



# Vietnam Women Veterans

Spring 2011

Dear Sisters:

Countdown to the next VVW Conference is less than a year, mark your calendars: **April 26 - 29, 2012** in Biloxi, MS. Details will be in the next Newsletter.

One of our members is trying to gather information on illness/diseases that our women are suffering and may be related to service in Vietnam. She would like to know your illness/disease, where you were stationed in Vietnam and when. If you will provide the information, you may send it to me ([jurgevich5@aol.com](mailto:jurgevich5@aol.com)) and I will send it on to her.

Very little information is available about the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration Commission. I am sure more information will be out in the future. Their WEBSITE has been launched: <http://www.vietnamwar50th.com/> I do have one request concerning a slide show. The people putting the slide show together want to use photos that are on our website. If you object to their use, I will need to know no later than July 15, 2011. Otherwise I will assume you have no objections.

**VIETNAM WOMEN ERA VETERANS STUDY:** I have received the following info from Dr Kathy Magruder concerning the status of the study:

Things are really going well with the study! As you know, Open Enrollment is over, and we are preparing to send out our first wave of Study Invitations in May. We anticipate another wave of Invitations early in the Fall (if not sooner). The mailed Invitations include the written questionnaires, and for the women who complete those, we will follow with the telephone survey.

We are very thrilled to be at this stage, and we're crossing our fingers that we will have a very strong response rate. We appreciate all the help and support that you've provided.

Several members have contacted us concerning the VVW Blue Vest. Contact: LePhCo, Inc., Attention: Ms Phyllis, 135 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Zanesville, OH 43701. Phone:

(740) 453-6966. Current Cost is \$12.95 for the vest plus \$0.25 a letter. I hope to have a picture with information on costs for the November/December letter. We usually wear these vests at our Conferences and any other events regarding Vietnam Women Veterans.

Mary Hay Wilson is the Nomination Chairperson for the VVW Officers for the years 2012-2014. Enclosure #1 is the Nomination Form, which needs to be back to Mary by December 31, 2011. Please take this nomination seriously and get people involved, including yourself.

**FOR VIRGINIA VETERANS:** The State of Virginia's VA Medical Center has a Rural Health Van-Based Program to all areas within our catchment area to put on Enrollment Events and Health Education Classes to assist Veterans, to access, as well as living healthier lifestyles. They would like to put together some female-only events in the hopes to attract more female Veterans. If you will give me permission to give your name, address, phone number, and e-mail, I will pass the information to Kevin Amick, Rural Health Integrator, VA Medical Center, Hampton, VA.

**FOR OHIO WOMEN VETERANS:** The Ohio Department of Veterans Services Advisory Committee on Women Veterans and the Department of Veterans Affairs, VA Healthcare System of Ohio is sponsoring the Ohio Women's Veterans Conference on Saturday October 8, 2011 in Columbus, OH. For further information, call (614) 752-8941 or visit website: [www.dvs.ohio.gov](http://www.dvs.ohio.gov)

I just returned from the National Association of State Women Veterans Coordinators, Inc. (NASWVC) held in Madison, WI. The purpose of NASWVC is to exchange ideas, information and training to facilitate reciprocal veterans benefits and services for Women Veterans and secure uniformity, equality and effectiveness in providing those benefits and services to Women Veterans; furthermore, to identify issues of concern to the Women Veterans community and develop recommendations to address those concerns through legislative, programmatic and outreach activities.

The Conference opened with the Presentation of Colors by Wisconsin Army National Guard. The Invocation was by Denise Rohan and the National Anthem, led by June Miller. Larri Gerson then took the Roll Call. The President's Welcome was conducted by our own Precilla Wilkewitz. Christine Sinicki, Wisconsin State Representative, welcomed us to Wisconsin.

The first Speaker was General Rita A. Aragon, Secretary of the Oklahoma Department of Veteran Affairs. What a dynamic speaker to start off the Conference!!!! She gave us a short rundown of her career, starting out as an enlisted woman and retiring as a Major General. General Aragon has been involved in several Study Groups and Commissions concerning Women in the Military. She pointed out that the Combat Exclusion Policy is not a law, it is a Department of Defense Policy. General Aragon is dedicated to Veteran Affairs and for those of you that live in Oklahoma, she is a real friend.

Ms Beth McCoy, Region Office Director, St Louis, Missouri, then gave us an update on Veterans Benefits and what goes on in her Regional Office. She pointed out that there is an increased demand on the VA due to the economy and aging Veteran population (does that mean us??). This all has had an effect on time in processing VA Claims. Claims can now be submitted on line at: [vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp](http://vabenefits.vba.va.gov/vonapp). The VA is working overtime to process claims. In Fiscal Year 2010, decisions were made on one million plus Disability Claims. Ms McCoy also pointed out that currently there are 22.7 million living Veterans and that more than 1.8 million are women.

