



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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December 2013

Dear VVAW Supporter,

Thank you for your continued support of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).

Without you, we could not continue the important work that we do nearly 47 years after we first gathered to protest the Vietnam War.

VVAW quickly took up the struggle for the rights and needs of veterans in 1967. In 1970, we started the first rap groups to deal with the traumatic after-effects of war. We exposed the shameful neglect of many disabled vets in VA hospitals and helped draft legislation to improve educational benefits and create job programs. VVAW fought for amnesty for war resisters, including vets with bad discharges. We helped make known the negative health effects of exposure to chemical defoliants and the VA's attempts to cover-up these conditions as well as their continued refusal to provide treatment and compensation for many Agent Orange Victims. **Your sustaining financial support has allowed us to carry on VVAW's groundbreaking work and legacy for nearly 47 years.**

We believe that service to our country and our communities did not end when the war ended. We remain committed to the struggle for peace and for social and economic justice for all people. And in that, VVAW finds its legacy. We are Vietnam Veterans Against THE War because the US war against Vietnam was the war WE fought in. Our experiences are not monolithic. Some of us served overseas, some never did. Whatever our experience, it is THE war, and our opposition to it, that defines us to this very day. Some of us might not think about it every minute or every day, but it is still there. There are those of us who can't make it go away when we close our eyes. This is why VVAW carries on.

VVAW's free semi-annual newspaper, *The Veteran*, has sought to be the place where VVAW members, supporters and family can tell their stories and where we can further organizing efforts for ending the deployment of our troops in Afghanistan, our involvement in proxy wars like Syria, and for decent benefits for all veterans. You can check out our most recent issue on our website at vvaw.org/veteran. The Fall 2013 issue features articles on VVAW's meeting with the Vietnamese president, recollections of war and of protest, and much more. After you check out the latest issue of *The Veteran*, you can now take a look at over 95 issues of our paper. VVAW has been working to put up archives of all 116 issues of *The Veteran* and this archiving project should be completed sometime next summer. You can view both scanned versions of the newspaper to see it in its original format as well as searchable web pages. *The Veteran* was the first voice of Vietnam veterans in America, and has consistently addressed issues of peace and justice. It has featured original articles on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Agent Orange since its first year of publication in 1971. **Your financial support keeps *The Veteran* going with free semi-annual issues sent out to over 16,500 supporters across the country.**

VVAW also provides online forums for our members and supporters to post and discuss issues of the day. Our Facebook page continues to grow and our long-established email list (vvawnet) posts articles of interest to those who subscribe. VVAW also responds to the many requests from students, from grade school to grad school, looking for Vietnam-era veterans to interview and assistance in research for their class papers.

VVAW is in the process of collecting and expanding the existing archives of VVAW's work as part of documenting and preserving VVAW's legacy. Because VVAW was so large with chapters

across the country, the archives are currently scattered across the country in at least three larger collections and several smaller ones. As we explore what is in each archive and what we need to add to the archives, we want you to think about what you have that should be part of the archives. This may be letters, photographs, old publications, records, mementos, etc. We are not ready to accept materials for archiving, but we do ask that if you are interested in adding to the VVAW archives, please email us at vvaw@vvaw.org with information on what item(s) you may have to contribute.

As part of VVAW's ongoing work for the rights of all veterans, we have closely watched Washington as the government shut down, as cuts took place, and as talks of more cuts continue. The sequestration cuts that took effect on March 1, 2013, spared the VA for the most part, but many programs that help veterans are run by other parts of the government, which did face sharp budget cuts this year. The 18th annual Chicago Winter Stand Down had to be rescheduled due to the government shutdown, but it is on and will be occurring on December 13. The Stand Downs provide homeless veterans with free winter clothing, flu shots, haircuts, warm lunches, and the opportunity to connect with area services. **This is another way VVAW is helping to carry on the struggle for peace and justice for veterans of all generations.** There are Stand Downs across the country that you can get involved with by volunteering or by donating clothes and other resources. To find one near you, please visit <http://www.va.gov/homeless/events.asp>. If there isn't one near you, take action by contacting your local VA to see about setting up a local Stand Down.

The ongoing federal budget "crises" and the cuts implemented as "band-aid" solutions affect every one of us. They particularly affect veterans, especially Vietnam-era veterans, who are now retiring. A recurring proposal is to alter the Cost of Living Allowance (COLA) calculation, that determines how much both Social Security AND Veterans' benefits increase (or don't increase) every year to keep up with inflation. Take action by contacting your Senators and Representative – tell them to keep their hands off Social Security and Veteran's benefits – by calling the US Capitol switchboard at (202) 224-3121.

In these hard times, we understand the demands on everyone's limited resources. **So, we are deeply thankful when our members and supporters make tax-deductible donations to VVAW's work, at whatever level.** These donations enable us to carry on VVAW's legacy through issues of our free semi-annual newspaper and sustain our continued organizing efforts to achieve decent benefits for all veterans. **Take this opportunity to make an end-of-the-year tax-deductible donation before December 31 so that you can claim it on this year's tax return.** We thank all of you for your continued support. On behalf of VVAW's staff and board, we hope you have a safe and wonderful New Year!

Sincerely,

Bill Branson

Annie Hirschman

Brian Matarrese

Joe Miller

Susan Schnell

Marty Webster

VVAW Board Members

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.

Name (print) _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

E-Mail Address (please print clearly) _____

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