



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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Dear VVAW Supporter,

I'd like to thank you again for your continued support for Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) over the years. Without your involvement we could not successfully continue the important peace and social justice work that we began back in 1967.

VVAW is happy to see the final withdrawal of US troops from Iraq and the continual withdrawal of US troops from Afghanistan. But we know, from our own experiences and from our organizing, that the war does not end when a soldier comes home. The scars – whether physical, emotional, or psychological – last a lifetime. **This is why VVAW's work is just as important today as it was in 1967, and without your support, we could not continue the struggle for peace and justice for service members and veterans of all generations.**

As a representative of VVAW, I serve on the core committee of the Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign (VAORRC), where we fight for justice for all Agent Orange victims – work that VVAW has supported from the beginning. In August 2011, VAORRC, along with many other organizations, marked the 50th anniversary of the first use of Agent Orange in Vietnam. We have accomplished so much for the victims of Agent Orange – both in Vietnam and in the US – but we still have so much to do. We are working with second and third generation victims of Agent Orange (*the children and grandchildren of our veterans exposed to Agent Orange*). In December 2011, I attended a two-day organizing meeting, in coordination with VAORCC, to help provide resources to second and third generation victims. Please look for the next issue of VVAW's newspaper, *The Veteran*, in May for more information on this.

We are also working to support the Agent Orange Relief Act of 2011 (HR 2634), which calls for greater funding assistance to both Vietnamese and US Agent Orange victims and their children, as well as cleaning up the lands and eco-systems contaminated by Agent Orange/dioxin in Vietnam. You can read more and take action by signing a postcard to Congress at: www.vn-agentorange.org.

Your continued support for VVAW has allowed us to carry on the fight for Veterans, Peace and Justice. We have been able to fight not only for Vietnam-era veterans, but for all generations of GIs and veterans – both through VVAW's Military Counseling Service and financially supporting Iraq Veterans Against the War's (IVAW) Field Organizing Program.

VVAW employs two military counselors – Ray Parrish, our Benefits Counselor, and Johanna (Hans) Buwalda, our Licensed Clinician – whose specialties complement each other to provide comprehensive services for those in need, whether they are seeking counseling, discharge upgrades, help with VA claims, or a combination of those services. Ray and Hans have been working extensively on discharge upgrades for veterans who have wrongfully received less-than-honorable discharges.

These veterans are not eligible for VA care as they are considered "non-veterans" by the VA despite the service they provided for our country. While Ray and Hans are located in Chicago, they work with clients across the country, and even help provide training and resources through national networks (*including The GI Rights Hotline and The Soldiers Project*) to help other providers complete the evaluation paperwork needed to request a discharge upgrade.

Hans is currently helping Bobby, a Vietnam-era veteran who has spent many years homeless, apply for a discharge upgrade. While he was in the Army, marijuana was found in the barracks he shared and he was arrested for possession even though it was not his nor was it found in his belongings. He was later cleared, but the betrayal, humiliation, and alienation that came from the incident left Bobby with an anxiety disorder that manifested itself with physical symptoms

including a nervous tic. He was sent to a mental health clinic, where he was told to get over it and "be a man." Ultimately he received a less-than-honorable discharge due to his anxiety disorder. Hans is now completing his evaluation so he can receive a discharge upgrade and get the care he desperately wants and deserves – that he is denied from getting due to his discharge status.

Hans is also working with Matthew, an active-duty Marine who survived an IED attack in Iraq. Due to the injuries he sustained, he takes medication that makes it difficult for him to wake up and attend his early morning PT exercises. His CO is seeking an other-than-honorable discharge for him. Matthew survived a horrifying IED attack, sought treatment and followed medical advice, only to receive no understanding, sympathy, or respect from his commanding officer.

What makes VVAW's Military Counseling Services unique is that they are free of charge, confidential, and are open to current service members and veterans of all eras as well as their loved ones. **Without your support, VVAW could not continue our Military Counseling Service or provide support to the new generation of veterans fighting for peace and justice in Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW).**

IVAW carries on the struggle for peace and justice for this generation of service members and veterans through its Field Organizing Program. They work with soldiers across the country to fight for service members' right to heal from all forms of trauma. At Ft. Hood (*Killeen, TX*), after pressure from IVAW, Gen. Campbell and his staff held an unprecedented multi-media town hall meeting on January 27, 2012. This was Gen. Campbell's first open dialogue with the community and IVAW calls on him to maintain an open dialogue to address the mental health crisis at Ft. Hood.

In March 2008, IVAW marked the 5th anniversary of the invasion of Iraq with *Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan*, modeled after VVAW's own Winter Soldier Investigation from 1971. VVAW supported this four-day event, which brought together veterans from across the country to testify about what they witnessed in Afghanistan and Iraq. IVAW's work at *Winter Soldier: Iraq and Afghanistan* was captured on film, culminating in the release of the documentary *This Is Where We Take Our Stand* (thisiswherewetakeourstand.com). Most recently, over 40 VVAW members attended the New York City screening, where the filmmakers interwove clips from VVAW's Winter Soldier Investigation into the new documentary. *This Is Where We Take Our Stand* is now airing on PBS stations around the country. **Because of your support, IVAW has been able to further the struggle for Veterans, Peace and Justice that VVAW first started in 1967.**

Once again, 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 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 <input type="checkbox"/> \$35 <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 <input type="checkbox"/> 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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