



# VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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December 2014

Dear VVAW Supporter,

**Thank you for your continued support of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW).** Without you, we could not continue our 48 years of important work. As VVAW's 50th anniversary draws nearer, our work and our legacy is just as important and relevant today as it was when we first organized for peace, justice, and the rights of all veterans in 1967.

In the Fall 2014 issue of *The Veteran*, VVAW's semi-annual newspaper, the articles submitted and published focused on our experiences at war and its aftermath. We spoke truth to power, striving to prevent the whitewashing of history and stop the US from repeating it with another war in the Middle East. If you have not had an opportunity to check out this issue, you can view it online at [vvaw.org/veteran](http://vvaw.org/veteran). While you are there, you can browse the archives of all of VVAW's newspapers published since 1971!

Because of supporters like you, VVAW is able to publish the newspaper in time for Memorial Day and Veterans Day each year. *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 PTSD and Agent Orange since its first year of publication in 1971. It continues to serve as a unique and essential voice sharing veterans' experiences and opinions. **Your financial support keeps *The Veteran* going with free semi-annual issues sent out to over 17,000 supporters across the country.**

Veterans organizations like VVAW have been advocating and organizing for stronger protections for GI's and veterans and their allies. VVAW joined the many voices raised in calling to rebuild the fractured VA system and to protect VA whistleblowers speaking out against the systemic problems. Congress passed Senator Sanders' Veterans Access, Choice, and Accountability Act of 2014, which will help build up the VA's infrastructure. VVAW signed on to the Bad Paper campaign, to help veterans get discharge upgrades, and in September, the Department of Defense announced that it would begin a process to reconsider bad discharges for Vietnam-era veterans. Despite progress in some areas to protect GI's and veterans, most legislative efforts have fallen short. The US Senate voted down both Senator Gillibrand's Military Justice Improvement Act and Senator Sanders' Veterans Omnibus Bill earlier in the year. We face even more challenges now after the mid-term elections shifted the balance in Congress.

**This is why we need your continued support.** The US seems trapped in repeating history, in entering into another unnecessary and illegal war, and creating another generation of veterans fighting in an unjust conflict. The rampage ISIS has been carrying out is wrong and yes, the international community should address it. But the US led response of bombing ISIS targets in Iraq and Syria is the same knee-jerk reaction that produced the current chaos in the Mideast. When has bombing ever solved anything? It has repeatedly been the gateway to a much deeper and bloodier conflict. After the mid-term elections, President Obama called on Congress to authorize more funding and more troops to be sent to Iraq. Sending in more soldiers as advisors seems very reminiscent of the early days of Vietnam. VVAW believes that the US can be part of an international effort to bring stability without putting more troops in harms way.

President Obama, now the fourth president in a row engaged in war with Iraq, seems doomed to follow Lyndon Johnson's legacy after Vietnam. Obama, like Johnson, began his presidency with a much-needed focus on domestic reform. Johnson launched "The Great Society," which included the Civil Rights Act, the Older Americans Act, and the creation of Medicare. But he ended up being remembered most notably for escalating the US' role in the Vietnam War. President Obama took office with promises of closing Guantanamo, immigration reform, and healthcare reform. His leadership led to the greatest social reform since Johnson through the creation of the Affordable Care Act ("Obamacare"). But he has fallen short on many of his other promises and seems to be leading us back to an unnecessary and illegal war. Will his legacy be another war in the Middle East?

Join VVAW in calling on President Obama and Secretary Kerry to end the illegal bombings in Iraq and Syria and to withdraw our bombers and "boots on the ground." We are killing innocent men, women, and children in the process. We are galvanizing the very people we want to "protect" by bombing cities where there are not clear enemy targets, including urban and rural targets with civilians and terrorists living side by side. There are other ways to have an impact, and a positive one at that. The US has other strengths beside weaponry and bombs. If we truly want to eliminate terrorists like ISIS and Al Nusra, we have to be part of an international effort to provide support and resources, not bombs and casualties. We can't continue to be the source of destabilization, expect to end terrorism by bombing, sponsor "friendly" jihadist groups, then walk away with our hands clean and a "victory" in our pocket. We need your support to keep up the pressure on Obama and Kerry.

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 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

Ann Hirschman

Brian Matarrese

Joe Miller

Susan Schnall

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, justice, and for decent benefits for all veterans. Donations to VVAW are tax deductible. You can also donate online at [www.vvaw.org](http://www.vvaw.org).

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