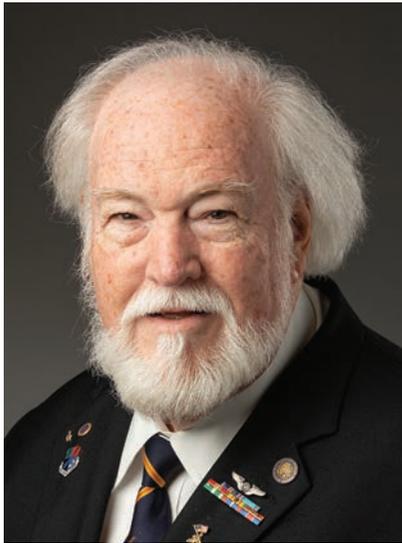




# 2021 VVA Candidate Statements

20TH NATIONAL BIENNIAL CONVENTION, GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

## NATIONAL OFFICERS



**John Rowan**  
President

I have had the privilege of serving as your President for the last sixteen years and thank all the members, Chapters, State Councils, and the Regional and At-Large Directors for having faith in me over these years and thank them and my fellow officers for their continued support.

Vice President Tom Burke has had to deal with serious personnel problems after we had to lay off staff last year. He worked with our Human Resources law firm to ensure that our personnel actions were fair and equitable and helped with our administration and staff issues as we lost some of our senior staff. We have also contracted recently with a human resources firm to enable us to take care of our staff as COVID restrictions change daily.

Our Treasurer, Jack McManus, has used his skills as a manager to keep us afloat as our fundraisers went through great difficulties last year, and our finance staff suffered cutbacks and changes. Tom and Jack's administrative experience has helped us immensely during these hard times, particularly with the use of lower cost consultants to take over some of our staff functions.

Our Secretary, Bill Meeks, has kept an eye on our Chapters and State Councils through these trying times and kept our Board of Directors functioning through Zoom meetings and online voting. He has also kept an eye on our Membership Department operations. Amazingly, despite our advancing age, our membership has been growing, setting new records every month. (An interesting statistic: VVA has eight members over 100 years old)

As Congress opened this year, the Democrats took charge of the House and Senate. Thus, the Senate and House Veterans' Affairs Committees found themselves with some new leaders. Sens. Jon Tester (D-Mont.) and Jerry Moran (R-Kans.) switched seats with Tester as SVAC Chair and Moran as the Ranking Member. Rep. Mark Takano (D-Calif.) stayed as Chair of the House Veterans' Affairs Committee. The new

Ranking Member is Rep. Michael Bost (R-Ill.), a former Marine. As always, we maintain relations with all Committee members, no matter the party. It is this steadfast bipartisanship that has kept VVA in good grace with all Members of Congress.

Perhaps, because of our constant activity on the Hill, the SVAC and HVAC both have been putting out a very large number of bills affecting veterans and their families. What was most rewarding was the fact that both the Senate and House, as well as most of the other Veterans Service Organizations, have decided that this is the year they are going to deal with toxic exposures. There are two major, almost identical bills going through SVAC and HVAC that, if passed, will go a long way to dealing with our health issues from Agent Orange to Burn Pits. During my annual testimony, I kidded Sen. Tester that it looks like they went through their files and put in the bill every leftover toxic exposure issue that had not been dealt with for the past fifty years, such as clearing up Agent Orange issues, such as adding Thailand, Guam, the Philippines, and Johnson Atoll, or adding radiation exposures from cleanups in Eniwetok and Palomares, Spain. We must work to make the final bill as comprehensive as possible, including a focus on the descendants of exposed veterans.

Our Government Affairs Department has had no peer in Congress. But between staff and consultant losses last year and the recent retirement of our Executive Director for Policy and Government Affairs Rick Weidman, we are down to one person, Sharon Hodge, our new Director for Policy and Government Affairs. Thankfully, she has been up to the job, and we hope to fill the vacancies soon.

Unfortunately, the fundraising losses in early 2020 forced *The VVA Veteran* to go virtual only. Thankfully, a reversal of our losses has enabled our award-winning newspaper to go back to limited print editions. Hopefully, as our fundraising returns, *The VVA Veteran* can fully return to pre-COVID levels. We thank our peerless staff for continuing to produce a wonderful and informative paper through these trying times.

Our Membership Department with guidance from the Membership Affairs Committee has persevered through changes in consultants, staff, technology, and structure.

The Finance Department, the Administration Department, the IT staff, and our Household Goods Program also keep our organization running efficiently. I want to thank all of them for their efforts.

The Veterans Benefits Department has also been dealing with the changes that have gone on in the VA as well as VVA. Thankfully, our Director, Ms. Felicia Mullaney, and all our staff are up to the task.

The Communications Department has brought us into the digital era with Facebook, Twitter, and other outlets, while getting our message out to the print and video media.

The Veterans Health Council Director, Col. Artie Shelton, M.D. (USA ret.) and his Deputy, Rebecca Patterson, MS. CPH, have represented VVA in var-

ious health forums during the pandemic. Col. Shelton orders you to get the vaccine. We may need a booster soon.

I thank the members, chapters, and state councils for the hard work you do on behalf of our veterans and families. You make us look good and give us the authority to work on your behalf in Congress and the VA. I thank you for your support and hope you will allow me to continue to serve as your President.



**Thomas R. Burke**  
Vice President

When I took the oath of office two years ago, my reason for seeking a leadership role was that I wished to be a part of any decision that would affect VVA's future. Little did I know how much I would be tested in moving our organization forward.

Events have taken place across our country, which no one would have ever believed. Our plans were being assembled to move into the future. COVID-19 struck, worming its way into just about every facet of our lives. For some, disruptions to everyday life were overwhelming. The functions of VVA were dramatically impacted.

The officers were forced to take drastic action. My role as Vice President took on a perspective that I could not have foreseen. During these last two years, I have been looking after the administrative side of the house—Veterans Benefits, IT, HR, and staff. Changes were made, and we brought on new people. The entire staff has performed well for our membership.

Also, I addressed the downsizing situation, unemployment, insurance problems, 401K distributions, and State Council and Chapter problems that were brought to my attention; I negotiated a couple of contracts for services to our members, as well as discipline situations, and much more.

I believe the officers reacted in the best way that we could have, given the circumstances. VVA's

major revenue sources disappeared in a matter of 48 hours. The business of our household goods program shuttered almost 100 percent. Most were forced to shut down, and 4,400 employees were laid off by our buyers.

All of us (officers) brought different backgrounds and talents to the forefront in dealing with this crisis. These talents/backgrounds proved to be a major factor in dealing with what had to be done in a short period of time. Many reports were made to the membership during these difficult times.

The officers were in constant contact and responded accordingly. As a member of VVA, I would expect nothing less. I can tell you I spent many sleepless nights rolling over in my head details of what could be or what might be or what should be. Ultimately, we made decisions that were incredibly difficult but in keeping with what we felt was best for both the organization and the membership. Decisions had to be made. At times we had no idea where these events might leave us. In the end, as it turned out, we made more right decisions than wrong. We reacted quickly and decisively. We changed our minds about some decisions, when that need arose. These efforts allowed VVA to see another day. We survived an unprecedented event to live again!

As we look back over what we have been through, I trust that we all have learned some lessons from events of the immediate past, that prepare us to better meet the future needs of our organization head on. I believe we are all concerned with our legacy efforts, as we begin to see ourselves aging out, but a bright future is sure to follow us. I am still of the belief that we should carry on as long as possible. As always, there is a never-ending agenda for Vietnam Veterans of America. We always have projects and legislation that we want to get passed.

At our upcoming Convention, many topics that have the potential to impact our future will be discussed. As most of you know, plans are being developed to take on VVA's legacy. We still have much to do in the immediate future. Decisions will be made, and you all need to be part of it. I urge you to come to the Convention and to make your thoughts known. I have said it before, and I will say it again. As a member of the National Board of Directors, I pledge to listen to you, the members, and hear your desires regarding the future direction of VVA. We all need to have our opinions heard. I am here for one reason, you, the Vietnam Veteran, your spouse, and your children. Most of you know I have been around VVA a long time. I am a proud life member. I have served VVA in many capacities at the local, state and national levels.

