

# VIETNAM WOMEN'S MEMORIAL FOUNDATION, INC

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Affiliations noted for purposes of identification only.

Fall 2012

## Dear Friend of the Vietnam Women's Memorial

The Department of Defense kicked off its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Vietnam War Commemoration at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Memorial Day, 2012. The office of commemoration is working closely with the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation to support our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemoration of the Dedication of the *Vietnam Women's Memorial* on Veteran's Day 2013. I hope you can join us that day!

This year we fielded a record number of requests asking about women's service during the Vietnam era. As our younger generations witness the increasing need for women to keep our military strong they look for research,

lessons learned, historically accurate material, and oral histories. The efforts of the Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation (VWMF) have transformed conversations and images of women's service of the Vietnam war, affirming that women share the crucible of war.

We are grateful to you for standing with these heroic women, helping to assure their legacy is remembered. We give special thanks to the estates of Elizabeth Wilson and Alice Dyer for generous bequests endowing the VWMF. These gifts provide support for our ongoing education and service mission to include the collection and archiving of oral histories at



the Library of Congress.

And again, we give you our special thanks for continuing to donate what you can.

*Diane Carlson Evans*  
Vietnam '68-'69

## 20th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial

Begin your planning now to join us for the 20th Anniversary of the Dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial, **Veterans Day 2013**. While planning is ongoing, the events listed here are definite.

### StoryCorps:

The VWMF will again sponsor the StoryCorps program on November 9th and 10th. This extraordinary program records oral history interviews. We invite military and civilian women veterans to contact us to schedule an interview time. You and your interviewer, a family member or friend, will conduct your interview in the comfort of a suite at the Embassy Suites hotel. A sign up form is included in this letter. Apply early!

### Theater:

Infinite Variety Productions will bring their touching production of "A Piece of My Heart" by Shirley Lauro to Washington D. C. for our Anniversary Celebration. Tentatively, we've scheduled performances for Saturday Nov 9th at 6 PM and

Sunday Nov 10th at 2 PM. This play, with thousands of performances nationwide, has long been an heartfelt expression of the stories of the military and civilian women who served in Vietnam.

### Giftshop:

The VWMF gift shop will be open on the 2nd floor of the Embassy Suites Hotel on November 10th from 9 AM to 4 PM. This is a great chance to get mementos of the Memorial.

### Reading of Names:

The VWMF seeks at least 30 volunteers to read the names of women who served during the Vietnam era who have died. The reading will be conducted between 5 and 6 PM Sunday, Nov 10th at the Vietnam Women's Memorial. Anyone wishing to volunteer should contact the VWMF directly. A volunteer form is included on page 4 of this newsletter.

### Candlelight Ceremony:

A special candlelight ceremony will be conducted at the Vietnam

Women's Memorial at 6 PM Nov 10th.

### Storytelling at the Vietnam Women's Memorial: In Their Own Words:

Sign up early to present your story on Veterans Day, Nov 11th. Join us at the Vietnam Women's Memorial to experience a wide range of messages scheduled in 30 minute intervals throughout the day with a break between 12 PM and 2:15PM. Email [vwmfdc@gmail.com](mailto:vwmfdc@gmail.com).

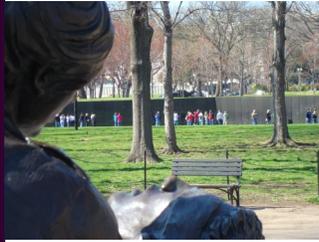
### 1 PM Ceremony at the Wall:

Join us at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial for the special Veterans Day ceremony celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the dedication of the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

### Host Hotel:

Once again, the Washington D. C. Embassy Suites will be our host hotel. It's located at 1250 22nd St. NW (1-800-EMBASSY). There is a block of rooms for our event.

This holiday weekend (Nov 9th and 10th, 2013) is a terrific time for your group to plan a reunion!



## Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation

### VISION

*Sustaining a living and lasting memorial to women who acted with courage, passion, and purpose during the Vietnam War.*

### MISSION

*Sustain the Vietnam Women's Memorial as a national memorial on the grounds of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. to honor the hundreds of thousands of American military and civilian women who served their country throughout the world during the Vietnam War.*

*Identify the military and civilian women who served during the Vietnam War; educate the public about their roles, facilitate research on these women and their families and promote healing.*

## 50th Anniversary Commemoration of the War Kicks off Memorial Day

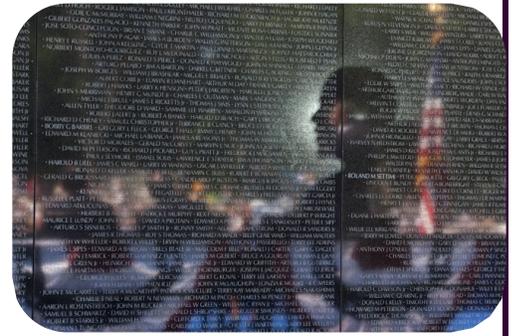
On a blistering hot day, Memorial Day Ceremonies at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial marked the first event of many to Commemorate the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War. The commemorative program, sponsored by the Department of Defense and authorized by Congress honors veterans and their families, recognizes contributions and sacrifices on the home front, and provides Americans with an understanding and history of the Vietnam War.

President Barack Obama addressed the audience: "[We] come to this wall--to this sacred place--to remember. We can step towards its granite wall and reach out, touch a name. Today is Memorial Day, when we recall all those who gave everything in the darkness of war so we could stand here in the glory of spring. We honor each of those names etched in stone--58,282 American patriots. We salute all who served with them. And we stand with the

families who love them still...

And so a central part of this 50th anniversary will be to tell your story as it should have been told all along. It's another chance to set the record straight. That's one more way we keep perfecting our Union -- setting the record straight. And it starts today. Because history will honor your service, and your names will join a story of service that stretches back two centuries.

Let us tell the story of a generation of servicemembers - every color, every creed, rich, poor, officer and enlisted -- who served with just as much patriotism and honor as any before you. Let's never forget that most of those who served in Vietnam did so by choice. So many of you volunteered. Your country was at war, and you said, "send me." That includes



our women in Vietnam -- every one of you a volunteer. Those who were drafted, they, too, went and carried their burden--you served; you did your duty...

Today, we're calling on all Americans, and every segment of our society, to join this effort. Everybody can do something. Five decades removed from a time of division among Americans, this anniversary can remind us of what we share as Americans. That includes honoring our Vietnam veterans by never forgetting the lessons of that war."

Follow the progress of the commemoration program at [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com).

## Tropical Paradise in Vietnam

Colonel Sharon Bystran, USA, Ret., began her speech at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial on Veterans Day, 2011, reflecting back 46 years..."It is hard for me to believe that I saw the distant shores of Qui Nhon, Vietnam and thought; wow it looks like a tropical paradise. The vision quickly vanished as I landed on shore with doctors, nurses, medics and other hospital personnel to establish the 500 bed 85<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital. We arrived with great anticipation and expectation, but with little knowledge of how to set up a field hospital.

As tents were set up and supply boxes opened we began to realize that we were assembling a World War II vintage hospital. The lack of modern equipment and supplies was a shock. We were soon to find out what challenges heat, humidity, monsoon rains, old equipment, and inadequate supplies would bring.

In the early weeks, the hospital had several small surges of 5 to 15 casualties that were treated in a reasonably efficient manner. Then, in early November the 1st Battalion, 7<sup>th</sup> Cavalry's venture into the Ia Drang Valley and battle with the North Vietnamese Regular Army brought the true realities of war home to us. Suddenly we were inundated with casualties. Surgery went around the clock -64 surgeries were done in the first 24 hours and it continued on for several days.

During that year we admitted more than 14,000 casualties. On our worst day 106 wounded were admitted during a two-hour period.

It was how we pulled together as a team, the camaraderie when we saw what we could accomplish under the worst of circum-



stances and still provide quality care to the many wounded that arrived at our door. You can only understand the bond among those who have successfully served together in a war, if you have been there. There is no greater bond."

