

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"

February 2020



"KEEP A CANDLE BURNING"

February marks the 12th Anniversary of the chapter's "Keep A Candle Burning" campaign to keep a single candle lit in your home window to remind our fellow citizens of the sacrifices of our military personnel and their families who are serving in "harm's way" around the world. Today's war on terror has no front lines, faces, and geographical boundaries.

You are asked to place one electric candle in a window to be lit every night until our troops are safely home. If your neighbors or a guest asks, "What is the significance of the lone candle?", you can explain it. You can invite them to join the campaign.

Let the "Stars and Stripes" fly boldly during the day, and light a single candle at night to show the world that we stand with our brave warriors and their families to remind everyone that the daily sunset does not mark the end of the work day for our troops in harm's way.

FEBRUARY 2020 MEMBERSHIP MEETING: "7 YEAR TOUR"

The February 20th membership meeting features Tess Johnston, who will discuss her seven-year Tour of Duty as a US AID employee. She survived the Tet Offensive and worked with John Paul Vann. Later she served in Shanghai, China and witnessed the transformation of China into a global economic power.

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 is supporting The Lamb Center, a daytime homeless service center, by 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. Our last delivery of kitchen bags arrived just as the Center was on their last plastic bags. Again, ***"Just in Time!"*** action saved the day for the local homeless.

POW/MIA SEARCH CONTINUES "FULL SPEED AHEAD!"

Jack Kull, Strategic International Coordinator for Southeast Asia at Defense Prisoner of War/Missing in Action Agency, gave a very detailed and informative status of our country's search to bring home our missing heroes. He cited that the mission includes searching for the remains from all our past wars and current conflicts. An interesting note is that the Russians asked for assistance in recovering remains of their missing in Afghanistan. The remains of 400 Russian soldiers were recovered. Russian public records are open to us, but the more detailed information resides as military secrets, especially their role in the Vietnam War. China is helpful in recovering WWII remains. Even North Korea returned the remains of 150 American soldiers. The cases that may never be resolved are the troops lost over water. These losses are 40,000 with 350 from the Vietnam War. A U.S.-trained Vietnamese team is now conducting searches that substantially increases the effort.

Time is our greatest enemy. The monsoon limits ground searches, while the weather, the soil, and micro-organisms are destroying the clothing and human remains, and vegetation is concealing aircraft parts. The all-important visual sightings are disappearing as we all grow older. In one case, a local elderly Vietnamese directed the search to another rice paddy where the aircraft and remains were located within hours. In response to a question, Jack cited that there is no creditable evidence of missing Americans alive in Russia or Asia. Most of the live sightings were resolved as fabrications or mis-identification as Europeans. Laos is the only country that continues to be a search challenge for political reasons. He encourages families, who have a MIA member, to donate a DNA sample to assist in identifying remains. In some cases, the Agency does accept the family wishes not to identify the possible remains of a lost one.

Jack cited VVA's Veterans Initiative as a very important factor in gaining the support of the Vietnamese government. He cited VVA's Mokie Porter and Grant Coates for their help. Jim Lyons, chapter member, collected information from the National Archives and other sources for the program. The Vietnamese culture values the proper burial of deceased family members. Our outreach program successfully returned many battlefield remains to their Vietnamese family which earned their respect and gratitude, and more importantly, the Vietnamese government and their national veteran organization. This program resulted in the Vietnamese government (Continued Pg. 2)



Jay meets with U.S. Senator Warner (L) and U.S. Senator Kaine

POLITICS ANYONE!

Chapter members, Jay Kalner, Bruce Waxman, and Len Ignatowski attended two legislative veteran events in support of national and Virginia veteran issues. On December 10, 2019, Jay attended a veteran legislative agenda that was sponsored by Virginia's two U.S. Senators, Senator John Warner and Senator Tim Kaine. In response to Jay's question about expanded AO benefits including bladder cancer, both Senators replied that both of them and the House favor expanding the list, but the primary road block is the White House resistance that centers around Chief of Staff Mick Mulvaney, who is not a military veteran.



Bruce discusses the need for a legal veterans court in Virginia and to secure federal funding with Virginia State Senator Bryce E. Reeves of Virginia, Chairman of the Military and Veterans Caucus.