Leadership is important, no matter where our task may take us. I truly appreciate that the membership has put their trust in me over the last 25 years as a leader of this organization in various capacities at the local, state, and national level. Today, I ask for your support to re-elect me as your National

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## NATIONAL OFFICERS

Vice President. This position is so much more than a title. I consider it a privilege to serve our organization. It is also my passion, my commitment, and my dedication to VVA. I hope that you will agree to help me to continue my efforts for a second term on your behalf as your National Vice President.



### Jake Barsottini Vice President

Jake Barsottini was born in Beaver Falls, Pa., and graduated from Beaver Falls Senior High School, May 1970. He attended Slippery Rock University from July 1970 to July 1971. He enlisted into the USAF as a delayed enlistment to finish his first year at the University and entered active duty on August 11, 1971.

After basic training, Jake attended the Accounting and Finance School at Shepard AFB where he graduated with honors in December 1971. His first duty station was Sheppard AFB and while there in May 1972, he attained a war skill of Security Police and later became a marksman for a tactical neutralization team. Jake continued his dual career in Finance and Security Police.

Jake is married to his lovely wife Pamela and has three adult children. Jake furthered his education, obtaining an AAS in Financial Management, a BA in Human Resource Management, and two Masters' Degrees, one MBA in Finance, and a LLM Master of Law in Employment Law. Jake served as VP and COO for Employshare, Inc., a HR and Payroll Consulting Company from 2001 through 2011. He participated in lobbying Congress on behalf of the Society of Human Resource Management from 2008 through 2011 where he gained valuable experience on the Hill and with his State Legislature.

Jake is a proven leader in his industry and community. He served 8 years on the local school board as finance director and 5 years on his municipal council as finance chair. He was lauded for his work in both capacities reducing expenses and increasing reserve funds.

Jake served from December 1972 through April 1973 in the 16th Special Operations Squadron Ubon Royal Thai AB. In 1979, Jake was assigned as a Security Police Marksman on a team involved in Operation Eagle Claw, the failed attempt by the U.S. to rescue the Iranian Hostages in Iran. Jake served with

UN peacekeeping forces in Lebanon during the crises of 1983, again in Panama in 1989, Desert Shield in 1990, and Desert Storm in 1991. In addition to his varied assignments Stateside, Jake served at Aviano AB Italy, Decimomannu AB Sardinia, Bitburg AB Germany, with numerous temporary duty assignments throughout Europe, Africa, and the Middle East.

Jake's awards include three MSMs, three AFCMs, one AFAM, one Presidential Citation, five GCMs, two National Defense Medals with two Bronze Stars, and two Expert Marksmanship Medals. He was Airman of the Year twice, NCO of the Year twice and Senior NCO of the Year once. He is a graduate of the NCO Leadership School, the NCO Academy, and the Senior NCO Academy. Prior to Desert Shield, in June 1990, Jake was one of eight Senior NCOs selected by SAC to develop the Comptroller Warrior Challenge establishing a program of Joint Special Operations between Comptroller personnel, Security Services, Procurement and Logistics, to ensure personnel were combat trained and ready to perform at a high level when called upon. Today the AF has a program called Agile Combat Employment (ACE) which is a direct offshoot of the efforts put forth to ensure all career fields are combat ready and able to develop skills needed in the field outside of their primary AFSC.

Jake is currently the Executive VP and Treasurer of VVA PASC, Treasurer of VVA Chapter 862, our third largest chapter in the nation, and President of the Pennsylvania Veterans Assistance Fund. Jake assisted with the establishment of numerous VVA 501c3s as well as establishing AVVA as a 501c3 and setting up the Veterans Health Council, Inc., a Pa. 501c3. Jake received the AVVA Presidential Commendation Medal for his efforts. Jake has been an integral part of his State Council and his chapter, raising awareness of the needs of veterans and increasing revenue through unique fundraising skills. Jake is a true leader, an independent thinker and change agent that always moves any organization he works with forward.



### Bill Meeks, Jr. Treasurer

Hi, I'm Bill Meeks, Jr. I'm completing my fifth term as your National Secretary, and this term was full of challenges, to say the least. Loss of revenue

caused the budget to be frozen as our Household Goods Program took huge losses; the VVA national staff had to be downsized, which changed our SOP on handling business, and restrictions on social distancing caused numerous problems with holding any meetings at any level. Special meetings and E-Votes by the Board of Directors have kept business moving forward.

The Officers were holding Zoom calls several times a week, working to keep VVA open for business. President Rowan called special meetings on RingCentral which were recorded and placed on the website for the members to review. Vice President Burke was frequently in the VVA national office, working with VVA staff and addressing numerous problems with the building. Treasurer McManus held the financial picture under control and used sound judgement to improve our financial standing to keep operating. Slowly, things are improving and most of our state councils and chapters have held their elections. VVA will hold the National Convention in November, and I ask for your vote to continue as your National Secretary.



### Wayne (Doc) Reynolds Treasurer

I am seeking to be re-elected as Your National Treasurer. I promise to continue to be dedicated to communicate with each member. I have been accessible and committed to each member's needs. In my term as YOUR National Treasurer I have been determined to identify additional resources for VVA and insure all of our funds were spent wisely. We need to increase the percentage of our expenditures spent on services to members. I am decisive and understand my role and responsibilities emphasize service to YOU. I have been diligent in working with other Officers, Board of Directors, and State Councils.

During my terms as National Treasurer I have fulfilled my promise to be transparent in my actions. I have been very active in Contract Compliance and have had a busy term. My work for VVA included working on our relationship with our contractors.

Soon after becoming Treasurer I discovered significant problems with our implementation of the information technology project. An analysis and report to the BOD were completed, then we instituted changes to save VVA large amounts of money. I was assigned tasks to work closely in the oversight of our Information Technology and Finance Departments.

I am a member of the Conference of State Council Presidents and support their role in leadership of VVA. Vietnam Veterans of America is a vibrant 501c19 and I support its continuation and growth. I believe each member of VVA is entitled to honest and complete disclosure of the business of VVA. My cell phone number is published and I respond to the membership. I also support AVVA as a partner in service to veterans.

**PERSONAL LIFE:** Married to Carol Reynolds for 51 years. Father of two children (Paige is a DOD Engineer and Wesley is an Air Force Veteran and serves as a Neurologist in Denver). We have two grandchildren. I am the oldest of twelve children and my father was a World War II and Korean War Veteran. I receive VA 90 percent disability payments and still have a VA claim on appeal.

**PAST VVA and MILITARY SERVICE:** I am a Life Member of VVA and have served as your National Treasurer from August 2011 until 2019 and did not seek re-election due to an Agent Orange related Leukemia. Thank God, I am healthy now. I was also the National Treasurer from 2001 to 2003. I have been Alabama State President since 1998 and also served for three years as President of Chapter 511. I served in Vietnam with the 95th Evacuation Hospital and 22nd Surgical Hospital in 1968-69. I have been a member and officer of the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund, a 501c3, for several years. I assisted in raising funds to assist the Service Officer Program and other VVA-supported projects.

**EDUCATION AND EMPLOYMENT:** a Master's Degree in Finance from the University of Georgia and a Doctor of Education Degree from Auburn University. I am a retired Public School Superintendent and am a Registered Nurse. I am an elected member of the Alabama State Board of Education representing District 8. For 20 years I was the owner and CEO of my business.

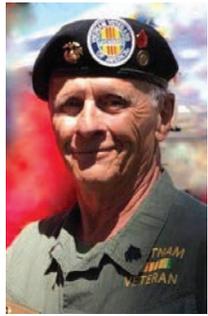
**VVA NATIONAL SERVICE:** has included the following National VVA Committee memberships: Finance, Public Affairs, Veterans Health Care, PTSD and Substance Abuse, VVA Constitution, Employment Training Business, and the Veterans Affairs as well as a former Secretary of the Conference of State Council Presidents.

**OTHER SERVICE ORGANIZATIONS:** Life member of Disabled American Veterans, Life member of the Veterans of Foreign Wars. Received the Paul Harris Award by the Rotary Club. I have been awarded the Bronze Medallion by the Chapel of the Four Chaplains. VVA has awarded me the Commendation Medal and the Achievement Medal. I was the Alabama Veteran of the Year in 2003. ■

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AT-LARGE

### Dennis Howland

At-Large Director



I am requesting the opportunity to continue to serve you, our members, as an At-Large Director. I currently serve as an At-Large Director, as National Public Affairs Committee Chair, and as President of the VVA Utah State Council. Your vote

will permit me to continue to serve our organization and to assist in the growth and future of Vietnam Veterans of America.

