



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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Dear VVAW Supporter,

I want to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support for Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW). Because of your involvement, we have been able to carry out the important peace and social justice work that we began back in 1967. My name is Joe Miller, and I am currently one of the National Coordinators for VVAW. I served in the Navy from 1961 to 1968, first as a Communications Technician (Linguist) with the Naval Security Group (NSG) until 1964, then as an administrative clerk (Yeoman) until 1968. I was "on station" aboard the USS Ticonderoga (CVA-14) during the Gulf of Tonkin "incidents" in August 1964, and my background with the NSG allowed me to know the facts behind the official lies about those events. That is where my politicization began. By the time of my discharge in 1968, I was more than ready to join the anti-war movement, and I linked up with VVAW in Chicago in 1969. For most of the past forty plus years I have maintained my connection with VVAW, and **I see the positive impact we continue to have, because of your support.**

Every August I go through a period of remembering/reviewing my limited "participation" in the 1964 Gulf of Tonkin events. This provokes in me a sadness at the extreme losses experienced by the Indochinese people and the US and allied troops as a result of that war, a war started by a lie. We in VVAW know that, for many on both sides, the war never ends. The poisoning from Agent Orange exposure continues to extend into the second and third generations of those who were exposed. Many of our brothers and sisters live in constant pain from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). We have learned that wars do not end with the armistice or the peace treaty; they continue for all who were in harm's way, civilians and troops. Our work with Iraq and Afghanistan veterans certainly shows this. My personal commemoration of the Gulf of Tonkin each August reminds me that we all must remain vigilant any time the political class begins to rattle their sabers. We cannot keep forgetting how we got into our recent wars and how easy it was for the politicians to pull the wool over our eyes, especially as we approach the presidential elections.

VVAW's work is just as important today as it was when we came together in 1967. Without your support, we could not continue the struggle for peace and justice for service members and veterans of all generations. It is with a heavy heart that I announce that longtime VVAW Military Counselor, Ray Parrish, has decided to leave his position. We wish Ray the best in his future endeavors. I have known Ray since 1979, when he was a student at the University of Illinois organizing against Jimmy Carter's re-establishment of the Selective Service System. His work on that issue included organizing rallies and writing opinion pieces for the campus newspaper. We reconnected when I returned from teaching in Australia in the mid-1980s. By that time, Ray was deep in his work with the Midwest Center for Military Counseling (MCMC), which provided GI and veteran counseling services until after the first Gulf War. The void that Ray is leaving will be hard to fill. We need to make sure that VVAW's Mental Health/Trauma Counselor, Johanna (Hans) Buwalda, has all the resources she will need to continue this very important work.

We will continue to provide the free and confidential services that make VVAW's Military and Veteran Counseling unique. These services are open to current service members, veterans from all eras regardless of discharge status, and their loved ones. Without your support, VVAW cannot continue to provide support to all generations of veterans through the Military Counseling.

Hans Buwalda is a licensed clinician who specializes in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), offering counseling/therapy services and mental health evaluations to help veterans

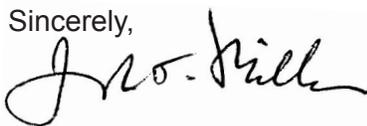
document their case for a PTSD claim with the VA. Hans' work encompasses many other areas and she is by no means a typical counselor, going above and beyond to help her clients. Unlike the VA, she doesn't label someone as "non-compliant" when they miss an appointment, understanding that anxiety and fear from PTSD may often prevent someone from coming to their first, or second, appointment. She will meet people in settings they feel comfortable in.

Most recently, she began working with Samuel, a Vietnam veteran with PTSD who had much difficulty controlling his interactions with the people in his life. He missed his first few appointments, but Hans came to him and they were able to talk. When Samuel felt threatened, he would react, as if he was in danger rather than just speaking to a friend or family member, and immediately became very defensive and angry. This quick reaction made for a skilled soldier in a combat zone and probably saved his life more than once, but in civilian life, this reaction left him alienating the people in his life. Hans used a simple diagram to show Samuel the difference between how people with PTSD respond to a perceived threat, and how people without PTSD respond to a perceived threat. This diagram left Samuel with a life-altering realization of how he was bypassing a critical thought process in evaluating situations he was in. At first, with very conscious effort, when Samuel felt threatened when talking to someone, he would walk away and think about how he felt before reacting. After much practice, he learned to respond in ways that made it possible for him to have relationships, and not be defined by a reaction from his PTSD. Hans has been able to help many people like Samuel work to gain back control of their lives.

Your continued support for VVAW has allowed us to carry on the fight for Veterans, Peace and Justice. Not only do we fight for Vietnam-era veterans, but for all generations of GIs and veterans. In addition to VVAW's Military and Veterans Counseling Service, VVAW provides both financial support and other resources for Iraq Veterans Against the War's (IVAW) organizing. VVAW also continues publishing its newspaper, The Veteran, which will have a new issue out in time for both the elections and Veterans Day. VVAW staff is working to get the entire 42 years of newspapers archived online – check them out at www.vvaw.org/veteran. VVAW also continues educating the newest generation of potential service members through high school and college talks and presentations. This November, VVAW will once again help organize the Chicago Winter Homeless Vets Standdown, where homeless veterans can receive winter clothing, food, access to social services, flu shots, hair cuts, and much more. **Because of your continued support, VVAW leaves no veteran behind.**

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 especially appreciate and recognize the importance of every individual donation in these difficult economic times. **Every dollar does count, so please support us today with a tax-deductible donation. Your continued support keeps VVAW going.**

Sincerely,



Joe Miller, 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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