



# 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 the important work that we began in 1967.**

Over the last forty-seven years we have carried out the struggle for veterans, peace and justice. My name is Joe Miller and I am a member of the VVAW Board. Fifty years ago, I was serving on board the USS Ticonderoga during the Tonkin Gulf incident.

**Thanks to your support, we have been very busy this spring!** In mid-May, VVAW published the Spring 2014 issue of *The Veteran* in time for Memorial Day. *The Veteran* is a free semi-annual newspaper sent out across the country to over 17,000 individuals and organizations. *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. If you did not receive a copy of *The Veteran*, you can view it online at [www.vvaw.org/veteran](http://www.vvaw.org/veteran).

The Chicago chapter of VVAW joined our younger brothers and sisters of Iraq Veterans Against the War (IVAW) for Memorial Day to remember our fallen comrades. The event – sponsored by VVAW, IVAW and Veterans for Peace (VFP) – included speakers from IVAW, VVAW, and VFP as well as the National Nurses Union. This union represents the nurses who work at the Veterans Administration. The event also featured Jesus "Chuy" Garcia, Cook County commissioner and former state senator, as the keynote speaker.

A few days after Memorial Day, the two-day Chicago Homeless Vets Standdown was held at the Armory. Every year, VVAW is honored to provide volunteers to help with cleanup the day before and then to help staff the kitchen during the Standdown. Over 760 guests and 200 volunteers were fed over two days. VVAW also provided cleaning supplies and utensils for the Standdown. In addition to free meals, homeless veterans are able to receive medical triage, meet with various social service agencies, and get free haircuts and supplies. The Chicago Homeless Vets Standdown is sponsored by: the VA, VVAW, Viet Now, VFW, and IVAW.

**Without your ongoing support, VVAW could not help organize for peace, justice, and the rights of all veterans of all eras.**

As an organization that has, and continues to, struggle for veteran's rights and benefits, we are compelled to share a veteran's perspective on the most recent scandals rocking the Veterans Administration (VA). We have learned in the past month that the secret patient lists at the Phoenix VA contributed to the deaths of more than forty veterans and prevented 1,700 veterans from seeing a primary care provider at the Phoenix VA. This is horrendously tragic for veterans to have to wait so long to just get through the door to see a primary care doctor. But it is also not new. The VA is the largest health care system in the United States and the demand is growing. Vietnam-era veterans are now beginning to seek out care from the VA for Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), conditions related to Agent Orange exposure and much more. At the same time, we've created a new generation of veterans that desperately need access to health care at the VA. This means that 700,000 new patients were added to the system in a few years.

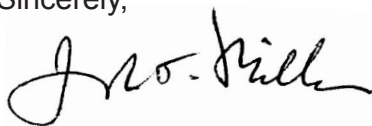
There are those in Congress who succeeded in their call for Veterans Affairs Secretary Shinseki to resign, and they are also calling for VA care to become privatized. But they are simply using the Phoenix VA scandal as a lightning rod for their own agenda. These are the same elected officials who do not care that veterans with less-than-honorable discharges do not have access to VA services. The US Senate voted down both Senator Gillibrand's Military Justice Improvement Act and Senator Sander's Veterans Omnibus Bill this past spring.

These are the same officials who fought against expanded Medicaid, which would have provided health care to 250,000 veterans in the states that choose not to expand the program because they were not required to. Our country has an access to care problem, regardless if you are a veteran. There was a time where I would not have stepped into a VA building to get care. But things HAVE changed and the services and care have improved. Former Secretary Shinseki had spearheaded the effort to decrease the backlog in processing veteran disability claims, which has gotten so much better in the last year. It is a shame that Shinseki, not those who kept his hands tied, has been forced into being the fall guy for the latest scandal. Now is not the time for politicians to be reactionary or to use this tragedy to further their own agenda. Instead, it is the time for us to fight for a stronger VA system that can meet the needs of ALL veterans.

**VVAW will continue to struggle for veterans**, by collaborating to host events like the Homeless Veterans Standdown, by supporting other organizations in their efforts to fight for veterans, and by giving veterans and their loved ones a place to share their stories in *The Veteran*. VVAW has also signed on to the Bad Paper campaign being led by Swords To Plowshares. The campaign is fighting to protect veterans who have received less-than-honorable discharges, which prevent them from accessing VA healthcare, benefits and more.

**So we need your continued support. We hope you can make a tax-deductible contribution to support VVAW's work, at whatever level.** Every donation, no matter the size, enables us to carry on the struggle for veterans' rights by issuing our free semi-annual newspaper, sustaining our continued efforts to fight for the benefits for all veterans, and collaborating with other organizations to help homeless veterans. **Again, thank you for your continued support to further VVAW's mission of peace, justice, and the rights of all veterans.**

Sincerely,



Joe Miller  
VVAW Board Member

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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