On January 15, 2020, Bruce Waxman and Len Ignatowski, at the invitation of Carrie Ann Alford, Director of Policy & Planning, Virginia Department of Veterans Services, attended the Annual Joint Leadership Council of Veterans at the General Assembly. Bruce previously worked with Carrie on veteran issues. The Council consists of twenty-five non-partisan VSO's. The Council advocates for veterans programs and legislation. Charlie Montgomery, VVA State Council President, was in attendance too. He is the State Council representative on the JLC. Bruce and Len visited five legislators and voiced our support for Virginia to seek new federal funds for veterans courts and to make veterans courts a legal entity in the State judicial system. During the day, they interfaced with other VSO members to discuss the need for a legal veterans court in Virginia. The delegates and senators on the Military and Veterans Caucus displayed a strong and unified support for veteran and National Guard (NG) needs in the Commonwealth. Virginia has some of the highest combat ready units ranging from a cyber warfare unit to a partnership with a new F-22A squadron at Langley AFB. The NG is providing pilots and support personnel. We should be proud of the high degree of dedication and patriotism of our NG and reserve warriors.

The Search Continues (from page 1)

giving the remains of one U.S. MIA to VVA representatives in Hanoi. VVA transferred the remains to our government. For new members, the VVA inspired Veterans Initiative program collects after-action reports, maps, battlefield souvenirs, photographs, and other related documents that can identify the location of enemy battlefield deaths. For inquiries or to provide information, contact the Veterans Initiative program at vi@vva.org or call 301-585-4000.

Jack cited the highest degree of dedication by everyone who is involved with this national effort. The employees do not treat their effort as a job, but as a sacred and honorable mission to bring peace and closure to the family members and to the nation. No stone is left unturned in bringing a Fallen Hero home.

Used Book Program Revived

Andy Bender located a new store for our used book fundraiser. The new store is Second and Charles bookstore at 13653 Lee Jackson Hwy, Fairfax. The telephone number is: 703-817-0869. Books can be delivered to the store. Our store account is "Andy Bender". Any questions, ask for David. Books will be accepted at the membership meeting too. Let's recycle those old books and earn funds for the chapter. The new vendor has already earned over \$135.

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

- **Single Mom Veteran:** A \$300 grant was provided to a single homeless mom veteran with four children who received a VASH voucher for an apartment. The grant purchased back packs and miscellaneous back-to-school needs for the children.
- **Rent Assistance:** A \$400 grant was approved to assist a veteran with his apartment rent when unexpected personal expenses imperiled an eviction from the apartment.
- **Fisher House Support:** A \$500 grant was approved for the Fisher House program for maintaining free lodging for family members of one who is being treated in a Veteran Administration or a military hospital.

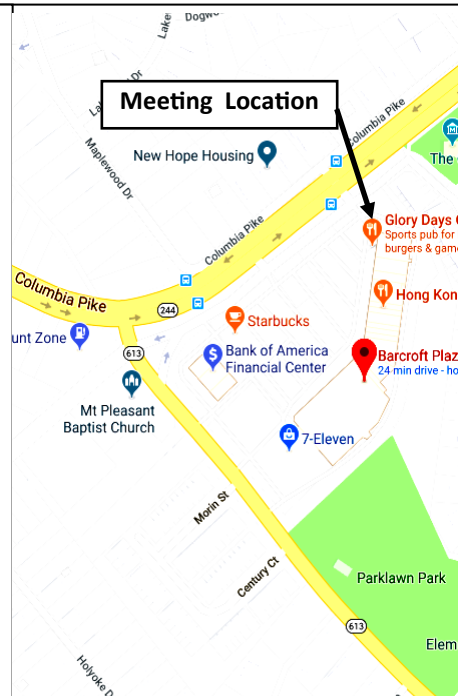
CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

February 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
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Sergeant at Arms: George Jones
Board of Directors: Bill Dumsick, Bill Lynch, Tom Stryer, Jonathan Olson, Don Drunsic, 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>

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
 29: National Vietnam War Veterans Day Noon - 2 PM: Vietnam War Commemoration, Marine Corps Museum

APRIL 2020:

02: Board Meeting 1:00 PM: Glory Days Grill, Pan Am Shopping Center, 3059 Nutley St., Fairfax, Va.
 16: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Chapter elections; Spkr: Col. Jim Sullivan, *1st Infantry Division Operations during 1967-1968*.

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

FEBRUARY 20TH MEMBERSHIP MEETING

“My Seven Year Tour of Duty in South Vietnam”

SPECIAL 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 February 20th 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.

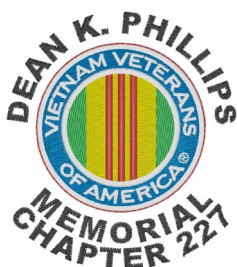
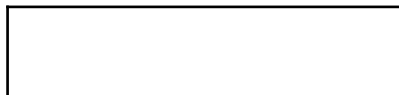
CHAPTER 227

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