

## Legislative Priorities Policy Initiatives

Annually, our Government Affairs Committee develops VVA's National Legislative & Policy Initiatives. Each National Committee and Task Force assists in the development, compilation, and advancement of our National Agenda. A few policy initiatives and legislative priorities affecting women veterans are listed below.

- Seek no less than .5 FTEE position for all VA Women Veteran Program Managers with added time for Lead VISN Program Manager.
- Seek legislation & funding for VA benefits to children of all veterans, who suffer birth defects attributed to service in Vietnam.
- Seek to make women veterans a priority in next VA Homeless Grant and Per Diem Capital & Per Diem Only grant.
- Seek to have VA commission a follow-up study to the "Survey of Female Veterans: A Study of the Needs, Attitudes, and Experiences of Women Veterans".

Since its beginning, Vietnam Veterans of America is committed to the equitable inclusion & involvement of women veterans at all levels and within all arenas of the organization, unified in the advancement of their issues.

We seek continued diligence and oversight from the VA in providing staff competent in gender specific care and knowledgeable of veterans and the impact that military service has on their health care.



**Vietnam Veterans of America**  
**P.O. Box 64299**  
**Baltimore, MD 21264-4299**  
**1-800-VVA-1316**  
**<http://www.vva.org>**

### MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: M F

Home Phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

Work Phone: (        ) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Eligibility

Vietnam and Vietnam-Era veterans who served on active duty in the U.S. military (for other than training purposes) between February 28, 1961 – May 7, 1975 (in-country Vietnam), or between August 5, 1964 – May 7, 1975, for Vietnam-era veterans. Return this application along with a copy of your DD Form 214.

— 1 year - \$20  
 3 year - \$50

Term:  
 — Life Membership  
   \$250 (age 49 and under)  
   \$225 (age 50 - 55)  
   \$200 (age 56 - 60)  
   \$150 (age 61 and over)

Payment Option: — Check            — Money Order  
                           — Credit Card (Visa, MC, Amex)

Credit Card # \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



# Women Veterans

Women Veterans have been an integral part of Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) since it was founded in 1979.

As a leader in moving the agenda of women veterans, the pro-active approach of Vietnam Veterans of America benefits all women who served in the military regardless of time or place, both now and into the future.

## **Purpose**

The Women Veterans' Committee, as a representative body, is the voice of those who seek strength and support in resolving problems and addressing concerns related to all women veterans. The Committee identifies issues and needs specific to women veterans and develops strategies to address and resolve them.

Our goals are accomplished through communication, representation, advocacy, and outreach on behalf of women veterans. The Women Veterans' Committee maintains a watchful stance as a guardian of equitable care and benefits for women veterans. The Women Veterans' Committee establishes legislative priorities and actively advocates Congress to secure the passage of responsible and just legislation that women veterans have earned.

## **Progression**

In the Spring of 1979, Linda Van Devanter met and discussed the concerns, issues, and needs of women veterans with a number of the founding members of Vietnam Veterans of America. It was then that VVA made its commitment to women veterans.

The Women Veterans' Committee began as the Women Veterans' Project in the Spring of 1979. By a VVA National Constitutional amendment in 1999, the Women Veterans' Committee attained Standing Committee status at all levels of Vietnam Veterans of America.

## **Accomplishments**

VVA Women Veterans' Committee pushed for the first Report on Women Veterans, resulting in the 1982 GAO investigation of VA services to Women Veterans.

VVA was a major force in calling for the first Congressional Hearings on Women Veterans in 1983. This resulted in the passage of Public Law 98-160 that established the VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans.

VVA testified in the Congressional Oversight Hearings (1985 - 1994), crafting the legislative agenda for improved services to women veterans in all government agencies.

VVA Women Veterans' Committee presented testimony and assisted in the drafting of legislation, resulting in Public Law 102-585, The Veterans Health Care Act of 1992. This landmark victory, in the long struggle by women veterans to assure continued recognition and support for their specific health care programs, broadened the context of PTSD to include care for sexual trauma associated with military duty. In 1996 & 1999 we successfully advocated for the extension of VA sexual-trauma treatment (MST).

VVA identified the need for a more formalized process to address the issues of women veterans. As a result of VVA's efforts, in 1994, legislation was passed to create VA The Center for Women Veterans.

VVA actively participated in the process that resulted in the National Center for PTSD—Women's Health Services Division.

This Committee works with the VVA Task Force for Homeless Veterans, assisting

with legislation for homeless women veterans. In 2000, VVA testified and assisted with the legislation for benefits to children with birth defects born to women who served in Vietnam & made service-connected mastectomies eligible for VA Special Monthly Compensation. In 2004 testified to make permanent VA authority for MST care. Members have and do serve on a number of VA Advisory Committees.

## **Our Members**

Women have served this country with great pride in all branches of the Armed Forces. The role of women in the military is varied, diverse, and expanding.

VVA National Women Veterans' Committee illustrates this diversity. Members and advisors of the Committee are volunteers from both enlisted and officer ranks. They served in Vietnam, stateside, and worldwide with a broad range of duty assignments, occupations, and experiences. Diversity is the element that helps the Committee identify and respond to the needs of all the women veterans.

## **Historical Line of the Chair**

Linda Van Devanter, Women's Project

Mary Stout, Women's Project

Lily Adams

Leslie Feldstein

Cheryl Nicol

Linda Schwartz

Agnes Feak

Marsha Four, present Chair