

1971

## New Horizons

William F. Long

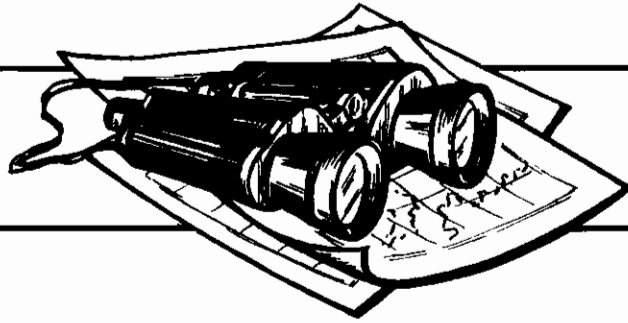
Follow this and additional works at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review>

---

### Recommended Citation

Long, William F. (1971) "New Horizons," *Naval War College Review*: Vol. 24 : No. 3 , Article 5.  
Available at: <https://digital-commons.usnwc.edu/nwc-review/vol24/iss3/5>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Naval War College Review by an authorized editor of U.S. Naval War College Digital Commons. For more information, please contact [repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu](mailto:repository.inquiries@usnwc.edu).



# NEW HORIZONS

**Project ADVANCE:  
An Alliance of Generations  
by**

**Colonel William F. Long, Jr., U.S. Army  
Senior U.S. Army Adviser  
Naval War College**

**“Let us forge an alliance of generations”  
President Nixon**

President Nixon, speaking to the students of the University of Nebraska in January 1971, proposed an alliance of generations for those willing to give of themselves in cleaning up the environment, combating illiteracy, and performing other services of social value at home and abroad.

An idea recently developed by the President of the Naval War College, Vice Adm. Richard G. Colbert, uses this same concept of social action and puts it in a military context.

The primary responsibility of the Armed Forces of the United States has been and always will be combat readiness. Yet, programs contributing to national welfare are entirely possible—even desirable—within the organization of the Armed Forces. Admiral Colbert's proposal would contribute to the maintenance of the national defense while, simultaneously, improving the national welfare.

An earlier program, Project 100,000, which was initiated in October 1966, was an outstanding example of creative military involvement in social action. The innovative step in Project 100,000

was accepting disadvantaged young men under lowered mental and physical standards into the armed services. In accepting these young men, who were previously disqualified for military service, the hope was that by sharing the obligations and opportunities of service they would be prepared for more productive lives when they returned to civilian society. They were given the collective title “New Standards Accessions” (NSA) and were integrated directly into the operating forces.

In spite of the social worth of the Project 100,000, there were operational difficulties encountered by all services. While the different services did not follow uniform programs in managing New Standards Accessions (NSA) personnel, criticisms of the project were fairly uniform:

*Reduction of unit readiness.* This stemmed primarily from a need to spend an inordinate amount of supervisory effort and leadership investment in proportion to minimum performance returns by NSA personnel assigned to operational billets.

*Increased administrative overhead time.* This was necessitated by the need to cope with a high number of early discharges and courts-martial cases attributable to the increase of mental category IV personnel via the NSA infusion.

*Poor management.* Participants were integrated into existing units where leaders belatedly discovered individual handicaps and initiated remedial pro-

grams. This forced an additional mission on the already overloaded unit leadership structure. The frustrations of the men who did not measure up were frequently equaled by the aggravations of the leaders.

*Reduced unit morale.* The introduction of NSA men who did not receive sufficient special training and attention into operating units created additional work for other enlisted men and, at the same time, reduced unit efficiency. This tended to lower general morale, generate antagonism toward the NSA men, and increase disciplinary problems among other men.

In short, while Project 100,000 was a worthwhile social improvement effort, it reduced overall military operational efficiency.

However difficult the challenge of accepting large numbers of disadvantaged men into the military service may be, the political pressures against selective service are driving the Nation in the direction of an all-volunteer force. With the advent of an all-volunteer force it is likely that a great many men who will be attracted to military service will be those whose economic prospects in civilian life are bleak enough to make the pay, educational prospects, and job security appealing. With this perception, what seemed wise to Vice Admiral Colbert was to attempt to match President Nixon's inspiration to ally the generations to move the Nation forward socially without sacrificing military combat readiness.

In attempting to serve both ends, the need for new approaches was apparent. In this respect, the creative aspects of Project 100,000 served as a catalyst for innovation. If the social goals of Project 100,000 argued for revised ideas of standards for entry into military service, how could NSA men be given the opportunity for social mobility without putting another heavy burden on the operating forces?

The President of the Naval War College has long been convinced that in the ranks of retired officers and noncommissioned officers of the armed services of the United States there is a major resource of dedicated and capable individuals available to the Nation for further constructive service. To match the creative social aspects of Project 100,000, a program moving outside the boundaries of active military service and tapping still vigorous and capable retired service personnel seemed to offer a promising new approach. So, out of the desire to meet the needs of the disadvantaged of the new generation together with the possibility of employing the unused potential of the retired generation, the Project ADVANCE idea materialized.