I have been a veterans advocate for more than four decades, routinely serving in positions of leadership and as a member of successful teams. I am a VVA Life Member; I established Utah's Chapter 1079 and the Utah State Council. I served as Chapter President and am currently serving as Utah State Council President. In 2016 President Rowan appointed me as Chair of the VVA National Public Affairs Committee. Our committee created the JROTC Cadet Medal program and the Eagle Scout Medal with a focus on VVA's legacy. I am currently a member of the VVA Government Affairs and POW/MIA Committees.

I served as a Marine for nearly eight years and in Vietnam in 1966 and 1967. I am a retired federal employee, and I retired a second time from the local school district as a Computer Tech. After my military service I served as a First Responder Firefighter/Rescue EMT, Engineer, and a Chief Officer. I have had extensive experience as a Public Affairs Officer, a radio DJ, and TV News Anchor.

My service to our nation's veterans includes as Chair, Project Development, Fundraising, and Construction of Utah's Replica Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall, dedicated July 14, 2018. I am a member of the team that developed, built, and dedicated a Vietnam Combat War Dog Memorial, dedicated in December 2020. I am honored to serve as a member of the Utah Governor's Veterans and Military Affairs Commission, this being my sixth year, and the County Veterans Advisory Committee. I have spearheaded or co-spearheaded five pieces of state legislation to honor Vietnam veterans and served on the Utah Governor's Veterans Advisory Council for three years. I have continually lobbied our congressmen and senators for support of legislation beneficial to veterans.

In addition, my veterans service includes originating the Northern Utah Vietnam Veterans Welcome Home Parade. I served on the Construction Oversight Committee for the Northern Utah Veterans Home and the Veterans Home Advisory Council for six years. I continue to work with our South Vietnamese community to honor U.S. veterans and worked with the publisher/producer of the book *Time to Honor* and the documentary *Journey Home for Vietnam Veterans*. The book and CD were distributed to 47,000 Utah Vietnam veterans and have been reproduced in five additional states and coordinated

and distributed by State Councils of Vietnam Veterans of America. Fifteen years ago, I brought back the Veterans Parade to Northern Utah after it had been absent for fifty years. I am a VFW life member and past Utah VFW Commander.

### Dottie Barickman

At-Large Director



Dottie Barickman was born in Nashville, Tennessee, and grew up in Columbus, Mississippi. She graduated from Northwest Mississippi Junior College in Senatobia, Mississippi, earning a BA in accounting. She attended Memphis State College (University) in Memphis, Tennessee, and completed the first semester of her senior year with a major in accounting. She is married, has one son, a daughter-in-law, and two grandsons. Barickman currently lives in Council Bluffs, Iowa.

Barickman joined the U.S. Air Force following the first semester of her senior year in college. She was stationed at Lackland AFB, Barksdale AFB, and Offutt AFB as a Computer Program Specialist. After serving four years in the Air Force, she started her professional careers as a Production Control Manager, an Insurance Underwriter, and a Human Resources Manager and Consultant. During her career, she was instrumental in developing a benefits department and an HR department. Barickman continues to work as an HR Consultant for *The Alliance Group* in Omaha, Nebraska. She served in the U.S. military with honor and has a distinguished professional and volunteer record, as well.

After her son graduated from college, Barickman became active in the local veterans' community, serving as an officer for the VVA Omaha Chapter 279; as President for the VVA Nebraska State Council for 17 years; as a member and 1st Vice Chair of the VVA Conference of State Council Presidents (CSCP); and as an Alternate Region 6 Director. She has joined and participated in various VVA committees, such as Agent Orange, Finance, Legislative, PTSD, and Women Committees. Barickman advanced to VVA At Large Director in 2013 and currently serves in that capacity as a Board member, as well as the chair of the VVA Budget Oversight Committee under the VVA Finance Committee. On the home front, she is currently leading the Nebraska Vietnam Veteran Memorial's Education-History Committee and has gained traction in the Nebraska community to build the first state Vietnam Veteran Memorial to "welcome" home all who served during the Vietnam War era.

Barickman has served at every level of the veteran community, including, but not limited to the following: Nebraska Veteran Home Board-Alternate; Nebraska Veterans Council; and Nebraska Governor's Round Table. Additionally, at

the VVA level, she assisted in the review of the VVA CSCP Welcome Guide (2016) and in the amending of the VVA Directors Handbook (2017); she served as VVA CSCP Committee Chair of the Political Action Committee; and continues to write articles as a director for *The VVA Veteran* on a regular basis.

Barickman has continued her service to community by coordinating and leading various projects such as the Offutt Air Force Base open house; *A Piece of My Heart*, which played both in Omaha, Nebraska, and Washington, D.C.; Region 6 workshops; the Vietnam War 50th Commemoration; fundraising; delivering keynote addresses; providing legislative testimony; and advocating for elder veterans. My Mission Statement: "My highest priority and commitment is to ensure that the veterans who served for us; will be served by us."

### Felix "Pete" Peterson

At-Large Director



I am running for reelection for the position of Board of Director-at-Large.

In April 1962, I was drafted and went on to serve enlisted tours with the 5th Special Forces Group and the Army Security Agency. After attending Officer Candidate

School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, I served various officer assignments that included Battery Commander and Battalion Commander.

During my career, I served two tours of duty in Vietnam; three tours of duty in Germany; a tour of duty in Korea; numerous tours stateside; and special assignments.

My military education includes the Command and General Staff College and the Army War College. After 31 years of military service, I retired at the rank of Colonel.

My civilian education includes a BS in Business Management from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma and an MA in Human Relations from the University of Oklahoma, with post-graduate work at the University of Oklahoma.

I served as the Program Administrator for the Agent Orange Class Assistance Program for the State of Oklahoma and as the Director of Veterans Family Services, where I still serve.

Nationally, I served as the committee chairman for the 2012 Leadership Conference, and I am currently serving as chairman of the Government Affairs Committee. I am chairman of the State of Oklahoma Veterans Council and the Chief Service Officer for the State of Oklahoma. I serve on VVA's Minority Affairs Committee, Convention Committee, and Veterans Benefits Committee. I am a life member of VVA.

### Gumersindo Gomez

At-Large Director



I would like to extend my appreciation to the membership that came together at the last Convention in the state of Washington two years ago. It was at that Convention that you, the membership, put your trust in me and elected me to a second term as

an at-large member of the VVA Board of Directors. In the trust that you placed in me I have tried to do the best with the mandate that you gave us Board members to represent you on the Board of Directors; that is, watching over the organization and ensuring what is best for the membership in VVA.

I remember clearly at the last Convention that the membership was very concerned about what is to happen to VVA at the end of the road. I have advocated on the Board to ensure that this business is clear and concise and reflects the members' wishes. I will continue in that path until we, the membership, achieve our wishes with the organization.

As you must be aware, I am the appointed Chair for the Minority Affairs Committee, a job that is very close to my heart, as a minority veteran myself. In these two past years we have been able to help our Vietnam Korean In-Country veterans with the proclamation that you passed at the Convention in their favor so they can get medical services through the VA for PTSD and Agent Orange contamination. With the territory of Puerto Rico and the resolution that you also passed at the Convention, we are moving in a very favorable manner so that the citizens of Puerto Rico can achieve equal treatment as citizens of the United States of America in comparison to the rest of the citizens in the country.

I will stand steady in continuing to do your mandate to the Board and continue to help those who can't help themselves.

### Richard W. Lindbeck

At-Large Director



Richard W. Lindbeck served in the U.S. Air Force (1963-67) and was Honorably Discharged in 1969. Lindbeck's service was in the Strategic Air Command (SAC) at two bases in the U.S. and one base in Vietnam—Tan Son Nhut AFB. Following his military service, he served twenty-nine years in the Wisconsin State Patrol (WSP), more than one-third as a Sergeant. Lindbeck provided security and supervision for three National Governors Conferences and all presidential visits to southeastern Wisconsin (1985-98) which included liaising with the Secret Service. Notable achievements in the WSP included the creation and implementation of specialized training programs and serving as a WSP Academy Instruc-

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AT-LARGE

tor: Armorers Program; Officer Survival Program; Drug Interdiction; Firearms; Firearms Instructor Development; Dignitary Protection; Diplomatic Immunity; and Accident Investigation. Lindbeck was instrumental in starting an Emergency Response Team, during which he was trained as a counter-sniper.

