

# THE JOURNEY

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227

The Dean K. Phillips Memorial Chapter

***"Just In Time"***



***"Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another"***

May 2019



## Fall In!" for Memorial Day

Hopefully you have not forgotten that May is the most sacred month for military veterans? When was the last time that you attended our chapter Memorial Day service at The Wall? If you don't attend the monthly membership meetings, Memorial Day weekend provides an excellent opportunity to remember those who paid the ultimate price for our freedom and to renew your sacred veteran bond with fellow members. Our Memorial Day events are a great way to introduce family and friends to the true meaning of being a military veteran.

- Chapter Barbecue, Sunday, May 26th from 3:00 PM to 8 PM. Bruce Waxman and Sarah Elpern are hosting the party at the Enclave Apartments' Club Room, 9450 Silver King Court, Fairfax, VA. Mission BBQ is catering with their delicious barbecue meats and side dishes. The chapter is providing the cold beverages, while guests are requested to bring an appetizer. RSVP

by May 17th to provide an accurate head count for the caterer and to be assign an appetizer. Call or text Bill Dumsick at 571- 217-3330. He prefers texting. Park in the two adjacent lots.

- Wreath Laying at The Wall, Monday, May 27th at 8:00 AM: Meet by the American flagpole.
- Post Wreath Laying Breakfast: The traditional breakfast follows at the Metro 29 Diner at 4711 Lee Highway, Arlington near the Glebe Road intersection.
- Memorial Day Writer's Project, Monday, May 27th from 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM: This chapter inspired program provides a therapeutic outlet through poetry, music, and short lyrics to eradicate their war ghosts and other post-service issues. Look for the tent near The Wall along Constitution Ave.

## MAY MEMBERSHIP MEETING: A Fight to Freedom

The May 16th membership meeting guest speaker is Michelle Layer Rahal, who will discuss her collaborative book, "Straining Forward: Minh Phuong Towner Story." Her life struggle starts when she witnessed the VC killing her father and two brothers. Minh and her younger brother left Saigon in 1975 in their quest for freedom. They journeyed through Taiwan, France, Australia, and finally the United States. Her life story is a study in coping with physical and mental challenges by adapting to each day's challenges and demands. A story well worth learning about.

Come early for the 7:30 PM meeting to enjoy a great meal and meet your fellow members. Spouses and friends are always welcomed. Bring a fellow Vietnam veteran or a new generation veteran with you. The book, "In Honor and Memory" that lists and describes U.S. and Allied military installations in South Vietnam and Southeast Asia, is available for viewing. See Bill Dumsick. Plus the traditional 50/50 raffle includes cash and a very artistic hand carved wooden bowl by George Jones. Remember the new meeting location, Glory Days Grill, Falls Church. So see you there!

**\*The AVVA Community Outreach Project \***

**Small size sun protection lotion and insect repellent (no aerosol cans) will be collected for the Lamb Center**

## SUICIDE PREVENTION

Ellen Shannon, Area Director, National Capital Area Chapter, American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, presented a very informative discussion on suicide illness and prevention at the April 16th membership meeting. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. Women have a higher rate of attempted suicides, but men have a higher fatality rate due to more lethal methods. This deadly disease is an increasing health issue with veterans. Military veterans are approximately 1.5 times more likely to take their lives than non-veterans. There is no single cause. Suicide most likely occurs when life events and health issues converge to create a feeling condition of hopelessness.

The major suicide warning signs are talk, behavior, and mood. Talk includes killing oneself, feeling hopeless, having no reason to live, feeling trapped, being a burden on others, and unbearable pain. Behavior signs are sleeping too little or too much, withdrawal from activities, searching for suicide methods online, increasing use of alcohol or drugs, aggression, excess fatigue, giving away prized possessions, isolating from family and friends, and calling people to say good-bye. Moods are depression, anxiety, loss of interest, irritability, humiliation, agitation, and rage. Those who take their lives exhibit one or more warning signs, either by what they say or do.

You can save a life by assuming that you are the only one who will reach out. Talk to the.. Continued Page 2.

**Suicide Preventions** (Continued from Page 1) individual. Ask directly about suicide. Listen, but AVOID debating the value of life, how to fix it, and minimizing the person's feelings. If the threat is imminent, stay with the person and secure firearms if you can. Call the Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255. If not, remind them that their suffering is only temporary. Suggest that they seek medical help. Follow-up to see how they are doing. If you are displaying the same symptoms, seek mental health treatment and tell your clinician about your suicidal thinking.

The disease is treatable. American Foundation for Suicide Prevention provides this information. Visit their website at afsp.org, text TALK to 741741 or call the Lifeline at 1.800-273-TALK (8255). For veterans, press 1. Lets take this illness out of the closet and recognize that it is treatable just like any other mental or medical condition.



Sebastian Altmann interviews Len Ignatowski for the project.

