

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"

January 2020



2019

WAS A BANNER YEAR!

VVA Chapter 227 had another great year in 2019, further establishing our reputation as a dynamic and responsive veteran organization dedicated to helping veterans in Northern Virginia. Our accomplishments and a very active recruiting campaign resulted in the chapter growing from 301 to 324 members to become



the 22nd largest VVA chapter and to maintain our status as Virginia's largest chapter. We continue to use traditional, digital, and social media to enhance the public image of Vietnam veterans and to recruit new members and supporters. The following accomplishments are examples of the broad outreach, to veterans, military personnel, and the community.

- Our hallmark accomplishment is our increasing financial assistance to needy veterans and their families (about \$6000) as well as our gift cards for back-to-school and Christmas needs and Santa lists (nearly \$9000). Donations are our primary source of revenue, and two of our donors, Volko Ruhnke and Kathy Ausley, have been especially generous and were honored with special plaques by the chapter. Our presence on several local veteran umbrella organizations expands our opportunity to assist veterans in financial need including women veterans with children.
- We continue to support the Lamb Center's efforts to help homeless veterans and the community homeless.
- Three chapter members shared their Vietnam tours of duty for a senior class project at the Howard Gardner School in Alexandria. The students posted the written and oral interviews on a website they developed.
- Our continuing successful roles as mentors in the Fairfax Veterans Treatment Docket has helped rehabilitate many veterans. More mentors are needed as the program is expanding to also include a Docket for Juvenile and Domestic Relations. Our member mentors are Jay Kalner, Bruce Waxman, Tom Brown, and Don Sutherland.
- At the Vietnam Memorial Wall, we continue to host combat veterans from the Lyons VAMC in NJ who are being treated for PTSD. Special thanks to Ben Buckley and Bill Shugarts for serving as hosts over the last several years.
- Our membership meeting speakers provided exceptional insights on veterans' issues (e.g. suicide prevention, PTSD, etc.) and wartime experiences by Vietnam veterans, a Vietnamese civilian, and a WWII veteran's daughter.

Our success depends upon the dedication of many members. Here are a few. Bill Lynch leads the successful member recruitment. Kudos to Bill Dumsick, Joe and Sharon Celesnik, and Bill Bohuslaw for running our Fairfax City Fall Festival booth. Special acknowledgement to Stan and Merrie Rose Derr for our two-day presence at the Americans in Wartime Museum Open House. Diane Ignatowski, AVVA Representative, continues to serve the chapter in many ways including as a board member. Our chapter delegation participated in the VVA National Convention to discuss VVA's future. VVA is exploring ways to prolong our existence by becoming a more inclusive organization that can recruit younger veterans to build on our accomplishments. In this regard, we would be living up to our founding principle, ***"Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another!"*** —Jay Kalner, Chapter President

JANUARY 2020 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: ***POW/MIA STATUS***

Come to the January 16th membership meeting is a great way to start the new decade with your fellow members and to learn the status of a very relevant topic, the DOD POW/MIA program. John Kull, Strategic International Coordinator for Southeast Asia at the Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Agency (DPPA) is the speaker.

Come early for a great meal and meet your fellow members. The meeting starts at 7:30 PM. Spouses, friends and fellow Vietnam War veterans are welcome. Chapter policy prohibits the consumption of alcoholic beverages during the formal meeting. Adverse weather cancels the meeting if the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed that day.

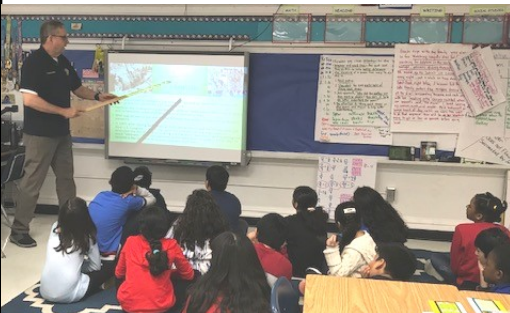
AVVA's support for The Lamb Center, which is a daytime homeless service center, is asking members to bring paper towels, 13 gallon plastic kitchen bag with drawstrings, and Styrofoam bowls and cups to the meeting. The Center provides space and time for VA staff to assist homeless veterans in filing for benefits besides providing an essential community service.

2019 NEWS CATCH-UP

- **VETERANS DAY SPEAKER:** Len Ignatowski spoke to the 4th graders at the Weyanoke Elementary School in the Fairfax County on "What It Means to be Veteran!" The students asked some very interesting questions based on Len's presentation. Special thanks to Bill and Leslie Lynch for arranging the presentation. Leslie is a teacher at the school. Later, Len and Bill were honored for their military service during the school's Veterans Day program.
- **LONG DISTANCE SPEAKER:** On April 24, 2019, Chuck Harris joined three fellow-helicopter crew members to speak to approximately 50 students at the University of Southern Mississippi. They shared their Tour of Duty, especially their involvement in the famous Battle of An Loc during the 1972 Easter Offensive. Dr. Andrew Wiest, the seminar moderator, is the author of *The Boys of Summer, Charlie Company's War in Vietnam.* Chuck was a helicopter gunship pilot in B Company, 229th Assault Helicopter Battalion, 1st Cavalry Division.
- **WASHING THE WALL:** On September 7, 2019, Bruce Waxman, Len Funk, Jay Kalner, Gerry Cepaitis, and Len Ignatowski washed The Wall with members from VVA Chapter 641, "The VVA Wall Washing Crew" and a visiting college hockey team. The five veterans retreated to a local diner for breakfast and relived their war memories. Gerry and Len Ignatowski served together with the 169th EB in Vietnam in overlapping tours. Len located Gerry while conducting research for his book on the 169th EB road construction of QL-20.