Sharon is the editor of, *85<sup>th</sup> Evacuation Hospital, Phu Tanh Valley & Qui Nhon, South Vietnam 1965-1966*. The book is a history of the unit's deployment and first year in South Vietnam. 1993.

## Vietnam Veterans Inducted Into Army Women's Hall of Fame



(back row: COL (R) Jan Southby, Claire Stearnes, MG (R) Donna Barbisch, COL (R) Jane Hudak, Nancy Jurgevich, Prescilla Wilkowitz, middle row: Dr. Doris Allen, COL (R) Collette Kaiser, Diane Evans, LTC (R) Sharon Stanley-Alden, BG (R) Connie Slewitzke, Carole Gittman, front row: COL (R) Darlene McLeod, BG (R) Pat Foote)

Hundreds of women gathered on Capitol Hill, March 13, 2012, to induct into the Army Women's Hall of Fame all those who served in Vietnam. The afternoon event was hosted by the U.S. Army Women's Foundation, and followed a morning event, the 4th Annual Army Women in Transition Symposium, where former military leaders and civilians discussed the changing roles of

women serving in the Army and the challenges faced by female soldiers after they leave the Army -- finding employment after the Army, for instance. In the afternoon, retired Maj. Gen. Dee Ann McWilliams, who now serves as president of the foundation, discussed the challenges faced by women who had served in Vietnam. "The women who served in

Vietnam did it for their country -- in terrible conditions," she said. Those women, she said, dealt with adversity, and the nurses there dealt "with things they could not ever have been trained for; the trauma, the shock, the tropical diseases, compounded all the things that happened." When those women officers and enlisted came home, she said, Americans didn't take notice of the work they had done. "They didn't even make a ripple at home. We want to change that today, and do our part."

More than a dozen women took the stage at the event representing all Vietnam Veterans. All had served in Vietnam in the limited roles for women at the time.

Visit [www.armywomensfoundation.org](http://www.armywomensfoundation.org) to learn more about the foundation and its programs.

## VWMF Gratefully Acknowledges Dedicated Volunteers

Every Memorial Day and Veteran's Day, rain or shine, in heat or cold, two women drive from Pennsylvania to work all day at the Vietnam Women's Memorial handing out booklets and inviting visitors to listen to Storytelling. These two dedicated volunteers are U.S. Navy Commander (Retired) Anne Devney, a Vietnam era veteran, and her friend Rebecca (Becky) Daugherty. When Anne attended the Memorial's dedication in 1993, she wondered

how many of those celebrating Veteran's Day had been her patients. Although she was not recognized by any attendees, it was a time to remember her colleagues and patients. For Becky, who suffers from a serious chronic illness, the Memorial inspires women who did not serve in Vietnam to realize that there is hope and healing after difficult and unspeakable events in

their own lives. We are grateful to have these dedicated volunteers and hope you will come meet them at our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary celebration if not before.



## Announcements

The DOD is preparing for the **Commemoration of the 50th Anniversary of Vietnam War**. Visit [www.vietnamwar50th.com](http://www.vietnamwar50th.com) for information on upcoming events. DOD is asking veterans to share photos or videos for the Commemoration web site galleries. Digital files may be emailed to [mktg\\_vnwar50th@wso.whs.mil](mailto:mktg_vnwar50th@wso.whs.mil) or send discs to their mailing address, available on their web-site.

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The VWMF is working with the Library of Congress to prepare the Foundation's archive for donation to the collections of the Library of Congress. Soon researchers will be able to access the story of the campaign to establish a Memorial honoring women who served during Vietnam at the Library of Congress.

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The **VA Long Term Health Outcomes study of Vietnam era women** has entered Phase

III of data collection. This study assesses the prevalence of posttraumatic stress disorder, other mental and physical health conditions and disability for women Vietnam veterans and will explore the relationship between PTSD and other conditions and the Vietnam deployment experience. For more information on the study, contact the Perry Point Cooperative Studies Coordination Center at (410) 642-2411 x6122 or x5291.

