



## Gold Standard

**U.S. Army Reserve Culinarians Shine in International Competition**



[www.roa.org/event/2024National](http://www.roa.org/event/2024National)

Come to Washington, DC, and join your fellow members in gathering to hear interesting and informative speakers, collaborate, mentor, conduct association business, see old friends, and make new ones.

### Registration Information

Registration details will be available soon. Registration will open on or before July 1, 2024, and will close at midnight Thursday, September 26, 2024.

Registration includes the Welcome Reception (Friday), all meetings (Friday-Sunday), access to the Minute Man Lounge, and the option to purchase tickets for the Banquet, which will be held on Saturday, October 5<sup>th</sup>.

### Meeting Venue

All meetings and the Banquet will be held at ROA's Minute Man Memorial Building, 1 Constitution Ave NE, Washington, DC 20002. [CLICK HERE](#) to find it on Google Maps.

### Lodging

ROA has a block of rooms at the Residence Inn Washington Downtown / Convention Center, 901 L St., NW, Washington, DC 20001. The group rate is \$239 (plus tax) and includes breakfast. Reservations must be made by Monday, September 1, 2024, to enjoy the group rate. To book your room, [CLICK HERE](#) or call (800) 321-2211.

Also be sure to stop by the ROA hospitality suite to enjoy a beverage with your fellow attendees. The suite will be open Friday and Saturday evenings.

**Come see us in Washington, DC, for the first-ever ROA Annual Meeting held in the prestigious Minute Man Memorial Building!**

### Schedule

[CLICK HERE](#) for the full agenda. Highlights include:

#### Friday, October 4, 2024

8:00 am – 3:00 pm	Executive Committee Meeting
Noon – 6:30 pm	Registration
1:00 pm – 2:30 pm	ROA Academy
3:00 pm – 5:00 pm	STARs Foundation Board
3:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Department Presidents and DNCMs
4:00 pm – 5:00 pm	National Council Meeting
5:00 pm – 6:30 pm	Welcome Reception

#### Saturday, October 5, 2024

7:30 am – 2:00 pm	Registration
7:30 am – 5:00 pm	ROA Minute Man Lounge Opens
8:30 am – 9:15 am	Service Section Meetings
10:45 am – Noon	General Assembly: - Senior Enlisted Advisor Panel - Joint Service Awards Ceremony - State of the Association - Legislation Update
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm	Reception (included with banquet ticket)
7:00 pm – 9:30 pm	Banquet (ticket required)

#### Sunday, October 6, 2024

8:00 am – 12:00 pm	Registration
8:00 am – 3:00 pm	ROA Minute Man Lounge Opens
9:00 am – 12:00 pm	General Assembly: - Resolutions - Constitution & Bylaws - Elections - Installation of Officers

Surveys tell us socializing and networking rank highest in what attendees want in an annual meeting. We have listened to your feedback! While the formal sessions may end at noon, the conversation doesn't have to. Our Minute Man Lounge will be set with informal conversational groupings to allow you to gather for socializing, networking, and informal meetings.



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Embracing a legacy of change**

**Executive Director Report:  
A transformational perspective**

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**Working to ensure our Air Guard  
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**Improving servicemember and veteran  
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By Congressman Derrick Van Orden

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**Department of Michigan**

**ROA's Communications and Marketing Committee**

**CIOMR**

**CIOR**

**SARCA**

**ROA**  
RESERVE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICA

Organized in 1922. Incorporated under charter of the Congress by Public Law 81-595.

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**ON THE COVER**

Army Reserve Warrant Officer Daniella Blanco competes in the 48th Joint Culinary Training Exercise March 1-8 at Ft. Gregg-Adams where culinarians from all branches of the U.S. military and three international teams met to compete for top honors. Photo by Ryan Sharp, CASCOM public affairs

## Embracing a legacy of change

“**T**op Gun” is a 1986 American action-drama film directed by Tony Scott, and produced by Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, with distribution by Paramount Pictures.

I vividly remember watching this movie when it came out. I was a high school sophomore in the fall of 1986 and a member of Air Force Junior ROTC. My dad was a Marine who served in WWII, and I aspired to be a Marine officer. Yet, the Air Force was the only one at my high school with a junior ROTC program. Ultimately, I joined the Air Force as a result, but graduated high school with “Top Gun” being my favorite movie of all time. But becoming a U.S. naval aviator would have been a dream come true.

“Top Gun: Maverick” is a 2022 American action-drama film directed by Joseph Kosinski and written by Ehren Kruger, Eric Warren Singer, and Christopher McQuarrie, from stories by Peter Craig and Justin Marks. I was beyond excited to hear that a sequel had been released. I could quote the first movie line-by-line and had super high expectations that this movie would be as good as the first. I loved the sequel but still felt the 1986 version was the best. Blame it on being part of the X-generation.

However, a line in the sequel stuck with me; it vividly placed ROA at the front of my mind. Actor Ed Harris, playing Rear Adm. Chester “Hammer” Cain, had just told Capt. Pete “Maverick” Mitchell (Tom Cruise) that he had been called back to Top Gun. As the scene closed, Hammer said to Maverick: “The end is inevitable, Maverick. Your kind is heading to extinction,” to which Maverick responded, “Maybe so, sir, but not today.”

To say that ROA is at an inflection point would be yesterday’s news. The reality is our association has wrestled with its identity for decades. I have been to dozens of leadership meetings and conventions since 2002. My first experience with our identity was during Rear Adm. Paul Kaye’s presidency in 2011 when Col. Eileen Bonner was responsible for threading a needle and changing the association’s governing documents. These documents were a relic of years and decades past and had not evolved as the association had.

There were almost 500 people at that conference at Wardman Park with a banquet hall filled with affinity contractors. The Air Force Reserve Command held their senior leaders’ conference in conjunction with our conventions. The chiefs of every federal reserve section attended our meetings. Everyone who knew somebody was there.

Our 100th anniversary, celebrated in Washington in 2022, had 126 delegates in attendance. Our annual meeting in Baton Rouge in 2023 had 102 paid registrations. Not since 2011 have we had

more than 200 delegates attend a national meeting. In 2007, our membership was 68,000 members. We had almost 38,000 by the end of 2023.

Every elected Executive Committee has wrestled with the membership challenge. We’ve worked with the Secretary of Defense on access to reserve centers; we’ve hired national recruiters. We’ve partnered with brigade, company, division, group, squadron, and wing commanders to share ROA’s value. We hired a consulting firm to advise us on how to grow membership. A select committee has been established to focus on departments and chapter growth.

Robert D. Putnam wrote a book in 2000 titled *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of American Community*. Wikipedia says that “he has described the reduction in all the forms of in-person social intercourse upon which Americans used to found, educate, and enrich the fabric of their social lives. He argues that this undermines the active civic engagement which a strong democracy requires from its citizens. Putnam discussed ways in which Americans disengaged from community involvement, including decreased voter turnout, attendance at public meetings, service on committees, and work with political parties. His book provides a list of civic organizations whose membership and volunteerism have declined and uses bowling as an example to illustrate this: ‘although the number of people who bowled had increased in the last 20 years, the number of people who bowled in leagues had decreased. If people bowled alone, they did not participate in the social interaction and civic discussions that might occur in a league environment.’”

Derek Thompson wrote an article on February 15, 2024, in *The Atlantic* titled “Why Americans Suddenly Stopped Hanging Out.” According to Thompson, “[F]rom 2003 to 2022, American men reduced their average hours of face-to-face socializing by about 30 percent. For unmarried Americans, the decline was even bigger—more than 35 percent. For teenagers, it was more than 45 percent. Boys and girls ages 15 to 19 reduced their weekly social hangouts by more than three hours a week. In short, there is no statistical record of any other period in U.S. history when people have spent more time on their own.”

The reality is ROA is one of hundreds, if not thousands of organizations that are a fraction of their size at the height of their glory.

The membership model as we have known it is not a sustainable solution. It should be retired. Size is not everything: ROA must pivot from an association intent on increasing sheer membership numbers to a grassroots organization closely serving a core

constituency that identifies with its purpose and responds with enthusiastic support and involvement.

ROA's governing documents and its organizational structure reflect the old model and assume a high number of engaged participants. The state of today's association is a direct reflection of its membership model's inadequacy. Chasing "the membership solution" is akin to looking in the rearview mirror while standing still.

ROA, however, can be a thriving organization with a great future. Today's operational reserve components have challenges very different from their strategic reserve days. Many reserve units across the country deploy at least once during a member's enlistment. Their dental, medical, and training requirements mirror those of their active-duty comrades. These same reservists also have civilian jobs, families, and external commitments. Our association is the only organization whose mission is to support U.S. national security through a focus on the reserve components and their families. We do that through influence, awareness, partnerships, engagement, and management. Every person who serves or who has served in the reserve components, regardless of role is our core constituency.

Our journey together has been marked by significant milestones and challenges alike. From the enthusiasm of past conventions to the more intimate gatherings of recent times, each moment has contributed to our rich history. Our membership's evolution reflects a broader shift in how communities come together, underscoring the need for us to adapt and prosper in new ways. The spirit of our mission remains unchanged: to support and uplift each other, ensuring that the voices and needs of our reserve members and their families are heard and met. This mission calls for a renewed commitment from each of us, to step forward as advocates, leaders, and volunteers, bringing our unique strengths to bear on the challenges ahead.

Let us be inspired by the strength of the Belgian draft horse, a symbol of the incredible feats we can achieve together. The Belgian draft horse is a tall, powerful, and massive horse. One horse can pull a load weighing as much as 8,000 pounds—twice its weight! They can also labor 8-10 hours a day without growing tired. However, a team of two Belgian drafts can pull more than double what a single

horse can, as much as 22,000 pounds! Our collective effort can far exceed what we can accomplish alone.

I urge you to attend the annual meeting. Those members who attend put themselves forward as engaged and active members. The dynamic they create is that each person uplifts those around him- or herself, creating energy that will drive transformation, doing the work shoulder-to-shoulder that will create an effect greater than the sum of the parts. Convening members and placing them into action toward the shared mission is the *raison d'être* of ROA.

History has shown time and again how a small group of individuals can change history. We still need socialization. We still need camaraderie. We still need action. We need to continue meeting together. Human beings are social creatures by nature, and human nature does not change. Together we make the impossible possible.

People seek purpose and meaning in community. We in ROA have a social community with shared purpose and values. We come together to advance a common purpose. We are stewards of a mission that transcends our generation. We inherit a tradition and history. As stewards we are responsible for securing and improving the foundation for the work of future generations.

In this spirit, I invite you to join me in reinvigorating our commitment to our association and to each other. Together, we have the power to shape a future that honors our legacy while embracing new opportunities for growth and engagement. Change, indeed, is inevitable. Yet, in this ever-changing world, our unity and shared purpose provide a beacon of hope. Let's seize this moment to forge a path that reflects our strengths, our values, and our unwavering dedication to our community.

Layne R. Wroblewski, Lieutenant  
Colonel, USAF (Retired)  
83rd ROA National President



# A transformational perspective

In his column in these pages, our national president, retired Air Force Lt. Col. Layne Wroblewski, establishes some pretty darned concrete and — more inspiring to me and to staff — transformative guidance regarding his direction as ROA's leader.

When I am asked "how is ROA doing," I respond positively that we have stabilized our finances and are operating in the black; in fact, our cash is ahead of forecast. We have made significant improvements in our governance processes, and have a top-notch legislative and policy game that is performing directly within the letter and spirit of our founding purpose for national security and the readiness and quality of life of our reserve component members and families.

That's insufficient.

I read a book entitled, *7 Measures of Success: What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*. It draws on research by *Built to Last* and *Good to Great* author Jim Collins. The seven areas measured by Collins were organized into three "commitments." These commitments distinguished nine "great" associations from all the others his team studied in 2002.

- Commitment to purpose
- Commitment to analysis and feedback
- Commitment to action

*Commitment to purpose* entails a customer-service culture (measure 1) and alignment of products and services with mission (measure 2).

Does ROA have such a customer-service culture? Who are ROA's customers? I suggest that our members empower ROA to serve its true customer: the nation itself, through readiness. Our members play a crucial role in fulfilling our purpose. We should focus on better serving those who enable us to fulfill our purpose, including ROA members, reserve component members and their families, policy and law officials, employers who support dual roles, and voters.

Are our products and services aligned with our mission? We have credit card deals and travel deals and all sorts of insurance. Like everyone else. But do we offer the kinds of services that powerfully enhance the readiness of the reserve components? Are services confined to travel insurance or are they the value we provide to our true customers. How about advocacy that improves the lot of the young enlisted or commissioned citizen-warrior and/or family? Support for the all-important employer? Education that improves understanding of the reserve components? I think those are services.

*Commitment to analysis and feedback* entails data-driven strategies (measure 3), dialogue and engagement (measure 4), and CEO as broker of ideas (measure 5).

Do we use data and analysis? Not sufficiently well. To do better; to improve visibility of key numbers and measurement of results — and thus improve them — we are developing a much more robust data management capability. We will track and use data better than ever before.

Do we communicate within our organization well enough? We do vastly better than a decade ago. Yet I see tension within elements that erodes our solidarity and thus our effectiveness in the face of a growing national crisis in readiness.

Is the CEO a broker of ideas? Here I give myself, as chief executive, a B. Ten years ago, the wolf was at the door. Trust, good will, confidence, and corporate vitality had all collapsed. Within that context, ideas had no more chance of germination than a lily in a briar patch. We're better now. I have worked hard to create an environment conducive to trust, goodwill, and growth. I am excited about initiatives that will revitalize the service sections. I must guard against hubris and mental impermeability. (Thankfully, the staff does not hesitate to "help" me in that regard.)

*Commitment to action* entails organizational adaptability (measure 6) and alliance building (measure 7).

Does ROA adapt? Well, we survived what might have killed (indeed has killed) other associations. We embraced strict and painful fiscal discipline. We overcame entrenched dogma on membership eligibility (that I suggest fundamentally meant refuting elitism). We are tackling tough constitutional reforms. Sometimes we stood visibly, even alone, for the right thing (installation name changes and the PACT Act). Yet, we must adapt further.

How are we at alliance-building? Yes, we are a member of — and a leader in — The Military Coalition. We join with other groups when it fits. I think a huge opportunity exists with an alliance among associations in the reserve-component advocacy community. Gone are the days when one association alone could reliably "carry the flag" on an issue. For example, in the gathering fight for free and full health care for the Selected Reserve, currently it's ROA, National Guard Association of the U.S., the Enlisted Association of the National Guard, and the Chief of the National Guard Bureau (with some in Congress and the RC leadership nodding). Any of us alone will get nowhere; together, we have a chance to make and expand a penetration in the well-defended status quo.

As it has since our founding, membership may be the most-disussed and fretted-over topic among ROA leaders at all levels.

I contextualize challenges with membership within the set of similar difficulties faced by other organizations contending with the "bowling alone" phenomenon President Wroblewski cited.

As our president writes, ROA is at an inflection point. Throughout our history, we have measured membership success largely by membership numbers — gross numbers: in the 1950s, we had only 55,000 (this, shortly after WWII “employed” 16 million men and women in uniform, mostly reservists and roughly ten percent of whom were officers). In the long-gone days of commander coercion, we passed 120,000. Now we’re under 40,000.

Having written the ROA history published in the past two issues of *RESERVE VOICE MAGAZINE*, I would know if we had ever “parsed” membership numbers differently. And I recall no instance of us doing so, except what we now have: age groups, ranks, and services.

“ROA must pivot,” Layne continues, “from an association intent on increasing sheer membership numbers to a grassroots organization closely serving a core constituency that identifies with its purpose and responds with enthusiastic support and involvement”; he identifies the reserve component community as that core constituency.

Layne affirms the essence of human nature: we are sociable beings. In his superb primer on personal effectiveness, *Principles*, billionaire hedge fund founder and thinker Ray Dalio writes, “Neuroscientists, psychologists, and evolutionists agree the human brain comes pre-programmed with the need for and enjoyment of social cooperation.”

I think the depredations of technology will not *change* human nature, but instead mute the beneficial drive for society while metastasizing the cancers of stress, alienation, and hostility.

Do not look for human beings to give up their “smart” phones and virtual interactions (so profoundly deficient). Technology reduces the need to actually interact with another across the spectrum of human interaction (including inconvenience and risk). Human nature craves the dopamine rush fueled by constant referrals to the inbox and its promise of a new gift to be unwrapped. It is all so irresistible that we now consider it an imperative: technology exists and therefore must be used. I download, therefore I am.

