

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—March 2024



2024 CHAPTER ELECTIONS

Nominations for chapter offices and the AVVA representative for the April 18, 2024 elections are open. Each office has a two-year term. The current officers and directors are seeking re-election except for Fred Ducca. The AVVA Representative is open too. The candidates are Jay Kalner, President, Len Ignatowski, Vice President, Chuck Harris, Treasurer, Bob Tecklenburg, Secretary, and Directors, Andy Bender, Tom Brown, Tom Davis, Stan Derr, Don Drunsic, Bill Dumsick, Scott Hurley, George Jones, Bill Lynch, Bob Pezold, Dennis Stephens, Tom Stryer, Don Sutherland, Bruce Waxman, and Norm Williamson. AVVA Representative candidate is Diane Ignatowski

If you want to serve, contact the Nomination/Election Committee Chairman Dan Creed at 703-401-8042 or danielcreed@hotmail.com or Fred Ducca at 571-228-8292 or fred.ducca@cox.net. For AVVA representative, call Diane Ignatowski at 703-772-5303. Both the VVA and AVVA candidate registrations deadline is April 15th, but nominations from the floor are allowed.

MARCH 21st MEETING: NEW STARTING TIME: 7:00 PM

The March 21st meeting speaker is LTC Randy Jones, USA (Ret), who will discuss his duties with the US Military Liaison Mission, a little known and beneficial intelligence program during the Cold War against Soviet troops in East Germany.

A cash bar will be open 5:30-6:45pm, buffet dinner is served at 6:15pm (\$25/person, cash only), and the meeting begins at 7:00pm. Anyone planning to attend should **RSVP to Melissa Kalner, mkalner77@gmail.com or call/text 703-819-1480 by noon, Tuesday, March 19th**, and indicate whether you plan to eat dinner and if you plan to bring a spouse or other guest. Meeting location is American Legion Post 177, 3939 Oak St., Fairfax. The AVVA will be collecting cash donations at the meeting for The Lamb Center, our successful community homeless outreach. For questions about The Lamb Center's activities, call Diane Ignatowski at 703-772-5303 or visit <https://www.thelambcenter.org/>.



David Welker (L) receives a chapter challenge coin from Jay Kalner. Credit: Len Ignatowski

CIA ROLE IN THE VIETNAM WAR

David Welker, a CIA historian, delivered a very informative discussion of the CIA's role in the Vietnam War.

The CIA predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services, entered Vietnam during WWII. Its teams trained and led guerrilla operations against the Japanese invaders. The U.S. funded French efforts to eradicate the armed insurgency against French colonial rule from 1946 to 1954. Our policy was to contain the growth of Communism. The French defeat resulted in dividing Vietnam into North and South with an eventual election to unite the country under a single president. At our urging, South Vietnam ignored the election since Ho Chi Minh, a Communist, would likely win. During this time, the CIA conducted Operation Exodus that relocated North Vietnamese Catholics to the South under the pretext that they would be persecuted. As the insurgency increased, the CIA officially returned in 1961. Along with Special Forces, the CIA managed the Strategic Hamlet program that relocated the rural population to fortified villages and armed its villagers. The Gulf of

Tonkin incident in 1964 opened the war to large-scale U.S. and allied military intervention. The CIA role increased too. The Phoenix program monitored and identified VC suspects and interrogated them for intelligence. The Ho Chi Minh supply trail in Cambodia and Laos became a prime CIA area of operations. They trained and armed approximately 40,000 Montagnards to attack the trail. The CIA formed the Air America airline of assorted aircraft to support these operations. A CIA's A-12 Blackbird flew aerial reconnaissance, and ground sensors were deployed to count truck and troop movements on the trail. One of the most successful operations was the establishment of secret communications with our POWs in North Vietnam. Messages were written in invisible ink in family letters. Soaking the letter in water exposed the message. The CIA war successes came with the cost of 36 agents losing their lives.

David Welker's presentation revealed that we should be proud of the CIA for its distinguished national service, but unfortunately, since secrecy is the Agency primary principle, we may never know its true degree of success.

MISSION BBQ RECRUITMENT — VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

The Mission BBQ recruitment is set for March 29th from 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM. The recruitment will be at several restaurant locations. The restaurant is offering a free sandwich to veterans on this special day. Call Stan Derr to volunteer for the display at 703-278-9322 or sderr5410@gmail.com.

CHAPTER BRIEFS:

- **CHAPTER CONTINUES TO GROW!:** As of January 31, 2024 the chapter roster includes 402 VVA members and 36 AVVA members. Our VVA roster is the 17th largest in VVA and constitutes 16% of Virginia's membership. Again, Stan Derr and Bill Lynch, both Directors, are largely responsible for a fantastic membership growth. Detailed AVVA membership is not available, but our AVVA number is probably the largest in Virginia too! You and your family members are encouraged to join AVVA too.
- **2024 CALENDAR UPDATE:** Besides Len Ignatowski's photo in the 2024 VVA calendar, Richard Kurtz and his wife, Carol, are on the April month page. The photograph shows Rick pinning first lieutenant bars on his wife's nurse uniform. Congratulations to Rick.
- **ALEXANDRIA WAR MEMORIAL:** A \$500 grant was approved for the Vietnam War Memorial plaque to honor the 68 Alexandria residents who lost their lives in the war. The memorial is located at Union Station in Alexandria. The plaque ensures that their ultimate sacrifice is not forgotten. The plaque cost is \$15,000. If you wish to make a donation, mail your check payable to the City of Alexandria and addressed to Office of Historic Alexandria, 202 Washington St. Alexandria, Virginia. Identify the donation for the Vietnam War Memorial plaque and your association with VVA Chapter 227.
- **SPEAKER'S PANEL:** The Speaker's Panel is in need of speaking engagements and volunteer speakers at local schools from elementary to college, and civic groups. Page 3 has the Panel's announcement to be used. The program involves typically two veterans sharing their Tour of Duty and responding to questions. Tom Stryer is the program manager and will answer your questions. His telephone number is 703-323-9032.