**Update your entry  
in our Sister Search  
database by  
emailing  
[wvmfcd@gmail.com](mailto:wvmfcd@gmail.com)  
or calling the  
VWMF  
(866) 822-8963**



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**A Legacy of  
Healing and  
Hope**

## Memorial Dedicated to First Woman to Die in Vietnam



On Saturday, June 16, 2012, the 2LT Carol Ann Drazba RN, US Army Nurse Corps Memorial was dedicated in Scranton

PA. Lieutenant Drazba was the first American military woman to die in the Vietnam War (February 1966). She and two friends, 1LT Elizabeth Jones and CPT (Dr.) Thomas Stasko, all stationed at the 3rd Field Hospital in Saigon, had left for a hard-earned short R&R at Dalat when their helicopter crashed after it became entangled in high tension wires. All aboard, including four members of the flight crew, were lost. Their names are on Panel 05E, Line 046 of the Vietnam Memorial in Washington DC.

The memorial consists of a statue of Carol Ann Drazba in the uniform of her Scranton State General Hospital School of Nursing, including cap and cape, and was unveiled by her surviving brother and sister with 22 family members also attending. Behind the statue is a low wall of black granite, echoing the Vietnam Memorial, and it is flanked by two

black benches commemorating local residents who gave their lives in Vietnam. The spot is well shaded and placed in front of the Gino Merli Veterans Center in downtown Scranton - once site of the Scranton State General Hospital. The honored guest speaker was BG Wilma Vaught, (USAF, Ret) President of WIMSA, and the keynote speaker was MG Jimmie O. Keenan, Chief, Army Nurse Corps. Two members of the VWMF Board of Directors, Ms. Edie Meeks, RN, and LTC Sharon Stanley-Alden, (USA, Ret) represented the Foundation and presented a memorial wreath.

To the hundreds of veterans and family members in attendance, Carol Ann Drazba remains a hero and inspiration to selfless service. Her spirit remains very much alive in that special place.

Donations may be sent to:  
Carol Ann Drazba Memorial  
c/o Friends of the Forgotten  
527 E. Scott St  
Olyphant, Pa 18447  
[Nepa.friendsoftheforgotten.org](http://Nepa.friendsoftheforgotten.org)

## A Vietnam Veteran's Return to Active Duty

I had the privilege of serving 27 years in the Army Nurse Corps (ANC), from 1966-1993 (with a break in service), including tours around the US, a year in Vietnam, the Gulf War and a final eight years at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. After I retired, I moved on to the civilian world with several terrific jobs over the next fifteen years. I thought things were going along swimmingly!

In summer 2008 I received an email from the ANC asking if I was interested in returning to Active Duty for a few years as a Nurse Case Manager (NCM). Well, I had never served in that role - clinically, I was in critical or emergency care - but it only took a nanosecond or two to send back my reply: YES! Even better, I was given the opportunity to serve in Germany, where my older son and his family were stationed at the time. Within two months, I packed up household goods and felines, and off we flew to our new home: Bamberg and the Warrior Transition Unit (WTU); more specifically, 2nd Plt., C Co., Warrior Transition Battalion-Europe.

Both the job and the environment were

wonderful, providing ample opportunities for helping Wounded Warriors recuperate and for personal travel around Europe.

WTU NCMs coordinate all aspects of patient care for recovering servicemen and women, whether ill or injured, when complex recovery or rehabilitation involving multiple medical services will take more than about six months and precludes performance of regular duties. Soldiers are formally assigned to a WTU, where their only job is preparation for either return to duty or for transition to civilian life as a contributing Veteran and citizen after medical separation. The 3+ years I spent in that capacity were among the most challenging, interesting and rewarding I spent in the ANC, and the perfect coda to a wonderful career.

## Enhanced Efforts by VA to help Women

The Veterans Administration has rolled out enhanced services especially for women wrestling with serious PTSD, traumatic brain injury, substance abuse, depression or sexual trauma (MST). More and more VA facilities have established dedicated facilities

for the care of women. To receive services for MST, veterans do not need a VA service-connected disability rating. For information, ask your local VA clinician or contact the VA's general information hotline at 1-800-827-1000.



