

# 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"*

September 2023



Chapter delegates, (L to R) Chuck Harris, Scott Hurley, Jay Kalner, Len Ignatowski, and PJ Dermer discuss convention business. Credit: Bill Dumsick

## CONVENTION SUMMARY

The 2023 VVA National Convention was productive as we march towards eventual dissolution. Jay Kalner, Len Ignatowski, Chuck Harris, Scott Hurley, and PJ Dermer were chapter delegates, while Diane Ignatowski attended the AVVA convention. Bill Dumsick was a state council delegate. Here are important convention actions:

1. The Strategic Plan for dissolution will be presented at the 2027 convention for delegate approval.
2. The National dissolution date will be determined at a future convention.
3. The VVA National dissolution must follow New York law since it was incorporated in the state. As a Virginia corporation, the chapter has to abide by the Commonwealth dissolution law.
4. The search on how to legally dispose of the corporate assets and obligations is being pursued.
5. A membership age breakdown was provided which is in Page 2.
6. The 2025 National Convention will be in New Orleans.

Charlie Montgomery and Steve Williams of Virginia Chapter 969 were elected as Directors-at-Large. Congratulations to both. Current National officers were re-elected except that Wayne Reynolds defeated incumbent Linda Schwartz for Treasurer. Jay Kalner, Chuck Harris, and Len Ignatowski contributed to the convention discussions.



## OUR FUTURE? LAST VETERAN STANDING OR MARCH ON?

The September 21st membership meeting will be a Town Hall format to discuss the chapter's future from dissolution to continuance after eventual VVA National dissolution. VVA National is committed to a Last Man Standing organization. Our future needs to include dealing with non-business and legal issues because of our membership's health and age. We are not getting younger. The chapter AVVA members are in the same boat regard-



ing age and health. Come to the meeting to express your opinion on our future. All members are strongly encouraged to attend the meeting. You do not have to purchase a meal to attend the meeting. Visionary Consulting Partners will solicit member participation in the VA's Suicide and Crisis Program survey. See Page 3 for details.

Due to rising food costs, the dinner price is now \$25/person. Please bring exact cash. The meeting includes a buffet dinner of salad, pizza, fried chicken, dessert, and coffee at the American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax, Va. The meeting starts with a cash bar from 6:00 PM to 7:15 PM. The buffet dinner is served at 6:45 PM. Mask wearing is optional. AVVA is collecting cash donations for The Lamb Center, our successful community homeless outreach. For questions about The Lamb Center's activities, call Diane Ignatowski at 703-772-5303. **RSVP to Melissa Kalner at [mkalner77@gmail.com](mailto:mkalner77@gmail.com) or call/text her at 703-819-1480 by noon, Tuesday, September 19<sup>th</sup>.** A meal purchase is not required, but if you order a meal and don't show, please mail payment since the chapter pays for the set number of meals. Come to the meeting. Do It Now!



Col. Barnum (tan suit) cheers as his wife, Martha Hill launched the USS Harvey C. Barnum. Credit: Chief Petty Officer Shannon Renfroe, USN.

## U.S.S. HARVEY C. BARNUM

The Navy christened the USS Harvey C. Barnum Jr. (Arleigh Burke-class destroyer DDG 124) during a ceremony at General Dynamics Bath Iron Works in Bath, Maine on July 29. Col. Harvey C. Barnum, Jr., USMC (Ret) received the Medal of Honor for heroism in South Vietnam. He took command of the company during an enemy ambush. He successfully mounted a strong defense and directed the successful air evacuation. His wife christened the ship with a bottle of sparkling wine across the bow.

Col. Barnum (aka Barney) is a long-time supportive chapter member. He has spoken at two chapter meetings and donated several autograph books to the dance silent auction. The destroyer naming recognizes his sacrifice and courage on the battlefield and his stellar civilian federal government service. Congratulations Barney!

