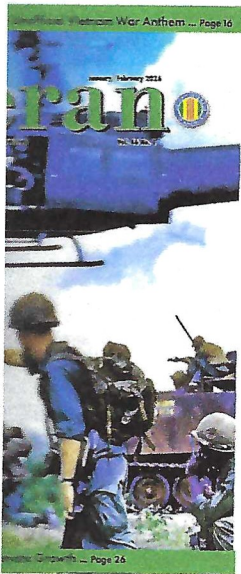


LETTERS



Since *Nautilus* was decommissioned in 1980 and crew members who served before that year are getting older, our organization's membership of crew members has become difficult to maintain. That led us a few years ago to make a decision about our legacy.

We chose to open our membership rolls to family members and descendants of *Nautilus* crew members, as well as to the shore-duty crew that maintains the Historic Ship *Nautilus* at the Submarine Force Museum in Connecticut. We changed our by-laws to allow this and also to allow family and legacy members to serve on our board of directors. Only a former crew member, however, can serve as president.

This has allowed us to keep membership robust and interest in *Nautilus* alive. And it will help ensure *Nautilus*, her 1954-80 operational crew, and her many great accomplishments remain known to Americans forever.

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WPLE

's Message in the January issue was exciting and timely.

I, the U.S.S. *Nautilus* and later joined served a total of 42 years ago, I was elected *Nautilus* Alumni

Send your letters to Sean Venables, Editor, *The VVA Veteran*, Silver Spring, MD 20910 or email svenables@vva.org

BOOKS OF ARTS OF WAR

On the 40th anniversary of Arts Editor Marc Leepson's column, which first appeared in the March 1986 issue.

The column occasionally ran reviews of books, movies, stage plays that dealt with the Vietnam War and Vietnam. Book editor Jeff Stern asked Marc, who had been contributing since October 1985, to write a monthly column with reviews about artistic endeavors dealing with the war and its

"I don't think there would be material to fill a column every month. But that never proved to be a problem. In fact, by the time we had so many new books to review that we started Books in the column in the magazine."

has run in every issue since then. Arts of War moved

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Mission 75: Responsible Planning for VVA's Future

BY TOM BURKE

At the most recent Conference of State Council Presidents and Board of Directors meetings, I introduced what I call **Mission 75**, or, as some have suggested, the **Veterans Victory Alliance**. I introduced it to help clarify a few issues for the membership: first, how we keep our name; second, how VVA can exist beyond March 1, 2028, which has been viewed as something like a firm drop-dead date for VVA.

Regarding our name, as I will detail later, Mission 75 would protect the existing copyrights on the name of organization in perpetuity. As for our drop-dead date, I simply don't do it that way. Instead, I see March 1, 2028, as a planning date by which we must decide what comes next.

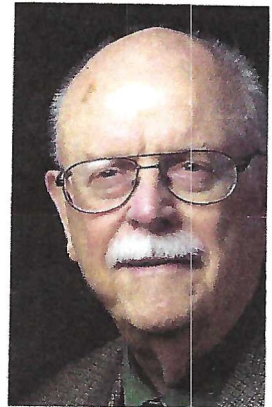
In my proposed solution, Mission 75 would be a division of VVA — a visible promise, made in the lead-up to the decision date, that VVA's mission will endure beyond time, safeguarded by veterans who served after us and bound by the principles that founded our organization.

PURPOSE AND STRATEGIC IMPERATIVE

Vietnam Veterans of America was founded to ensure that veterans were never again left behind or turned against one another. To do that, we face a different challenge, not of relevance or mission, but of demographics. Demographics alone demand responsible planning. Mission 75 will ensure that the mission, authority, and legacy of VVA will endure without disruption.

NOT A MERGER, NOT AN ACQUISITION, NOT A TAKEOVER

The Mission 75 initiative is not intended as a merger, acquisition or consolidation of VVA. It is a long-term, phased transfer of operational capacity and institutional knowledge. Vietnam War veterans would retain leadership authority for as long as they are willing and



Our committee works closely with the VVA Government Affairs staff to keep us focused

Veterans Act (S.1231/3395; Lactation Spaces for Veteran Moms Act (S.778/H.R. 1646); and Veterans Families Health Services Act of 2025

Chairwoman, VVA Advisor. ADVISORS: MARSHIA FOUR, Linda Blankenship, Sandy Miller, Bev Stewart.

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MISSION 75

Continued from 3

reach and relevance while keeping Vietnam War veterans at the center of authority and identity. This expansion would also allow VVA to remain an organization made up entirely of military veterans.

TRAINING FUTURE GENERATIONS OF LEADERSHIP

Mission 75 would create a structured environment to train and prepare future generations of veterans to assume increasing responsibilities in VVA. This plan allows younger veterans to ease into positions of advocacy, governance support, and leadership under the mentorship and stewardship of Vietnam veterans, thereby preserving VVA's institutional memory and culture.

OPERATING WITHIN THE EXISTING 501(C)(19) AND CONGRESSIONAL CHARTER

This plan operates fully within VVA's current 501(c)(19) status and our Congressional Charter. It does not require a full charter rewrite or organizational reform. Only minimal technical adjustments, such as name-continuity provisions, would

be required, and then only at the point when no Vietnam War veteran remains eligible to serve in national leadership.

PRESERVING THE STRENGTH OF THE 501(C)(19)

Maintaining 501(c)(19) status preserves VVA's unique strength as a veterans service organization, including its advocacy, authority, identity, and congressional recognition. Transitioning to a 501(c)(3) would forfeit this hard-won status — something VVA fought decades to achieve and must protect.

CLARIFYING THE ROLE OF AVVA

The Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America operates as a 501(c)(3) and would remain a critical partner under the Mission 75 plan. AVVA could continue to grow in its associate and charitable role, but legally and practically, AVVA cannot inherit or transfer VVA's Congressional Charter. Mission 75, as a national division within VVA's existing structure, allows for seamless continuity without legal risk or loss of standing.

PERMANENT STEWARDSHIP OF VVA'S LEGACY

Mission 75 is designed to be the caretaker of all VVA history, titles, names, copyrights,

trademarks, wordmarks, and symbols. This guarantees the perpetual existence of Vietnam Veterans of America as a living institution.

This plan declares unequivocally that VVA's mission has no expiration date, while also ensuring that future generations of veterans do not abandon or work against one another. VVA's founding principle remains: Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another.

Q: What happens when no Vietnam veteran can serve in national leadership?

A: Only then would Mission 75 step in as the continuation force, through minimal technical changes that preserve everything that VVA stands for.

Q: What happens to VVA's history, name, and symbols?

A: They would be permanently protected. Mission 75 would be charged with stewardship of all VVA history, trademarks, copyrights, and symbols.

Q: What principle guides this entire plan?

A: *Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another.*

To have any chance of working, however, VVA members, through the delegates at a VVA Convention, will need to change our Constitution to open up membership to veterans who served after 1975 (Iraq, Afghanistan, Gulf War). These veterans are waiting to join us when we make this move. ♦