As it matured in discussions at the Naval War College, the idea of Project ADVANCE incorporated these features.

*First*, the purpose is to achieve the social benefits of Project 100,000 as well as serve as a source of highly motivated potential career servicemen.

*Second*, Project ADVANCE calls on a reservoir of outstanding retired military personnel who would be specially educated in attitudes and techniques necessary to develop the New Standards Accessions men. The advantage of using these individuals is twofold: their use will avoid diluting the strength of operating forces; and since the cost of each retired man represents only the difference between retired pay and active pay, this benefit can be achieved at minimum cost.

In order to insure that this program would be uniformly administered and operated, a joint agency composed of selected volunteer retired military personnel from all services could be established as a Department of Defense agency under the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Manpower and Reserve Affairs. At this level of government, the establishment of such a program, pos-

sibly as an independent agency similar to the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) of the Roosevelt era, might be a desirable option. In this case, some constraining disciplinary instrument similar to an oath of service and the provisions of the Uniform Code of Military Justice should be considered.

The pilot program could consist of some 10 battalion-size units, located on existing military facilities, with initial training being devoted to the development of personal responsibility, literacy, simple skills, and self-confidence. Each battalion would be led by retired personnel of the particular service on whose facility the training was being conducted. A unit located on a naval base, for example, would be led by retired naval officers and chief petty officers, with the NSA trainees initially appointed as seamen recruits (E1) and uniformed and equipped by the Navy. Education and training would, however, respond to new programs designed by the Project ADVANCE agency.

As men in the individual battalions were raised to sufficient levels of education and skill, they would be integrated into operational combat units. Once assigned to such units, they would lose their NSA identification.

The advantages of using specially selected and trained retired personnel are several. In addition to relieving the operational forces of the need to provide qualified leadership, the use of such men would permit greater flexibility in staffing. The normal battalion command positions might be modified. For instance, senior officers (e.g., Colonel/Captain) could command a training battalion while other officers and senior noncommissioned officers could be assigned to training positions. Furthermore, since the personnel would have only a single mission and absolute stability, they would not suffer the usual career development dislocations of an active duty military man.

Project ADVANCE men would be

sworn into a service and subject to the Uniform Code of Military Justice. However, with specially selected and trained leaders and in a highly personalized program, disciplinary action under the UCMJ would hopefully be rarely required.

The probable extension of the basic training period which would be necessary to train these individuals would be costly. But it would not be as costly as losing a handicapped man through subjecting him to normal competition with men who meet the regular standards. It is the frustration arising from failure which probably accounted for the large number of Project 100,000 men who were disciplinary problems.

With the requisite discipline maintained by a specially dedicated and educated older generation of stable retired officers and noncommissioned officers, in an atmosphere of personalized concern and education for the disadvantaged younger generation, this "alliance of generations" might produce remarkable results in inclining many of these young men toward a successful service career.

There are some logical questions which anyone could raise with respect to the idea of involving the retired older generation in a program of military training and social rehabilitation. A few of these questions with their respective answers follow.

*Q. Couldn't all the benefits visualized for the Project ADVANCE idea be achieved by using active duty personnel?*

A. Yes, but it would be more expensive and it would reduce the readiness posture of active forces by subtracting regular manpower and effort from the operating forces through the imposition of a dual and competing mission.

*Q. Would retired service personnel be content to return to a challenging and difficult training job for the bare*

*difference between retired and active duty pay?*

A. The motivated ones would, and they are the only ones desired.

*Q. Doesn't this idea depend upon the assumption that retired personnel would be attracted to such a program in sufficient numbers to make it work?*

A. Yes, this assumption is basic to the idea.

*Q. Other than reduced pay cost, is there any other significant personnel management gain visualized in using retired personnel?*

A. Yes. The stability of retired personnel recalled to active duty for this program could be a great asset. The fact that they would have a single mission and would not be involved in the turbulence associated with active duty unit movements and personal career development relocations should be a great factor in gaining and maintaining the person-to-person rapport essential in such a program.

*Q. Could Project ADVANCE be used to contribute to improving our ecological welfare?*

A. Yes, NSA trainees, stationed throughout the Nation, could be used on such projects as reforestation, fight-

ing forest fires, and salvaging areas blighted by oil spills.

x x x

In proposing consideration of a Project ADVANCE type program, the benefits which might accrue are worth considering. Briefly, these might include:

- A program which does not hinder the operational effectiveness of military units, but which does accomplish the social benefits of Project 100,000.

- A source of career military personnel from what is now disadvantaged, potentially antagonistic men.

- A program which uses selected retired personnel to take advantage of a large reservoir of skill and leadership at a minimum cost, with their cost representing largely the difference between active duty and retired pay.

- A program which reflects the desire of the armed services to function as an agency of social progress.

Finally--and for those who might be skeptical about the feasibility and suitability of such an idea--ask any boy fortunate enough to have a competent and loving grandfather to teach him skills and impart unhurried wisdom whether an "alliance of the generations" is worthwhile.





Commander Raymond A. Spruance, USN (Circa 1926)