So we must satisfy the new reality. And we must balance it with that other imperative of human nature, the need for society. Go to the bowling alley — the one that recently opened in my town of Leesburg, with its first-rate bar and grill serving up classic American cuisine and local micro-brews. The joint is crowded with youngish folks happily demonstrating human nature.

There’s a way to do it. That bowling alley shows there is.

The conventional wisdom is that if we get the reserve chiefs to join, their troops will follow. This is true to a limited extent. In the past, ROA had decades of leadership by senior officers, many of whom had served in either WWI or WWII together. They were leaders in their communities, men such as Edward Orton, Jr.; General Orton was a president of what is now Ohio State University and a renowned engineer. Strom Thurmond, though his views on race were justly condemned, was a general, a senator, as

well as ROA’s national president. And then there is Truman, ROA’s titan champion for decades.

The “commerce” among these top-of-the-food-chain men was facilitated by the relative absence of technology — theirs was a more interpersonal and less bureaucratically encumbered culture. Couple that with the relative absence in those days of the “security state,” which today vastly increases the inaccessibility of personal contact with officials (and creates an expectation that such inaccessibility is the norm) — just try getting into the Pentagon.

Maj. Gen. Evan Hultman, an ROA president and executive director, was perhaps the last of his “breed” — men who had made warm, even fraternal, ties during the post-war years and in ROA used them. The much-loved “Curly” Hultman knew fellow WWII veteran Ronald Reagan and enjoyed the access of an old acquaintance, virtually unimaginable in today’s environment of money, and special-interest politics, and an obsession with security.

These heavyweights of the 1920s through the 1960s or 1970s attracted other senior officers, preserving the cultural fabric of connection and clout. Coupled with the practice of commanders cajoling young officers into membership, that influence drove up our numbers. The inertia lasted until about 1990, as the older cohorts departed the earthly battlefield, policy change prevented command influence, and the joiner generation gave way to a cohort less likely to join simply because “that’s what is done.”

Such connections and positioning still matter, but there are other ways to revitalize our strength. In any event, doggedly trying to recreate yesterday is fruitless. Yesterday was a different era: leaders then were open in their advocacy of ROA. Today they can be and are less apt to trumpet membership, *although I see that changing to an extent*.

What should we do? We need to build from the ranks up. We must offer value that appeals to potential members, specifically targeting company-grade NCOs and officers, and extending to those of all subsequent ranks, including the separated and retired cohort.

That’s a broad swath, but recall that in surveys done for ROA going back decades, a commonality exists among the priorities of members: camaraderie and “fraternity,” networking (especially among young serving members), and legislative and policy advocacy. The serving folks want advocacy for their issues, and the veterans want it for those serving. So there’s a lot of shared territory.

We must make our presence and compelling value proposition known. Until now, we have had a plausible excuse for our failure: commanders of all ranks (and I mean *all*) have deferred to JAGs who are paid and promoted to eliminate risk, and thus may blindly sweep away opportunity. Commanders often have had no experience with military organizations and avoid the risk.

But those leaders “with eyes to see” may recognize that the system does not always adequately equip them, train them, fund them, care for them, advocate for them, fight to eliminate the outrages

that undermine their capacity to serve in a military that too often takes them for granted.

Commanders are beginning to recognize that they need us. They want us to influence on Capitol Hill what they in uniform cannot. They want us to rally on Main Street the support that has flagged. They seek help funding from Wall Street what their ravaged budgets neglect.

In April, I participated in New York in the promotion to lieutenant colonel of a USAR officer whom I have mentored since he was a first lieutenant. At the ceremony a couple officers, one a colonel, asked me about ROA and how he could become involved. They weren't joining for the pizza and beer.

ROA recently hosted senior Army Reserve NCOs who wanted to hear about us. We are developing what I preliminarily call an advisory group within the Army section among them to offer input in our resolutions, legislation, and policy arenas — what does the Army Reserve really need, *at the soldier level*?

The service section is the right place for this effort: the service sections have historically been centers of service-specific excellence, engines of resolutions, incubators of future leaders, and generators of initiatives within ROA. Placing this capability into their realms, which — in a virtuous upward spiral that will energize NCO and enlisted membership — just makes sense.

This initiative grew out of an invitation to me extended last year by the command sergeant major of the Army Reserve. This leader invited me to address his senior command sergeants major at a dinner held at ROA wrapping up their annual senior council offsite. During that talk, I told these NCOs that ROA was at — to use that term again — an inflection point. They had the opportunity to gain great influence in the organization if they took the initiative.

Human nature is re-emerging, an inborn desire for engagement. That's what we must tap into. I see great opportunity in attracting NCOs into ROA and supporting their rise in power here. I foresee a serving or retired command sergeant major or chief master sergeant or master chief petty officer elected to the presidency of ROA — and in his or her inaugural speech, addressing an audience comprising great numbers of members of all ranks, united in the drive to ensure readiness through strong and equitably resourced and treated reserve components.

This is not radical — no more than it was admitting women into membership in the 1920s. Admitting naval officers after the war, somewhere in time eliminating racial biases and biases connected with sexual orientation, opening membership eligibility to NCOs and then all ranks — all of these provoked some degree of consternation.

But this is what ROA has done all along: evolve. It's what healthy organizations do, and what we must continue doing. A robust membership is fundamentally important. However we frame "membership", it provides power to achieve our founding purpose: advocacy. So we must have a membership that can actively exert influence at the district, state, and the national level.

Detailed more fully in Director of Legislation and Military Policy Director Matthew Schwartzman's report, our clout in that realm, our founding purpose, continues to show wins. Matthew has developed into a powerhouse, doing the work of at least two. Whereas I used to produce all news releases, he does them now, and has significantly increased our output, which in turn creates a "drumbeat" of impressions "in the marketplace" of policy and legislation.

In turn, ROA is increasingly sought out for guidance on the Hill by legislators and their staffs. They recognize that the RC is different from the active force and turn to ROA with its preeminent expertise. ROA is again invited to give testimony at hearings, as Matthew details in his report.

Among senior military leadership, we have met singly or among military service organizations as part of panels with Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness Gilbert R. Cisneros and subsequently his acting replacement, Ashish S. Vazirani; Chief of the Air Force Reserve Lt. Gen. John P. Healy (in collaboration with the Air Force Section VP); Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Manpower and Reserve Affairs Alex Wagner; Director of the Army Staff Lt. Gen. Laura Potter; Deputy Chief of Staff G-9 (Army installations) Lt. Gen. Kevin Vereen and his senior enlisted advisor, Sgt. Maj. Michael Perry; Director of the Army National Guard Lt. Gen. Jon A. Jensen; Reserve Forces Policy Board Military Executive Maj. Gen. John Hashem; the National Security Council's John Kirby, coordinator for national security communications; U.S. NATO Deputy Chief of Mission Richard Holtzapple; Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs) Celeste Wallander; and U.S. European Command Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Peter Andrysiak, Jr.

I have met with the incoming Deputy Chief of Army Reserve, who pushed back on my suggestion that the all-volunteer force, with weak recruitment, is getting "wobbly." Major General Kotulich, a life ROA member who appreciates our support of the USAR, described reforms in Army recruiting that are already paying off, among them greater rigor in recruiter "productivity" such as is normal in private-sector sales. The Army is creating a viable "career track" for recruiters from NCO through warrant officer who are good at it and want to do more — what a great idea: reinforce success!

ROA has called on Congress to approve equipment modernization initiatives requested by the Chief of Army Reserve Lt. Gen. Jody Daniels in her April testimony to Congress, in addition to the USAR's desire for duty status reform and health care for its force, which ROA fully supports.

ROA, alone among RC military service organizations, has a representative on the newly established DoD Military Family Readiness Council, former Command Chief Master Sergeant of Air Force Reserve Command Ericka Kelly. The council advises the secretary of defense on family-related issues; its nineteen members include a general, an admiral, the acting under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, three senior defense officials, and the

senior NCOs of the Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, and Space Force.

Your ROA is front and center in some big and important fights, among them securing full, government-provided “military grade” health care for members of the Selected Reserve who could be expected to “fight tonight.” The gaps and discontinuity in care, as well as the expense entailed in the back-and-forth from civilian care to military care are a hardship and a readiness issue.

These citizen warriors are employed as an operational reserve. We owe it to them and to the nation to ensure they are ready, just as we do for the active force. The Chief of the National Guard Bureau is an ally in this fight, but we expect the active force and Defense bureaucracy to oppose it, claiming the expense (we think proactive care will actually *save* money) will take away from their priorities. We say, if you want to use the RC like an active force, pay for it — just as you pay for your active force.

On behalf of ROA and on a pro bono basis, Wiley Rein LLP filed an amicus curiae supporting certiorari in *Feliciano v. Department of Transportation* and *Flynn v. Department of State*, asking the U.S. Supreme Court to overturn the U.S. Court of Appeals decision to deny reservist differential pay. Nick Feliciano, an FAA air traffic controller, was mobilized from 2012 into 2014. Charles Flynn, a special agent in the Bureau of Diplomatic Security, mobilized from March 2020 to 2022. Both were denied reservist differential pay on the basis that they *volunteered* for active duty.

The amicus argues that the court’s decision to refuse differential pay to the petitioners, reservists mobilized to active duty, disincentivizes reservists from volunteering for active-duty missions, deters young people from pursuing military service, and ultimately impacts the readiness of the U.S. armed forces. ROA and Wiley Rein had similarly collaborated to get the case of LeRoy Torres into the Supreme Court, where the medically retired Army captain, crippled by toxic fumes and forced to leave his job as a Texas state trooper, triumphed. Because court decisions create precedents, all servicemembers triumphed. ROA alone fights like this for the reserve components.

The Army Reserve engaged us with a family-important issue. Army Emergency Relief (AER). This private sector organization (now run by the immediate former Sergeant Major of the Army) is known as “the official nonprofit of the Army.” With about \$350 million in net assets, AER chiefly provides relief loans and grants to soldiers who demonstrate financial need. Among AER’s loan eligibility policies is a rule that Army Reserve soldiers can only qualify for an emergency loan while they’re on active duty for 30 or more days. Recently, the Army Reserve unsuccessfully appealed an AER denial of \$400 to a soldier who desperately needed it. We agree with the USAR, and will advocate to AER and the Army, that this AC-centric policy is out of step with an operational reserve: the fix can be as simple as authorizing the first O-6 in the chain of command to approve an exception to policy.

These fights are “muddy-boots” fights. They are real issues contended with by real citizen-warriors. ROA must fight them and win them.

These fights take money. As it is, we do well with a legislative team of one (and Matthew leverages unpaid interns to the hilt). While I made the case earlier for ROA’s return to financial stability, we are far from the financial strength we need. The national staff, as I promised during the 2023 national convention, submitted a budget that relied only minimally on the most justifiable draws from our investment accounts. For example, a draw on our \$6.3 million Life Member account to help pay for the operation of an association whose membership is more than 90 percent life members.

The current budget eliminated funding for our professionally conducted development and special project management efforts at mid-year, which will halt our nascent Citizen Warrior Coalition if funding is not found — and I am working on finding it. The coalition, begun in 2021, would partner ROA with private-sector employers who seek to identify and hire into their workforces members of the RC, veterans of the force, and spouses. Sponsor funds from these employers would benefit ROA’s ability to do its work. This program had been under development by our outsourced partner Military Non-Profit Consultants, and it is new funding for this now-halted effort that we must bring in.

In reductions elsewhere, we chose to go digital-only for RESERVE VOICE MAGAZINE and eliminate the *Convention Communique*, saving about \$100,000, though we know that a digital magazine has a lower “open rate” and are thus much less effective among our members. And you can’t leave electrons on the desk of a legislator or potential donor.

Our investment accounts have grown with the Wall Street bull market. I agree with our national treasurer that we must grow this reserve, now at about \$10 million, back to \$20, \$30 or even \$50 million. The group of accounts now includes a Minute Man Memorial Building Fund to ensure we have dedicated reserves for our headquarters and an associated committee with expertise in architecture, infrastructure, law, and business to help advise on MMB maintenance issues.

ROA’s revitalization bears a price (for example, further improvements in data management, the website’s operability, and our outmoded association software’s replacement with a better one). So, we must continually grow revenue. The major opportunity is corporate sponsorship, and I touched on that. Another area is advertising among law firms in connection with our Service Members Law Center, some of which we have done, and are now broadening the effort.

Another area of potential for our growth is “mergers and acquisitions.” We are actively looking for opportunities among service organizations that seek strength (and survivability) within the framework of acquisition. The stronger ROA gets, the more likely we’ll be considered a good suitor. We cannot try to be all things to all potential partners; we must be disciplined at “who we are” and

"whom we seek." Nearly a decade ago, we learned the hard way with the aborted integration of National Association of Uniformed Services (an all-components, all-ranks organization when ROA was still officers-only) that a merely fair fit is likely to falter in the details.

In my favorite line from one of my favorite movies, the animation *Ratatouille*, the tyrannical food critic Anton Ego arrogantly descends upon the transformed Parisian Restaurant Gusteau, which he previously disparaged. Gusteau's has been revitalized with the brilliant cooking of the undiscovered rat-chef Remy. Ego is determined to skewer the place yet again. Seated imperiously, Ego answers the petrified waiter's query, "Do you know what you'd like this evening, sir?"

"Yes, I think I do. After reading a lot of overheated puffery about your new cook, you know what I'm craving? A little perspective. That's it. I'd like some fresh, clear, well-seasoned perspective. Can you suggest a good wine to go with that?"

Nourished by some fresh, clear perspective, we should be heartened by the renewed vigor of our century-old ROA. Where other organizations have disappeared and new ones have sprouted, ours is among the few stalwarts to survive overzealous military legalism, bureaucracy, the technology-driven "poaching of the American soul," middling management, and other depredations.

Here we are, doing precisely what our founders intended, persevering, as did the generations after them, making a difference in law and policy.

Father Richard John Neuhaus, in his *American Babylon* reflected on the spiritual duality of citizenship in troubled times. "...we seek

to be faithful in a time not of our choosing but of our testing. We resist the hubris of presuming that it is the definitive time and place of historical promise or tragedy, but it is our time and place. It is a time of many times ... a time for dancing; a time for walking together, unintimidated when we seem to be a small and beleaguered band; a time for rejoicing in momentary triumphs, and for defiance in momentary defeats; a time for persistence in reasoned argument, never tiring in proposing the world a more excellent way..."

Our untiring defiance and persistence will preserve the fighting strength of our Reserve forces that someday, perhaps soon, will again step into the line for freedom.

And returning to our transformational Chef Remy, being a sommelier myself, I'll readily suggest a good wine to have with that: Château Minute Man 1922. Drink now or for the next century!



Jeffrey E. Phillips  
ROA Executive Director



ROA Photography by Henry Plimack



# Annual Meeting

October 4 - October 6, 2024

For registration and more details, visit

[www.roa.org/  
event/2024national](http://www.roa.org/event/2024national)

# The ROA story: creating a legislative style

By Matthew Schwartzman, legislation and military policy director

The first task that Executive Director Phillips gave me when I joined the team was to read *The ROA Story*. “I want you to know this book as well as I do, if not better,” he said, setting a high bar.

*The ROA Story* has much to offer members and staff alike, but the chapter that proved pivotal for my work at ROA was the fourth, *Creating a Legislative Style*.

The chapter begins by citing floor remarks from a senior senator describing ROA in 1966 as “the most powerful organization on Capitol Hill.” While much has changed since then, ROA is still relentless in its advocacy.

The question raised to me at ROA’s executive committee meeting in March was, “What makes for an effective advocacy program?” I replied that “an effective program is sought after, respected, and *fear*ed.”

Those familiar with *The Prince* might describe my response as Machiavellian, and I could not agree more. As your legislation and military policy director, my duty is to drive a *premier* advocacy program that renders a *premier* government affairs service. Your *continued* support of ROA national’s daily operations is critical in these efforts.

This process began with asking myself, “What is our legislative style?” I looked to Chapter 4 of *The ROA Story* for the answer but could not find it stated explicitly. Or so I first thought.

Chapter 4 begins, “ROA’s legislative record over the period of history in which the Association has made a mark has been a model; ROA’s total commitment to building the Reserves as the nation’s mobilization base, and an essential element for National Defense and the persistence with which it has pursued its goals regardless of opposition has gained a fine respect.”

Seeking greater clarity, I referred to my political science background, “What *ought* our legislative style be?” As I pondered the question, that first sentence in *The ROA Story* persisted in my mind. Eventually, the answer struck like a bolt from the sky. ROA’s



Matthew Schwartzman (3rd from right) with Sen. Amy Klobuchar (MN) (middle) and members of The Military Coalition urging support for S.Res.444 and the approval of hundreds of held military promotions. (Nov. 2023)

legislative style is and ought to be, “a total commitment to building the Reserves regardless of opposition.”