## VVA NATIONAL MEMBER AGE BRACKETS

| AGE (Years)           | MEMBERS       |
|-----------------------|---------------|
| 60—64                 | 10            |
| 65—69                 | 3,177         |
| <b>70—74</b>          | <b>21,299</b> |
| <b>75—79</b>          | <b>46,837</b> |
| 80—84                 | 11,703        |
| 85—89                 | 2,371         |
| 90— Plus              | 923           |
| Unknown               | 3,941         |
| <b>TOTAL MEMBERS:</b> | <b>90,261</b> |

## MEMBERSHIP AGE BRACKETS

The membership age brackets revealed at the National Convention underscore the VVA's future and actions needed in accordance with New York state's corporate dissolution law. Our rising age with its health and family issues is creating a leadership void at the chapter and state levels. The Constitution was amended so that the minimum number of members for a new or existing chapter was reduced from 25 to 15 members to address the age issue, with one convention delegate allocated for 15 members.

Nevertheless, membership is increasing. For July 2023, VVA added 330 new members, while 120 members died. 75% of the membership is in the 70—79 age bracket. In five years, most of us will be in the 80—84 age bracket. One member is identified as being 104 years old, but he cannot be located. The handwriting is on the wall for action!

The chapter membership continues to grow under the intensive recruitment by Bill Lynch and Stan Derr. Bill is recruiting members from the state's At-Large roster, while Stan manages the Mission BBQ and Tank Farm recruiting programs. We are now the 18<sup>th</sup> largest VVA chapter with 386 members. The number 17th position is only two members away. Several new members are active from serving on the board to participating in chapter events. You are strongly encouraged to attend the town hall meeting on September 21st to discuss the chapter's future.

## THE NEED CONTINUES!

All grants are awarded through appropriate government and non-profit agency requests to eliminate any scams. Your funds assist legitimate veterans and their family needs.

- \$ 500 Partnered with other Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) to purchase a bed for a disabled female veteran.
- \$ 416 Partnered with other VSOs to pay a veteran's back rent and electricity bill of \$2177
- \$ 341 Partnered with other VSOs to pay a veteran's back rent.
- \$1093 Paid a veteran's car repair bill.
- \$ 250 America's Adopt A Soldier, a local non-profit that assists needy veterans and active duty personnel.
- \$ 500 Partnered with other VSOs to pay a \$1600 mortgage payment.

## START THINKING ABOUT IT (RMD)?

As 2023 comes to a close, many members are thinking about their IRA Required Minimum Distribution (RMD) or other IRA withdrawals. IRA regulations allow a qualified charitable distribution (QCD) beyond the normal charity deduction. A QCD reduces taxable income from your IRA. You can make a IRA QCD to the chapter program of assisting veterans and military personnel. Consult with your tax advisor before making this decision. The chapter is accepting other cash donations too. Mail your cash donation to: Chuck Harris, Attn: VVA Chapter 227, 44020 Pandora Ct., Ashburn, Va. 20147-3844. Check Memo: Veterans Assistance. Checks payable to VVA Chapter 227.

## VETERAN OUTREACH SURVEY AT THE MEETING

Norm Williamson, Chapter Member, and Michael Thornton Sr. of Visionary Consulting Partners will briefly give an explanation of a VA survey that evaluates the effectiveness of the it's outreach media campaign for the veterans Crisis Line's new telephone number, 'Dial 988 then press 1' to reach a counselor 24/7. The survey has three goals:

1. Understand how veterans receive and perceive the Dial 988 then press 1 media campaign.
2. Assess the impact of the Veteran Crisis Line (VCL) media campaign on awareness and engagement of the line since the number change.
3. Ensure optimal outreach of the VCL with particular attention to those hard-to-reach veterans.

Your participation is entirely voluntary, and your information will remain anonymous. Suicide will be mentioned during the presentation and participants are free to discontinue at any time. The survey needs veterans above the age of 55, which is the reason for their meeting appearance. The next step is to take the survey and possibly be selected for a lively focus group discussion.