The next speaker was Dr. Linda Schwartz, Commissioner of Connecticut Department of Veteran's Affairs and President, National Association of State Directors of Veterans' Affairs (NASDVA). Members of NASDVA are tasked by their Governors as the office of prime responsibility for providing services to veterans and are uniquely qualified to be a vital resource which can augment Federal programs, improve the identification of needs, coordinate local resources and ultimately enhance the quality of care and services to America's veterans and their families. NASDVA works to exchange ideas and information between states and the Federal Government. Dr. Schwartz emphasized how important it is that the states and Federal Government work together. She is

very committed to continuing her strong advocacy for Veterans that began over 30 years.

Congresswoman Tammy Baldwin, Wisconsin Representative, a forceful supporter of civil rights and an advocate for those in society whose voices, too often, are not heard, discussed some of her workings in Congress. She wants equality for all Veterans, battles for VA Benefits and money for Veterans. Congresswoman Baldwin is a leading advocate for Health Care and a proponent of Energy Independence and Renewable Fuels. She emphasized the importance of working together and thanked NASDVC for the job they do. She led successful efforts in the House in 2009 to pass expanded Hate Crimes Legislation.

Our next speaker was Dr. Patricia Hayes, Chief Consultant for Women Veterans Health Strategic Healthcare Group. She has significant expertise in sexual trauma and recovery, serving for seven years as Victim Services Coordinator at Pittsburgh Action Against Rape, a Non-Profit Counseling Service. Dr Hayes has expertise in Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling with Veterans experiencing combat-related PTSD. In the past year, she has successfully worked across the Veterans Health Administration to expand initiatives for Women Veterans Health Care into a broad range of areas of importance, including Cardiac Health, Reproductive Health and Birth Defect Prevention, and full evaluation of care provision to the increasing number of Women Veterans. She has also promoted comprehensive primary care to Women Veterans, including to the unique population of women with physical disabilities. Dr. Hayes works across Federal agencies, such as Department of Defense, and Health and Human Services, to enhance the provision of quality care to Women Veterans.

Young Captain Kristin Boustany, Wisconsin Army National Guard, Joint Force Headquarters Sexual Assault Response Coordinator, Service Member Support Division, was introduced. She coordinates and oversees implementation and execution of the Joint Sexual Assault Prevention & Response and Domestic Abuse/Violence Prevention Programs for the 10,000 members of the Wisconsin National Guard. Unfortunately, all these problems are cultural, as well as military. At least in this day and age, the military acknowledges these problems and strives to take action as necessary.

Wednesday morning opened with a panel on Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Military Sexual Trauma (MST). The Panel was made up of female veterans who served in a Theater of Operations. I will not list their names out of respect for their privacy. All three of these women were proud that they served and may have stayed in the military if they had different experiences. The panel brought to light both physical and mental problems that many of our women still face. My opinion is that the Military needs Programs like Captain Boustany has in the State of Wisconsin.

The next Speaker was Elaine Westermeyer, Women Veterans Coordinator, VA Regional Office in St. Petersburg, FL. She is a Veterans Benefits Counselor, Personal Trauma and Women Veterans Coordinator (WVC) and Alternate Homeless Veterans Outreach Coordinator for the VA Regional Office. Elaine works with the Veterans Home Administration (VHA), Veterans Centers, and Service & Community Organizations. She is involved in Transitional Housing Programs for Female Veterans in Florida. The VA in St Petersburg has Points of Contact for Women with Special Needs. Elaine works one-on-one with Veterans throughout the Personal Trauma Claims Process. Hopefully, your VA can provide these Services.

Dr Irene Trowell-Harris, Director, Center for Women Veterans , Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) , gave us an Overview of the Center for Women Veterans (CWV). The Overview included: CWV Mission, Role, Women Veteran Demographics, Challenges and Initiatives, Enhancing Outreach to Women Veterans, Improving Care and Increasing Utilization, VA Benefits and Services, What Women Veterans Tell Us They Need and Want, How You Can Help, Joint Coordination and Collaboration. How Women Veterans Can Obtain Local Assistance, VA Advisory Committee on Women Veterans, 2011 National Summit on Women Veterans Issues, White House Interagency Council on Women and Girls, Upcoming and Recent Key Events, Recent Legislation, Current Issues, VA Priorities, Summary - Where We Are e Going, and How to Contact the Center. I will address some of the areas listed in the Overview, If you have specific questions on the ones I have not addressed, please, feel free to let me know.