## Speaker Panel Contributes to a H.S. Project

Len Ignatowski, Tom Stryer, and Jay Kalner shared their Tour of Duty experiences for a senior class project at the Howard Gardner School in Alexandria. Tom served in the Brown Water navy, Jay was an Army MP in Saigon, and Len served with an Army engineer unit. On a separate visit, Jay discussed his CIA career to encourage the students to consider a career with the CIA.

The project is part of the senior history class on the 1960s'. The objective was to gain a first-hand perspective of those who served. The website includes written and video interviews of the three veterans and a collection of their photographs from the war. The website is at <https://www.hgsveteranproject.org/>

Ms. Kayla Brazee is the class teacher, and the students are Lydia Klick, Genevieve Ropple, Sebastian Altmann, Connor Morgan and Jasmine Hudson and Sethe Powell. Thank you, Ms. Brazee for this great opportunity in educating your students and the website creation.

Tom Stryer, Speaker Panel Chairman, is actively seeking new speaking engagements. The program is open to schools and civic organizations.

## VETERAN OUTREACH

- **LYONS VAMC PTSD UNIT VISIT:** The visit is Wednesday, June 19th at The Wall. Meet at the snack bar across from The Wall. Bus arrival time is 11:00 AM. Ben Buckley is the program director. All are welcomed.
- **KOREAN AND VIETNAM WAR VETERANS VISIT:** Fifty Korean and Vietnam War veterans from Lynn, Massachusetts will be visiting D.C. with a wreath laying ceremony at The Wall on Monday, May 20th at 10:30 PM. Ben Buckley, chapter member, will host the wreath ceremony. Chapter members are invited to welcome these visitors. Assemble at the U.S. flagpole by The Wall.
- **VETERANS' COURT MENTORS NEEDED:** The successful Fairfax Veteran's Court Docket is in desperate need of mentors to maintain the one-on-one ratio for each case. The program has expanded to include another court docket for juvenile and domestic relations. One does not have to be a resident of Fairfax County to serve. For questions or to volunteer, contact Tom Davis at 703-629-0111 or [tom.davis@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:tom.davis@fairfaxcounty.gov). The recent graduation of several veterans demonstrates its effectiveness.
- **NATIONAL CONVENTION:** The chapter is soliciting member comments on VVA future to be addressed at the National Convention: 1. Should VVA transfer our legacy to a more inclusive veteran group or terminate our existence and 2. The mechanisms for accomplishing the objective. Use the chapter Facebook site or mail your written comments to the chapter at Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 227, P.O. Box 5653, Arlington, Va. 22205-0653.
- **IT IS THAT TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN!:** As the school year moves into the spring, the history of the Vietnam War appears on the classroom schedule. If you know a teacher, inform them about the chapter's Speaker Panel. The format is for one or two veterans to share their Tour of Duty with students from elementary classes to college plus any social or community group. Some members provide a Power Point presentation to reinforce the discussion. Contact Tom Stryer, Speaker Panel Chairman, at 703-323-9032 for information and questions. Lets not permit time to diminish our sacrifice and lessons of our war so the same mistakes are not repeated.
- **VIETNAM WAR ART EXHIBIT:** The Smithsonian American Art Museum has a special Vietnam War Art Exhibit through August 18th. The time frame is 1965 to 1975. The exhibit documents how the war sparked a change in American art and shows the emotional and political toll of the war on the country.
- **CHAPTER TENT:** Our new fair tent caught the attention of Chapter 311 of Northwest Chicago. Brian Mulcones, Chapter Secretary, saw the tent in the chapter newsletter and inquired about it. Bill Dumsick provided detailed information on the tent and its features. It is a great example of one chapter helping another chapter. The inquiry definitely acknowledges Bill's hard work in procuring the new and highly visible tent. Thanks, Bill.

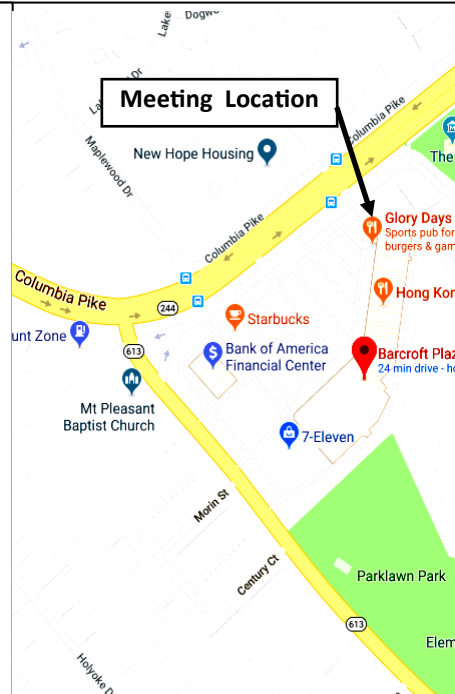
# CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