As a Life Member of Vietnam Veterans of America since 1991, Lindbeck has been an active member in his VVA Chapter 448, including being elected as Treasurer. While serving as a delegate to the Wisconsin State Council, Richard served as the WSC Secretary of the Membership Committee, was appointed and served four years as the WSC Sergeant-at-Arms, represented VVA WSC at VVA Region 6 Conferences, attended VVA Leadership Conferences, and served as a Wisconsin delegate to VVA Conventions since 2001-10th National Convention. Richard ran for and was elected as President of VVA WSC and has served with distinction for the past eleven years. During his tenure as WSC President, he assisted in starting two new VVA Chapters in Wisconsin.

Concurrent with his other duties, Richard has been an active member of the WSC Toxic Exposure (formerly Agent Orange) Committee and TEAM Wisconsin, which facilitates Toxic Exposure Town Hall Meetings in Wisconsin, parts of VVA Region 6, and at the VVA Leadership Conference held in Kansas.

Richard has been an active member of the VVA Conference of State Council Presidents (CSCP) for eleven years where he has served as a member, Second Vice-Chair, First Vice-Chair, and Interim Secretary. Additionally, Richard was appointed by VVA President John Rowan as the Credentials Chair for the 2017 (New Orleans), 2019 (Spokane), and 2021 (Greensboro) National VVA Conventions.

Lindbeck's commitment to veterans is not only reflected in his actions within VVA, the WSC, and his local VVA Chapter, but to the veterans he has assisted by serving on two veterans foundations, specifically the Veterans Assistance Foundation, Inc., and the Wisconsin Veterans Foundation, Inc., where he served on the Board of Directors as Secretary and President, respectively.

Also, Richard's numerous activities at the local, county, and state levels have not diminished his commitment to veterans. Richard remains committed to his brothers and sisters in arms as an active member in the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW), Disabled American Veterans (DAV), 40et8, Air Force Security Forces Association, Vietnam Security Police Association, Tan Son Nhut Association, and 377 Security Police Association.

### Sandie Wilson

At-Large Director



to make the lives of Vietnam veterans and their families better.

For the past 50 years, I have had the pleasure of providing health care and advocacy for my brother and sister veterans and their families. In addition to my many years of caring for soldiers on active duty, I have participated as a veteran

On the state level I held most of the leadership roles within the state council. With pleasure, I represented VVA on Michigan government commissions and task forces. These included the Michigan Veteran Trust Fund, Agent Orange Commission, and Commander of the State Commanders Group. I have been a veteran adviser for the VA hospital and VISN. For years I was an officer serving the homeless veterans in my state. Within VVA on the national level, I have been a Board member and participated in numerous committees. I know VVA very well.

Now that we have matured, we can reflect on our many accomplishments. We continue to grieve for those members who were an important part of the team but are no longer with us. At times we ask how long each of us has before we are forced to join that larger chapter. We also have to ask how long each of us will be physically able to continue our efforts.

I believe now is the time for the members to decide what is to become of VVA. Our members need to decide what we can accomplish, taking into consideration our age. Is it time to change our priorities and set goals and financing for what is most important in our limited time? With the majority of us retired, we have the time to work on VVA priorities, but it takes us twice as long to accomplish what we could in the past.

I desire to serve and represent our membership as VVA Director at Large.

### Jack Mattingly

At-Large Director



I am announcing my candidacy for election to the office of Director-at-Large.

Serving as VVA Kentucky State Council President, 2016 to present (VVA Life Member); served in 2015 as VVA 1st Vice President, Kentucky State Council; served on VVA Working Group II for the future of the VVA; founder and president of VVA Chapter 1104 in 2014; honored with the VVA Achievement Medal; appointed to Congressman Andy Barr's Military Affairs Outreach Committee; appointed to the Governor's Advisory Board for Military Affairs in Kentucky (two-year term); appointed by the Kentucky Secretary of State as a Commonwealth Ambassador; Chairman, Joint Executive Committee of Veterans Organizations (JECVO); Commandant, Marine Corps League Detachment 858, Kentucky; Marine of the Year, 2016 (Detachment); Judge Advocate Marine Corps League State Department; constructed The Traveling Kentucky Vietnam Wall, which is going around to every county in the state of Kentucky; Chaired bringing The Traveling Vietnam Wall (AVTT) into our county, where more than 60,000 attended; Cochaired The Traveling Vietnam Wall (AVTT) for the state of Kentucky; Past Commander, VFW Post 6935, 2011-14; Started two honor guards, one for VVA Chapter 1104 and one for Marine Corps League

Det. 858; a member of Rolling Thunder and Patriot Guard; was named Hometown Hero in Lexington, Kentucky, 2016; inducted into the Kentucky Veterans Hall of Fame, 2017; awarded the Mercer County Chamber of Commerce Civic Award for bringing in the Cost of Freedom (AVTT Wall); Having road signs and/or a memorial for each of the 1,106 we lost from Kentucky in Vietnam installed in their county; lecture high schools on the history of the Vietnam War and on flag etiquette.

Enlisted in the Marine Corps in 1969, 10 days after graduation from High School. Received PFC out of boot camp, San Diego, California; Back to San Diego for Communication School, promoted to L/Cpl.; next stop was Camp Lejeune, N.C., where I was promoted to Cpl.; next stop was MAG-16, Marble Mountain, Vietnam (1970-71). I was over Secret & Confidential Files and TAD from time to time as a Door Gunner; was promoted with a Meritorious Combat promotion to Sgt/E5; with one year in grade, I was Honorably Discharged from three years of active duty from the Marine Corps at Beaufort, S.C.

After leaving the Marine Corps, I have worked as a manager for IBM Lexington, Ky; and as corporate director of corp. services at H.J. Wilson, Inc. (retail firm) in Baton Rouge, La. I have been self-employed with my own company, Mattingly Enterprises (Mattingly Realty & Action Co., Home Inspection Group). Accu Forms and Rental Property, Concealed Carry Instructor. Have degrees in Drafting and in Business Management.

Married to my wonderful wife, Kathy, who is at my side in all my endeavors. Together, we have five kids and fourteen grandchildren.

### Dan Stenvold

At-Large Director



Hello! My name is Dan Stenvold. Could I please have your vote for Director at Large at this Convention? I have been serving on the VVA National Board for a few years, and I am now serving as chair of the Convention Committee; as chair of the Awards Subcommittee; and as chair of the Investment Subcommittee. I am a member of the Finance Committee, the PTSD/Suicide Prevention Committee, and the Public Affairs Committee.

I served three tours in Vietnam—in 1969, 1970, and 1971—with the Army artillery. We fired thousands and thousands of rounds from our 155mm guns in support of all you 11Bs out there, without an accident!

I'm married, for the second time; I have five grown children and eleven grandchildren who are all healthy. For several years, I have been the mayor of Park River, North Dakota, a small town of 1,500 that has been very progressive. I manage five departments, including a small police force, our landfill organization, our electric company, a rural water consortium, and a very aggressive economic devel-

opment committee. We work with a \$6M budget each year.

I am past president of the North Dakota League of Cities, and I serve on the board of the Red River Regional Council, an incubator for new businesses with a \$1.2M budget. I also serve on several of the governor's veterans boards in North Dakota.

I have been the VVA North Dakota State Council president since 1999. I have seen our state membership grow from 241 in 1999 to just about 800 at this time. I have convened fifty-one Agent Orange roundtables in our counties, with three left to do. We are responsible for three 20'x60' billboards that were placed along our I-highways, drawing national attention with the simple message: AGENT ORANGE IS KILLING OUR CHILDREN!

I'm a 100%er and life member of all the service organizations except for the American Legion, where I am an annual member.

I believe in honesty and transparency. If you want the truth, ask me, if you don't, don't ask, because as with my job as mayor, I won't sugarcoat it!

I would appreciate your vote for another two years as one of your directors at large. Thank you!