On the heels of this realization, the voice of a retired Army major general came to mind with the wisdom “write to express, not to impress.” And so the motto was born. ROA must “relentlessly represent reserve readiness.”

To *relentlessly represent reserve readiness* is—and will always be—ROA’s legislative style. In this style, ROA continues to build on a historic legacy of accomplishments by relentlessly representing reserve readiness.

The National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024 was signed into law in December. It had many [achievements for ROA](#), including:

- Extending TRICARE Reserve Select coverage for survivors of reservists and national guardsmen from six months to three years.
- Establishing the authority for the secretary of defense to equal special and incentive pay to that of the active component.
- Providing full parental leave parity by giving reserve component parents 12 weeks of leave when adopting a child or accepting the placement of a child for long-term foster care.

- Funding the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account at approximately \$1,000,000,000.
- Increasing the accession bonus for Reserve and National Guard nurses from \$20,000 to \$40,000.
- Delivering dual basic allowance for housing for single reserve component service members on active duty for training from 140 days to fewer than 365.

Also, in December, ROA influenced the approval of more than 400 general and flag officer promotions. We did so through a multi-month campaign that included calling on the Senate Majority Leader to consider the nominees one by one (which occurred for the confirmations of the chair of the Joint Chiefs of staff, U.S. Army chief of staff, and the Marine Corps commandant) and advocating for the Resolution that lifted the hold on the promotions.

“Advocating,” if you are curious, entailed ROA meeting with the offices of all Senate Rules and Administration Committee members urging unanimous support for the resolution.

*Improvise, adapt, and overcome* were the three words Rep. Amy Klobuchar, the committee’s chairwoman, used to describe the resolution at its markup. These words equally describe ROA’s advocacy approach to this issue.

Following fatal Osprey CV-22 crashes in Australia and Japan, ROA wrote to Secretary of Defense Lloyd J. Austin, calling for the aircraft’s immediate grounding. One week later, the aircraft was grounded.

In March, ROA testified before the 118th Congress for the third time (we have submitted seven statements for the record, all available on ROA’s website).

At the hearing, I reaffirmed ROA’s support for legislation that requires all courses under the Montgomery GI Bill Selected Reserve to be charged at the in-state tuition rate (regardless of the enrollee’s state of residence) and improves homeownership opportunities for citizen-warriors and their families.

ROA also presented its recommendations for improving the Transition Assistance Program. I detailed our five-step action plan for improving TAP, referred to as the Delivering Reservist Integration and Veterans Education plan, or the **DRIVE** plan.

Specifically, ROA’s **DRIVE** plan calls on Congress to:

- 1) Amend TAP’s eligibility requirements to allow service members who accumulate 180 cumulative days of active service, which includes drill weekends and active duty for training, to participate.
- 2) **Provide reserve component members that take TAP multiple times with diminishing returns the opportunity to opt out of their TAP requirements (with thoughtful consideration given to the timing of such a request).**
- 3) Add reserve component-focused matters to the TAP preseparation checklist and process, including information, advice,



Matthew Schwartzman (right) with Trey Criner (left) details ROA’s five-step action plan to improve TAP for Ranking Member Mike Levin (CA-49). Source: Screenshot of hearing video feed (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zq9O9TulFs&t=4370s>). (March 2024)

and counsel on using separation from service documentation to receive retirement benefits.

- 4) **Establish a reserve component curriculum track within TAP.**
- 5) **Ensure military spouses are fully integrated into their service spouse’s TAP process.**

Both bills and three of the five steps of our **DRIVE** plan (bolded above) have since passed the House at the Subcommittee level and are gaining traction. We expect congressional champions to try to use the FY 2025 NDAA as the vehicle to drive these proposals home (pun intended).

As you can see, many of our campaigns have been successful. There are others still ongoing. I am spotlighting our efforts to sustain Total Force medical readiness and support the U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps. Regarding the former, congressional opposition prevented a provision delivering no-cost dental care for all Selected Reserve members from being included in last year’s NDAA.

According to the conference report, the “importance” of the issue was “recognized” because DoD contracted a federally funded study on the proposal’s feasibility and cost. “What will solve this problem is action,” said Phillips in response. “No more studies. No more delays. Congress and the nation expect their military—all of it—to be ready to fight. Dental care is health care; it affects military readiness, and it must be made fully available to those in the reserve components expected to ‘fight tonight.’”

As for the latter, members of Congress have positively received ROA’s calls to restore funding for the USPHS RRC, including Sens. Ron Wyden (OR), Tammy Duckworth (IL), and Mazie Hirono (HI). The 118th Congress as a whole has yet to respond. For those

unfamiliar, the USPHS RRC was created with ROA's support by the *Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act* in 2020.

The CARES Act successfully established a preliminary framework for properly and effectively using the USPHS RRC. It did not, however, provide a codified structure or access to the proper "tools" for recruiting and retaining qualified talent.

As a result, the USPHS RRC has yet to realize its desired end strength or full capability. This is presumably why funding for the USPHS RRC was eliminated last June by the *Fiscal Responsibility Act*.

In alignment with the senators, ROA urges appropriators and the Department of Health and Human Services leadership to support the USPHS RRC by providing \$32 million in FY 2025 funding.

Without the support of HHS leadership, such a goal could prove unattainable. Regardless, ROA is fighting for the USPHS RRC and national security readiness. Therefore, we are hosting an *ROA Advocacy Day* at our Minute Man Memorial Building (MMB) June 13, which is solely focused on supporting the USPHS RRC. The goal of the Advocacy Day is simple: broaden congressional support for the USPHS RRC. I hope to see you here at the MMB June 13.

Many of the efforts I just described would not have been possible without the support and talents of ROA's most recent defense fellow (legislative intern), Jake Fales. The vision for ROA's defense fellow program is to be the premier professional education and development opportunity for aspiring advocates, government affairs professionals, and patriotic Americans. ROA's defense fellows rotate quarterly. Jake was our third fellow in the last year.

As the primary manager of the program, I strive to immerse our defense fellows in the legislative process. The final task I gave Jake was to write about his experience as ROA's defense fellow. Here is what he had to say:

## My Time at ROA

By Jake Fales

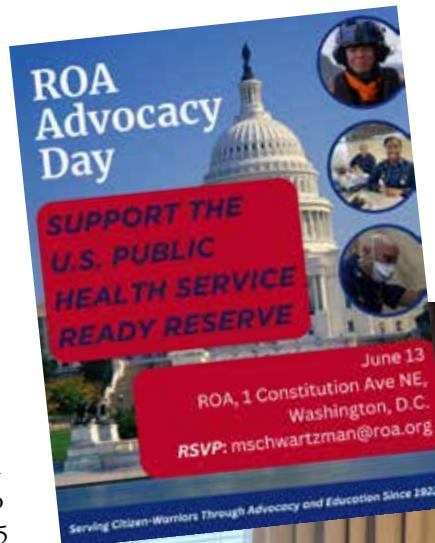
I first heard of ROA from General Phillips during a speech he gave to my American public policy class. From my upbringing in Hampton Roads, Virginia, I have had a strong connection with service members, veterans, and their families. They were my teachers, scout leaders, and my friends' parents.

I always knew I wanted the chance to provide a service to those who serve. I am thankful that ROA provided me with that opportunity. If not for ROA, I would not be who I am today.

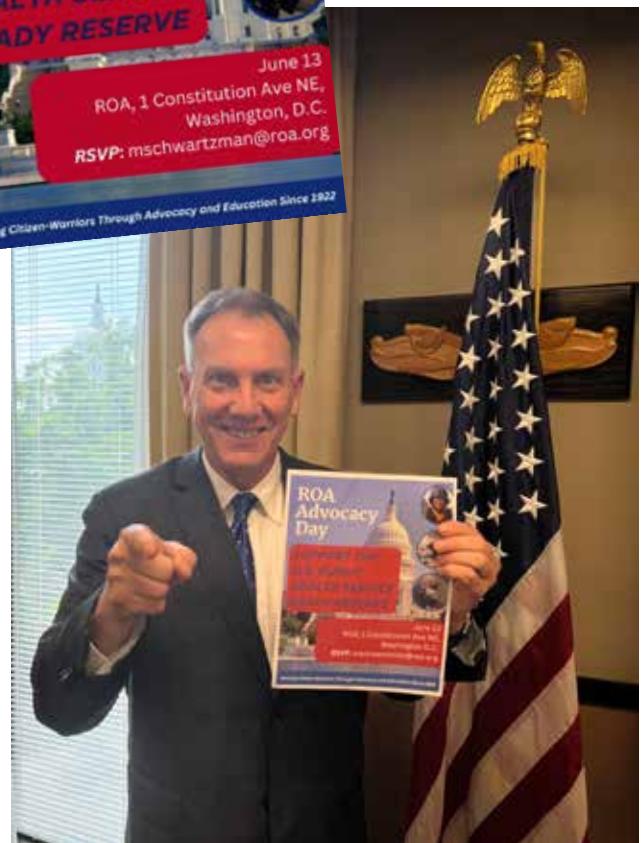
I came to ROA with limited legislative experience and knowledge. What I knew came from American University classrooms and meetings I have had with other advocates.

On my very first day, Matt put me right to work writing a news release, something I had never done before. After many rounds of editing, I learned how to write professionally and concisely in The Associated Press style.

Developing my writing skills enabled me to author congressional modes of correspondence for ROA, including articles for the RESERVE VOICE MAGAZINE and sections of congressional testimony.



ROA June 13 Advocacy Day flyer



ROA's executive director retired Army Maj. Gen. Jeff Phillips spotlights the association's June 13 Advocacy Day focused on the U.S. Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps. (May 2024)

Matt believes in trial by fire. For me, that meant being the sole representative for ROA at a meeting of The Military Coalition and at a Defense Health Agency executive session within my first few weeks. Those experiences made me curious to learn more. And learn more I did.

As my time with ROA went on, I learned more about the military's organization (and disorganization), along with the unique needs of citizen-warriors and their families. My head was bursting with new knowledge daily, and Matt kept the challenges coming.

He rarely answers questions directly on the first ask, preferring to ask questions in return to let me draw my own conclusion(s).

This intellectual independence extended into being assigned as the primary advocate for H.R.4244/S.2076, the *Servicemember Enrollment and Readmission for Valuable Education Act*. This legislation provides essential educational protections (those associated with prompt readmission following time on duty) for servicemembers attending university.

Another aspect of ROA that made for a pleasant experience was my co-workers. ROA has a team of the most competent and capable people I have ever had the pleasure of working with.

The more I investigated the law and heard from ROA's members, the more I realized how vital ROA's work is. I see each issue as an opportunity to improve people's lives—to make our nation safer.

Before starting at ROA, I thought I would enjoy policy but was worried it might be tedious or too difficult to practice. Fast forward three months later, and I found myself testifying before the Maryland General Assembly on behalf of an organization I lead at AU.

ROA's defense fellow program has helped me realize that I do not just enjoy it, but I want to make a career out of it.

When Matt tasked me with writing my first bill, he told me something that has stuck with me ever since: "A great law is like great music; it delivers a message and compels action."

Through my experience with ROA, I am more confident than ever that I am on my way to becoming a legislative musician.

I wish ROA's next defense fellow the best of luck. It has been an honor and pleasure serving you.



ROA's defense fellow Jake Fales commands the podium at the Pentagon's visitors center. (Feb. 2024)

Following Jake's departure, we welcomed our newest defense fellow, Peter Donlon, to the team.

Like Jake, Peter is an American University student passionate about the policy process.

Please help me welcome Peter to the ROA team by sending him an email at [dfellow@roa.org](mailto:dfellow@roa.org).

Peter is joining us in the heat of the FY 2025 NDAA cycle. In association with an April 30 budget hearing with the reserve chiefs, we submitted a [statement](#) outlining our leading NDAA priorities.

On May 8, ROA President Wroblewski, Executive Director Phillips, and I met with House Armed Services Committee chairperson Mike Rogers (AL-03) staff on these priorities, among others.

As we have for more than a century, ROA will *relentlessly represent reserve readiness* in Washington, D.C. With your help, we can maintain our legislative style and write our chapter into *The ROA Story*. 

# ROA Advocacy Day champions the PHS Reserve Corps

Recalling its successful 1970s fight to save the Coast Guard Reserve, ROA's June 13 Advocacy Day supported the USPHS Ready Reserve Corps, with nearly twenty U.S. Public Health Service officers, including Deputy Surgeon General Rear Adm. Denise Hinton and partners, including the Military Officers Association of America and Non-Commissioned Officers Association visiting congressional members and staff.

"D-Day" began at ROA's Minute Man Memorial Building at 0830. ROA's executive director, Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips, USA (Ret.), offered opening remarks. (ROA offered a virtual alternative to its in-person offering (still available).

Phillips experienced Public Health Service capabilities while in uniform. "As a brigadier general, I commanded Fort Stewart, Ga., during the Iraq deployment of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Infantry Division stationed there," said Phillips. "With the division's medical staff deployed, the command's chief of behavioral health for some ten thousand soldiers and many more family members was a USPHS captain, who performed superbly well in this vital role."

Phillips was followed by a panel featuring retired Air Force Lt. Col. Susan Lukas (who was directly involved with the USPHS RRC's creation) and MOAA's director of government relations for health affairs Karen Ruedisueli (an Army spouse with more than ten years of advocacy experience in the military healthcare arena).

Lukas and Ruedisueli outlined problems facing public health preparedness and the Military Healthcare System. Lukas expounded on ROA's vision for the USPHS RRC, particularly in a Title 10 role.



ROA President Lt. Col. Layne Wrobkewski USAF (Ret.), Matthew Schwartzman, and Air Force Vice President, Lt. Col. Susan Lucas, USAF (Ret.) at the Minute Man headquarters with U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers Cmdr. Ingrid St. Amand and Lt. Cmdr. Eric Butcher before heading to House and Senate engagements on June 13. USPHS officers shared their stories as part of an advocacy event urging lawmakers to support funding for the service's Ready Reserve Corps. MOAA staff participated in the event, which was led by the Reserve Organization of America. (Photo by Tony Lombardo/MOAA)

"I envision the USPHS RRC having an even more expansive role in ensuring the Armed Forces' medical readiness," said Lukas. "When it comes to education, training, and mission execution, the USPHS RRC must be integrated further into the Total Force. This will help the services overcome staffing challenges in critical medical specialties."

Following closing remarks from Rear Admiral Hinton and ROA's president, retired USAF Lt. Col. Layne Wroblewski, attendees formed into six teams. Following a group picture on the MMB's front steps, they deployed to the offices of nearly 30 members of Congress throughout the day, including:

Sens. John Cornyn (TX), Jon Tester (MT), Chris Van Hollen (MD), Kevin Cramer (ND), Ben Cardin (MD), Tammy Duckworth (IL), Sherrod Brown (OH), Catherine Cortez Masto (NV), Michael Bennet (CO), John Boozman (AR), Marsha Blackburn (TN), and John Thune (SD); and Reps. Ed Case (HI-01), Michael Burgess (TX-26), Scott DesJarlais (TN-04), Kathy Castor (FL-14), Jamie Raskin (MD-08), Tom Cole (OK-04), Troy Balderson (OH-12), Elissa Slotkin (MI-07), Mike Rogers (AL-03), Adam Smith (WA-09), Terri Sewell (AL-07), Robert Aderholt (AL-04), Lizzie Fletcher (TX-07), Lisa Blunt Rochester (Del.), Kim Schrier (WA-08), and Mike Waltz (FL-06).

Teams also met with professional staff from the Committees on Health, Education, Labor, and Pension and Appropriations.

“You have heard me say that it’s important for ROA members to be twice the advocate,” wrote ROA’s legislation and military policy director Matthew Schwartzman in his June 5 *Up to the Minute Man Update*. “This means it’s equally important for you to send pre-authored letters using our *Legislative Readiness Center* and to schedule meetings with your elected officials and their staff on our resolutions and leading legislative priorities.”

By visiting <https://www.roa.org/page/policyportfolio>, you can access the official June 13 Advocacy Day *Government Affairs Readiness Resource Guide* (referred to as the *Guide*).

The *Guide* provides all members of ROA’s Minute Man



(Photo by Tony Lombardo/MOAA)

U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps officers, including reservists, pose with advocates prior to a “Hill Day” in Washington, D.C., run by the Reserve Organization of America with support from MOAA. (Photo by Tony Lombardo/MOAA)



ROA’s director of legislation and military policy, Matthew Schwartzman, with congressional staff and PHS officers, and ROA’s director of operations, retired USN Cmdr. Trey Criner (second from right) and defense fellow, Peter Donlon (at right).



