



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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Dear VVAW Supporter,

I'd like to thank you for your continued support of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Without you, we could not continue this important work 44 years after we first gathered together to protest the Vietnam War. My name is Marty Webster and I am currently a National Coordinator for Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). I served during the Vietnam war (1965) as a Navy corpsman. When I came home I joined VVAW in 1969 and participated in the many anti-war and VVAW activities in the late 60's and 70's. I became reactivated during the 1980's, then after 9/11 I became heavily involved in VVAW national campaigns. Currently I serve on the core committee of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC) and work with the in-country Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA). I am also a current member of the IVAW Advisory Committee.

Even though we are not 25 anymore, **VVAW is still involved in the fight for Veterans, Peace and Justice.** The battlefields of the Vietnam war are silent, but the consequences of that war and the wars that still rage on are being manifested everyday in the lives of those who fight them. We carry on the fight to make sure Veterans young and old are treated properly and taken care of when they get home, by employing two Military Counselors – Ray Parrish and Hans Buwalda – **who are able to provide their invaluable services to Veterans free of charge. Your support makes this possible.**

Our counseling project continues to be in high demand. Each case covers a wide range of laws, records and services that must be coordinated. The range of vets currently being helped, goes from Korean vets to recent Iraq and Afghanistan vets. Ray is currently helping an 85 year old Korean war vet get a discharge upgrade. Sam came back from Korea to Jim Crow and was given a court martial for insisting he needed to stay in the hospital. **The skills represented in VVAW's Military Counseling Program are helping to right this decades old injustice.**

Wesley, a 75 year old Vietnam veteran, is finally on the short list to live in a veterans only subsidized supportive housing unit because of the help received from Ray and Hans. He came home from Vietnam on leave to bury his father and ended up going AWOL to care for his family, resulting in an undesirable discharge. He was able to live a normal life until viewing Iraq war footage in 2003 triggered his PTSD, resulting in the loss of his job. Homeless until a year ago he came to VVAW, when Ray began helping him with the seemingly endless list of hurdles needed to get his benefits.

With a backlog of cases as long as 16 months, Vietnam vets are getting adjudicated last because of so many new vets needing help. The board of appeals reverses many cases because grossly inexperienced VA staff are not following the VA's own rules. Decades of experience allows Ray to quickly spot these errors and help veterans win their appeals and to use new administrative rulings in veterans favor. **The victories Ray is able to wring out of these difficult cases are made possible with your contributions.**

VVAW also continues to support the next generation of veterans fighting to carry on the struggle for veterans, peace and justice by funding Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) and their Field Organizing Program. Recently, I was invited to attend and participate in IVAW's national convention in Portland, Oregon. What a contrast to the inaugural meeting, several years ago, where only a handful of people were present to kick off this worthy project! There were over 60 veterans present, many of them new to IVAW who had stepped forward to participate in this worthy endeavor.

Upon my entering the room, it was announced **that without the support of VVAW there would not be any Field Organizing Program.** Everyone in the room rose to their feet and I received cheers and a standing ovation. I became a bit emotional with all the hugs and such but I realize that it was not only myself and VVAW that was being recognized, it was you who have faithfully supported us through the years that they were really recognizing. **I was once again reminded how important your support is in order for us to continue our mission to stand behind these young brothers and sisters who have been placed in harms way for a lie.**

Recently I attended a meeting in New York City with a delegation from Vietnam to discuss our pending Agent Orange legislation, which is now before congress (more on this next time). I was invited to say a few words and I asked one of the NVA officers who was present to come and stand with me. I told the audience that neither one of us really gives a "shit" what each other did during the war but that we were united as brothers to help rid this nightmare that overshadows both of our countries. It turned out to be a highly successful evening. I will be returning soon to New York to participate in both IVAW and Agent Orange related activities. **Once again thanks to you, our supporters, we are able to participate in and support such important endeavors.**

Another service VVAW brings to veterans and their supporters is the publication of our newspaper *The Veteran*. It seems everywhere I go I am reminded of how much people appreciate and enjoy *The Veteran*. As supporters of VVAW, you have seen that the forum we offer to veterans and their allies is still going strong after 41 years. Featuring reports for veterans of all eras, as well as commentary, poetry and cartoons, *The Veteran* helps get the voice of VVAW out to a nation-wide audience.

I could spend all day telling you more stories of how important VVAW is to its members and allies all across the country. I am in continual communication with many of our veterans and sometimes it's important for them just to know that **even though our ranks may be thinning and some of us are getting frail, that VVAW is still here, doing the work that needs to be done. Of course, your support is what makes many of these programs possible.**

If I could thank every one of you personally, I would. Without your support, VVAW would not be able to continue these programs that make a difference in the lives of so many. We appreciate that in these hard economic times, you can't donate every time we ask you. **Every dollar does count, so please do support us today with a tax-deductible donation. Your continued support keeps VVAW going.**

Sincerely,



Marty Webster
VVAW National Coordinator

I am sending Vietnam Veterans Against the War \$35 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500 Other to support its work for peace and for decent benefits for all veterans. Donations to VVAW are tax deductible. You can also donate online at www.vvaw.org, a one-time or monthly donation.

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