

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”

January 2014



Bill Lynch carries gifts to the car. Photo by Len Ignatowski

Charlie Escapes Again!!!!

The chapter had another very successful and enjoyable Holiday Party on December 15th. Two primary ingredients for the party's success were Bill, Cheryl, and Joey Dumsick's exceptional hospitality and the membership holiday generosity.

The abundance of food, beverages and holiday decorations provided an ambiance that even Mr. Scrooge would have succumbed to. The collection of children's toys and winter clothing was the second ingredient which fulfilled our community outreach to the Sullivan House, an Arlington County family shelter. This community outreach continued our twenty plus year tradition.

The party's climax came when Jonathan Olson skillfully packed the gifts into his car. Despite a mountain of gifts and clothing, his packing skill averted the fulfillment of the traditional challenge for Charlie Klein to ride the car hood if our gifts filled the car. To everyone's disappointment, Charlie escaped for another year.

Special kudos to Scott Hurley who attended the party despite recent heart surgery after receiving his medical clearance. The only party disappointment was that there was still room at the inn for more member attendance and gifts. For those who did not attend, another great opportunity to meet your fellow veterans and spouses was missed.

Special thanks are in order to Bill and Cheryl Dumsick as party hosts for the umpteenth year. The party marked another year ending chapter event.

JANUARY SPEAKER: A VETERAN REFLECTS

The January 16th membership meeting features Robert Tecklenburg, a Vietnam veteran and chapter member, who will discuss his new book, "The Boys Next Door: A Marine Returns to Vietnam." The book is a combination of personal memories, travel, and history. Bob served in the highly combat effective Marine Combined Action (CAP) unit in Vietnam in 1968-69.

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.

“Just In Time!”

- **VASH FAMILY HOLIDAYS:** Thanks to member and others generosity, the chapter turned a dim outlook to a joyful holiday for several VASH veteran families and an active duty family. The Virginia state council gave a \$ 500 grant in recognition of our homeless veteran outreach. One member partnered with his spouse employer in making a \$ 2000 grant for VASH veteran families. These grants, along with other member contributions and chapter funds, supported the AVVA holiday outreach to five VASH families whose children numbered from two to four. Three of the families are single parent. Diane Ignatowski, AVVA Representative, along with team leaders, Bill Lynch and Fran Knouse, fulfilled the family Santa List plus a \$100 VISA gift card. Another member's family decided to forgo their Christmas gifts to sponsor a VASH family. A last minute VASH appeal resulted in Bruce Waxman delivering assorted store gift cards totaling \$ 500 just three days before Christmas to a homeless veteran family of four. The family just received a VASH voucher. Chuck Harris with personal friends and church members sponsored a wounded warrior family Santa List. The final holiday response was to pay for the car repairs of a homeless veteran who was living in his car. Unfortunately, contact with the veteran was lost which resulted in no repairs. Many thanks to the many members who purchased the individual gifts or made a cash contribution. Our holiday response honors our founding principle, "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another!"
- **BYRON SHELDON'S MEMORIAL FUND GRANT:** Diane Sheldon, wife of deceased Byron Sheldon, directed the fund amount of \$ 1,130 be given to Final Salute for the purchase of a house for homeless women veterans. Byron had a special feeling for this veteran issue. A legal issue forced the foreclosure of the Final Salute rental house. Final Salute decided to purchase the house, but a bidding war resulted in a \$450,000 price. Members wishing to make a donation for the house purchase should mail their checks payable to Final Salute Inc., P.O. Box 156, Haymarket, Va. 20168.



Kennedy Center Honors show features a tribute to Billy Joel. Photo by the Kennedy Center.

KENNEDY CENTER HONORS

In response to a Minuteman Alert, Hugh Jordan, John Hall, and Don Drunic, participated in the Kennedy Center Honors show which paid tribute to Billy Joel. They were part of a group of fifty Vietnam War veterans that participated in the hit song, "Goodnight Saigon". The group flanked Garth Brooks during the chorus line, "**And we will all go down together.**" The veterans' stage appearance invoked a standing ovation from the 2,500 plus audience including President Obama and Ms. Obama.

The members appreciated the opportunity to honor

all Vietnam veterans and enhance their personal feelings of their military service. The act can be seen on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Hh82llukEA>. Thank you, Hugh, John, and Don.

Many Thanks to the Minuteman Alert Members

The chapter wants to thank all the recipients of the Minuteman Alert, which is our highly successful and instantaneous response to time sensitive veteran and active duty personnel needs and for chapter member opportunities to participate in special events. Participants include chapter members and friends, a local church, and non-profit organizations. America's Adopt A Soldier supplied a laptop computer to a VASH veteran who needed it for his school work in a recent appeal.

If you wish to participate, send your email address to Len Ignatowski at grunt69@gmail.com

CHAPTER BRIEFS:

- **HOUSEHLD GOODS:** The VVA Household Goods program resulted in a quarterly payment of \$ 845 to the chapter. Continue your household and clothing donations and purchases at the Unique Thrift Store (the former Levitz furniture store in Merrifield). For home pickup call, 1-800-459-8387. A second drop off station is at the SAVERS Thrift Store at 14427 Potomac Mills Road. Your participation is also part of our environmental recycling program.
- **SUITS FOR VETS CAMPAIGN:** The MITRE-Chapter 227 Veterans Day campaign resulted in the collection of \$ 4,802 plus a \$ 500 donation from the Northern Virginia Senior Softball League, which has supported the program for the last several years. Thank you Mitre employees and the Softball League players.
- **CHRISTMAS CARDS FOR HOMELESS VETERANS:** Working through a California school teacher and Vietnam veteran, Phil Nussbaum, and Ben Works of Chapter 619, a package of Christmas cards with personal greetings were delivered to the VASH case managers for distribution to local homeless veterans.
- **CARE PACKAGES:** America's Adopt A Soldier is in need of volunteers to pack Care Packages for deployed troops on January 4. The event is at Ravensworth Elementary School, 5411 Nutting Drive, Springfield, Va. from 11:00 am to 2:00 PM. Enlist at <http://americasadoptasoldier.eventbrite.com>. Questions, call Mary Keeser at 703-278-3718. Mary's organization is a very strong chapter partner in helping VASH veterans and their families. Chapter LIFE member baseball caps will be available for \$ 10 to members.
- **VVA AUTOMOBILE TAGS:** Bruce Waxman and George Corbett of the Virginia State Council are working to introduce legislation for access to owners of VVA license plates to determine if they are actually VVA members. In recent years, several cases of non-members having the tags have been identified. The DMV requires verification of the driver's membership status and a certificate of eligibility. The process was started when Len Ignatowski discussed the problem with Delegate Mark Keam. A staff member researched the issue and provided a DMV contact. With the state council approval, Bruce discussed the issue with the DMV and reviewed the current law. A draft amendment to the current law is ready, while George explores whether other veteran organizations are having the same problem through the Joint Leadership Council of state veteran orgqnizaions that advises the governor and the legislators on veteran issues. If you want an eligibility certificate, contact Len Ignatowski at 703-255-0353 or grunt69@gmail.com
- **2014 CHAPTER ELECTIONS:** The chapter is always in need of new ideas and leadership. If you want to contribute to the chapter's success, offer to serve a two year term as a director or officer for the 2014 election by calling Bruce Waxman at 703-323-0269.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

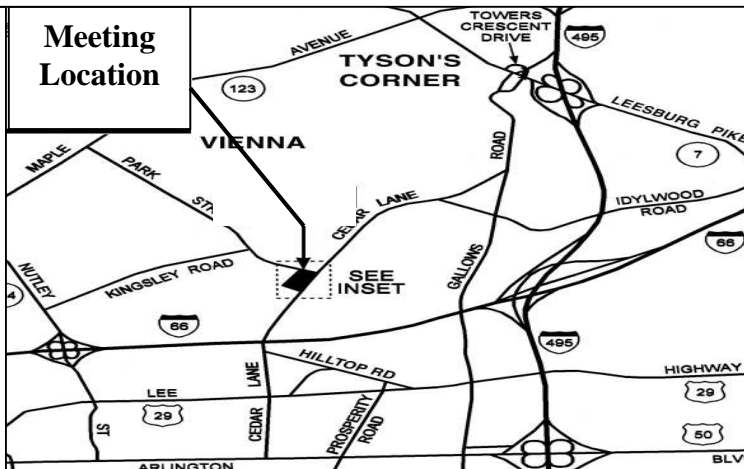
January 2014



OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

President: Bruce Waxman – 703-323-0269
Vice President: Len Ignatowski, 703-255-0353
Secretary: Ron Ball
Treasurer: Chuck Harris
Sergeant at Arms: Jonathan Olson
Board of Directors: Paul Stancliff, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, Tom Stryer, and Bob Tecklenburg.
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

Jan. 2014:

- 01: Virginia State Council Scholarships for a veteran and for a family member. The application is available on the council website.
- 01: Happy New Year
- 02: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 03: Volunteer registration deadline for Homeless Veteran Standdown. See December newsletter for application.
- 04: America Adopt A Soldier "Care Package" packing: See newsletter for details. Your help is needed.
- 08: Lyons Combat PTSD Class Visit to The Wall: Meet by flagpole at 11:00 AM
- 16: Membership Meeting 7:00 PM: Speaker: Bob Tecklenburg "The Boys Next Door, A Marine Returns to Vietnam"
- 25: Homeless Veteran Standdown 9 am to 5 pm: **Event relocated** to the DC VA Medical Center, 50 Irving St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20422

Feb. 2014

- 06: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 20: Membership Meeting 7:00 PM: Speaker to be announced.

VETERAN'S HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255

24 HOURS/ 7 DAYS A WEEK

DD-214: Mail a copy of your DD-214 to the chapter's post office box address as shown on the newsletter. The social security number can be made illegible. This request is to comply with IRS audit requirements.



Members and Chuck Robb, Vietnam veteran and former U.S. Senator, discuss the play at the special post-show actor panel. Photo by Len Ignatowski

MISSED MINUTEMAN OPPORTUNITY

Utilizing the Minuteman Alert list and Bruce Waxman's initiative, several members attended Miss Saigon and a special post-play discussion with the actors on September 1, 2013. The play is a modern day version of the Shakespeare classic, Romeo and Juliet. Special ticket prices were obtained for the show.

An unexpected guest was Chuck Robb, Vietnam War veteran and former Virginia governor and U.S. Senator. He accepted Bruce's invitation to attend the special post show discussion with the actors when he was seen in the lobby.

The panel discussion ended on a happy note. Len Ignatowski shared a recent story of a fellow engineer who served four Tours in Vietnam. The soldier revealed that the reason was not patriotism, but love with an Australian lady. He used his R&R and Tour extension leave to visit her. However, he left her when he came home. They continued their love affair until last year. He returned to Australia to marry her and both are now living in the United States. Len plans to meet them at an upcoming unit reunion.

START THE YEAR OFF RIGHT!

Come to the January 16th Membership Meeting
Bob Tecklenburg

“The Boys Next Door: A Marine Returns to Vietnam”

“CARE PACKAGES for the TROOPS”

January 4th

Volunteers needed to pack boxes
See newsletter for details

HOMELESS VETERAN STANDDOWN

January 25, 2014

Relocated to VA Medical Center
50 Irving Street, NW, Washington, D.C.

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”
Since October 11, 1985