Movement with resources to bring the halls of Capitol Hill to you, including template e-mails to schedule meetings with members of Congress and their staff, a congressional staff e-mail listing, position papers, meeting talking points, and step-by-step instructions on how to be an effective USPHS Ready Reserve Corps supporter.

ROA also sent a Call to Action (titled *Help ROA get funding for the USPHS RRC in FY2025!*) that is available on our *Legislative Readiness Center* at <https://www.roa.org/page/LegislativeReadinessCenter>.

The goal for Advocacy Day was simple: broaden congressional support for the USPHS and its RRC. Without question, this was achieved.

Those familiar with the USPHS RRC know that ROA was instrumental in the fight to establish it in 2020. Since then, the USPHS RRC has contributed significantly to safeguarding the nation's health and ensuring Total Force medical readiness.

From augmenting the National Guard Bureau's medical teams to delivering needed healthcare to the U.S. Coast Guard, the USPHS RRC has proven its worth.

Unfortunately, the *CARES Act* did not provide the USPHS RRC with the "tools" to recruit and retain qualified talent. As a result, the USPHS RRC currently has fewer than 100 officers, well below its desired end strength of 3,000.

This is presumably why funding for the USPHS RRC was "axed" when the *Fiscal Responsibility Act* was signed into law last June. It is almost certainly why the Department of Health and Human Services omitted the USPHS RRC from its FY 2025 budget request.

Just as ROA fought for the USPHS RRC's creation, it has fought — and will continue to fight — for its sustainment. This fight transcends the June 13 Advocacy Day.

Following the signing of the *CARES Act*, ROA worked to create conditions conducive to the USPHS RRC receiving appropriations.

It achieved this through the *American Rescue Plan*, which provided the USPHS RRC with \$84 million in funding over three FYs (\$28 million per year).

ROA then "attacked" the USPHS RRC's recruiting and retention challenges head-on by spearheading a comprehensive campaign that yielded the introduction of S.2297, the *Parity for Public Health Service Ready Reserve Act*: the most significant benefits parity package in the Corps' history.

It did so through co-hosting an "education forum" with the Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service in the MMB on the leading USPHS RRC parity issues.

Attendees included a congressional staffer of S.2297's sponsor, Sen. Tammy Duckworth, and USPHS RRC representatives,



Roa's executive director, Jeff Phillips, with PHS Cmdr. Barbara Mason, RN, after their engagement with Rep. Robert Aderholt's staff.

including retired Rear Adm. Susan Ortega (then the Senior Advisor to Secretary for Health and U.S. Surgeon General).

Following the bill's introduction, ROA established and led a task force within The Military Coalition's guard and reserve committee focused solely on S.2297.

Upon the news that the FRA revoked funding for the USPHS RRC, ROA further engaged with TMC, resulting in a letter of support backed by 19 military and veterans service organizations calling for \$32 million in FY 2025 funding for the USPHS RRC.

Unfortunately, the FRA, coupled with unprecedeted spending rules set by the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress, has impacted most, if not all, of ROA's policy priorities.

This includes its USPHS RRC priorities.

While these friction points still exist, ROA's June 13 Advocacy Day added "logs to the fire." Now, it is time to capitalize on the momentum and continue to relentlessly represent readiness for the USPHS RRC and its impact on national security. 



## More photos from ROA's Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps Advocacy Day





## More photos from ROA's Public Health Service Ready Reserve Corps Advocacy Day



# Working to ensure our Air Guard members receive the education benefits they have earned



By Senator John Hoeven

The members of the National Guard play an essential and growing role in our country's defense every day. Having served as Governor of North Dakota and now as U.S. Senator, I have seen firsthand the ways we rely on our guard members, who serve right alongside their active duty counterparts to defend our nation at home and abroad. Whether it's responding to natural disasters and keeping our communities safe in times of crisis or deploying to counter the many threats that the U.S. and its allies face, the National Guard gives up time with their loved ones and in their careers to protect us and preserve our way of life.

Through these sacrifices, they have earned not only our deep gratitude and recognition, but the very best benefits as well. That's exactly why I am working to properly reward guard members for their dedicated service and ensure we can continue to recruit the best and brightest for the increasingly high-tech missions the National Guard takes on. Among other efforts, I have been working to secure more comprehensive education benefits for our guard members, including the Air National Guard.

In 2019, I began leading an effort to provide drill-status Air Guard members with federal tuition assistance (Fed TA), similar to the program that is available to the Army National Guard. This is a priority we've worked to advance across two administrations, leveraging my role on the Senate Defense Appropriations Committee. We secured the first round of funding in Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 to establish the Air Guard Fed TA pilot program, with North Dakota and 13 other states being selected to participate. In FY2021, the pilot program expanded to an additional four states, and nearly 1,000 Air Guardsmen utilized this important benefit. Since then, we have provided nearly \$20 million for the pilot program and have continued to urge leaders at the Department of Defense and our Senate colleagues to make the program permanent.

Clearly, such a benefit is warranted, and we have only to look to the North Dakota Air National Guard to see why. My state's Air Guard members serve in a wide range of capacities that are critical to our nation's defense. In particular, we have the MQ-9 Reaper mission, which supports military operations around the globe and is flown by the 119th Wing in Fargo, also known as the Happy Hooligans. These Air Guard members have long embodied the best qualities of our Armed Forces, having a record of excellence in all they do. The MQ-9 mission is highly sophisticated and requires state-of-the-art technology in order to meet the operational demands they face on a daily basis.

These men and women must have specialized skills and knowledge in order to succeed, and education benefits play an essential role in recruiting the type of young people who can fulfill these highly technical roles. The 119th Wing is just one example of the important work of our Air Guard members and why this benefit should not only be available, but prioritized.

That's why I'm sponsoring legislation with Senator Jeanne Shaheen that would require the Secretary of the Air Force to provide federal tuition assistance to drill-status members of the Air National Guard on a permanent basis. This effort already has broad bipartisan support, with a similar measure that I authored being unanimously approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee in the FY2024 defense funding bill. Now, we're urging Air Force leaders, including Secretary Frank Kendall, to join us in this effort and include \$4 million in his FY2025 budget request to make the Air Guard Fed TA program permanent.

In this and other ways, we're working to properly recognize our National Guard members for the service they provide to our country every single day. It's not only what they've earned, but it's critical to the future of our national defense. 

# Improving servicemember and veteran quality of life is key for a strong military



By Congressman  
Derrick Van Orden

**T**he United States faces many challenges from adversaries around the globe, but there is no question that the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is the greatest pacing threat to the United States. From buying U.S. farmland to a rapidly growing military to their aggression towards our friends and allies in the Indo-Pacific region, the CCP has one single goal: becoming the leading world power. This absolutely cannot happen.

As a retired U.S. Navy SEAL Senior Chief with a total of 26 years of service, I have firsthand experience with those whose ultimate goal is to harm Americans and destroy the United States. I joined the Navy at 18 and served multiple combat tours, including to Iraq and Afghanistan, with deployments to four different continents. It was during my first combat deployment to Bosnia and Herzegovina that I truly understood why the United States of America is worth protecting without hesitation. I am sure others who have served had a similar experience and know that we must make a supreme effort to keep the nation and our freedoms protected.

Maintaining a strong military that deters adversarial nations and protects Americans and our allies requires more than strategic alliances and a mission-oriented defense budget. We must have the personnel who are willing to risk their lives to protect and defend the United States, and we must make sure we take care of those individuals while they are serving and when they return to civilian life.

It is well-known that many of our military branches face significant recruitment issues. In Fiscal Year 2023, the all-volunteer force collectively missed their recruiting goals by 41,000 recruits. It is becoming increasingly more difficult to mitigate recruitment shortfalls when we do not provide the appropriate financial compensation, medical and mental health care, and living conditions for those serving.

Having retired from the military in 2014, I understand what it means to have the challenges you face during deployment follow you back home. Too often, veterans return to civilian life and have difficulty reintegrating back into society. They struggle with long-term injuries, fragile mental health, and experience bureaucratic barriers to secure housing, education, and jobs. While there are resources to assist veterans in this transition, many of them are not

aware of what benefits are available to them or the benefit programs do not do enough to keep veterans on their feet.

When I came to Congress, I knew I wanted to work to improve the lives of my brothers and sisters in uniform – during and after their time of service. I am honored to sit on the House Veterans Affairs Committee and serve as Chairman of the Economic Opportunity Subcommittee where I focus on improving educational, vocational, and housing opportunities for veterans, and smoothing the transition of servicemember to civilian.

I have introduced or cosponsored over 50 pieces of legislation that enhance the quality of life for servicemembers and veterans. I recently had my *Warrior Call Resolution* pass the House, which encourages all Americans to connect with a member of the Armed Forces and veterans to provide support and promote mental health treatment and solutions. I also introduced the *Montgomery GI Bill-Selected Reserves (MGIB-SR) Tuition Fairness Act* to expand educational opportunities for veterans by requiring public higher education institutions to charge in-state tuition rates for veterans using MGIB-SR, as well as the *EMPLOY Vets Act* to ensure veterans receive important information about employment opportunities during their transition back into civilian life.

In addition to the work I have done to improve veterans' quality of life, I have done the same for our active-duty servicemembers. I proudly cosponsored the *Pay Our Troops Act* to make continuing appropriations for military pay in the event of a government shutdown. I also aided in the House passage of the Fiscal Year 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, which included many key provisions for our servicemen and servicewomen, including increases to their basic pay, expansions to mental health counseling, and improvements to housing reimbursements.

We clearly still have many challenges facing servicemembers, veterans, and our nation as a whole. This means Congress must work that much harder to ensure those who serve and have served the United States are taken care of and that our nation is safe, secure, and projects strength around the world. I promise you that I will always stand up for our warfighters and veterans and do everything I can to bolster our national defense. 

# One team...one fight

By Col. Anthony K. Atlas, Sr., USA (Ret.)

**A**s I embark on my first year of a two-year term, having been duly elected in at the National Convention in Baton Rouge, La. I am honored and humbled to serve as the National Vice President, Army, for the Reserve Organization of America. Having been a life member of ROA since 1992 serving in this office has been my aspiration for the past 32 years. In the past I have held ROA national offices as executive committeeman, Army and junior vice president, Army. I have also held many department offices such as president for the formerly known as Department of California. Finally, many chapter offices such as chapter president.

I look forward to serving with Committeemen Col. Monti Zimmerman, Col. Stanley Remer, Maj. Reece Newsome and Junior Vice President Capt. Nina Kazibwe. The Army Executive Committee is fully staffed for the first time in many terms, as we are pleased to have Capt. Kazibwe who is this year's recipient of the Army Junior Officer of the Year.

As part of the Army Agenda, I have charged each member of the Army EXCOM to focus on initiatives to grow ROA's membership. This is the most crucial mission to ensure the storied legacy of ROA is preserved as we move into the next 100 years. As part of this most crucial mission, we need to ensure we engage senior leaders at all levels and educate them on what ROA does for them. This will surely stimulate our membership and keep ROA the big player that we have come to be known on Capitol Hill.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize and celebrate Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Roger Sandler, who celebrated his 90th birthday on February 23rd. General Sandler is a former Chief of Army Reserve, ROA Executive Director, ROA President, and a lifetime member of ROA. We all owe a great debt of gratitude for this man who has meant so much to ROA and the Army Reserve. 



Photo of the Army EXCOM from right to left: Col. Tony Atlas, Vice President, Army; Capt. Nina Kazibwe, Junior Vice President, Army; Maj. Reece Newsome, Executive Committeeman, Army; Col. Stanley Remer, Executive Committeeman, Army; Col. Monti Zimmerman, Executive Committeeman, Army (WHIP Not Pictured)



Capt. Nina Kazibwe receiving the Army Outstanding Junior Officer of the Year Award

# Confronting recruitment challenges

By Col. Scott A. Willis, USMCR

**A**s we commence ROA's Second Century of support to the reserve components,

The Naval Services Section will continue to represent deck plate issues and provide information on the status of each of our five uniformed services.

Thanks to the feedback from one of our newest members, Coast Guard reservist Jacob Marx, here are three important issues facing his shipmates and how ROA can and is addressing them:

**1.** “One of the primary issues that members of the Coast Guard Reserve face is the lack of funding for members to travel to their reserve assignments. At present, the Coast Guard Reserve is the only reserve component that does not fund travel for all members. Although efforts are being made through paying for the travel of Petty Officer Second Class and below to assignments such as Port Security Units, this needs to be offered to all Reservists.”

#### ***ROA response:***

Dealing with inequity between each of the services' compensation must be solved — and that ROA can and will pursue.

**2.** Another issue that many Reservists from all branches face is that those who work for the federal government are not allowed to opt-in to the TRICARE benefits that other Reservists can. This becomes very costly for the Reservists who serve both in the federal government and the Reserves, and it is an issue that Congress needs to change.



Coast Guard Reservist Lt. j.g. Jacob Marx

#### ***ROA response:***

ROA is scheduling and participating in Hill meetings with the National Defense Committee's Guard and Reserve Task Force on this issue and others such as ensuring every day in uniform — including training days — counts toward Post-9/11 GI Bill eligibility.

**3.** Finally, Coast Guard Reservists face issues with administrative support and readiness. Whereas most other services have medical and dental services readily available, the Coast Guard Reserves must hunt for opportunities to “get in the green” for readiness.”

#### ***ROA response:***

ROA is concerned with the medical readiness of the Total Force and its medical corps. ROA has been told by a trusted source that the percentage of care purchased in the TRICARE-purchased care network, for example, as opposed to the direct care network, has increased to close to 60%.

While the Defense Health Agency (DHA) has “shifted” certain beneficiaries and care needs onto the purchased care network, it is now actively seeking to “re-attract” about 7% of said beneficiaries back onto the direct care network, for the purposes of increased caseload and readiness for medical billets.

ROA sees the U.S. Public Health Service (PHS) and its Ready Reserve Program as a viable and longstanding surge capability to backfill personnel shortages across DoD and the Coast Guard and be a force multiplier for existing capabilities. However, the PHS Ready Reserve Corps (RRC) was stripped of its funding beginning next Fiscal Year with the signing of the Fiscal Responsibility Act June 3, 2023.

ROA is actively seeking to restore the funding and provide the PHS RRC with the tools it needs to recruit and retain qualified talent.

The bottom line is that ROA will work to enhance Total Force medical readiness and ensure the Coast Guard has alternative means to meet manpower, medical, and dental needs in the absence of sufficient administrative support and readiness.

And now, about our five uniformed services.

## Marine Corps Reserve

Submitted by Col. Scott A. Willis, USMCR

It has been a challenging environment to recruit for all branches of the services. It is arguably the most challenging time since the establishment of an all-volunteer force in 1973. This is a result of high employment rates, soaring wages, a shrinking pool of eligible recruits, and an ongoing quest to effectively communicate the nature and value of military service to the American people. Roughly 23% of 17- to 24-year-olds are eligible to serve, and that issue has gotten more dire due to rising obesity and falling academic scores.

However, the Marine Corps once again met or outperformed its goals for recruiting across all major categories in the 2023 fiscal year. Except for the very small Space Force, it is the only branch of service in the Department of Defense to meet its recruitment goals ending Oct. 1.

The service exceeded its goal for non-prior-service enlistments by 21 people, for a total of 33,323 new or soon-to-be Marines. This included 28,921 new enlisted Marines in the active force and 4,402 new Marines in the reserve. On the officer side, the Corps is getting 1,694 new officers, 20 more than the target. This included 1,602 active-duty and 92 reserve officers. The Marine Corps also exceeded its target for prior-service accessions — enlisted and officers — by 310 Marines, for a total of 4,487.

Unlike other branches of the services, the Marine Corps has never been heavy on bonuses. As a result, recruiting and advertising typically focus on its rich history and pride in being one of “The Few.” In contrast, other branches seem to tailor their campaigns to the modern world and advertise themselves as career fields where everyone is welcome.

As the Marine Corps begins implementing its Force Design 2030, more assets and personnel are focusing on deterring China and scaling back from other parts of the world. This means a return to our seafaring roots with amphibious assaults and a lighter force. The reserves are playing a role in this with a heavy focus on supplementing the active side where needed and taking a starring role in duties such as crisis response in the theaters that are not in the Indo-Pacific Command and filling the ranks of Marine Forces South.

As a result, making mission on recruiting numbers and retention are paramount moving forward. Reserve units are being leaned on more from an operational standpoint than at any time in Marine Corps history, and this will not change in the future. ROA’s mission and support of reserve



**Lt. Gen. David G. Bellon**  
Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Forces South

personnel will be critical as pressure builds on corporate America to accept reserve deployments during peacetime operations.