## JUNE MEETING SPEAKER By Bruce Waxman

The speaker for the June membership meeting was Captain Drew Hartigan, (USN. Ret.), a defense industry executive with expertise in naval aviation procurement. Drew, a former test pilot, spoke about the evolution of combat aircraft from the Vietnam War era through today and into the future.

During the Vietnam War, the military made some rudimentary use of electronics and computers to improve air to ground combat (i.e., bombing). For example, in the early part of the war, the munitions used were the same as from WWII and Korea, without electronics. Their accuracy was not very good. The first efforts, in 1965, by a huge strike force of U.S. aircraft to destroy the massive Dragon's Jaw bridge at Thanh Hoa "barely interrupted traffic." It was not until 1972 that there was a successful laser-guided missile strikes of May 13, 1972. Bear in mind that the power of computers available to the aircraft was far less than what is in the average cell phone today.

Fast forward to the present where the aircraft crew no longer have to see the target in order to deliver a smart bomb with precision, using GPS coordinates. In the not too distant future, it will be possible for the aircraft to be hundreds or thousands of miles from the target, with the actual release and guidance of the armaments to be performed by operators who are not onboard the aircraft. Plus, all but one of the aircraft in a formation may be unmanned. This is not your grandfather's air combat warfare.



Jasmine Wilson (C) accepts the cash gift cards from Bruce Waxman (L) and Len Ignatowski.

## BACK TO SCHOOL GRANTS

For the thirteenth consecutive year, the Chapter provided back-to-school gift cards to forty-two children of Veterans Administration Supportive Housing (VASH) and to twelve veterans in school. The successful VASH program resulted in an increase of student grants from last year's total of forty-six children and one veteran.

The total amount of \$ 6,600 is for a \$100 gift card for each child from pre-school to college and a \$ 200 gift card to a veteran in school. This year the program was offered to a veteran spouse in school, but none were enrolled.

Bruce Waxman and Len Ignatowski presented the gift cards to Jasmine Wilson, the Northern Virginia VASH Case Manager. She stated that the gift cards are a great boost in getting the students off on the right foot to school and a return to normal life. Two female veterans were nearly to receive their gift cards. They expressed their deep appreciation for the gift cards.

The needs continues for the upcoming Holidays where the Chapter will provided gift cards for needy VASH veterans and their families. The card value range from \$75 for a single veteran to \$350 for a veteran family. Mail your donation to the chapter address as shown on the news-letter.

Help fulfill our principle, "Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another" by mailing a donation for the holiday gift cards to the chapter address and payable to VVA Chapter 227 with a Memo note, VASH Holiday.

## **Vietnam Veterans of America**

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

Name \_\_\_\_\_ ☐ Male ☐ Female

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

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

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

Chapter No. **227**

• Eligibility: Vietnam and Vietnam-era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. military (for other than training purposes) between November 1, 1955 - 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.

***Special Life Membership: \$50***

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

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. 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).

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



**WE WANT YOU**

**QUESTIONS**

**CONTACT**

**BILL LYNCH**

**703-474-4891**

## **ANNIVERSARY DINNER**

The October 19<sup>th</sup> membership meeting will celebrate our 38<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of fulfilling our founding principle, “*Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another.*” The dinner is free. The guest speaker is Mokie Porter, VVA Director of Communications, will discuss VVA’s unique Veteran Initiative to resolve VC and NVA missing in action.

## **CALENDAR**

### **SEPT**

07: Board Meeting 7:30 PM via Zoom format

21: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: “Where do we go from here?” A town hall meeting to discuss the chapter’s future

### **OCT**

05: Board Meeting 7:30 PM via Zoom format

19: Chapter Anniversary Dinner 7:30 PM: Speaker: Mokie Porter, “VVA’s Veteran Initiative”.

**VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA ® INC.**

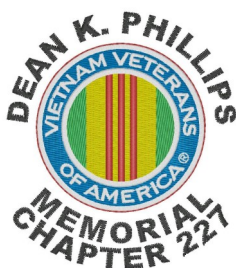
**CHAPTER 227**

**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*