# Planning to attend the Vietnam Women's Memorial 20th Anniversary Celebration?

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## Volunteer

During our celebration week, there will be a variety of activities available for volunteers. Those include staffing a reception desk for the StoryCorps project Nov 9th and 10th, helping staff the giftshop on Nov 10th, volunteering for the Candlelight Ceremony the evening of the 10th, handing out books during Storytelling on the 11th. These are just a sample of the opportunities available. Send in the form below or contact us by email or telephone to let us know you are interested. We'll contact you to match you according to your interest.

## Reading of the Names!

The VWMF will conduct a Reading of the Names of women who served during the Vietnam era and have since died. If you would like to join in this reading, contact us using the volunteer form below. All readers will need to meet at the Vietnam Women's Memorial at 4:45 PM on November 10th, 2013. If you know of a woman who died recently who served during the Vietnam era and you want to ensure she is recognized during this touching ceremony, list her name below and send or email it to us.

## StoryCorps

Sign up on the form below to be scheduled for an oral history interview during our 20th Anniversary Celebration. You must come with a friend or family member who will conduct your interview. Include your contact information and a brief paragraph about your service during the Vietnam era on the form below. Interviews will be conducted at the Embassy Suites Hotel in Washington on November 9th and 10th, 2013.

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## Call on me! I want to Volunteer with the Memorial's 20th Anniversary Celebration!

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

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

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Yes, I would like to help read the names Sunday afternoon at 5 PM.

Please provide this information and we will contact you about the volunteer opportunities we will have in Washington, D. C. for the period November 8 through Nov 11, 2013.

I want to ensure the following women are recognized during Reading of the Names:

\_\_\_\_\_

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## I want to participate in the oral history program (StoryCorps)

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

Relation of Interviewer to you: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tell us about your service:

**VIETNAM  
WOMEN'S  
MEMORIAL  
FOUNDATION**

1735 Connecticut Ave. NW  
3rd Floor  
Washington DC, 20009

Phone: 866-822-8963  
E-mail: vwmfdc@gmail.com

### A Legacy Of Healing And Hope

The Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation maintains an active program educating the public about the roles women played during the Vietnam era. We respond to many dozens of queries each year to provide information, find resources to support local programs, and assist students at every level of education. Using our Sister Search database we assist historians and researchers wishing to conduct studies that offer outcomes that would assist Vietnam veterans as well as the veterans of today's Global War on Terrorism. We reach out to today's veterans to mentor and promote healing. Our "Storytelling at the Vietnam Women's Memorial: In Their Own Words" is a day-long program at the Memorial every Memorial Day and Veterans Day. During this day a variety of speakers offer their insights related to their experiences, memories and hopes for the future. Contact the VWMF if you are interested in presenting. Join us every Memorial Day and Veterans Day at the Vietnam Women's Memorial.

### Seeking Stories of Disabled Veterans

Gail Prenskey is looking for personal stories to include in developing a book and film project about disabled veterans after they return home from war, and how our country has responded to them.

Gail is looking for personal accounts-copies of letters, diaries, written essays, and visual material-by disabled veterans and their family and friends. She would like to share their experience in dealing with the effects of war and their disability after returning from WWI, WW II, Korea, Vietnam, Persian Gulf War, Iraq and Afghanistan.

If interested, please send your material along with your contact information to:

Gail Prenskey  
4000 Cathedral Ave.  
NW #505B  
Washington, DC 20016

gprenskey@sprintmail.com



Enclosed is my tax deductible gift of:

- \$1000
- \$500
- \$250
- \$100
- \$50
- \$25
- \$10
- Other

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**YES! Count me in on the campaign to help the VWMF meet its dream to carry on its programs of education, Sister Search and research.**

Remember —Your gift will help, no matter the size of your donation. So please use the enclosed envelope to mail your tax deductible contribution to:

**Vietnam Women's Memorial Foundation  
1735 Connecticut Ave. NW, 3rd Fl  
Washington, DC 20009**

Visit the VWMF website or the enclosed catalog to see the many VWMF products available. Vietnam Nurses with Dana Delaney DVD is available for \$21.95. Also see our new posters and postcards.



If you wish to make your donation or place your order online, or if you wish to place a credit card order, visit our web-based marketplace ([www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org](http://www.vietnamwomensmemorial.org)).



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