## **HOW WOMEN VETERANS CAN OBTAIN LOCAL ASSISTANCE:**

Full-time Women Program Managers exist at every VA Health Care Facility

[www.publichealth.va.gov/womenhealth/](http://www.publichealth.va.gov/womenhealth/)

Women Veterans Coordinator at every VA Regional Office  
[www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1](http://www.va.gov/directory/guide/home.asp?isFlash-1)

Homeless Veterans Coordinators:

[www.va.gov/homeless/index.cim](http://www.va.gov/homeless/index.cim)

Minority Veterans Program Coordinator at every VA Healthcare Facility, Regional Office, and National Cemetery

[www.va.gov/centerforminotiryVeterans/](http://www.va.gov/centerforminotiryVeterans/)

**The 2011 NATIONAL TRAINING SUMMIT ON WOMEN VETERANS** will be held on July 15- 17 at the Hyatt Regency Washington on Capitol Hill, Washington DC to provide training to participants on Women Veterans' issues, review issues from the 2008 Summit, and review the VA's progress on these issues. Visit [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) for the latest details. How to contact the VA Center For Women: Department of Veterans Affairs, Center for Women Veterans (OOW), 810 Vermont Ave., NW, Washington, DC 20420 or [www.va.gov/womenvet](http://www.va.gov/womenvet) or email: **OOW@mail.va.gov**

A Memorial Ceremony was conducted by Precilla Wilkewitz and Gen. Wilma Vaught, Women in Military Service For America Memorial (WIMSA). This was a very touching Ceremony.

After lunch, Gen. Vaught, Founder and President of the Board of Directors of WIMSA, gave an update on WIMSA. I was amazed to find out that less than 10% of Women Veterans are registered with WIMSA. The highest number of women registered are from World War II and they also are the highest supporters. This is our Memorial, I hope each of you are registered.

Our next Speaker was Verna Jones, Director, National Veterans Affairs and Rehabilitation Commission of the American Legion. She oversees Health Care and the

matters involving Claims to include the Board of Veterans Appeals and Special Claims Unit, the Appeals Management Center/Washington Regional Office, Department Service Officer School and liaison to the Department Service Officers located in 57 Regional Offices. The American Legion provides assistance in Veterans matters. Being a Life Member myself, I would encourage you to get involved in your local Chapter.

Thursday morning we were briefed by Lt. Col. Cynthia Rasmussen, Combat Stress Officer, U.S. Army Reserve at Fort Snelling on PTSD and MST. She is on the Combat Control Team at the 88<sup>th</sup> Regional Readiness Command (RCC), the Army Reserve Command. This Team cares for the Mental Health needs of Service Members and Families in the Region during the entire Deployment Cycle to include Reintegration. At Enclosure 2, is a Service Member Self Emotional Assessment that is given to Service Members. It is good to see the Military has recognized and addresses the issues on PTSD and MST, maybe they have learned this from our experiences in Vietnam. I am very happy for today's Military Members.

Precilla Wilkewitz made closing remarks. It was a pleasure to attend the NASWVC Conference. Not only do we get to see what is current in the Military in taking care of their Members and Veterans, it also puts one in touch with Women Coordinators whom we can call on in time of need. During the past year, I have called upon many of the Coordinators for information and assistance, and as a result, we have located several of our Sisters that were on our Search List. NASWVC is an Organization that looks out for we Female Veterans.

**AGENT ORANGE:** A new rule expands the list of health problems the VA will presume to be related to Agent Orange and other herbicide exposures, adding two new conditions and expanding one existing category of conditions. For Vietnam Veterans, VA is adding Parkinson's Disease and Ischemic Heart Disease and expanding Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia to include all chronic B Cell Leukemias, such as Hairy Cell Leukemia. More information can be found at

[www.vbava.gov/bin/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm](http://www.vbava.gov/bin/21/AO/claimherbicide.htm)

and

[www.ublichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange](http://www.ublichealth.va.gov/exposures/agentorange)

If you do not have access to a computer, let me know and I will see if I can find you a point of contact.

Again, some of our members have been very generous in contributing to the Administrative Fee for the Newsletters and we thank you. Right now we are okay with this Fund, but it decreases with the mailing of the newsletter. If you care to contribute to the Administrative Fund, please send your contribution to: Mary Hay Wilson at 11123 Luttrell Lane, Silver Spring, MD 20902. Checks should be made to: **Vietnam Women Veterans**. Along, this line, I would love to have information to include in this Newsletter - this is your Newsletter. Send to me at [jurgevich5@aol.com](mailto:jurgevich5@aol.com) or send to me in the postal mail.