### Kerwin B. Stone

At-Large Director



I practiced law in Beaumont, Texas, from 1978 until my recent retirement in 2020. My practice included corporate law, contracts, banking, and real estate. My older son, a retired Air Force fighter pilot, flies for United Airlines; my younger son is a Methodist pastor. I am blessed with four marvelous grandchildren. I am a Christian and an active member of my church.

I earned Bachelor's and Master's degrees in mathematics from Southern Methodist University; received my commission in the Air Force in 1969; and entered active duty with the Air Force in 1970. I was assigned to Ko Kha AS, Thailand, in 1972. I separated as a Captain in 1975 and went to law school at The University of Texas on the GI Bill.

I joined VVA as a life member in 1993. I was Treasurer of Chapter 292 for six years and have served as its President since 2005. Following four years as Secretary and four years as Vice President, I served as President of the Texas State Council from 2018 until 2021. I have served as an At-Large Member of VVA's National Board of Directors since 2015 and as a member of VVA's Finance Committee since 2019. I served as a member of VVA's Working Group II, charged with the task of examining in depth the challenges which VVA will be facing in the coming years. I have also served as Secretary of the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Foundation of Texas since 2010. I am an Agent Orange victim. VVA is both a family and a passion for me.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AT-LARGE

I have formed hundreds of organizations and have assisted in the winding down (or dissolution) of a number of organizations, as well. I have served on the boards of many companies (both for-profit and nonprofit) and as a school board Trustee. My experience, both as a lawyer and as a proud VVA member, can help make VVA a better organization, ready to face the future.

### Charlie Hobbs

At-Large Director



I am announcing my candidacy for the office of Director-at-Large for the 2021-23 term. I believe that VVA is a membership organization and that the members should always have a say in any decisions made by the Board of Directors that affect them. I pledge to be the Board member who listens to the membership, and I promise to always consider the impact that my vote will have on them.

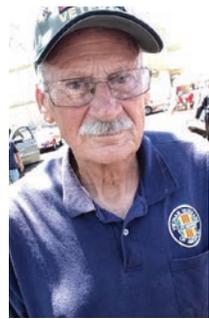
I joined the Army in February 1967, and eighteen weeks later, I landed in Vietnam. After serving one year as a Military Policeman with the Americal Division based in Chu Lai, I returned to Fort Devens, Massachusetts, to finish my military commitment. I joined VVA in July 1991, and I served as the Tennessee State Council President from 2008-12. I am currently the Chapter 203 President and I have served in this capacity for approximately fourteen of the last twenty years. I believe that the work done by our chapter-level "boots-on-the-ground" is the reason that VVA has a success story to tell. And although Agent Orange has wreaked havoc with our brothers and sisters, we are still adding new members every month. Sharon and I have been married for forty-five years. We have three daughters, five grandsons, and one great-grand daughter.

I served as an At-Large Director from 2013-17; I served as the National Membership Chair from 2011-19, so I am well aware of how the VVA system works at the national level—some practices are good and some are not so good. I am not so simple-minded as to believe that I can make changes alone, but I can promise you that I will lead the way for those changes, IF it will improve our members' experience with VVA.

During the upcoming Convention, decisions will be made that affect and determine VVA's future. I firmly believe that this decision is to be made by the delegates who represent our states and chapters. VVA's future is not a management or board decision. I will be serving as a delegate this year, I will not be poked or prodded into voting for anything that determines VVA future until all questions are answered and all options are made known; I hope your state and chapter delegates will stand with me.

### Steve Mackey

At-Large Director



I am announcing my candidacy for the office of Director at Large for the 2021-23 term. To me, VVA is a membership organization—always has been, always will be. The members make up the organization. We are not

always listened to and are not informed as to what occurred at a National Board meeting, as we should be. I am tired of hearing "If you want to know what went on at a National Board meeting, go to the website, and read the minutes." As a Board member, I will listen to the members, and I promise to always consider the membership's views when voting.

I was drafted into the Army in September 1969. I went to Fort Ord for Basic and AIT. Arrived in Vietnam March 3, 1970, as an infantryman. I was sent to Chu Lai and the Americal Division. When I arrived there, they were looking for door gunners for Hueys. I volunteered and was chosen. After two months as a door gunner, they promoted me to crew chief. I spent my 12 months flying around I Corps with a total of 1,340 flight hours.

I returned to the States on March 3, 1971. Spent my last five months in the Army at Fort Carson, Colo.

I joined VVA in October 1996, Chapter 47 Riverside, Calif. I served as a Chapter 47 board member and vice president. Then from 2001 to 2019, I served as Chapter 47 president. From 2019 to 2021, I was the chapter secretary.

I served as president of the California State Council from 2010 to 2020.

I served as Secretary of the VVA Conference of State Council Presidents from 2014 to 2020.

My belief is that VVA is held together by its chapter members. The members make up the organization. The members need to be heard and listened to by the National Board of Directors, and I don't believe this is happening.

While California State Council President, I attended two and three National Board meetings a year, so I have seen how things work at the national level. Some are great; others not so good. If elected, I will, with others, try to make everything great.

To me, VVA is a last-man-standing organization. I joined VVA because it is an organization of veterans from my era, my war. They understand me, and I believe I understand them. I hope your delegates will support me. Let's make VVA even better.

On a personal note, I lost my wife of 48 years, two years ago. That sent me into a downward spiral. Our daughter saw that and called our Pastor. My Pastor immediately called me, and we had a very long, positive talk. He turned my thinking around on the spot, and I got back to work for VVA.

### John McGinty

At-Large Director



I am asking for your vote because I believe, in some cases, we have lost our way. I can say this since I've been at this from almost the beginning, 1978. We started with all veterans organizations telling us it wasn't a war, it was a police action. Then it

was combat veterans against Veterans Against the War; then we put it together, and we were going to have our own organization. The big push was POW-MIA—the bracelet, the flag, and the recognition of our brothers who were left behind.

Back then, New Jersey was the first state to recognize Vietnam veterans and their problems with PTSD and Agent Orange. In 1987, I was appointed to the New Jersey Commission on Military and Veteran Affairs advisory board on the study and treatment of PTSD in Vietnam veterans. I was involved with the first Pointman Study about the dioxin levels in different Army, Marine, Navy, and Air Force Ranch Hand veterans exposed to the herbicides. Marines—especially the 9th Marines—had the highest levels of dioxin in all the controlled units.

The first three years I joined Chapter 151 in Bayonne, and I believe everything came out of there. In 1985, N.Y. Mayor Ed Koch gave us a parade down Fifth Avenue, with Raquel Welch as the Master of Ceremonies. All of us remembered her with Bob Hope at Christmas time. It was the first time we got to meet old friends.

I transferred to VVA Chapter 280 of Rocklyn and Bergen Counties, where I was involved in the first State Veterans Home in Paramus. As most Vietnam veterans didn't trust the VA, we established Vet Centers that were run by Vietnam veterans VSO. I was also establishing the Patient Bill of Rights in the East Orange VA Hospital.

My next chapter, VVA 510, was started by Richard Ventola and Anthony Dellanno. We were the chapter that brought about the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall. It took us five years before it became a reality, and it was dedicated on May 7, 1989. The next step was the establishment of the museum of Vietnam veterans killed in the war from the State of New Jersey.

The establishment of a foundation for the memorial. In 2012, I moved to St Augustine, Florida, to find out no VVA chapter in town. There's one in Jacksonville and another in Daytona, so I formed the foundation of St Johns Chapter 1084 and got my charter within a month. I would like to thank Tony D'Aleo, Gary Newman, and Rod Philips for helping me with the formation.

While serving as president of Chapter 1084, Bob Dinkins approached me to rename our chapter after Leo C. Chase, Jr., the first from St. Augustine to die in Vietnam. Six years later, our new CBOC will be named VA Leo C. Chase, Jr., CBOC. After two terms as president, I moved to the Florida state positions of State Sergeant-at-Arms, thanks to then Florida State Council President Ben Humphries.

### Gene Crego

At-Large Director



It would be an honor and privilege to serve Vietnam Veterans of America as At-Large Director, representing our members and continuing to fulfill our motto, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another." I wouldn't be where I am if

it wasn't for the support of VVA, my wife, Sue, and my family.