## Navy Reserve

Submitted by Capt. Samuel F. Wright, USN (Ret.)

In my report about the Navy Reserve last year, I explained that the Navy Reserve, like the other reserve components, has changed its emphasis from operational support of intermediate-level military operations like Operation Iraqi Freedom to preparation for the possibility of a major war against a near-peer competitor like China or Russia, or perhaps both of those competitors at the same time. This has included changes in terminology, as “Naval Operational Support Centers” (NOSCs) have gone back to being “Navy Reserve Centers,” and the full-time officers and enlisted personnel who operate the Reserve Centers have gone from being “Full-Time Support” (FTS) to being “Training and Administration of Reserve” (TAR) personnel.

This change in emphasis is continuing, but new challenges in the Middle East and Europe may make it necessary for more Navy Reserve part-timers to return to full-time status to support peacetime operations. Moreover, the Navy, like the other services, is suffering from continuing shortfalls in active component recruiting, and that may mean that more Navy Reserve part-timers will need to return to active duty, voluntarily or involuntarily, to fill critical billets.

Because of the shortfalls in recruiting, the Navy has found it necessary to change its recruiting standards and accept enlistees who do not have high school diplomas or who cannot meet other requirements that have been imposed until recently. This change in standards may mean that more Navy Reserve part-timers will need to return to full-time status to fill tech-heavy billets.

Our organization, the Reserve Organization of America, is endeavoring to assist the Navy and the other services to recruit qualified young men and women for service and fulfill our purpose, as etched in the stone of our Minute Man Memorial Building in Washington D.C.: *“Ensure the spirit of the Minute Man lives in the hearts and minds of all Americans.”*

ROA seeks to achieve this through various means, including by publicizing the legal rights of enlistees, active component or reserve component, under the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) and the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA). There are more than 2,100 Law Review articles available at [www.roa.org/lawcenter](http://www.roa.org/lawcenter). ROA established this column in 1997, and we add new articles each month.

The Navy has also adjusted its policy about requiring sailors leaving active duty to affiliate with the Navy Reserve, actively and not just in the Individual Ready Reserve (IRR). See NAVADMIN 303/23. Any sailor who entered into a service contract on or after 10/1/2020, who is leaving active duty with less than six years of

time in service (TIS), is subject to required Selected Reserve (SELRES) service as determined by the needs of the Navy.

For example, Mary Smith enlisted in the Navy in 2020 and signed her service contract on 11/1/2020, and entered active duty on 12/1/2020. Mary expects to leave active duty on 11/30/2024, which is exactly four years of service. She will likely be required to serve actively in the Navy Reserve for two more years until 12/1/2026. At that point, she will be permitted to transfer to the IRR for the final two years of her 8-year obligation. Please see [this link](#) for more information about this policy.



*Vice Admiral  
John B. Mustin  
Chief of Navy Reserve,  
Commander Navy  
Reserve Force*

## **Coast Guard Reserve, U.S. Public Health Service Corps and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps**

*Submitted by Cmdr. John N. Leonard, USCG (Ret.)*

It's been nearly 80 years since our combined Sea Services rallied to achieve a decisive global victory in World War II. Now, as a unified naval service, we must prepare to ensure that we rise again to meet the challenges of the changing international order in the 21st century.

In 2023, staffing and recruiting shortages continued to impede the multiple missions of the United States' three non-DoD uniformed sea services. Since the 1993 post-Cold War downsizing era, the U.S. Coast Guard (USCG), U.S. Public Health Service (USPHS), and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) forces have remained significantly below authorized strength, under-structured, and underfunded to plan for and effectively respond to all emerging hazard contingency mobilization challenges at home and around the globe.

With the visionary leadership of three female flag officers: Adm. Linda Fagan, commandant, USCG; Adm. Rachel Levine, USPHS, assistant secretary of health; and Rear Adm. Nancy Hann, director, NOAA Corps; each service seeks to recruit and significantly increase its total force strength in 2024. We must now rise to meet the emerging global challenges of this decade: China's fast-growing naval power, Russia's aggressive behavior, persistent pandemic effects, the consequences of climate change, and international disaster response preparedness.

In 2024, ROA will lead reserve advocacy for the military coalition dedicated to advancing resolutions to Congress in support of reserve mission excellence for every member of the uniformed sea services and their families.



*Services' Color Guard*



# Reserve Organization of America

## Annual Meeting

October 4 - October 6, 2024

For registration and more details, visit

[www.roa.org/  
event/2024national](http://www.roa.org/event/2024national)



## Coast Guard Reserve

Admiral Linda Fagan's 2022 Commandant's Intent to transform the total USCG workforce to meet the complex demands of 21st-century personnel management is captured in her phrase, "Tomorrow looks different- so will we!" In 2023, that goal was advanced by the Coast Guard Reserve Component Action Plan, in which the USCG establishes three lines of effort (supported by ROA) to strengthen the professionalism, proficiency, capabilities, and readiness of the Coast Guard Reserve by 2026:

- 1) Modernize reserve recruiting, talent management, and benefits,
- 2) Maximize the effect of reserve capabilities,
- 3) and Improve reserve deployability and resilience.

Since Sept. 11 2001, like many Navy and Marine Corps Reservists, the 6,500 members of the Coast Guard Reserve Component have trained as Individuals - Mobilization Augmentees (IMA), prepared to support active-duty units by filling critical DoD and Department of Homeland Security (DHS) operational gaps with quick supplemental personnel staffing. However, the USCG's "Deepwater" acquisition program is finally bringing long-overdue modern cutters, aircraft and homeland security equipment into the 21st-century Coast Guard. Crewing and operating these advanced new assets will require upskilled active-duty staff, plus a growing reserve force of 8,000-12,000 members, trained to mobilize together as unit teams with the latest information technology, cybersecurity, air and seamanship, and maritime homeland security skills.

In 2024, all naval service reserve components, vigorously supported by ROA, will expand efforts to recruit reservists, train them in groups of detachments for incident response, and prepare them to mobilize on land, sea, or air as full reserve teams. Coast Guard Reserve units must prepare to respond to any 21st-century U.S. border surge, contingency, incident, or global hazard, with the watchwords that a Ready Reserve equals a ready Coast Guard!



*Rear Admiral  
Miriam L. Lafferty,  
Assistant Commandant for  
Coast Guard Reserve*

## Public Health Service

The 6,000 Commissioned Corp officers of the U.S. Public Health Service work on the front lines of public health, providing care for USCG, NOAA, Native American Indians, Merchant Mariners, and many other citizens in need. Led by Health and Human Services (HHS) Assistant Secretary of Health Adm. Rachel Levine and U.S Surgeon General Vice Adm. Vivek Murthy, active commissioned USPHS officers fight disease, conduct research, and care for patients in underserved communities across the nation and around the world. PHS officers serve in diverse roles as medical physicians, mental health counselors, nurses, dentists, veterinarians, health scientists, and engineering professionals.

After four decades of ROA support for USPHS, the passage of the CARES Act in 2020 finally established a true PHS Ready Reserve Corps (RRC). In 2023, ROA resolved to support the U.S. Senate's 'Parity for Public Health Service Ready Reserve Act.' The bill will improve response capabilities for public health emergencies by providing the new PHS RRC with the same rights, benefits, privileges, and structure afforded to all other Armed Forces Ready Reserve Components. The new USPHS RRC is growing slowly, with about 100 officers currently in uniform, and it plans to reach a future strength goal of several thousand RRC health professionals.

In 2024, ROA's mission is to advocate for continued recruiting, growth, and enhancement of USPHS health emergency mobilization readiness, including improved funding, strength, and organizational structure of the PHS Ready Reserve Component.



*Admiral Rachel L. Levine  
Assistant Secretary of  
Health and Human Services*



## NOAA Corps

An agency of the Department of Commerce, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Corps officers are NOAA's technical leaders for shipboard and aviation operations in support of U.S. earth science research and weather monitoring conducted around the globe. The NOAA Corps strength is 400 maritime officers. Each year, NOAA enrolls 15-20 prospective officer candidates who train alongside USCG reserve officers at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy in New London, Connecticut. New NOAA officers are commissioned with the rank of ensign (O-1) and deploy to NOAA survey ships, air stations, or weather facilities on the Atlantic and Pacific coasts.

Since 2001, NOAA's budget has declined in real dollars and has completely failed to keep pace with the expanding mission tempo that climate change research, extreme weather events, navigational charting, fisheries monitoring, and ocean data surveys have placed on aging NOAA ships, aircraft, and base facilities. NOAA Corps officer strength is down to 321 officers, and the NOAA fleet has significantly declined from 21 to 15 ships.

In 2024, ROA continues to support the growth of NOAA Corps officer strength to 500, plus NOAA's detailed plan for ship, aircraft, and facilities recapitalization. With strong existing USCG-NOAA partnerships in maritime mobility and global environmental security, ROA is encouraging U.S. national leaders to consider organizational efficiency proposals for NOAA's service to America's citizens. A better operational location for the agency's 12,000 civilians and officers may be to transfer NOAA from the Department of Commerce into the Department of Homeland Security.

If you have any questions about our five Uniformed services or the information in this article, feel free to let us know at: ROAinfo@roa.org 



*Rear Admiral Nancy Hann  
Director of the NOAA  
Commissioned Corps*

## Reserve Organization of America 2024 Annual Meeting

Friday, October 4 – Sunday, October 6

[www.roa.org/  
event/2024National](http://www.roa.org/event/2024National)

Come to Washington, DC, and join your fellow members in gathering to hear interesting and informative speakers, collaborate, mentor, conduct association business, see old friends, and make new ones.



# Taking action, communicating results

By Lt. Col. Susan E. Lukas, USAF (Ret.)

In Oct. 2023, I was elected as the Air Force Vice President for two years until Oct. 2025. I had to hit the ground running because I was also selected to be the Budget and Finance Committee Chair. The committee took a fiscally conservative approach to reduce costs. This year's budget is considered a reset year with pauses in funding to several programs. This will give staff and ROA leaders time to bring the budget in line with the strategic plan being developed by President Wroblewski.

It is our goal to reduce draws from investments and allow the investments to grow. However, we do still need to invest in programs for ROA but have recommended that those expenses be decided on a 5-year business plan. As I told the committee, while ROA is a nonprofit entity, the committee needs to think like a profit-based bank and fully vet programs after a 5-year business plan is developed. A business plan will allow us to have full transparency on the cost of the program, include metrics to evaluate the program, and clearly understand the return on investment to ROA members. Now that the ROA fiscal year 2024 budget has passed, I can now focus on my Executive Committee duties.

## Membership Support

The premise of my tenure as Air Force Vice President is simple: I believe in taking action and communicating that action to gain and retain members. Obviously, I could write about how important membership is and how much we need to increase membership, but words alone will not get it done. That is why I am putting a plan in place that establishes an annual plan that includes quarterly efforts. At the end of each quarter, I will send an email to Air Force members explaining what I was able to accomplish and include other information that I hope will be of interest to our members. With accountable and measurable milestones, I will be able to judge how effective the plan is or is not and adjust for future efforts. As you can see, in my first quarter, my time was taken up by preparing and getting a budget passed.

I am already working with the Pentagon Reserve Air Staff and with ROA Legislative Director Matthew Schwartzman, on our future legislative efforts that focus on Air Force Reserve specific needs. The top four priorities are explained below and can be used when you visit your congressional members. I will be leaning into these legislative efforts from March to June 2024 while the House and Senate defense committees prepare their authorization and appropriation bills.

## Air Force Section Legislative Priorities

While ROA's legislation and military policy director, Matthew Schwartzman, advances ROA's legislative policy, there are still legislative requirements that are of particular interest to the Air Force Section. I have identified four efforts that we can work on for this year, and potentially into next year, depending on how productive Congress can be in 2024. The first two issues, duty status reform and TRICARE Reserve Select affect recruiting and retention. In fiscal year 2023 all the services had difficulty meeting their recruiting goals.

It is my hope you will take these four issues to your local district and state legislative offices and present them to your congressional representative and senator. Papers will be available on the ROA website for you to use during your visits, whether you visit in person or by video/telephone.

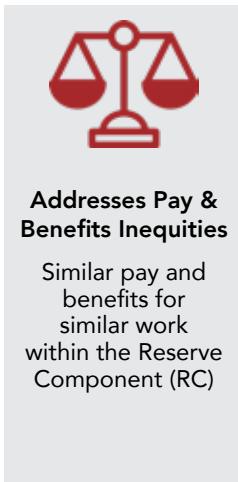
### Air Force Section Legislative Priorities

- Pass Duty Status Reform
- Early Funding for TRICARE Reserve Select for Federal Employees
- Fund National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation
- Provide Current & Proportional Fielding of Iron/Equipment

#### ➤ Duty Status Reform

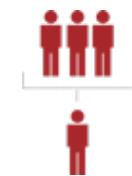
In 2022, the Reserve Forces Policy Board sent a letter to Secretary of Defense Austin stating their support of duty status reform and identified the holdup in getting the proposal to Congress, "The RFPB has consistently supported DoD efforts to reduce the number of reserve duty statues from 32 to no more than nine, grouped into four duty categories to which specific pay and benefits are aligned. DoD research in Sept. 2017 indicated that at least 450 statutes need to be changed to accommodate the new construct. Although the department has garnered support for duty status reform, there remains non-concurrence from the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) on aligning benefits to the new duty status construct."

Unfortunately, we are in our second administration where no action has been taken to get OMB to release the proposed



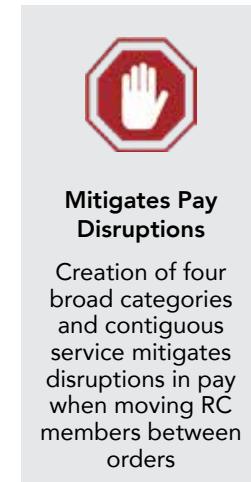
#### Addresses Pay & Benefits Inequities

Similar pay and benefits for similar work within the Reserve Component (RC)



#### Reforms Duty Statuses

Reduces the number of duty statuses from **27 to 4** categories and **8** duty authorities



#### Mitigates Pay Disruptions

Creation of four broad categories and contiguous service mitigates disruptions in pay when moving RC members between orders



#### Allows Compensation for Remote Work

Services have discretion to provide points and/or pay for approved activities



#### Aligns Programming and Budgeting

Aligns programming and budgeting to RC proposed categories

Source: DSR (defense.gov)

legislation to reform duty status. ROA would like OMB to send the proposed duty status reform legislation to Congress.

#### ➤ **TRICARE Reserve Select (TRS) for Federal Employees**

ROA worked to get TRICARE Reserve Select and expanded to include military technicians. In 2021, Rep. Kelly Trent (MS-1) introduced legislation that eventually passed in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2020 National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA). Section 701 authorized TRS for all federal employees who serve in the Reserve Component (RC). Because of the cost of providing this health care option, the implementation was delayed until 2030. ROA would like Congress to fund this provision now to help retain military technicians and recruit federal employees into the reserve components.

#### ➤ **National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA)**

Congress established the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Account to fund National Guard and Reserve equipment because it continually lags Active Component (AC) funding. For example, in FY2024, procurement accounts had \$50.2 billion for the Air Force, \$0.4 billion for the Air National Guard and \$0.1 billion for the Air Force Reserve. In the last equipment report to Congress, it identified a need for an HC-130J weapons systems flight simulator for Patrick Space Force Base. This is needed

because aviators now have to travel for proficiency training. There is currently no plan to purchase a simulator. Additional support equipment needs include reducing a 225-vehicle shortfall and providing RED HORSE civil engineering equipment for the construction and maintenance of airfield runways, roads, taxiways, and building sites. ROA wants Congress to fund Air Force Reserve equipment not currently in the AF budget.

#### ➤ **Current & Proportional Fielding of Iron/Equipment**

The demands on the Reserve Components as a force multiplier have placed an increased role in the RC for both strategic and combat support to the AC. This demand on the RC makes “cascading” of equipment from the active force to the reserve force an obsolete concept for equipping. In the past, cascading resulted in the AC getting equipment first, and then 15 or 20 years later, the same equipment would begin to flow to the RC. Proportional fielding of equipment to the RC needs to occur as the equipment is being placed in the AC. For example, if 75% of the mission is in the AC and 25% is in the RC then the equipping plan would give 75% of the aircraft or equipment to the AC at the same time, they would give 25% to the RC. There are other advantages to this approach. Providing concurrent and proportional fielding of the C-130J and KC-47A will make it easier for the active duty to separate and join the RC and for the RC to provide deployable forces and equipment to the AC. 



Team Manager CW2 Christine Stanley piping her award-winning dessert.