HOLIDAY CHEER: *Grant requests are from federal, state, or local social and veteran agencies.*

- **VASH HOLIDAY CARDS:** For the tenth consecutive year, the Chapter provided gift cards in value from \$50 for a single veteran to \$200 for a married veteran with children for the Holidays. This year's amount of \$3,950 benefited 43 veterans and their families.
- **SANTA LIST FILLED:** For the eighth consecutive year, the Chapter fulfilled the Santa List of not one, but two military families whose spouse is being treated in a local military hospital. Chuck and Glenda Harris shopped for one family of five. Charlie and Jim Puma, Chuck's neighbors, volunteered to be Santa for a second family of four. The Chapter grant was for \$500, while the Puma paid for their family's gifts. Thanks to both the Harris and Puma families for their time and generosity.



Len Ignatowski explains what it means to be a military veteran to Weyanoke Elementary School students on Veterans Day. Photo by Bill Lynch



Jonathan Olson (L) and Bill Lynch wait for the last gifts to be loaded from the Holiday Party. Photo: Len Ignatowski



Gerry Cepaitis, Jay Kalner, Len Ignatowski, and Bruce Waxman (L to R), prepare to wash The Wall on the mall. Photo by Rick Sullivan

HOLIDAY PARTY

The traditional Holiday Party was a smashing success at its new home at the Enclave Apartments' Club Room on December 14th. Bruce Waxman secured the new home which is in his condo building. The barbecue menu was reinforced with great dessert and appetizer dishes provided by the attending members. Sharon Celesnik's gourmet chili added to the barbecue menu, while Bill Wright's home-made holiday decorated ice cream cake topped-off a very tasty dessert menu. Jay Kalner's wine selections also added to our palate delight. Special thanks to Diane Ignatowski and her team of AVVA members, Melissa Kalner, Sharon Celesnik, Natalie Bohuslaw, and Margaret Stern for decorating the party room for the festival celebration. Bill Dumsick managed the barbecue menu, while Bill Lynch administered the party's member dish selections. A great example of exceptional team work.

The chapter tradition of providing emergency children's toys and winter clothing for the Bridges to Independence was successfully accomplished. The community service assists needy and homeless families in Arlington County. The number of gifts and clothing almost forced Leslie Lynch to ride the hood of Bill's car. Bill and Jonathan Olson delivered the gifts of cheer to the agency. Overall, the party was a great successful year ending event.

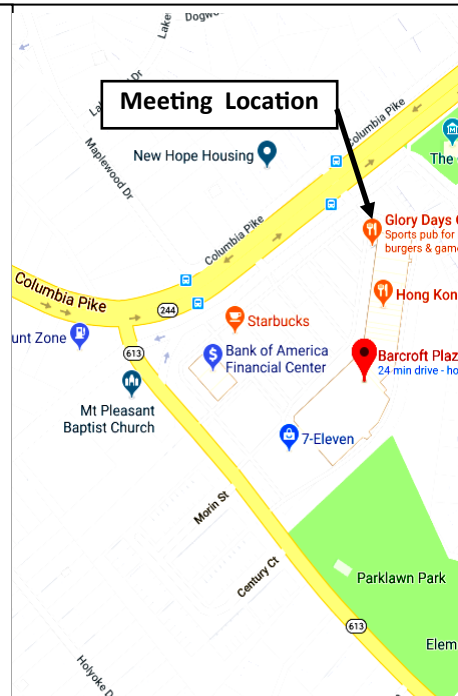
CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

January 2020



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
Sergeant at Arms: George Jones
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

FACEBOOK:

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

JANUARY 2020:

16: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Spkr: John Kull, *Current Status of the POW/MIA in Southeast Asia*.
 21: Congress grants VVA its Charter, 1986

FEBRUARY 2020:

06: Board Meeting 1:00 PM: Glory Days Grill, Pan Am Shopping Center, 3059 Nutley St., Fairfax, Va.
 20: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Spkr: Tess Johnston, author, *A War Away*, her 7 years as a US Aid employee in South Vietnam.

MARCH 2020:

05: Board Meeting 1:00 PM: Glory Days Grill, Pan Am Shopping Center, 3059 Nutley St., Fairfax, Va.
 19: Membership Meeting 7:30: Spkr: Deborah Snyder, *Operation Renewed Hope Foundation*, Housing for veterans

FOUL WEATHER MEETING CANCELLATION POLICY

The membership meeting is cancelled if the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed that day

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

START THE DECADE ON THE RIGHT FOOT

January 16th Membership Meeting

“Current Status of the POW/MIA Program in Southeast Asia”

SPECIAL JANUARY AVVA COMMUNITY OUTREACH

LAMB CENTER HOMELESS SERVICE CENTER NEEDS

Paper Towels, 13 Gallon Kitchen Bag with Drawstrings, and Styrofoam Cups and Bowls will be collected at the January 16th Membership Meeting

Foul Weather Meeting Cancellation Policy

The membership meeting is cancelled if the Fairfax County Public Schools are closed for the day or early closing due to adverse weather.

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.

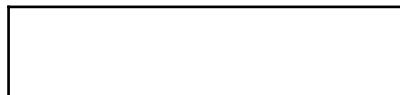
CHAPTER 227

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