I'm a life member of VVA, AVVA, American Legion, DAV, 1st Marine Div., MCL, and VFW.

I was born in Glendale, Calif., in 1948, and graduated in 1966 from Paradise High School. I completed almost two years of college courses while serving in the U.S. Marine Corps.

I joined the USMC in 1967 at MCRD in San Diego and served two tours in Vietnam (Jan. 1968-March 1970). I graduated from Staff NCO Academy in 1981 and retired in August 1989 at Twentynine Palms at the rank of Gunnery Sergeant (E-7).

In July 1990, I began working as a security officer for the Flamingo Hilton in Laughlin, Nev. In 2003, I was elected as Union President for Security, Fire, and Police Professionals of America. I retired in 2005.

In Oct. 29, 2004, I joined VVA at Yuma. VVA Arizona State Council President William Messer appointed me as At-Large Director. I have served for 16 years as a veterans advocate, working with legislators in Arizona and in Washington, D.C.

I serve on the following VVA national committees: Veteran Benefits (2013-present); Government Affairs (2014-present); Women Veterans (2015-present); and Veterans Health (2018-present). Additionally, I serve on the VVA Region 9 Disciplinary Committee (2009-present).

As Arizona State Council President, I served on VVA's Conference of State Council Presidents (CSCP) from 2012-20. In 2017, I was assigned Legislative Chair by CSCP Chair Rex Moody, a position I held until 2020. Prior to serving as VVA AZ State Council President, I served as the VVA AZ State Council Vice President from 2010 until 2012.

I serve on the VVA AZ State Council BOD (2004-present). Between 2012 and 2020, the VVA AZ State Council and chapters have presented 163 VVA Achievement Medals to members of VVA and AVVA; AZ members of the U.S. Congress; AZ State Legislators; and leaders for the VAMCs in Phoenix, Tucson, Prescott, and the VARO in Phoenix.

I am a VVA Mohave County Chapter 975 founding member and served as chapter president from 2006-09. From 2008-10, I served as chair of VVA Chapter 975's Veterans Expo and Education, covering the Tristate area of AZ, CA, and NV.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, AT-LARGE

In 2016, I was awarded the VVA Achievement Medal. In 2017, I was inducted into the AZ Veterans Hall of Fame. I have served since 2012 on the BOD of the Unified Arizona Veterans, Inc., and was elected Vice Chair for 2021. Since 2019, I have served on the AZ Department of Veterans' Services Veterans Advisory Commission. I serve on the AZ U.S. Congress Veterans Advisory Committees for Senators Sinema and Kelly and Representatives Biggs (Dist. 5) and Stanton (Dist. 9).

Thank you for your consideration, Sisters and Brothers Forever.

### Joe Jennings

At-Large Director

### Charles R. Montgomery, Jr.

At-Large Director



I, Charles R. Montgomery, Jr., Life Member of Chapter 969, am seeking the position of VVA At-Large Director. I joined VVA in January 1987 and have been actively involved since that time. I have served as At-large Director, as Region 3 Director, and as National Membership Committee Chair.

I served six terms as the Chair of the Conference of State Council Presidents and have served as the Virginia State Council President since 1995. I also served two terms with the Vietnam Veterans Assistance Fund. I have devoted much of my time and energy to all levels of VVA. We have many more important issues still to address and continue to work on, especially for the future of VVA. I would like to work and support this organization in any way possible in these endeavors.

I proudly served in the US Army with the 173d ABN BDE in Vietnam from 1969-70. I finished my military service with the 82nd ABN DIV from 1970-71. Since that time, I retired in 2011 from the City of Norfolk, Virginia, with 40 years of service. I am happily married to my wife, Nancy, for 26 years.

I promise to continue to serve you as I have in past years. Let's keep building this to be a strong organization and work together as a team. I am well qualified to lead our organization in the right direction. I adhere to the advice of one of our past Presidents, "Be true to yourself, and be true to the ones you serve."

### Jay Kalner

At-Large Director



**Joining VVA:** In 2012, I visited the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in D.C. and saw a VVA recruitment tent. I was warmly welcomed and joined Chapter 227, Virginia's largest chapter, as a life member in 2013. In 2014, I was elected to the board of directors, and then as Chapter 227 president in 2018. During my two terms, thanks to our many recruitment events, membership increased by 14 percent, from 298 to 340.

**Background:** Drafted out of graduate school, I served with the Army's 716th MP Battalion in Saigon in 1969-70. Most of my tour was spent teaching English to Saigon's Municipal Police to enable them to work with MPs on joint patrols. This unique cultural experience inspired me to pursue a Master's Degree in International Relations at the University of Chicago. I was recruited by the CIA in 1972, and I spent 35 years as a Russian affairs analyst, dealing with a wide range of international issues that required careful analysis and clear presentation of findings, often under stressful deadlines. I was asked to serve as an adviser at the Geneva nuclear arms talks, and I often briefed high-level U.S. and foreign officials on intelligence issues. I also spent my final two years recruiting highly skilled college graduates for the Agency. My work earned me seven Exceptional Performance Awards and the Career Commendation Medal. After retirement in 2007, I served from 2008-14 on a staff reporting to the Director of National Intelligence, utilizing my expertise in the effort to prevent future 9/11s and mistakes monitoring WMD programs.

**Demonstrated Leadership:** During my tenure, I have cultivated generous donors to the Chapter, allowing for continuous financial assistance to veterans. Our veterans' support budget averages \$35,000 annually, and the chapter's financial strength allowed for the return of our \$3,000 membership rebate to National during its recent financial crisis. As an original mentor for the Fairfax County Veterans Treatment Docket, I have successfully assisted several troubled vets. To expand chapter outreach, I serve on Arlington County's Military and Veterans Affairs Committee and ServingTogether, a regional veterans' assistance network, and I have spoken at various schools and charitable organizations on veterans' issues. At Fort Belvoir, I served five years as a USO volunteer, exposing me to active-duty military needs. As Chapter 227 president, I have lobbied Virginia's two U.S. Senators on veterans' initiatives and have maintained contacts with Vietnamese and Korean veteran groups who served with us in Vietnam. During the pandemic, we hosted monthly virtual membership meetings, including prominent speakers, and conducted business

via virtual board meetings. Importantly, our chapter modernized its website and Facebook page for increased visibility.

**Goal:** These experiences and my concern for veterans in need have led me to seek election to the VVA Board. My long government service and record of achievement in assisting veterans demonstrate that my analytical, leadership, and decision-making skills will help National confront the challenges it faces going forward. I would offer new thinking to the Board to preserve VVA's status as the country's preeminent veterans service organization.

### James Maddox

At-Large Director

James Maddox is a life member of Vietnam Veterans of America and the Montford Point Marine Association. He is also a member of the American Legion Post 218 in Pasadena and the National Association of Black Veterans (NABVETS). He has been a member of VVA since 1998. He has an extensive background in marketing and underwriting commercial insurance, specializing in liability coverage for technology and life-science firms. In May 2016, he graduated from the University of Southern California School of Social Work, with a Master of Social Work degree.

Maddox began his involvement with VVA in 1999, the year that the National Convention was held in Anaheim, California. He found that the VVA approach to issues was appealing. They only endorse candidates' policies, not politicians. At the conclusion of the Convention, he was asked to become a member of the National Public Affairs Committee.

He became a contributor to the National Public Affairs Committee and has become a member who has pushed for outreach and expanding the relationships that VVA has with a variety of organizations, including the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

As a member of VVA Chapter 446, Maddox has held a number of positions, including president, vice president, and currently, board member. He has worked with VVA Chapter 446 in its efforts to expand outreach to non-veteran communities. He was instrumental in creating a five-year relationship with the Real Men Cook Foundation and the VVA California State Council. The relationship has evolved to the current nine-year relationship with Trinity Baptist Church and its annual Prostate Cancer Screening on Veterans Day.

James has assisted the Chapter's outreach to the seven congressional representatives where members of VVA Chapter 446 live. He helps to coordinate the quarterly meeting with VVA Chapter 446 and their Congressional Delegation.

He truly believes in the motto of Vietnam Veterans of America, "Never again will one generation of veterans abandon another."