THE NEEDS CONTINUES

Grants are awarded and vetted from appropriate government and non-profit agency requests to eliminate any scams. Your funds assist legitimate veterans and active duty personnel and their family financial needs.

- \$ 266 Partnered with Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) to pay back rent.
- \$ 500 Paid delinquent rent
- \$ 740 Partnered with VSOs in paying delinquent rent
- \$ 405 Paid car repairs
- \$ 65 The Lamb Center meeting collection
- \$1,000 Partnered with VSOs to pay for a delinquent mortgage payment
- \$ 186 Partnered with VSOs to pay for property debris removal

ALL VOLUNTEER ARMY RECRUITMENT CHALLENGES



SFC Turner (L), Jay Kalner, and Capt. Johnson exchanged challenge coins after the presentation. Credit: Melissa Kalner

At the February 15th meeting, Capt. Cole Johnson and SFC Todd Turner discussed the recruitment challenges for maintaining an All Volunteer Army. Capt. Johnson is the commander of recruitment in Virginia, Maryland, and West Virginia. SFC Turner mans the Sterling office.

The current challenge is recovering from the COVID shut down. The standard high school recruitment is now extinct. Many school districts do not allow recruiters in the school and on their property. I can remember the military recruiters conducting an event in my high school for seniors during school hours. I know of at least two seniors joining after the event. SFC Turner provided an example where he was asked to leave the school property where he had set up a table. The quality of new recruits ranging from good to bad was discussed. Drug use is a major obstacle to overcome in light of its pervasiveness in today's society. Trust and accountability are current issues with a potential recruit. Unlike the draft, which involved a medical exam and a minimum background check to be inducted, today's process can take at least 90 days to place the recruit on active duty. The time period allows ample time for a recruit to change one's mind.

Despite these multiple challenges, both expressed optimism and duty dedication in accomplishing their mission. Our country is very fortunate to have such men serving in the military.

VIETNAM VETERANS OF AMERICA INC. ®

CHAPTER 227

DEAN K. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CHAPTER

P.O. BOX 5653

ARLINGTON, VIRGINIA 22205

PHONE: 703-255-0353

WEB PAGE: www.vva227.org



- **TEACHERS!**
- **COLLEGE PROFESSORS!**
- **COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS!**

LEARN ABOUT THE VIETNAM WAR FROM THOSE WHO SERVE!

Since 1987, members of VVA Chapter 227 have shared their Tour of Duty experiences with a multitude of audiences from elementary school students to senior citizens groups in fulfilling Vietnam Veterans of America's founding principle, *"Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another"*.

Let us share our experience with your group and help dispel the many "negative" myths about the Vietnam veteran and understand the personal sacrifice and life changing experiences of serving in a war. Learn how a war changed the lives of those who served and gain a deep appreciation for those who are currently serving in harm's way.

The agenda is flexible and educational. A typical program includes two veterans' Road to Vietnam and their Tour of Duty with a question-and-answer period.

Speaking engagements include discussions at THE WALL and in the classrooms of Arlington and Fairfax County Public Schools, Trinity College, University of Maryland, George Mason University, and Northern Virginia Community College.

Visit our website at vva227.org to learn about who we are.

Call now to get more information: Tom Stryer 703-323-9032.

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

CALENDAR

MAR:

01: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: Zoom format

21: Membership Meeting 7:00 PM: Speaker: LTC. Randy Jones, "Do You Know the United States Military Liaison Mission?"

25: National Medal of Honor Day

29: NATIONAL VIETNAM VETERANS DAY

29: Recruitment at Mission BBQ 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM: Call Stan Derr at 703-278-9322 or email at sderr5410@gmail.com

APR:

04: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: Zoom format

15: National Federal Tax Day

18: Membership Meeting 7:00 PM:

- Chapter Elections: See article on Page 1.
- Speaker: Peggy Kelly, "Life of a Donut Dollie in the Vietnam War"

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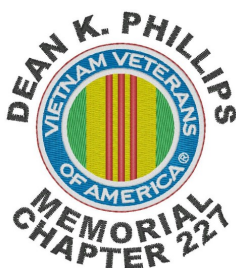
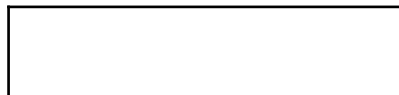
CHAPTER 227

DEAN K. PHILLIPS MEMORIAL CHAPTER

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Address Service Requested



OUR MISSION

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