

Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee  
2018- 2019 TERMS OF REFERENCE

This Terms of Reference establishes the objectives for independent advice to be provided by the Vietnam War Commemoration Advisory Committee (“the Committee”) to the Secretary of Defense regarding the Commemoration of the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War and the activities/ceremonies recommended for the end of the Commemoration period.

ISSUE STATEMENT AND OBJECTIVE

The Committee is asked to provide advice on the concept and design of the types of commemoration events the Vietnam War Commemoration Office (VWC) should consider supporting or coordinating through the close-out phase ending in 2025. The objective of this task is to set the conditions for completion and closing of the Commemoration, possibly in 2025, conceptually Veterans Day at Arlington Cemetery by the President of the United States or his/her representative.

BACKGROUND

The United States of America Vietnam War Commemoration officially began with the inaugural planning phase kick-off event at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington D.C. on Memorial Day, May 28, 2012, and will conclude on Veterans Day, November 11, 2025, as directed by Presidential Proclamation. As the President stated, “...we, as a nation, will commemorate the 50th anniversary over a long period of time, as many Americans served and sacrificed over that long period of time.”

For the purposes of this Commemoration, November 1, 1955 to May 15, 1975 is the period being utilized to recognize the service and sacrifice of those who served on active duty in the U.S. Armed Forces, regardless of service location. November 1, 1955 was selected to coincide with the official designation of Military Assistance Advisory Group-Vietnam (MAAG-V), and May 15, 1975 marks the end of the battle precipitated by the seizure of the SS Mayaguez.

The Committee’s deliberation and ability to provide advice and recommendations on the completion of the Commemoration requires the VWC to provide more information about its

approach to phasing out activities from 2023 thru November 11, 2025, to include completion of the report to Congress in 2025.

#### DELIVERABLE AND METHODOLOGY

The Committee is tasked to provide the Secretary of Defense a single report of recommendations, no later than April 2019, addressing the specific types of closing event(s) that could be supported or directly sponsored by the VWC, taking into account these factors when deliberating on the recommendations:

- a. Determine the scope of the events to possibly include local, state, and/or national levels.
- b. Consider a variety of proposed locations (cemeteries, Veteran's parks, State Capitols, Vietnam veterans' memorials, etc.)
- c. Consider themes or connections to influential historical events (e.g., Operation Homecoming- 2023) for each recommended closing event.
- d. Focus each recommended event on Vietnam veterans and their families.
- e. Suggest events that are "home-town" centric.

The Committee is authorized to access, consistent with law, relevant documents to its research or fact-finding under this Terms of Reference from the Vietnam War Commemoration Office, as directed by paragraphs 5.1.8. and 5.3.4. of DoD Instruction 5105.04, "Department of Defense Federal Advisory Committee Management Program," and in conformance with applicable security classifications.

The Committee will be convened for purposes of the following meetings, with no subsequent meetings thereafter due to the termination of the Committee:

#### *First Meeting - Information Gathering and Initial Deliberation:*

Office update on recent activities.

Review of the charge at hand: Provide advice on the concept and design of the types of commemoration events the Office for the Vietnam War Commemoration should consider supporting or coordinating during the close-out from 2023 through 2025. Committee members will thereby contribute to the conditions to be set for the closing of the Commemoration in 2025, conceptually on Veterans Day at Arlington Cemetery by the President of the United States or his/her representative.

Presentations from the VWC on facts, constraints, restraints, concerns, assumptions, current

plans:

- A phase-out plan for VWC's operation for the 2023 – 2025 period, including possible state-level participation.
- Issues involved in planning commemorative events for Vietnam veterans and trends in reaching target audiences.
- Requirements placed on the VWC, including requirements to remain in compliance with 598(c) of the FY 2008 NDAA and two Presidential Proclamations (Former President Barack Obama on May 25, 2012 and President Donald Trump on November 10, 2017.)

The Committee will be asked to discuss their initial ideas for closing events and whether they have additional information requirements.

*Second Meeting – Deliberation and Vote:* Discussion of individual members' recommendations for closing events. Final deliberation, vote on Committee recommendations (with rationales) and writing of the draft report. (The Chair will review and sign the final report no later than April 30, 2019.)

*Third Meeting (No later than May 2019):* Discussion and analysis from the VWC on whether the Committee's recommendations for closing events are feasible. Honorary recognition of members for their service.

## BACKGROUND ON THE VIETNAM WAR COMMEMORATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Committee provides independent advice and recommendations to the DoD on how to best achieve the following objectives in commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the Vietnam War, as referenced in section 598(c) of the FY 2008 NDAA:

1. Thank and honor veterans of the Vietnam War, including personnel who were held as prisoners of war or listed as missing in action, for their service and sacrifice on behalf of the United States and to thank and honor the families of these veterans;
2. Highlight the service of the Armed Forces during the Vietnam War and the contributions of Federal agencies and governmental and non-governmental

organizations that served with, or in support of, the Armed Forces;

3. Pay tribute to the contributions made on the home front by the people of the United States during the Vietnam War;
4. Highlight the advances in technology, science, and medicine related to military research conducted during the Vietnam War; and
5. Recognize the contributions and sacrifices made by the allies of the United States during the Vietnam War.

The Committee is composed of no more than 20 members. Members represent Vietnam veterans, their families, and the American public. Members may be from the Military Services (both retired veterans and active members who served during the Vietnam era), the Department of Defense, the Department of State, the Department of Veterans Affairs, the Intelligence Community, and/or nongovernmental organizations that support veterans or contribute to the public's understanding of the Vietnam War.

#### SUPPORT

The Vietnam War Commemoration Office will provide any necessary administrative and logistical support for the Committee.