### Larry J. Regan

At-Large Director



I am the fourth child in a family of twelve children. My mother was a homemaker, and my father was an oil field worker. I live in Sulphur, Louisiana, and am 76 years old. I am the father of two daughters and have three grandchildren. I am currently the president of VVA Chapter 1098 in Lake Charles, Louisiana.

I retired from the Army Reserve in 1995 after 29 1/2 years of combined enlisted and officer service with active and reserve duty time.

I trained and worked as an MP while enlisted and obtained my commission from Infantry OCS. I did two tours in Vietnam as a platoon leader in the 9th Infantry's Mobile Riverine Force; as an Assistant Senior District Advisor; as an Assistant Mobile Advisory Team Leader; and as an Assistant S-3.

After active duty, I joined a USAR School and taught Officer Advance, Warrant Officer, and Command and General Staff Courses.

In civilian life, I was a police officer, a criminal investigator, Assistant State Attorney for the State of Louisiana, an Assistant U. S. Attorney, an Assistant District Attorney, and a Special Prosecutor for the City of Sulphur, Louisiana.

I am a retired Assistant U.S. Attorney and retired from all prosecutive work in 2018 after 38 1/2 years of that service.

I am running for a seat on the Board of Directors as an At-Large candidate. I have no campaign directors nor campaign material. I'm just an old country boy doing the best I can with what I have.

But in all seriousness, I am running for a seat on the Board for the following reasons: Anything I have accomplished in my military and civilian life is due to the assistance I received from my NCOs and Secretaries.

I am a team player and work well with others. If elected, I will be a strong voice for the general membership of VVA. Although on all occasions I would work for a consensus, I would never agree to anything that is not in the best interest of the general membership.

I have never believed in "rubber-stamping" anything without an in-depth review to consider the pros and cons of the matter at hand. Having lived in a house with eleven siblings, I learned early on how to mediate disputes and negotiate for needed and wanted things.

I believe that I could be a large asset to the Board and general membership, and I humbly ask for your support. I am not a politician, and I don't make promises I can't keep. But because of life experiences, I can, without equivocation, promise that I will represent each and every one of you.

### Dean Dick

At-Large Director

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REGIONAL

### Skip Hochreich

Region 1 Director



My name is Skip Hochreich. I am running for reelection for my third term as Region 1 director. I am past president of Chapter 866 in Massachusetts as well as the Massachusetts State Council. As regional director I try to maintain contact with my various chapters in the New England states. I try to report on the activities and achievements of my chapters in the region, and I keep members posted on directives and activities coming from the National office. As we head into what may be one of the most important National Conventions in the organization's history, I want to convey the will and intent of my membership at the national level. If re-elected, I intend to continue to work on behalf of the members of Region 1. Thank you.

### Ted Wilkinson

Region 2 Director



I have been asked to provide a statement or as I see it; prove why I'm worthy of your vote. I put a lot of thought into this and decided to make a statement on proving to you my worthiness based on my "dedication." I'm going to try to keep this in chronological order as best possible.

Having been born in Buffalo, New York, I have lived or have been attached to Western New York my entire life. (Now that's dedication.) Before I graduated from Warsaw High School, I worked on dirt track race cars, and the year after graduation, became a half owner and won two championships. Through the years I was crew chief for several highly successful race teams and was "dedicated" to winning, which we did.

My grandfather served as a Doughboy in the trenches and an ammo runner during World War I; my father enlisted in the army and was in Pearl Harbor during the bombing. He re-enlisted for Guadalcanal and island to island to Philippines, until victory was achieved. My friends were joining the Marines, so in August 1969, I enlisted in the Army, because of family tradition. (Dedication.)

I served two tours in Vietnam with the 20th Engineer Brigade and Engineer Command. My second Bronze Star for Valor was received for actions during the Easter Offensive in Binh Thuy. I was honorably discharged in 1972.

In 1978, I married Nyla and dedicated my life to her, as she did to me, until the cancer finally won out in 2018. I am still dedicated to her!

For dedication in the automotive field, I was inducted in 1989 to the Automotive Hall of Fame in Midland, Michigan.

For dedication in Western New York with veteran advocacy, I was named Hometown Hero in Buffalo.

For dedication throughout New York State, I was inducted in 2012 to the New York Veterans Hall of Fame.

For dedication within the New York State Council, I was awarded NYSC Distinguished Service Medal.

In my 20 years with VVA, I have served as New York State Western District Director (2006-16); and the New York State Membership Affairs Committee Chairman (2008-present). I currently serve on the National POW/MIA Committee; the Veterans Against Drugs Committee; and the Membership Affairs Committee.

As the current Region 2 Director I have dedicated many hours of time.

If I am reelected, I will continue to dedicate myself.

If you have any questions, or want more information, feel free to ask.

### Rossie M. Nance

Region 3 Director



I, Rossie Monroe Nance, Jr., am running as a candidate for the position of Region 3 Director. For so many years, I listened and watched as Vietnam Veterans of America grew and matured into one of the finest veterans organizations I know. Being busy with family, and hours consumed in a position, did not allow ample time to relate to and join VVA as a member.

In 2004, I finally realized it was time to move forward and try the VVA slogan ("Never Again Will One Generation of Veterans Abandon Another"). In some way, this slogan touched home, and I have been active ever since. Creating local chapters was a lot of work, but thinking about my veteran brothers—we would meet and hear their requests for help—led to a more active role. Their individual problems were researched, and normally a solution was at hand.

Holding positions from Chapter Secretary to Vice President, and next Chapter President, taught me a lot about VVA. During a state VVA meeting, I continued to accept more responsibility, and next, I served as State Vice President for six years. A lot of work and problem-solving went into that position, and YES, next I accepted a State President position for a period of seven years.

Shortly after the Region 3 Director's retirement, I stepped up to fulfill the position. It was such a pleasure that I had received the correct guidance, training, and directions for this position. Working

with the seven southeastern states is sometimes a challenge, but we all work together to accomplish our goals.

Looking at the future of VVA and what the short-term holds for us is a process, as we look for a solution that is agreeable to the membership. I plan on being a vital part of that decision-making to the end and final closure of VVA, if that decision is made.

In closing, Vietnam Veterans of America has been a vital brotherhood and has provided a sense of comradery to all members. My continued support as the Region 3 Director will be support, not only to the seven Region 3 states, but to all VVA as well.

### Spence Davis

Region 4 Director



I am seeking reelection to my third term as Region 4 Director. I was drafted into the Army in 1966 and went to Fort Benning for Basic Training and AIT (Infantry Electronics Specialist). Afterward, I was assigned to Biggs Field in El Paso, Texas, and subsequently sent to Vietnam in August of 1967. I was assigned to HHSB 2/4th Artillery, 9th Infantry Division, in Tan An, south of Saigon in the Mekong Delta, ending my army career in August 1968.

In addition to owning and managing several businesses, including Advanced Electronics, Davis Trucking, and The Shoe Stop, I retired from Roadway Express after twenty years of service.

I was the charter Treasurer of VVA Chapter 1010, former Treasurer of the Georgia State Council, and I am currently serving my fifth term as President of the Georgia State Council. During this time, I actively served on both the Region 4 Disciplinary Committee and the National Disciplinary Committee.

My wife of forty-five years and I have a son, Brett, and a grandson, Kyan. We are both members of the Methodist Church.

My goal for being Region 4 Director is to promote VVA and to assist my fellow veterans. I would like for the region to work together promoting VVA programs and presenting conferences that provide tools and information to help us be better leaders. Even as we are getting older and many are being drafted to their final duty station above, VVA continues to grow in membership, and I would like to continue supporting that growth.

The reality, however, is that the time has come to decide what the future of VVA will look like. I know that, together, our leaders and members can identify and implement a positive path forward.

I would appreciate your support.

### Gary Newman

Region 4 Director

As a retired Navy Chief, I served on seven Naval Destroyers, served for two years with Armed Forces Police, Subic Bay; for two years with Armed Forces Police, Brooklyn, N.Y.; and for two years as supervisor of Shore Patrol Headquarters, La Maddalena, Sardinia.

