

THE JOURNEY

Vietnam Veterans of America Inc. Chapter 227

The Dean K. Phillips Memorial Chapter

“Serving Veterans and the Community in Northern Virginia”



In Service to America

“Never Again Shall One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another”

April 2013

OUR SERVICE LEGACY

On March 21st, the chapter made its second donation of \$1,500 for the Vietnam Veteran Memorial Fund Education Center construction near The Wall. The centers's hallmark will be a wall that has a photograph of each name on The Wall to show the human cost of every conflict. Jan Scruggs, VVMF President, accepted the grant at the VVMF office.

While construction donations are needed, good quality photographs of each fallen brother or sister whose name is enshrined on The Wall are needed for the wall display. The digital photograph submission information website is http://www.vvmf.org/submit_other ?

For photograph prints, provide a duplicate print enlarged to 8x10 with a glossy finish and have its quality enhanced as much as possible. Mail a completed photo submission form from the website and photo to

Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

Attn: Call for Photos

2600 Virginia Avenue NW, Suite 104

Washington, D.C. 20037



\$ 1500 grant presentation to the VVMF. Len Ignatowski, Jan Scruggs, VVMF President, Byron Sheldon, and Ron Ball (L to R).

Mark the front of the envelope with “Photo Enclosed”. Any questions, contact the VVMF at 202-393-0090 or gpojani@vvmf.org

WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE IRAQ WAR?

The guest speaker for the April 18th chapter membership meeting is Harold Bonacquist who will share a personal perspective of the U.S. extended effort to reconstruct Iraq during Operation Iraqi Freedom, so as to create a strong, democratic and dependable ally in the Middle East. He served as a Provincial Action Officer and interim team leader in Al Hillah. Mr. Bonacquist worked with Iraqi government officials to improve the government in Diwaniyah Province. Since becoming a Foreign Service Officer in 2002, he has been involved international narcotics and law enforcement with postings in Turkey, the Philippines, and Iraq. Don't miss this opportunity to learn a civilian perspective of the Iraq War, especially since the 10th anniversary of the war just occurred with much public debate.

Come early to enjoy a great meal and meet your fellow members! Spouses and family are always welcome. Better yet, bring a fellow veteran with you. No drinking of alcoholic beverages is allowed during the meeting.

LIFE AS A COBRA PILOT IN IRAQ

Maj. Dan Sheehan USMC Ret., who served two Tours of Duty in Iraq, provided a very vivid vision of the life of a Cobra helicopter gunship pilot with photographs and actual combat gun camera movies during his 2003 deployment. His combat experience reflects what happens in wars from combat successes to the loss of fellow warriors and the frustrations of fighting in a foreign country.

The combat movie footages and descriptions showed how the Cobra gunship has evolved from its first days of Vietnam combat. The Marines version has two engines instead of one with an awesome upgraded arsenal. The two M-60 machine guns in the nose turret were replaced with a 20mm Gatling cannon and the 2.75 free flight rockets were replaced with the “shoot and forget” Hellfire missile and the optical guided TOW missile. The modern night vision equipment and the long range accuracy of its missiles made the Cobra a lethal night fighter with the enemy not knowing when it became a target. Almost 90% of Dan's missions were flown at night.

His second life battle is in overcoming the almost minute-by-minute combat highs to the stateside peace environment. The military life did not prevent him from developing mental issues that adversely impacted his marriage and family. He used alcohol as a relief from the daily emotional highs and stress. Finally, he discovered free water diving as an emotional release, but he still had periods of coldness and detachment with his family. Continued Page 2.



Byron Sheldon, Chapter President (L), presents the Unsung Hero Award to Bill Bohuslaw. Photo by Len Ignatowski

UNsung HERO AWARD

Bill Bohuslaw received the fourth Unsung Hero Award for his “behind the scenes” service at the March 7th board meeting. Besides being a source of good information as a director and a regular attendee with his wife, Natalie, at chapter events, he served on the Membership Committee by writing welcome letters to new members and membership renewal reminders to delinquent members.

Being an avid Mets fan from New York City, he instigated the chapter’s annual family National baseball game event. In this endeavor he can claim a 100% winning record with his game selections. Seven wins and no losses.

Bill served with the 1st Logistics Command in Vietnam. Congratulations Bill.

VIENNA TO HONOR VIETNAM VETERANS

The Town of Vienna will honor local and town Vietnam War veterans at the Viva Vienna! Fair on Monday, May 27th at noon. Len Ignatowski is representing the chapter on the planning committee. The recognition is part of the national 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. Members who live in or adjacent to the town should contact Len if you want to participate in the recognition ceremony. Contact Len by phone at 703-255-0353 or email at grunt69@gmail.com.

The program wants to honor mothers lost a son or daughter in the Vietnam War. If you can provide a mother’s name and contact information notify Len.

“SUIT FOR VETS” CAMPAIGN

The annual Acquisition, Investment, and Program Management of Mitre Corporation employee party resulted in a \$ 734 donation to the Suits for Vets campaign. If your company would like to become a partner, call Chuck Harris at 703-729-5665.

The chapter paid for the dry cleaning of 35 donated suits that will be offered to our wounded warrior’s caregivers. Please have your clothing dry cleaned and wrapped in a plastic sleeve with a size tag on it to save chapter money and Chuck’s time.

8 IN A ROW??

The chapter’s traditional family baseball game will be the Mets vs. Nationals game on Sunday, July 28th at 1:35 PM. The ticket price is \$9. Mail your check payment to Bill Lynch, ATTN: VVA Baseball Game, 6322 Applegarth Ct., Alexandria, Va. 22312. Questions, call 703-256-4484. Ticket order deadline is July 5th. Please include your phone and email address. Will our attendance make it “8” straight wins for the Nationals. Bring the family, friends, and fellow veterans for a great time.