# Rising to the challenge:

U.S. Army Reserve culinary mastery unleashed at 48th annual Joint Culinary Training Exercises

By Mike Moran



**T**he United States Army Reserve Culinary Arts Team (USARCAT) recently participated in the 48th annual Joint Culinary Training Exercises (JCTE), sponsored by the American Culinary Federation (ACF). The annual exercise welcomed 168 competitors to the most prestigious military culinary event in North America from March 1-8 at Fort Gregg-Adams in central Virginia. This year's event brought competitors from across the Department of Defense and teams from Britain, France, and Germany.

The JCTE is open to active or reserve component members of the Army, Marine, Navy, Air Force, and Coast Guard as individuals or in teams. Each soldier's primary duty is in the food service-related specialties and all are assigned and working in a food service/culinary facility/operation.

The exercise promotes growth in the culinary profession with special attention to the tenets of modern culinary development. Core values emphasized by the exercise include practicality, nutrition, workmanship, economy, presentation, creativity, and concept.

Military culinarians compete against the ACF standard rather than a head-to-head competition. They compete for the same gold medal and to the same standards as chefs in the civilian world. The exercise provides an opportunity to raise culinary excellence and professionalism, recognizes individual and team efforts, and provides incentives and recognition in the form of certificates, medals, trophies, and continuing education credits that apply toward ACF credentialing. ACF credentials open doors in the restaurant and resort sector and to roles as personal and private chefs. ACF



The U.S. Army Reserve team earns its gold medal in Sunday's Hot Food Kitchen competition with a BBQ entree; Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Jeff Phillips (left), proudly stands with his fellow reservists (l to r) Col. Alexia Fields, Sgt. Steven Philipps, Staff Sgt. Jacob Hernandez, Master Sgt. Jeffrey Vaughan (team captain), Warrant Officer Daniella Blanco, Sgt. Shanea Benner, Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles Hunter, Chief Warrant Officer 3 Colby Beard

certifications range from foundational, such as Certified Culinarian and Sous Chef, to Executive and Master Chef and lead to positions

### **Finding the talent, building the team**

“Recruitment is our first priority,” says Master Sgt. Jeffrey Vaughan, team captain of the 2024 United States Army Reserve Culinary Arts Team (USARCAT). Fostering teamwork and mentorship in the culinary arts are key objectives of the program, and members of the USARCAT are obligated to share knowledge with whoever wishes to learn.

Student chefs, defined as E4 and below, can join the team with relatively basic skills for a competition at this level. Unlike other services, the Reserve team has a very brief window of time—days rather than weeks or longer—to come together in the same kitchen for training and team building.

Master Sgt. Vaughan has competed in 16 Joint Culinary Training Exercises (JCTE) since he first entered in 2005 as an individual competitor on the Pentagon Culinary Arts Team. Vaughn, who joined the Reserves in 2009, recalls years when the USARCAT could only field 3-5 participants, making it impossible to compete

### **UNITED STATES ARMY RESERVE CULINARY ARTS TEAM**

**Total medal count = 11**

Team GOLD Medals =

Individual GOLD Medal =

Individual SILVER Medals =

Individual BRONZE Medals =

Individual Commendable =

with peers from active duty teams who routinely had a full complement of 10 members.

The team was fortunate in 2024, though, with five experienced team members returning from the previous year's competition and two talented new members arriving with solid skills. “We just showed them what needed to be done,” said Vaughn, “and they went out and executed.”

One of those new members, Spc. Alicia Lindo, competing in her first JCTE, took the Gold Medal for Student Pastry Chef of the Year. Lindo secured the distinction with her creation of a cream puff filled with banana mousse and orange gelee, chocolate ice, chocolate pretzel crumble, meringue topping, candied lemon peel, and macerated raspberries “Yes, Specialist Lindo,” the Army Reserve Food Advisor Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles Hunter recalls, “silent but deadly. Absolutely stuck the landing.” Lindo also received a Bronze

## United States Army Reserve Culinary Arts Team

### MKT Menu

#### *Salad:*

Savory Roasted Brussel Sprouts  
with Lager Dijon Vinaigrette



#### *Soup:*

Western Corn Potato Chowder

#### *Entrée:*

Pork Tenderloin with BBQ Pulled  
Pork or BBQ Pulled Jackfruit  
(Vegetarian Option)  
served with Mashed Baked  
Beans and Peaches,  
Creamy Coleslaw,  
Roasted Root Vegetable  
Medley, Spicey Collard  
Greens, Cornbread Crisp and  
Alabama BBQ Sauce on the Side



#### *Dessert:*

Vanilla Mousse Cake with Strawberry Gelee  
served with Macerated Berries,  
Honey Citrus Tuille,  
and Buttermilk Ice Cream



Medal in the Single-Tier Cake category as part of an impressive first showing.

#### **Day One Fort Gregg-Adams**

Team Manager Chief Warrant Officer 2 Christine Stanley shouldered much of the logistical load for the team. Stanley, who also serves on the active Army Culinary team, coordinated orders for the soldiers, travel, lodging, and rental vehicles to assemble the team at Fort Gregg-Adams from March 1-8, 2024. On-site, she coordinated rations, worked with individuals on their menus, matched skills with duties, and guided members on the rules as needed. Simple things—daunting in their sheer number—that enable success or create obstacles. A disciplined approach defines leadership in this role.

The Reserve team goes into the competition at something of a disadvantage to active duty competitors.

“The Coast Guard, Navy, and Air Force identify their best talent and spend on average four to six months training for the event,” said Chief Warrant Officer 5 Hunter. “They pull their soldiers and sailors off their day jobs in the dining facility and move them into a training lab. Their sole purpose in life in those months is to train and get better, learn more complicated skills, and to develop better menus.”

“Our team is sometimes able to get together once or twice as a whole team somewhere in the country,” said Hunter. “Depending on how much money we have for TDY. Sometimes, they don’t meet each other in person until they report to this training event.”

Hunter also points out that members of the Reserve team practice in their home kitchens in their own time. They take pictures and connect via video calls, and give feedback on each other’s work. The cost of the ingredients they practice with comes out of their own pockets

On-site, the competition starts on day one, this year, March 1. Chief Warrant Officer 5 Stanley focuses first on menus the members have created, assisting in developing organizational checklists such as equipment lists and ration lists. Stanley also provides coaching throughout, educating team members on what judges look for, letting them know what they did really well and where they could have executed better.

“During preparation that week, we get all the gripes and moans out of our system,” said Master Sgt. Vaughn. The team tests equipment, and individuals have an opportunity for a few trial runs, and the whole team gets an opportunity to do run-throughs. “When



A remarkable demonstration of the diversity of talent in the USARCAT was the tallow centerpiece of a cowboy riding a bucking bronco. Master Sergeant Vaughan, who holds a degree in fine arts, earned his first best-in-show with the gold medal for the sculpture.

Vaughn enjoys applying his creative energy to every aspect of his work in competition, but specializes in tallow sculpture. Vaughn has created more than 40 centerpieces in competition, working the tallow in his hands until it warms and grows pliable enough to apply to a rough rebar frame. Once he has formed the essential shape, Vaughn begins to carve the tallow to define limbs, muscle, and hair. Vaughn crafts the most detailed elements, such as clothing, separately, by rolling the tallow out and cutting out the distinct pieces to dress the cowboy.

It took 120 hours of meticulous work over the course of a week for Vaughn to summon the dynamic scene from a 25 lb. block of cold beeswax and beef fat. As he worked, Vaughn kept the emerging work away from the hottest and busiest parts of the kitchen.

The bucking bronco centerpiece is now on display in a trophy case inside the entrance to the Culinary Center of Excellence at Fort Gregg-Adams. It is the first thing that every culinary trainee sees as he or she walks in the front door for training for years to come. The gold medal centerpiece replaces a tallow ballerina centerpiece Vaughn had created for a previous competition.





American Culinary Federation judges consult during the competition. The ACF Judges are accredited and skilled chefs who have been recognized for their expertise in the profession. The feedback these judges give to each chef on each dish make the JCTE a great opportunity for these military chefs to sharpen their skills and develop their craft.

we got to the competition itself, everyone knew their job. They knew what they needed to do and what they could rely on their team members for; we definitely meshed,” says Vaughn.

Equipment problems struck unexpectedly during the Military Kitchen Trailer (MKT) team event when the trailer lost power, and the team didn’t have any heat. The team lost 10 minutes getting the electricity fixed. But, Vaughn reports, “We kept our military composure, and everyone listened to the tower—which was me—and we got all of our plates out on time.” Despite the technical issues, the team got their plates out on time with a 4-course meal for 50 people. All of the hard work and the excellent service earned the team a gold medal for the MKT Team Event. The next day, the team helped out the team from Britain, giving them a tour around the MKT and helping with equipment as needed.

The USARCAT would earn four more gold medals in the MKT, including gold medals awarded to Sgt. Shanea Benner’s for petits fours (Cold Table), Staff Sgt. Jacob Hernandez’ for Nutritional Hot Food Challenge; Warrant Officer Daniella Blanco for Nutritional Hot Food Challenge; and Master Sgt. Jeffrey Vaughan for a stunning Tallow Centerpiece (Cold Table).

“In the midst of challenge, to watch them communicate effectively and to work as a team,” said Col. Alexia Fields, deputy chief of staff, G-4, “it was absolutely awe-inspiring to witness. The synergy and energy that they brought to the competition were phenomenal because they didn’t work together (every day)—they were from all over the country. So to field that team where they executed

technical and tactical skills, the individual and team competence was amazing.”

“They showed what a team of people that are trained in the Army Reserve is capable of. I see this capacity in large-scale mobilizations, in real-world missions,” says Col. Fields. “The ability to make adjustments, to communicate, to build relationships and even community. This is a skill that applies in peace and wartime.”

### Judging the competition

The JCTE is sanctioned by the ACF, and all judges are certified by the ACF for their expertise. ACF judges must have won four gold medals within the last ten years at an approved ACF competition. The judges have medaled in the categories they critique and provide competitors with detailed feedback on each dish prepared.

Judges follow food trends and are looking for culinarians who are keeping up to date on the leading edge of culinary arts. Judges look first to flavor, which is the primary factor. But they also look at the complexity of the dish. They evaluate colors, textures, and reward dimensionality—does it have height? How is the food arranged and spaced—how is it visually composed with the plate as a canvas. “And they touch every plate that shows up in front of them to see if it’s hot or cold,” said Vaughn. “If it’s a hot serving, it better be a hot dish.”

“They’re looking for creativity and inspiration,” said Stanley, who monitors the fast-moving food scene, Instagram, and other social media platforms. “They ask competitors to explain why they chose



FORT GREGG-ADAMS, Va., Mar. 5, 2024 - Sgt. Shanea Benner, with the 780th Quartermaster Detachment and representing the U.S. Army Reserve team, works feverishly to plate salads during the "Hot Food Kitchen Challenge" at the 48 th annual Joint Culinary Training Exercise. The MKT event simulates real-world scenarios where chefs may have to operate an MKT during deployments or field exercises, making it a practical and valuable learning experience for participants. (U.S. Army photo by: Ryan Sharp)

the dish and how they picked their ingredients." Stanley's inspired work in this year's competition earned her gold medal as Pastry Chef of the Year for her showpiece entremet. This is an individual award, so Stanley won Best in Show as the Best Pastry Chef of the Year against representatives from all 20 teams.

An entremet is a meticulously assembled layered dessert characterized by a well-balanced combination of flavors, textures, and colors. Stanley's showpiece was an almond yogurt cake with layers of basil rose jelly and buttermilk lemon mousse set off with a mandarin sauce and an orange thyme sauce on the side. The entremet was accompanied by citrus tuiles— delicate cookies shaped into

tubes filled with buttermilk ice cream and topped with strawberry basil compote.

Stanley appreciates the honor of receiving the gold medal, but it wasn't the most important part of the experience for her.

"Of course, everybody does want to get gold," said Stanley. "I think if you're always trying to aim for gold, you may miss out on learning what you're really trying to do."

Stanley says that in a previous competition, she had focused too much on the medal. "I'm really proud; I loved that I ended up getting gold, but I think I learned more this year because my main goal was getting out the best product and learning from what the critiques the judges offer." Her insight—you don't get gold by aiming for gold; you get gold by aiming for excellence—is something she can pay forward to those she mentors.

"You know, I just continue to take all the knowledge I've learned and the people I've met because you're always learning" Stanley said. "This year, I had the privilege to coach and mentor two new soldiers who've never done anything like this before." Both of those soldiers won gold awards as well, and Stanley had the difficult task of just watching from the stands.

Staff Sgt. Jacob Hernandez earned four honors in separate event categories, including silver medals for Chef of the Year and Five-Course Gastronomique and gold medals in both Hot Food Challenge and MKT. Hernandez described how each event challenges culinarians in different ways. "For Chef of the Year, they're looking for your sanitation practices, menu descriptions, terminology, make sure your techniques are proper that you're not calling something a bechamel that's not a bechamel."

"For the Five Course Gastronomique," said Hernandez, "they look closely at your menu development and presentation. All five courses have to weigh out at 18 to 21 ounces total. For the Nutritional Hot Food Challenge, you interview with a certified dietician who evaluates your menu to ensure it's under a thousand calories. Once they approve the menu, we execute it, and it all comes down to flavor and presentation."

In the end, the Joint Culinary Training Exercise exemplified more than just a competition or a personal test; it was a celebration of skill, dedication, and the relentless pursuit of excellence. Each participant brought a unique flavor, a distinct story, and an unwavering commitment to their craft. As the final dishes were presented and the last evaluations made, it was clear that this event had not only revealed extraordinary culinary talent in the ranks of the Army Reserve, but also demonstrated the capacity to forge a cohesive, dynamic team ready to tackle any challenge. The bonds formed, the lessons learned, and the inspiration ignited would resonate beyond this exercise in the field and in distant facilities as these exceptional soldiers continue to serve with distinction and pride. 

## ASK THE CULINARIAN

Chief Warrant Officer 5 Charles Hunter sat down for a brief question and answer with *RESERVE VOICE MAGAZINE* for some straight talk about what it's like to be 92G, the Army's Culinary Specialists. CW5 Hunter is the U.S. Army Reserve Food Advisor and Staff Lead for the U.S. Army Reserve Culinary Arts Team.

### Q: Can you give us a little background on your military career?

A: I have been in the army for 32 years; 17 years of active duty and 15 years of Reserve. I've been in Army food service my entire career. I joined the Army as a 94 Bravo, which is the old MOS; now they're 92 Golf. They're called culinarians now. I am currently AGR, Active Guard Reserve and serve at the Army Reserve Command Headquarters in Fort Liberty, NC.

### Q: What are the most rewarding and most challenging aspects of the culinarian's work that most people may not appreciate?

A: The easy answer for most challenging is the amount of time that we put into our craft. Culinarians report to work 2 hours before anyone else to prepare breakfast, and our shift ends 2 hours after everyone else because we clean up from dinner and begin preparations for breakfast. The most rewarding aspect of our job is taking care of soldiers. There are very few jobs in the army that include the title 'service'. Our primary mission is to take care of our battle buddies. That alone provides a sense of accomplishment each and every day.

### Q: What is the most important thing you were first taught about military food service that you want to pass along to everyone you train?

A: Maintain yourself and your equipment to a high level of readiness. Working long shifts in a garrison or field kitchen can be grueling. Being in good physical shape is the key to succeeding in this type of environment. However, if you are physically fit but your equipment keeps breaking down, you will still fail to feed your battle buddies. Equipment maintenance is of paramount importance to be successful as an Army soldier.

See culinarians in the field in 2022 as CW5 Charles Hunter evaluates 364th Expeditionary Sustainment Command's 654th RSG Culinary Specialists. The team was among 4 to advance to represent the U.S. Army Reserve at the Department of the Army Connelly Awards in 2022, where they competed against Army Reserve units nationwide. The Philip A. Connelly Excellence Awards Program recognizes excellence in Army food service and builds a competitive spirit among food service soldiers.

<https://www.facebook.com/watch/?v=627659405349661>

### Q: What do you know or appreciate as a military culinarian that your civilian peers don't?

A: Military culinarians perform nearly all of the same tasks as our civilian peers, but we do it better. Our counterparts typically have newer equipment and larger budgets than we do. But we perform to the same standard despite those disadvantages. We also do our job outside when Mother Nature is at her worst. Most Civilians can't perform their job using a piece of equipment that was designed in 1975, and perform at an exceptionally high level when the outside temperature is 115 degrees during a sandstorm, or when the temperature is 20 degrees below zero in a snowstorm.

