



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

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"All my brothers and sisters in Vietnam Vets Against the War went over to Vietnam, and they pulled the triggers and they dropped the bombs. They did the actual genocide. They did the actual ecocide. They removed people from their ancestral homes. They stole food. But, one thing that has to be remembered is that we were nothing more than a trigger finger for the American society."

— Barry Romo, Antioch College, Yellow Springs, Ohio, January 1973

Dear Friend,

Longtime Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW) member Barry Romo had just come back from his second trip to Vietnam. He represented VVAW on a peace delegation with Joan Baez, Telford Taylor and Rev. Michael Allen, delivering letters and packages to American POWs right outside of Hanoi. They were invited over by the Vietnamese government. What no one knew at the time, was that Nixon was about to start the Christmas bombings in 1972. The US military planes dropped over 20,000 tons of explosives on and around Hanoi over that ten-day period.

When Barry came back, he immediately hit the road to spread the word of what had happened, to talk about VVAW, and to build the movement to end the war in Vietnam. Archivists at WYSO, a public radio station in Yellow Springs, Ohio, recently uncovered Barry's entire speech and aired a two-piece story in February on Barry's journey from enlistment to anti-war protester.



We can see the importance of Vietnam Veterans Against the War (VVAW), then and now, by remembering and reflecting on the past and making those experiences and lessons integral to today. By uncovering some of the stories and coverage of VVAW, we can help build our own archives and provide a valuable tool for those fighting for peace and justice today. **With your continued support of VVAW, we can continue to preserve VVAW's legacy and fight for the rights of all veterans.**

One of the reasons Barry went as a VVAW delegate to Vietnam, was because VVAW saw the importance of working with the Vietnamese people. We saw that they were fighting for their country and that the US was the aggressor. Barry saw firsthand the damage Nixon's bombings did to the Vietnamese people. VVAW worked to stop the war and for years worked for the normalization of relations with Vietnam and the Vietnamese people.

We have continued to work with the Vietnamese people, whose country and people are still devastated by the US war fought on their homeland. VVAW has fought to raise awareness on the effects of Agent Orange since the 1970s. In recent years, we have worked with the Vietnam Association for Victims of Agent Orange/Dioxin (VAVA) to raise awareness of the continuing Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. VAVA is a Vietnam-based organization of victims and activists fighting for victim's treatment, remediation, and recognition of the ongoing poisoning from the US dropping dioxin-laced Agent Orange during the Vietnam War.

In December 2015, six members of VAVA came to New York and to Washington DC to speak to members of the US Congress, Vietnam-era veterans, and peace and justice activists about the continuing affects of Agent Orange on the Vietnamese people.

VVAW was part of the delegation – along with Iraq Veterans Against the War, Veterans For Peace, Vietnam Agent Orange Relief & Responsibility Campaign, and Children of Vietnam Veterans Health Alliance – that met with a series of legislators to educate them about these issues, and attempt to pass federal legislation to help the Vietnamese. After a meeting with the delegation, Tim Reiser, a Congressional staffer for the Senate Appropriations Committee, said in his 25 years working with Congress he has never met with a delegation of both US war veterans and Vietnamese.

Back in New York, many public events were organized for the VAVA members to speak out. At a VVAW-VAVA dinner, VVAW presented VAVA with a check for \$5,000. This money will help build 2 houses in the Quang Binh province for Vietnamese victims of Agent Orange. This area was heavily bombed by the US during the war. VVAW members in attendance were so moved that they also personally contributed to VAVA as well.

VVAW member Ed Damato was deeply affected by the VAVA members' stories. He was part of the last official trip made by VVAW to Vietnam back in 1987. Per Odman, a Marine vet and longtime VVAW member shared stories with one of the VAVA delegation members, General Rin, about their times in Khe Sanh back in 1968, and the path that led them both to fight for justice for the Vietnamese people today. The VAVA delegation felt that this trip to the US was their most successful yet. VVAW had a part to play in that, and you have an important part to play in continuing to fight for justice for the Vietnamese people.

We understand the demands on everyone's limited resources. **We are deeply thankful when our members and supporters make tax-deductible donations to VVAW's work, at whatever level.** Your donation enables us to carry on VVAW's legacy, whether it is through our efforts to work with the Vietnamese to fight for justice around Agent Orange, or documenting our legacy through our Archives Project. **We thank all of you for your continued support.**

Sincerely,



Bill Branson
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.

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