CHAPTER BRIEFS

- **Memorial Day Family Barbecue host needed.** A host is needed for the Annual Family Barbecue on Sunday, May 26. The chapter provides a \$300 grant for the purchase of meats and refreshments. Call Byron Sheldon to offer your home and services at 703-850-3498.
- **Memorial Day events:** Mark your calendar to attend our Memorial Day remembrance events: Viva Vienna!, Family Barbecue, Wreath Laying at The Wall, Family Breakfast after the memorial service at The Wall, and Viva Vienna! “Welcome Home, Vietnam Veterans” ceremony.
- **Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class Visit April 10th:** Show your support to these veterans. Contact Ben Buckley at 703-978-9179.

COBRA PILOT *Continued from Page 1*

After talking to fellow combat Marines, he discovered that many shared his post-combat withdrawal personal issues. After leaving the Marine Corps in 2009, he started to write about his combat experiences and their impact on his post-combat life with the goal educating the public about combat and what a soldier brings home from the battlefield. His three year writing odyssey produced the book, After Action. He hopes that the book will release him from PTSD and the need for medical treatment. He summarized his life battle by saying that the military train’s one to survive in combat, but fellow veterans help veterans survive the peace.

CHAPTER 227 DOG TAGS

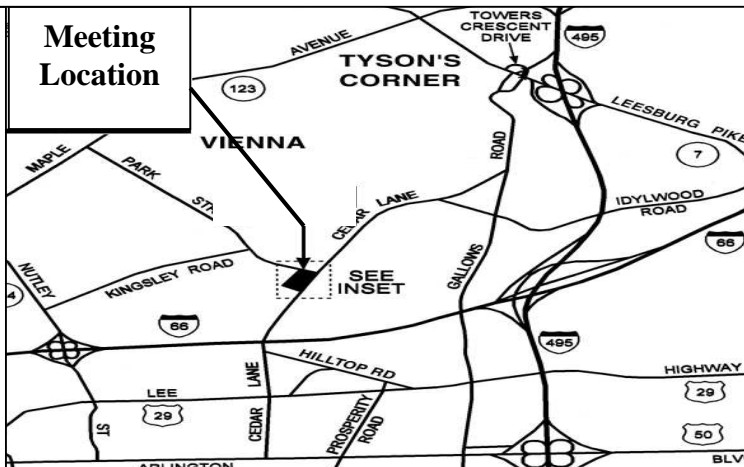
April 2013



OFFICERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS OF CHAPTER 227

President: Byron Sheldon – 703-850-3498
Vice President: Bruce Waxman – 703-323-0269
Secretary: Ron Ball
Treasurer: Chuck Harris
Sergeant at Arms: Jonathan Olson
Board of Directors: Paul Stancliff, Len Ignatowski, Bill Dumsick, Charlie Klein, Joe Celesnik, Max Knouse, Bill Lynch, Chris Beverley, and Tom Stryer.
AVVA Representative: Diane Ignatowski 703-255-0353
Newsletter Editor: Len Ignatowski 703-255-0353
School Speaker's Panel: Tom Stryer 703-323-9032
Meeting Guest Speaker: Len Funk 703-820-8118
DMZ To Delta@Dance: Len Ignatowski
Suits for Veterans: Chuck Harris 703-729-5665
Lyons PTSD Visit: Ben Buckley 703-978-9179

Meeting Location



CHAPTER INFORMATION: 703-968-0686

CHAPTER WEB SITE: www.vva227.org

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Neighbor's Restaurant, 262D Cedar Lane
Vienna, Virginia (Park St. & Cedar Lane)
Pre-Meeting Dinner (Optional): 6:45 PM
Meeting Time: 7:30 PM Phone: 703-698-8010

CHAPTER OPERATIONS PLAN

April:

- 10: <Date Change> Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class Visit. Meet at the flagpole at 11:00 AM.
- 11-14: VVA Region 3 Conference. Annapolis, Md.
- 15: Federal taxes dues
- 18: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Speaker: Harold Bonacquist, "Nation-Building in Iraq: Some Lessons (Hopefully) Learned"

May:

- 02: Board Meeting 7:30 PM: American Legion Post 180, 330 Center Street, N., Vienna, Va.
- 16: Membership Meeting 7:30 PM: Vince Kaspar Excellence in the Arts Awards
- 26: Viva Vienna Information Booth 10 AM to 5 PM
- 26: Chapter Family Barbecue 6 PM: Host needed
- 27: Wreath Laying at The Wall 8 AM:
- 27: Post Wreath Laying Family Breakfast at local restaurant
- 27: Viva Vienna "Welcome Home Vietnam Veterans" Service at Noon.
- 29: Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Class Visit. Meet at the flagpole at 11:00 AM.

STATE COUNCIL SCHOLARSHIP

The Virginia VVA state council is offering two \$500 scholarships for a veteran and a veteran family member. See eligibility and application on the council website at <http://www.vva-vasc.org/scholarship.pd>. Grandchildren are eligible. A raffle selects the scholarship winner.

VVA CAR DONATION PROGRAM 1-800-Help Vets

VETERAN'S HOTLINE 1-800-273-8255

**24 HOURS/ 7 DAYS A WEEK
DON'T HESITATE! CALL NOW**

WHAT I LEARNED FROM THE IRAQ WAR?

April 18th

Membership Meeting Speaker

Lyons VAMC Combat PTSD Visit

(Date Changed) April 10, 2013

“Great Opportunity to help new and Vietnam veterans!”

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR
FOR
OUR MEMORIAL DAY FAMILY EVENTS NOW!**

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 Veterans, Their Families,
Our Community and Our Country”