### Q: What do soldiers always want more of?

A: Soldiers always want food that tastes the same as their grandmother made it. The Army's diversity is one of our great strengths, but it's hard to meet the homemade taste expectations for everyone. We have standardized recipes that provide tasty and nutritious meals, but don't always taste the same as their dinner table at home.

### Q: What do soldiers gripe about the most?

A: Soldiers always gripe about having more options. If we had all 31 flavors of Baskin Robins in the Dining Facility, someone would complain about not having 32.

### Q: Do enlisted soldiers, NCOs, and officers seem to like the same or different dishes?

A: In general, soldiers of the same age group enjoy the same types of food. Eighteen to twenty-four year olds prefer fast food options such as hamburgers and chicken wings, while the over 40 crowd leans toward healthier options and the salad bar.



## National Guard Bureau

# Beyond disasters: a full understanding of the National Guard

By Gen. Daniel Hokanson, Chief National Guard Bureau, Joint Chiefs of Staff

When I became Chief of the National Guard Bureau on August 3, 2020, we were facing several crises at once. The National Guard and the Nation were deeply enmeshed in COVID, election security issues, civil disturbances, massive and continuous wildfires, Southwest border concerns, and a record-setting hurricane season where named storms stretched into the Greek alphabet.

In the public imagination, the National Guard was right where it was expected to be: rising to the challenges of domestic operations. We were keeping our promise to America—a promise to be “Always Ready, Always There.” But our domestic operations were—and are—only a small part of the picture.

At the same time the Guard was facing myriad crises at home, our soldiers and airmen were simultaneously serving in combat missions overseas. As part of Operation Spartan Shield, National Guard units were among the first into Syria to protect the oil fields from ISIS. There had already been more than a million Guard deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan, and Guardsmen were serving in every Combatant Command—as they continue to do so today.

And while COVID was certainly a domestic response issue, it also highlighted the strength of the State Partnership Program, a security cooperation agreement that pairs a state’s National Guard with a partner nation. Several states’ National Guards received support from their partners during the pandemic: Vietnam donated masks to their Oregon National Guard partners. Poland sent a medical team to Chicago to help the Illinois National Guard with vital lessons learned. Chaplains in South Africa helped chaplains in New York find ways to boost morale. West Virginia and Peru held virtual meetings to share ideas and best practices. In a time when many were isolated and alone, the National Guard’s SPP partners were a reminder of the importance and strength of enduring relationships.

### The unique story of the National Guard

The National Guard’s missions, like the people who serve in our ranks, are diverse and dynamic. But even today, there is widespread misunderstanding about what the National Guard is and does, reflected in questions like “Why do National Guardsmen need security clearances?” or “Why were Guard members in a dangerous



Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, presides over the retirement ceremony for Air Force Maj. Gen. Michael E. Stencel Nov. 4, 2023, Clackamas, Oregon. Stencel served as Oregon’s Adjutant General since 2015. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Zach Sheely)

place like Tower 22 in Jordan?” where more than 40 Guardsmen were injured in a drone attack.

For those of us in the National Guard, the answers to these questions are obvious. We need security clearances because we are 20% of the Joint Force and play an integral role in the National Defense Strategy. We have National Guardsmen in Jordan because the reason we exist is to fight and win America’s wars as part of the Joint Force. Our domestic response efforts may be the part of our mission the public knows best, but it’s far from the whole story. The National Guard’s 430,000 soldiers and airmen across all 50

states, three territories, and the District of Columbia are, first and foremost, the combat reserve of the Army and the Air Force.

The National Guard is one of our Nation's most indispensable organizations—and one of its least understood. So, I've made it my mission to tell the National Guard's unique story, to talk about this unequaled community-based force that also has a truly global reach, and to clarify misperceptions about what we do and who we are.

As soon as COVID travel restrictions began to lift, I hit the road. My team and I travel a lot—to ensure we can connect with the mission and support the soldiers and airmen in the field and deployed. It's invaluable to look Guardsmen in the eyes, touch what they're touching, see what they're seeing, and learn from them what works and what doesn't. We get to the ground truth in ways we simply can't back in garrison or at the Pentagon.

## Telling the story—making a difference

As a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, I have the chance to bring these lessons back to the Chairman and the other members of the Joint Chiefs, to the Secretary of Defense, and ultimately to the Commander-in-Chief. I also talk with members of Congress and their delegations who are eager to learn about the Guard to help them make the best decisions for the Nation. I have also had the chance to brief national and international media representatives over the past year; the dialogue is always enlightening for all.

However, I still find instances where there are tremendous gaps in general knowledge about the National Guard. One of our team recently fielded a background question from someone who's worked closely on Department of Defense issues for more than a decade, who asked, "Wait, what's an Adjutant General? I'm not familiar with what that is...Is that a lawyer?"

There are other examples. While we are guided daily by parts of the federal law called Title 10 and Title 32, those chapters are simply not a part of the lexicon of most Americans, so referring to those statutes generally confuses more than it clarifies. Other times, we battle misconceptions about the people in our ranks; recently, preparing for a sit-down with a prominent public figure, we were asked whether 'pretty much every member of the National Guard is actually a police officer or firefighter.' While there are certainly police officers and firefighters in our ranks, our Guardsmen hold jobs in every career field, from teachers to surgeons to Amazon programmers and space technicians. Some are even members of Congress.

Raising the public understanding of the Guard and Reserve components is more than a desire to be noticed. The way I see it, we have an obligation to tell people about their National Guard; who we are, what we do, and how we operate. We have to inform



Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief, National Guard Bureau, addresses attendees at the 145th National Guard Association of the United States General Conference, Reno, Nevada, Aug. 19, 2021. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. 1st Class Zach Sheely)

them about our requirements, capabilities, and capacity. Otherwise, they won't know how they can best support us in accomplishing the mission. I've seen it myself. The more people understand about the National Guard, the more they tend to support our soldiers and airmen. The more people understand about the National Guard, the more they're able to advocate for resources and reforms. The more people understand about the National Guard, the more likely they'll want to join our ranks.

Here is what I believe the world needs to know about the National Guard:

The Guard is engaged locally, regionally, and, of course, internationally. Our unique Constitutional structure and authorities allow us to support our communities in times of crisis. That's why Governors can call up the National Guard for disaster relief or for other local emergencies and why, between 2020 and 2023, National Guard soldiers and airmen rescued 21,189 civilians from disasters across the country.

The National Guard deploys combat formations around the globe, executes missile defense of the homeland, joins in the protection of cyberspace, and conducts space operations. Today, as I write this, nearly 45,000 Guard men and women are performing missions around the world – more than 27,000 of them overseas.

Our forces are some of the best in the world across a multitude of domains and disciplines. The National Guard is home to

# National Guard Bureau

some of the most proficient and lethal advanced fighter pilots and crews flying the F-22, F-15, F-16, A-10, and F-35. In September 2023, the National Guard took home honors at the William Tell air-to-air competition, where airmen from active-duty Guard and Reserve Wings are tested in realistic, high-speed, air-superiority, weapons-and-tactics, weapons-loading, and aircraft maintenance scenarios.

Competing side-by-side with active-duty in intense competition, the Vermont National Guard won the Top F-35 Wing award, the F-35 Individual Superior Performer award, and the Top F-35 Crew Chief award. The Massachusetts Air National Guard won awards for the Top F-15 Wing, the F-15 Individual Superior Performer, and the Overall Weapons Load Competition. Our Guardsmen are among the best of the best.

Additionally, last September, a National Guard team won the SANS NetWars Department of Defense Services Cup for the third year in a row. The competition pits expert teams from across the Department of Defense against each other to test their ability to respond to multiple complex cyber incident scenarios. Soldiers and airmen from Ohio, North Carolina, Delaware, Florida, and California embodied the best of our National Guard—experts in their civilian jobs who use their skills to serve our nation.

If that isn't impressive enough, a National Guard team also took top honors in the most recent International Sniper Competition against 35 three-person teams from all over the world. A National Guard team placed first overall. Of the four National Guard teams entered, all finished in the top 10.

## The international role

In addition to world-class capabilities in aviation, cyber defense, and marksmanship, the National Guard plays a unique and impactful role on the international stage, improving cooperation, interoperability, and security. The international importance of the State Partnership Program was thrust into national prominence in 2022 when Putin ordered a brutal and unjust invasion of Ukraine—the 30-year partner nation of the California National Guard.

Recently, on a trip to U.S. European Command's area of operations, I shook the hands of members of the 19th Ukrainian battalion—being trained by U.S. National Guardsmen at U.S. ranges in Germany to counter Russia's illegal invasion.

Your National Guard is as active and relevant as ever—and circumstances do not indicate either the effort or the effect will let up anytime soon.

We wake up each day ever mindful of the responsibility to make our National Guard the best-trained and most ready combat reserve our Nation can muster. We'd welcome you to join us in explaining the value of the National Guard to those you know. It's key to maintaining public support, advancing legislative initiatives, improving training, and enhancing quality of life. Telling the National Guard story helps us take care of our people, maintain our readiness, modernize, and embrace reform.

The National Guard is more than a response team for America's hardest days—we are citizen soldiers and airmen. We fight America's wars. We build alliances and partnerships that endure across decades. We represent the communities we serve. We are Always Ready, Always There. 



**Gen. Daniel R. Hokanson** serves as the 29th chief of the National Guard Bureau and as a member of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this capacity, he serves as a military adviser to the president, Secretary of Defense, and National Security Council, and is the Department of Defense's official channel of communication to the governors and state adjutants general on all matters pertaining to the National Guard. He is responsible for ensuring the nearly 445,000 Army and Air National Guard personnel are accessible, capable, and ready to protect the homeland and provide combat-ready resources to the Army and Air Force.

Hokanson served previously as the 21st director of the Army National Guard and earlier as the 11th vice chief of the National Guard Bureau.

Hokanson graduated from the U.S. Military Academy and served on active duty in air cavalry, attack helicopter, and aircraft test organizations prior to joining the Oregon National Guard. He has commanded at the company, battalion, and brigade combat team levels and served as the 30th Adjutant General of the state of Oregon. Hokanson also served as the deputy commander of U.S. Northern Command. His combat deployments include Operations Just Cause, Enduring Freedom, and Iraqi Freedom. He commanded the 41st Infantry Brigade Combat Team in Iraq and served as chief of staff for Combined Joint Task Force Phoenix in Afghanistan.

## National Guard Bureau

# People, Readiness, Modernization, and Reform

By SEA Tony Whitehead, Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief, National Guard Bureau

I am SEA Tony Whitehead, the senior enlisted advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau. Together, Gen. Daniel Hokanson and I represent the 430,000 soldiers and airmen who serve in the National Guard across 50 states, three territories, and the District of Columbia. Among this dedicated force are nearly 360,000 enlisted personnel who serve as the backbone of the National Guard.

Since its inception in 1636, the National Guard has participated in every major U.S. conflict and is even more omnipresent today in operations around the globe. In any joint force operation, a Guardsman will be at your side. Reserve component soldiers and airmen integrate seamlessly into your ranks. This is the essence of our motto, 'Always Ready, Always There.'

One of the National Guard's key priorities is to reduce disparities between the National Guard and active-duty services. Successfully navigating these challenges is crucial to ensure that the National Guard and the Reserve remain agile and ready pillars of the U.S. military.

The National Guard provides ground and air forces to all of America's combatant commands at home and overseas. In the past three years, we have performed over 28 million person-days in our communities, responding to emergency relief efforts when called upon. These missions alone demonstrate our strategic importance in the joint fight to defend our nation. Our federal, state, homeland, and state partnership missions have been growing and impacting the world for 30 years. Last year, we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Department of Defense National Guard State Partnership Program, which has grown to 88 partnerships with 100 partner nations. In the past year, we have also conducted over 1,600 engagements with partner nations around the globe—a 50% increase from previous years. I'm proud to say many of these engagements focused on mutually beneficial training and development engagements among enlisted members.

Gen. Hokanson's priorities are People, Readiness, Modernization, and Reform, which are crucial for the welfare of today's and tomorrow's warfighters. It is truly inspiring to witness the unwavering pride and dedication displayed by our Citizen-soldiers and -airmen in serving their communities and executing missions with the



Senior Enlisted Advisor Tony Whitehead, the SEA to Army Gen. Daniel Hokanson, chief of the National Guard Bureau, recently attended a conference in Columbus, Ohio, featuring keynote speakers such as Hokanson, Gen. James McConville, chief of staff of the Army, and Gen. Charles Q. Brown, chief of the staff of the Air Force. For Whitehead, representing Guard enlisted at the conference, which was attended mostly by commissioned officers, was "an inherent responsibility." (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Master Sgt. Erich B. Smith)



U.S. airmen assigned to the 124th Fighter Wing, Idaho National Guard arrive at Lechfeld Air Base, Germany in preparation for exercise Air Defender 2023 (AD23), June 6, 2023. Exercise AD23 integrates both U.S. and allied airpower to defend shared values, while leveraging and strengthening vital partnerships to deter aggression around the world. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Joseph Morgan)

# National Guard Bureau

utmost professionalism and skill. Their ability to adapt, improvise, and overcome obstacles is a testament to their resilience and commitment to their duties.

Over the past year, they have achieved remarkable successes while working hand-in-hand with other component sisters, brothers, and our allies and partners.

Some notable examples include the successful completion of Air Defender 23, a German-led, multinational exercise, where our team moved 100 aircraft over the ocean in just four flying days. We have made significant contributions in support of Ukraine by training thousands of Ukrainian military personnel, including ongoing training of Ukrainian pilots on F-16 operations. We have also participated in various missions for natural disasters, such as Typhoon Mawar in Guam, a 210-square mile American territory with a population of nearly 180,000, which serves as a strategic focal point in the Indo-Pacific Command.

Our warfighters have played a vital role in countless forest fires, floods, winter storms, southwest border operations, and more. Their achievements have been commendable, and we are proud to have such dedicated and skilled individuals serving in our military.

For our deployed soldiers and airmen who may be reading this, whether you are overseas or on duty away from your loved ones, or for anyone struggling with thoughts of ideation or self-harm, please be aware that support is just seconds away. You can dial 988 and press 1 for military members. We all need assistance sometimes, and it takes immense courage to ask for help. No matter what you may be going through, remember that you don't have to face it alone. Therefore, I urge you to seek support when you feel overwhelmed. Whether you are a parent, child, or sibling, please do not let a temporary problem lead you to make a permanent decision. We honor the memory of each battle buddy or wingman we have lost to suicide. I would especially like to thank the doctors, mental health experts, scientists, and counselors for their hard work over the last decade, who have studied and brought to light the hard truths about mental health.

Every new study, prevention program, and resource is one more step in the right direction to save a life. I have had the privilege to visit and speak with soldiers, airmen, and leaders across the force to learn firsthand what they are doing to prevent suicide. What I see is encouraging, but there is work to be done. We all are responsible for ensuring every service member's holistic wellness, health, and morale.

Our soldiers and airmen are working hard to fulfill their mission and serve the country. Meanwhile, leaders like myself and other senior enlisted advisors of our branch sisters' services are working to enhance the quality of life to improve both operational and personnel readiness. We regularly discuss topics that affect the Air Force or

the Army and all individuals who wear a military uniform. These discussions cover topics like gaps in healthcare, childcare, pay compensation, and other aspects that can positively impact their lives. Through these discussions and working groups, we become more united, informed, and prepared to face the challenges ahead for our military and nation.

Over the last year, the Army launched a new program called "Childcare in Your Neighborhood," designed to cater to the needs of National Guard and Reserve members. This program primarily focuses on tackling these members' unique challenges, especially when they are called in for drill. For dual military families or single parents, the challenges are particularly acute. Such programs reflect our ongoing commitment to identifying and implementing practical solutions that can enhance the quality of life for our service members. As the cost of housing and necessities continues to increase, our soldiers and airmen worldwide struggle to make ends meet. Our service's senior enlisted advisors are working on pay and compensation that aims to alleviate the financial strain on our service members.

As part of my role, I routinely travel across the globe to check the pulse of morale and readiness. On top of the priorities for the Chief, my three initiatives for our enlisted force are Educate, Empower, and Execute. I seek opportunities to develop our force, empower our Guardsmen, and educate our troops so they can perform to the best of their abilities and understand what they do is essential to our National Defense Strategy and their respective state mission.

Empowering our force so they can feel confident in their decision-making, training, and development, promoting help-seeking behavior and innovative thinking. From that stems the execution of our force, which is a sign of trust from leadership, confidence in their abilities to perform assigned and assumed tasks, and appreciation for not being risk-averse. These three initiatives build on the strategic warfighters of today tasked with executing complex missions in challenging environments. Our National Guard members are the embodiment of the American spirit. They are brave, resilient, Always Ready, and Always There – no matter the cost.