I am a Vietnam combat veteran, having been onboard the U.S.S. *Maddox* during the Gulf of Tonkin incident and a boat crew member with the Mobile Riverine Force, River Assault Division 112, Mekong Delta, RVN (1967-68). My ribbons and medals include the Combat Action Ribbon; the Navy Achievement Medal with combat "V"; a Presidential Unit Citation; two Meritorious Unit Citations; and two Navy Unit Citations. Other awards/medals/recognitions include the DOD Meritorious Service Medal and the VVA Achievement Medal. I am a 2018 Inductee into the Florida Veterans Hall of Fame for volunteer service to veterans. In 2018, I was summoned before our Board of County Commissioners and publicly recognized for my volunteer work with county veterans.

My primary duty and responsibility on 911 were to protect the multi-million-dollar assets of the Navy (aircraft) and over 2,000 military and civilian personnel supervising a Police force of 320 personnel, including activated Military Reserves.

My post-Navy retirement included Clay County Deputy Sheriff (1978-83); Chief of Police, NAS Jacksonville, Fla. (1983-2003); and Deputy Director of Security, NAS Jacksonville, Fla. (2003-07). Community organizations and service include president of the Clay County Shriner Club and two decades of fundraising in support of Shriners Children Hospitals.

In 2012, I founded VVA Chapter 1059 and Incarcerated VVA Chapter 1080. I was elected President and served until stepping down in 2018. I have remained an adviser to Chapter 1080. My work with incarcerated veterans has been recognized by the Florida Department of Corrections. I am currently working with the Madison County Correctional Institute and the Clay County Sheriff's Office to establish veterans' dorms.

In 2014, I formed a committee to build a monument honoring all county veterans who were KIA or died in combat. The monument was dedicated in 2017 with donations of \$83,000 from the community. It has become a focal point for local school students and educators in Clay County. Pre-Covid 2019, I had met with 850 students and more than 90 educators, who came to the monument as part of their required history studies. Thus far this year, I have met with more than 30 clerks of the Court from the State of Florida to explain its history and relevance.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS, REGIONAL

Having completed a two-year term (2018-21) as 2nd Vice President for the Florida State Council, I am currently serving as 1st Vice President, Florida State Council. I also serve as Chairman of the Florida Veterans Assistance Foundation; member of the National Veterans Incarcerated Committee; Chairman of the Florida State Council Veterans Incarcerated Committee; and Chairman of the Florida State Council Logistics Committee.

### John Riling Region 5 Director

### John L. Margowski Region 6 Director



John L. Margowski served as a Captain in the U.S. Air Force (1969-74, and was Honorably Discharged in 1985). He served as County Veteran Service Officer for 32 years and continues to serve veterans throughout numerous VSOs and as President of a Veterans Foundation. John proudly served on Sen. Herb Kohl's United States Service Academies Screening Committee for two decades (1992-2012).

As a Life Member of Vietnam Veterans of America since 1987, John has been an active member and held office as a Chapter Treasurer, Vice President, and President and is a Director on VVA Chapter 425's Board of Directors.

Mr. Margowski was appointed as the Wisconsin State Council (WSC) Service Officer (1988-2017). John also was elected as the WSC Vice President and later President (1998-2002). John has led WSC Committees and is presently a member of TEAM Wisconsin—WSC's Toxic Exposure Commit-

tee—participating in town halls in Wisconsin and throughout Region 6 and a Leadership Conference.

John was elected VVA At-Large Director (2005-11), Region 6 Director (2011-15), and At-Large Director (2017 to Present) and has served on several VVA Committees: Veterans Benefits, National Disciplinary, Women Veterans, PTSD/Substance Abuse, Membership Affairs, and was a part of Strategic Planning and a member of Working Group I. He is currently the 2021 National Resolutions Chair.

John is active in many local veterans organizations and held office in many, including the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, VVA, Am Vets, and Wisconsin Vietnam Veterans-Chapter 1.

### Dennis J Andras Region 7 Director



I'm running for the position of Region 7 Director. I'm a decorated combat veteran, having served in Vietnam for twenty months with the 101st Airborne Division, 2/502 Infantry, as a Forward Observer and Reconnaissance Sergeant, and as Battalion Liaison Sergeant from 1969 through 1971. I was medically retired from active duty at the rank of staff sergeant. Kathy and I have been married for fifty years, and have been blessed with two sons, one of whom is an Iraqi War veteran.

Among the duties of a Regional Director, according to the *National Board of Directors Handbook*, is to represent the membership within a Region to the National Board and its Executive Officers in all interest and matters.

Over the past two years, I have been your voice before the National Board in all matters. Before voting on any issue that came before the Board, I contacted all the State Council pres-

idents in Region 7 to get a consensus on how I should cast my vote, and I voted according to the majority.

The destiny of our organization will be decided over the next two years. It is important that you elect Directors who will do the bidding of the membership and not follow their own personal agenda or someone else's.

If you chose to, once again, place your trust in me for another term, I will continue to represent you, the membership, as I have done in the past.

I thank you for your consideration and trust you have placed in me.

### Francisco F. Ivarra Region 8 Director



My Fellow Veterans,

I am seeking re-election to the position of Region 8 Director. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, my mission of visiting every possible State Council meeting comprising Region 8 was met, as well as never missing

submitting a Region 8 Report. During the pandemic, I have joined Zoom meetings, continued to keep the Region informed by providing current National Board after-meeting reports and sharing relevant and updated information pertaining to our veterans and their families.

I believe most of you know who I am, so I prefer not to dwell on my previous personal or professional community, state, and national accomplishments other than currently serving on Secretary of Veterans Affairs Denis R. McDonough's Veterans Rural Health Committee. Instead, I prefer to write on the extraordinary membership and leadership we have leading the states within Region 8. I am proud to belong to a group of unselfish individuals who place service to their fellow veterans before self-interest and praise.

Prior to and during the coronavirus pandemic they have accomplished major projects like having state highways named for Medal of Honor Recipients, POWs and MIAs, holding large events to honor our veterans, lobbying and raising funds for VVA memorials, providing the best VSO service possible, and engaging our government on legislation to ensure that all veterans receive the benefits they rightfully deserve. These are indeed worthy endeavors, but what I admire most about these Region 8 members is that they are sincere and honest individuals who are committed to improving the life and worth of those who have served our great nation and who are in need of encouragement, guidance, and a path to positive self-worth. I am extremely proud of them and hope that in some small way I have helped their commendable efforts.

I am privileged in serving as Region 8 Director and I hope you will again support my candidacy. Thank you for your effective leadership and for making Region 8 one of the best Regions in the nation. With all sincerity, I also want to thank you for making your friendship an invaluable part of my life.

Your Vietnam brother,  
Francisco F. Ivarra  
United States Army, Americal Division  
196th LIB, 3/23 Infantry  
I Corps, RSV, 1969-69  
Combat Wounded, March 13, 1969

### Dick Southern Region 9 Director



My name is Dick Southern, and I am seeking re-election as the VVA Region 9 Director. I served in the Army as a Specialist 4 and a Hospital Ward Technician in B Co., 5th Medical Battalion, Support Command, 5th Infantry Division (Mech.),

from July 1966 to January 1968. I have been a member of VVA since 1996. I am a Life member of VVA. I was elected Secretary of Chapter 391 in 1997 and still serve in that office.

I have been a California State Council delegate to the last ten VVA Conventions. I was elected to the office of the California State Council President in June 2002 and then to Second Vice President in 2004 and still serve in that office. I have served on the VVA National Membership Affairs Committee since 2001 and have been the chair of the Membership Affairs Committee since 2019. I have been a member of the VVA National Veterans Benefits Committee since 2005. I was the National Resolutions Committee chair from 2013 to 2019. I was elected Region 9 Director in 2007.

I will continue to bring input from Region 9 to the National Board of Directors and let the members in Region 9 have a more active role in the decisions that are made. I strongly believe that "Communication is the key."

Over the years I have worked with the state councils and chapters in the six Southwestern States as well as Hawaii, the Philippines, and Guam. I have made visits on a regular basis to all of the state councils and the chapters that have no state council. The members in the region know that I am always available to answer their emails and telephone calls. We communicate often and solve issues together.

I am asking for your vote and promise that you will continue to have an advocate for the many issues of Vietnam Veterans of America with me as your Region 9 Director.

Thank you. ■



## CANDIDATE SUBMISSIONS:

The Elections Committee asked candidates to submit biographical statements with photos to *The VVA Veteran*. The rules were simple: Officers may not exceed 1,000 words; 500 words for Board of Directors candidates. The statements are printed without editorial review.