



VIETNAM VETERANS AGAINST THE WAR, INC

PO Box 355, Champaign, IL 61824-0355 (773) 569-3520

www.vvaw.org
vvaw@vvaw.org

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"We did a lot of nonviolent actions throughout the years. We were good at it.

The Vietnam War ended in 1975. The US Navy even visits the country now. PTSD is recognized and there are Vets Centers across the country. The VA now recognizes twelve Agent Orange related disabilities, not just chloracne.

When I received successful treatment at the Milwaukee VA hospital for prostate cancer in 2019, I rated an automatic 100% disability rating because it is one of the twelve conditions recognized as caused by the defoliant. My disability decision took 65 days, not 650 days.

You now have your own assigned Dr. and Nurse. PTSD treatment is in groups or one on one. I now love the VA. I guess VVAW's 'War on the VA' worked! It took a while, but I'm a proud old VVAW member."—John Lindquist, The Veteran, Spring 2021

Dear Friends,

As we look back at all the events we organized to stop the war 50 years ago in 1971, we should be amazed at everything we accomplished. From the large national actions to the regional to the local, VVAW emerged in 1971 as a major force. We learned, we struggled, we grew.

As John points out, some of our victories were long in the making, but we have many things to be proud of. We lost a lot of comrades along the way, but those of us left are not ready to sit back in our rocking chairs and whittle away our time.

One of those who led us through many of those struggles was Annie Bailey. After a long struggle with her health, Annie has left us.

"Annie stood out for her willingness to lead, for the depth of her commitment to VVAW and veterans, and for her audacity; she was not afraid to get directly in the faces of bureaucrats, VA or otherwise, and she could become a human bullhorn at a moment's notice—boy, could she ever! I can still hear that unique voice echoing in my head."—Annie Luginbill

We will be paying tribute to her in the Fall 2021 issue of *The Veteran*. You can share your memories of Annie on the VVAW webpage www.vvaw.org/anniebaileyguestbook/index.php

VVAW has abided by Mother Jones' mantra "Mourn the dead and fight like hell for the living." While we pay tribute to Annie and others we have lost recently, we need to continue our struggle for those still with us. As the past year has shown, and as John points out, the challenges the VA faces are probably the most relevant right now to our aging membership.

President Biden campaigned on a bold platform to modernize and refresh VA hospitals and

clinics across the country to "serve our veterans better" and ensure the VA "continues to lead in providing 21st-century care." At the end of March, he followed through on that pledge with a proposal — the American Jobs Plan — that includes \$18 billion to improve VA hospitals, two-thirds of which are over 50 years old.

Biden's plan calls for \$3 billion to immediately rectify unsafe or inefficient conditions inside VA health care facilities, upgrade buildings to support the growing number of women veterans, and enhance campuses so that aging veterans can better access high-quality health care more quickly.

Any delay in that VA infrastructure improvement will jeopardize the health and wellbeing of millions of veterans as well as the workers who have dedicated their careers to caring for veterans. Indeed, infrastructure improvement has been made even more critical because so many veterans have lost their jobs — and thus their health insurance — due to the COVID-19 pandemic and are now seeking VA care. Legislators who promise to improve the lives of veterans should unite behind the plan and push for further funding in the future.

Vets who want to fight like hell for the living; contact your congressional rep now and let them know that the VA matters to us. Improve it, don't privatize it!

While some restrictions are easing up, don't forget your friends and comrades in the struggle. Everyone who can needs to reach out and make a call or email or zoom or whatever. We can't let this current period push any of our friends over the edge. Let's make ourselves available!

We are deeply thankful when our members and supporters make tax-deductible donations to VVAW's work, at whatever level. Your contributions to VVAW help us keep distributing *The Veteran*, to our members, friends, and supporters. Your donations also keep our website going, where we have every issue of VVAW's newspaper online as well as archives of many other articles, photos, and videos. Your donations allow us to make VVAW's legacy not only accessible to all through our website but also to archive them for generations to come. We thank all of you for your continued support.

In solidarity,



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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