Family Barbecue, Wreath Laying at The Wall, and Family Breakfast after the memorial service at The Wall.
- **Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class Visit:** Next visit is April 17th. Lend your support to these veterans. Contact Ben Buckley at 703-978-9179.
- **Speaker's Panel:** If you know of a school teacher or community group that wants to learn the personal perspective of serving in Vietnam during the war, call Tom Stryer at 703- 703-323-9032 to schedule our panel to speak. The format is to have two veterans, one with combat experience and one in a support role to provide different perspectives. A question and answer period follows both veteran's "road to Vietnam" story.
- **Meeting Speakers Needed:** The chapter needs to schedule speakers for the rest of the year. If you know of someone who has an interesting topic to share with us or if you want to share your Tour of Duty with us, call Len Funk at 703-820-8118. Vietnam war topics that have not been covered include navy ship life, MACV tours, aircraft missions, military intelligence, MP's, civil affairs, Special Forces, Paris Peace Accords, and current military topics.

HOMELESS VETERAN TRANSITION SUPPORT

- **VA Supportive Housing Support (VASH):** Another \$50 gift card to the Unique Thrift Store was given to a veteran who is transitioning from the streets to an apartment under the VASH program. The gift card allows the veteran to purchase clothing or household items. This veteran did not have any household items for his apartment. This assistance provided an opportunity to introduce Melissa Schott, the new VASH case worker for Northern Virginia to the chapter. Our area now has 2-1/2 VASH case managers. Melissa stated that the veteran had been on the streets for two years.
- **Boots on the Ground:** This military term identifies that troops on the ground are essential to every military mission's success. In our case, the chapter responded to an appeal to buy a new pair of construction safety boots for a homeless veteran in Manassas. The Homeless Case Manager for the area placed an appeal to the chapter. John Runyon, chapter member, responding to a request from Len Ignatowski to find a store that sold a size 16 boot, immediately asked his fellow carpenters and conducted an internet search. John located a store in Springfield that had the boot size. Len Ignatowski met the veteran at the store, but the boot tip style did not provide a comfortable fit. The veteran, a post-Vietnam War veteran with special operations tours in Panama and in Columbia provided the brand and style of his existing boots that were damaged while working in an industrial cleaning operation. Len contacted the shoe vendor and ordered the shoes. When the vendor learned that the boots were for a homeless veteran, a 50% discount with overnight shipping was obtained. The disabled veteran has obtained part-time employment and is waiting for approval to attend heavy construction equipment training. He has applied for a VASH housing voucher. He has expressed sincere thanks for our immediate response. In this case, the chapter effort in placing "boots on the ground" was a success for a veteran saving endeavor.

ANOTHER MINUTEMAN ALERT SUCCESS

The chapter's Minuteman Alert email service is another victory in helping a VASH veteran family in early January 2013. April Ballard, VASH Case Manager, appealed for a bunk bed for one of the VASH veteran families that the chapter provided Holiday Cheer for. The single mom veteran with three children asked for a bunk bed. The appeal was immediately transmitted on the Minuteman Alert. Within minutes, several offers of old bunk beds were received, but Mary Keeser of American's Adopt A Soldier responded by providing a new bunk bed with mattresses and sheets and even had the bed delivered and assembled. Wow! Mary's organization provides household goods and other items to needy active duty military families and veterans. She has responded to several Minuteman Alert appeals for the last several years. Thank you, Mary.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

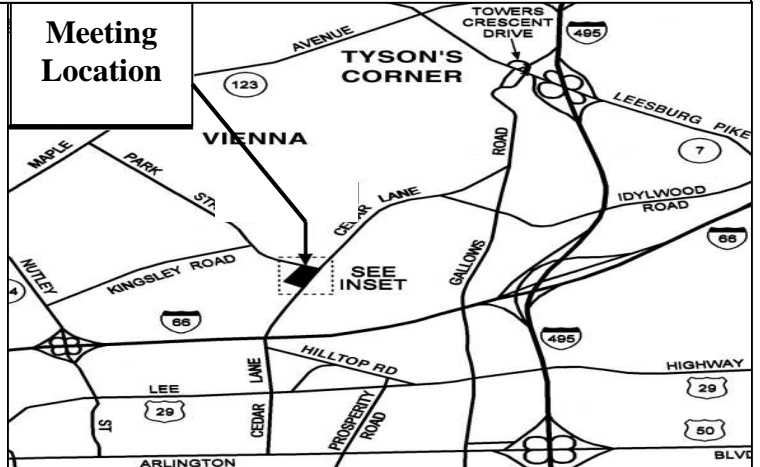
March 2013



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 Beverley, 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

March:

- 07: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, N., Vienna, Va.
- 21: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Speaker: Dan Sheehan, author of "After Action", the combat experiences of a Marine cobra pilot in the Iraq War.
- 23: Virginia State Council Meeting in Richmond, Virginia.

April:

- 04: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, N., Vienna, Va.
- 11-14: VVA Region 3 Conference. Annapolis, Md.
- 15: Federal taxes dues
- 17: Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class Visit. Meet at the flagpole at 11:00 AM.
- 18: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Speaker: Harold Bonacquist, "Nation-Building in Iraq: Some Lessons (Hopefully) Learned"

VVA HOUSEHOLD GOODS DONATION PROGRAM

- Two locations:
 - SAVERS Thrift Store at 14427 Potomac Mills Road. Store hours are Monday through Saturday from 9 am to 9 pm and Sunday 10 am to 6 pm.
 - Unique Thrift Store at 2956 Gallows Road (the old Levitz Store)
- To schedule a pickup, call, 1-800-459-8387 or deliver the items at either store.
- The store offers an excellent selection of home furniture, appliances, decorations, and clothing

VVA CAR DONATION PROGRAM 1-800-Help Vets

VETERAN'S HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255

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

LIFE AS A COBRA PILOT IN IRAQ

March 21st

Membership Meeting Speaker

Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Visit

April 17, 2013

“Great Opportunity to help new and Vietnam veterans!”

Want To Support the Veterans Outreach Efforts?

Join the Minuteman Alert

By giving your email address to

Len Ignatowski at grunt69@gmail.com

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”**