Have a Happy and Safe Summer.

**Biloxi April 26 - 29, 2012.** Details will follow in November/December Newsletter.

Nancy Jurgevich  
President

## Officers

President: Nancy Jurgevich  
2206 Spring Creek Circle  
Palm Bay, FL 32905

First Vice: Nancy Keough  
4089 El Bosque Dr.  
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Second Vice: Kathleen Fontana  
2501 E Westcott Ave  
Visalia, CA 93292

Third Vice: Aurora Toth  
11221 109<sup>th</sup> St SW  
Lakewood, WA 98498

Secretary: Ryhnell Stoabs  
700 E 3<sup>rd</sup>.  
Winfield, KS 67156

Treasurer: Precilla Wilkewitz  
13680 Milldale Rd  
Zachary, LA 70791

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President: Nancy Jurgevich

First Vice: Nancy Keough

Second Vice: Kathleen Fontana




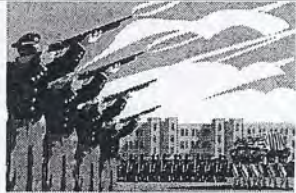





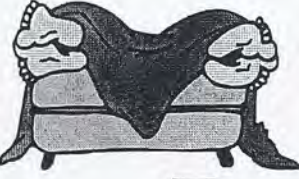






Third Vice: Aurora Toth

Secretary: Ryhnell Stoabs

Treasurer: Precilla Wilkewitz

# SERVICE MEMBER SELF EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT

Place a number from 1 to 5 in the boxes of the pictures that are similar to things you or a loved one is experiencing: with 1 meaning "not much of a problem" and 5 meaning "happens daily." Be honest - it's a sign of progress when you know something isn't going or feeling right; it's easier to work on it and make it less of a problem. If you have placed a 3 or greater in any of these boxes it would be a good idea to talk with someone.

<p>Do you get angry easily?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Do you isolate yourself?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Do you drink alcohol more often than you used to?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p><b>Do loud noises bother you?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Do you think about Suicide?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Do you feel emotionally numb?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Do you feel guilty for surviving, or guilty for still not being there?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Do you feel depressed?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
 <p>Do you feel road rage?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Are you having relationship problems?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Do you feel anxious or have panic attacks?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p><b>Do you feel uncomfortable in crowds?</b></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Do you have trouble sleeping or nightmares?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Are you hyper-cautious about security and safety?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Are you having trouble reuniting with loved ones?</p>  <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Are you avoiding people and interests you used to enjoy?</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

NATIONAL VIETNAM WOMEN VETERANS, INC.

Nomination Chairman

Mary Hay Wilson-Chairman



Email: [mhwilson@gmail.com](mailto:mhwilson@gmail.com)

In anticipation of election to the 2012-2014 officers, who will serve the National Vietnam Women Veterans, Inc., and in preparation for the 2012-2014 Administrative Years, the nominating committee is prepared to accept nominations from the members of the association. In accordance with VWV, Inc., By-Laws, Article IV-Officers; Item (1) the Election of Officers will be conducted every two years with the officers serving a two-year term. The election of the VWV, Inc. officers will be conducted during the final Business Meeting scheduled at the National Conference as follows:

1. Individuals elected to the position of President, Vice-Presidents, Treasurer, and Secretary shall be female enlisted, and/or female staff and line officers who have served "In Country." All Officers shall present, to the Board of Directors, through the Secretary, a copy of their DD-214, if applicable, prior to being elected or appointed. (Vice Presidents are: Vice-President, 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice-President and 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President.)

Please submit the names of individuals you wish to nominate to serve the VWV for the 2012-2014 years. If you wish to serve as an officer, please indicate on the nomination form. Please **return this entire completed sheet with Nomination Form attached** to me before December 31, 2011. If you have any questions—please do not hesitate to call me. I look forward to seeing all of you in Biloxi, MS at the Sixth Annual VWV Conference, April 26-29, 2012.

In the Spirit of Friendship,

Mary Hay, VWV Nomination Chairman

2012-2014 VWV Nomination Form

Dear Mary:

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to nominate: \_\_\_\_\_ for the Office of \_\_\_\_\_. I am willing to serve as: (List Title or Titles of interest) \_\_\_\_\_ for the 2012-2014 VWV Administrative years.

SIGNATURE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_ STATE \_\_\_\_\_

ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ PHONE-HM# \_\_\_\_\_ WK# \_\_\_\_\_

FAX # \_\_\_\_\_ CELL # \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL \_\_\_\_\_