May 2019



## OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

**President:** Jay Kalner, 703-346-2013  
**Vice President:** Len Ignatowski, 703-255-0353  
**Secretary:** Bob Tecklenburg  
**Treasurer:** Chuck Harris  
**Immediate Past President:** Bruce Waxman  
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**Board of Directors:** Bill Dumsick, Bill Lynch, Tom Stryer, Jonathan Olson, Gus Howard, Dennis Stephens, Stan Derr, George Jones, Scott Hurley, and Bob Pezold.  
**AVVA Representative:** Diane Ignatowski  
**Newsletter Editor:** Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353  
**School Speaker's Panel:** Tom Stryer 703-323-9032  
**Guest Speaker Program:** Jay Kalner 703-346-2013  
**Membership:** Bill Lynch 703-474-4891  
**Used Books:** Andy Bender 559-575-2748



## MEETINGS

3rd Thursday of the Month except July, August, and December

Glory Days Grill  
6341 Columbia Pike,  
Barcroft Plaza,  
Falls Church, Virginia  
22041

Ph.: 703-992-6060

- 6:30 PM Dinner (Optional)
- 7:30 PM Meeting

## WEBSITE:

[www.vva227.org](http://www.vva227.org)

**FACEBOOK:** <https://www.facebook.com/VVA227>

## May 2019:

- 16: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Michelle Rahal, Author of "Straining Forward: Minh Phuong Towner Story"
- 17: Deadline for Chapter Barbecue: RSVP Bill Dumsick at 571-217-3330. He prefers texting him.
- 20: Korean and Vietnam War Veterans visit to The Wall 10:30 AM: Ben Buckley to host. All are invited.
- 23: Happy Birthday, VVA!: Congressional charter is approved in 1986.
- 26: Chapter Barbecue 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM. RSVP by May 17th. See newsletter for details
- 27: Memorial Day: Wreath Laying at The Wall 8:00 AM Meet by the Three Soldier Statue
- 27: Post Wreath Laying Breakfast: Metro Diner, 4711 Lee Hwy., Arlington, after the wreath laying
- 27: Memorial Day Writers Project 11:30 AM to 5:30 PM: See newsletter for details

## June 2019

- 06: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, North, Vienna, Va.
- 19: Lyons VAMC PTSD Unit visit to The Wall 11:00 AM. Meet at the snack bar at The Wall
- 20: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Deborah Snyder, "Operation Renewed Hope"

**SHOW YOUR VETERAN PRIDE — Purchase custom chapter attire at**

<https://militarybest.com/vva-chapter-227-dean-phillips-merchandise.html>

## Vietnam Veterans of America

Send to: Bill Lynch, Attn: VVA Chapter 227, 5328 Taney Ave., Alexandria, Va. 22304-2039

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female Date of Birth \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Apt. \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

H ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ C ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Chapter No. **227** Sponsor \_\_\_\_\_ Sponsor's ID No. \_\_\_\_\_

- Eligibility: Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. military (for other than training purposes) between February 28, 1961 - May 7, 1975 (in-country Vietnam), or between August 5, 1964, and May 7, 1975, for Vietnam-era veterans. Return this application along with a copy of your DD Form-214.

## Life Membership: \$50

- Payment Option: ☐ Check ☐ Money Order ☐ Credit Card (Amex, Discover, MasterCard, Visa)

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- ☐ I am a spouse/family member or friend of a Vietnam Vet and would like to join Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America (AVVA).



**WE WANT YOU**

**QUESTIONS**

**CONTACT**

**BILL LYNCH**

**AT 703-474-4891**



**May 16th Membership Meeting**  
“Straining Forward, Minh Phuong Towner Story”

**Memorial Day Weekend Events**  
Barbecue, Wreath Laying, and Breakfast, See newsletter for details

**AVVA Community Outreach**  
Small size sun protection lotion and insect repellent (no aerosol cans) will be collected at the May membership meeting for the Lamb Center

***NO NEWSLETTER FOR JUNE, JULY AND AUGUST 2019***

**VVA Chapter 227 Facebook!!! <https://www.facebook.com/VVA227>**



**CHAPTER CHALLENGE COIN**

The chapter's challenge coin is on sale at \$10 each for chapter and AVVA members and \$15 each for non-members. The attractive coin is made of metal with detailed engraving and bold colors from the lettering to the images. The coins will be sold only at the monthly chapter membership meetings. Make checks payable to VVA Chapter 227. The coins will be given to the monthly guest speaker and for other special occasions. The coin is a great birthday gift and also an addition to a challenge coin collector.

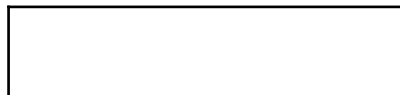
**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ® INC.  
CHAPTER 227**

**DEAN K. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CHAPTER**

**P.O. Box 5653**

**Arlington, Virginia 22205-0653**

**Address Service Requested**



**OUR MISSION**

***To “Serve Military Veterans, Their Families,  
Our Community and Our Country”  
Since October 11, 1985***