# National Guard Bureau



The 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155 Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, refined crew station duties, movements and maneuvers, battle tank maintenance, and gunnery precision with the M1A2 Abrams battle tank during a culminating training exercise at McGregor Range Complex, New Mexico, June 11-17.

As a combat reserve of the Army and the Air Force, our soldiers and airmen are built to fight our nation's wars.

The 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry Regiment, 155 Armored Brigade Combat Team, Mississippi Army National Guard, refined crew station duties, movements and maneuvers, battle tank maintenance, and gunnery precision with the M1A2 Abrams battle tank during a culminating training exercise at McGregor Range Complex, New Mexico, June 11-17.

As we venture out into the field, be it me, Gen. Hokanson, or any of the NGB leaders, we are often told by our soldiers and

airmen about the reasons behind their decision to join the force. It is important for us to appreciate the individuality of each of these stories. By doing so, we can establish a connection that can help us reach out to people in our communities and encourage them to become a part of our force. These personal accounts also serve as a reminder of where we, as leaders, once stood many years ago.

To all my fellow Reserve component service members, we sincerely appreciate your efforts to contribute to worldwide safety, security, and prosperity. Thank you. 



SEA Tony L. Whitehead is the Senior Enlisted Advisor to the Chief of the National Guard Bureau, Pentagon, Washington D.C. He serves as the Chief's principal military advisor on all enlisted matters affecting training, utilization, health of the force, and enlisted professional development. As the highest enlisted level of leadership, he provides direction for the enlisted force and represents their interests.

SEA Whitehead entered the Air Force in December 1982. His background encompasses myriad positions and assignments in the Security Specialist and Security Forces career field, and as a First Sergeant. He joined the Florida ANG in April 1994. SEA Whitehead has deployed in support of Operations Southern Watch and Enduring Freedom, including a tour as the Provost Senior Enlisted Leader to the 10th Area

Support Group, Camp As Sayliyah. Prior to his current position SEA Whitehead served as the Command Chief Master Sergeant of CONR-1 AF, Tyndall AFB, FL where he advised the commander on matters influencing the health, morale and welfare of assigned American and Canadian forces and their families.

## Army Reserve

### State of the Army Reserve

By Lt. Gen. Jody J. Daniels and Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lombardo

**A**s the Army focuses on ensuring our adversaries cannot outrange or outpace us on traditional battlefields, space, and cyberspace, a ready and engaged Army Reserve is posturing itself to meet the challenges we face and protect American interests – at home and abroad.

Today's Army Reserve is comprised of over 175,000 Soldiers and 11,000 civilians, serving across all 50 States and five U.S. Territories. Citizen Soldiers bring civilian training to the uniform and Army leadership to more than 1,200 American communities, with expertise in a wide range of specialized areas, including advanced engineering, medicine, artificial intelligence, cyber, and robotics.

That resident blend of civilian skills and military training – maintained at just 6% of the Army's budget – is crucial now and in the future, as the Joint Force prepares for Multi-Domain and Large Scale Combat Operations.

On any given day, upward of 9,000 Army Reserve Soldiers are mobilized or deployed to 23 countries worldwide in support of combatant commands last year, while tens of thousands of Soldiers train for deployments or participate in Joint exercises to strengthen national alliances and partnerships across the globe. The Army Reserve participated in over 50 exercises last year.

#### Sustaining the warfighter

The Army provides the bulk of sustainment forces to the Joint fight, and the majority of these capabilities reside in the Army Reserve – which means the Joint force cannot deploy, fight, and win without the Army Reserve. Additionally, Citizen Soldiers possess high-demand civilian career skills that can be difficult or expensive to maintain in the active component. We have over half of the Total Army's deployable strength in psychological operations, quartermaster, civil affairs, transportation, and medical units.

Already, we're forward-positioned to make an impact, with commands postured to provide direct support to U.S. Army Pacific and U.S. Army Europe – Africa. Through our robust logistics platform, we're able to provide critical capabilities such as port operations, petroleum distribution, water purification, and railroad operations to combatant commanders worldwide.



Soldiers from the 88th Readiness Division descend the Whitetail Ridge Ski Hill during snowshoe training at Fort McCoy, Wis. on Jan. 21, 2024. (Photo by Christopher Hanson)

To evolve our structure, we're maintaining an innovative edge through broad modernization efforts. We've taken on the tough job of divesting excess equipment across our footprint, working closely with Army and DoD leadership to achieve this and other modernization efforts, and clearing the way for integrating equipment for the future.

#### Tough, realistic training...done safely

The Army Reserve is focusing on conducting the tough, realistic training – done safely – that Soldiers signed up for, with cohesive teams and units demonstrating they are highly-trained, disciplined, and fit to accomplish their mission.

Recently, more than 1,500 Army Reserve Soldiers participated in DoD Innovative Readiness Training (IRT) missions across 12

# Army Reserve

states and three U.S. territories, with Citizen Soldiers leveraging specialties such as healthcare, construction, and civil affairs. The real-world, on-the-job training created a lasting impact, not just for the Soldiers who conducted it, but for the communities across America that benefited from their hard work and expertise.

Around the world, Soldiers conducted training and support in locations including Puerto Rico and Guam, where nearly 15,000 real-world medical procedures were performed on more than 5,000 patients. In the Mariana Islands, over 24,000 procedures were provided free of cost to local citizens. More than 100 Army Reserve Soldiers received the DoD Civil-Military Partnership of the Year award for improving readiness and building strong civil-military partnerships.

Ultimately, we are achieving our goal of reinvigorating the Army Reserve experience and getting our Citizen Soldiers back to the fundamentals of Soldiering. As our Soldiers' enthusiasm spreads, they are bringing that excitement back to their communities and workplaces, getting the word out about the benefits and opportunities service in the Army Reserve provides, while increasing readiness. Prioritizing challenging training has paid off, and we're making significant strides toward achieving our recruitment and retention objectives.



Pfc. Monica Burgos of the Army Reserve's 303rd Information Battalion pushes through a driving Alabama rainstorm as she nears the end of a 12-mile ruck march February 4 on Alabama's Camp Rudder training area. (Photo by Lt. Col. Adam Weece)

## Shaping tomorrow

Preserving our all-volunteer force is crucial to national security interests, and recruiting plays a vital role. While the DoD-wide challenge of recruiting and retention remains, the Army Reserve is taking a holistic approach to shaping the force – beginning with an effort to build end strength by filling historic mid-grade position shortages.

That focused approach is purposeful. Retaining Soldiers completing their first enlistment gives us a good shot at maintaining readiness levels across our formations. We've streamlined the Junior Enlisted Promotion Board process and increased promotion rates to Sergeant and Staff Sergeant.

Our approach is working. Over the past year, controllable losses dropped 10%, incentivized reenlistment rates increased 25%, and overall reenlistments are at an all-time high. We're not just responding to old problems; we're getting ahead of issues. We're looking ahead to forecast manning needs, and factoring that into our decision-making processes – aided by improved command sponsorship and onboarding programs.

## Recruiting & retention

It is imperative that we continue to recruit and retain the best and the brightest future Soldiers and leaders. We recently simplified the direct commissioning process to greatly expand its use, resulting in an increase from only 26 direct commissions in FY 2022 to 77 in FY 2023. Also, by aligning time-in-grade requirements with the Active Army, we significantly increased our captain ranks.

Additionally, whether an officer is busy pursuing a formal education or certifications, we're now allowing them to request to defer promotion boards. Finally, the Army Reserve is seeking to expand a statute to enable select officers to continue serving for up to 40 years, strengthening our force by maintaining some of our top talent.

Warrant officers continue to bring the highest level of expertise to their fields, so we're expanding retention bonuses across the board to help keep them in our ranks. We are addressing attrition at Warrant Officer Candidate School through better lifecycle management and a targeted approach to preparing our enlisted troops for the academic rigors of the school.

## E5 in 5

This past year, we homed in on our specialist versus sergeant strength, which was overstrength by nearly 14,000 specialists and understrength by 4,000 sergeants. A slowdown in enlisted promotions was significantly impeding our ability to grow qualified leaders.

Between September 2023 and March 2024, we promoted nearly 8,000 promising young specialists and corporals to sergeant—a

# Army Reserve

huge step toward creating a strong pipeline of noncommissioned officer and warrant officer leadership.

Our E5-in-5 challenge prioritized potential over paperwork, raising the overall sergeant strength from 87% in September 2023 to 108% in March 2024 and positioning us to overcome endemic shortages in the Army Reserve's staff sergeant, sergeant first class, and warrant officer ranks.

We also expanded the Army Civilian Acquired Skills Program, increasing the number of military occupational specialties that apply constructive credit for civilian experience/training from just four to 43. This demonstrably improved overall promotion eligibility and reduced training time away from civilian employers. On the enlisted side, the Selected Reserve Incentive Program provides educational benefits across the board, with a special emphasis on our sergeant population.

The Army Reserve is now better positioned to overcome endemic shortages in the Army Reserve's staff sergeant, sergeant first class, and warrant officer ranks. We will continue to emphasize promoting potential to further decrease our average time to reach sergeant.

## AC2RC

Our Active Component to Reserve Component (AC2RC) program offers transitional opportunities for Active Duty Soldiers to use their skills and experience in the reserve components, continuing their journey as Soldiers for Life. In FY23, we successfully transitioned nearly 4,000 enlisted Soldiers into the Army Reserve, including nearly 600 officers and warrant officers.

AC2RC allows Reserve Component Career Counselors at installations worldwide to contract Soldiers a year before their estimated date of separation, allowing active duty Soldiers to continue service in uniform and preventing the complete loss of their talents and skills. The Soldier who, at one point, served in a line unit in the active component could easily transition to becoming a Citizen Soldier, supporting the same Active Component command in theaters worldwide.

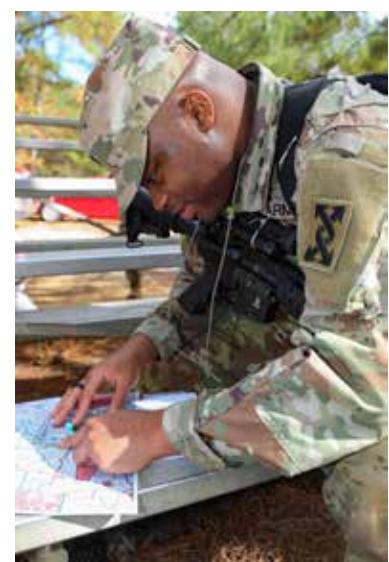
Soldiers receive counseling to help their transition into a matching career field, presenting opportunities to continue to provide value to the reserve component, civilian employers, and the Total Army. The program saves hundreds of millions of dollars annually, preventing the heavy costs of recruiting, developing, and training comparable initial-entry Soldiers.

## P3O

The Private Public Partnership Office (P3O) continues to build on a nationwide network of corporate, profit/nonprofit, and employee partners. The employment outreach program pairs thousands of qualified Soldiers, Family members, and Veterans with hundreds of private and public organizations across more than 16 industry



It was no day at the beach for the teams of military water treatment specialists competing against each other in this year's Reverse Osmosis Water Purification Rodeo, May 8-12, 2023, as the five-day U.S. Army Forces Command (FORSCOM) competition tested skills and readiness under the watchful guidance of U.S. Army Reserve instructors from the 94th Training Division. (Photo by Master Sgt. Benari Poulten)



Spc. Tymar Scott, a supply specialist with the 642nd Regional Support Group, takes part in the 642nd Regional Support Group's Best Warrior Competition Nov. 16, 2023, at Fort Moore, Ga. (Photo by Master Sgt. Gary Witte)

# Army Reserve

sectors to develop career pathways through training, internships, or apprenticeships with respected companies.

By the end of January 2024, the program had secured over 2,000 confirmed hiring actions, 255 active employer partners in more than 20 ready-to-hire industries, and more than 100 Soldiers completing certification programs. Additionally, nearly 225,000 prospective clients and Soldiers received briefings outlining the available training and job opportunities.

We want America's youth to know that when you sign up for the Army Reserve, you're opening more than one door to opportunity. In one P3O event held at Fort Buchanan, Puerto Rico, almost half the nearly 500 troops who attended either left with a job, a job offer, or follow-on interviews toward employment.

When an organization enters a P3O Partnership, they are supporting the readiness of the Soldier, which in turn benefits the Army Reserve. These mutually beneficial relationships and opportunities enhance Soldier and Family readiness and bring additional capabilities to the Army Reserve and the Nation. Partners also receive access to a well-rounded employee who is often ready to leverage military training in that industry.

## Quality of life

Quality of life is at the forefront of everything that we do – we recognize that while we recruit Soldiers, we retain Families. We are putting People First through programs that make it easier to integrate family, work, and military life.

Last year, the Sergeant First Class Michael Clark TRICARE Reserve Parity Act was authorized, allowing Reserve service members and their families to receive the same Tricare benefits that Active service members receive as soon as they are activated for a mobilization.

We also have several other wins outlined in the 2024 National Defense Authorization Act, including:

- Dual basic allowance for housing for training for reserve component servicemembers without dependents who are called to active duty for training at least 140 days but fewer than 365 days.
- Parental leave parity, which enables RC members parental leave for up to 12 inactive-duty training periods during the one-year period after birth, adoption, or the placement of a minor for adoption or long-term foster care.

And finally, we're currently piloting four child care programs to help with non-standard (weekend) care for dependent children, which will enable our Soldiers to train without worrying about their families.



Staff Sgt. Michael Spragg, 3rd Brigade, 98th Training Division (Initial Entry Training) navigates the Ranger Malvesti obstacle course event during the 98th Training Division Best Warrior Competition at Fort Moore, Georgia, February 8-11, 2024. (Photo by Lt. Col. Michelle Lunato)

# Army Reserve

## Conclusion

The Army Reserve is evolving to meet the challenges we face on the battlefields of the future. For the war of the future, we're overhauling our force structure to meet LSCO requirements. We're recruiting across the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math spectrum to ensure that our troops are employed in the Multi-Domain Operations of the future.

The difficult recruiting environment we are operating in presents unprecedented challenges, and we are applying unprecedented solutions. We invested over \$164 million in bonuses alone, with over 3,000 Soldiers dedicated full-time to supporting recruiting and retention. We're finding and signing those who want to serve with opportunities like the Minuteman Scholarship, which can pay full tuition plus room and board at public and state universities nationwide.

Military Support Organizations like the Reserve Organization of America are instrumental in achieving our goal of providing a fulfilling, challenging, and rewarding time in uniform to our Citizen Soldiers. I ask that you continue to help us fill our ranks and highlight what it means to serve in the Reserve. We are grateful for the support ROA provides in communicating the importance of our ongoing mission, the opportunities available in the Army Reserve, and the quality of life and quality of service improvements we've made across the board for our Army Reserve Soldiers.

We will continue to support the missions we are tasked to accomplish and the Citizen Soldiers to our left and right...today and always.

Ready Now! Shaping Tomorrow... 



100th Battalion 442d Infantry Regiment Soldiers conduct MORTEP (Mortar Training and Evaluation Training) certification training, July 11, at Area X in Schofield Barracks, Hawaii. (Photo by Sgt. Mason Runyon)



**Lt. Gen. Jody J. Daniels** assumed the role of Chief of Army Reserve and Commanding General, U.S. Army Reserve Command, July 28, 2020. Her 40 years of active and reserve military service includes assignments as Commanding General of the 88th Readiness Division and Chief of Staff, U.S. Army Forces Command. Daniels holds a bachelor's degree in Applied Mathematics (Computer Science) from Carnegie Mellon University, a master's degree and doctorate in Computer Science from the University of Massachusetts (Amherst), and a master's degree in Strategic Studies from the U.S. Army War College.



**Command Sgt. Maj. Andrew Lombardo** enlisted in the United States Army in 1985. He attended One Station Unit Training at Fort McClellan, Alabama, where he graduated from the U.S. Army Military Police School. He completed a two-year active-duty commitment with the U.S. Military Academy Military Police Company at West Point, New York. In 2015, Lombardo graduated from both the Army Force Management School and the National Defense University Reserve Component National Security Course. He is a 2016 graduate of the University of Kansas School of Business Army Leader Strategic Broadening Program, and was selected as honor graduate from the U.S. Army War College Nominative Leader Course 17-03. Most recently, in 2019, Lombardo completed the National Defense University Keystone 19-02 Command Senior Enlisted Leader Course in joint and combined studies.

Marine Forces Reserve

## Modernizing the force to confront next-generation challenges

By Lt. General David G. Bellon, Commander, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve and U.S. Marine Corps Forces South and Sgt. Major Edwin A. Mota, Command Senior Enlisted Leader, U.S. Marine Corps Forces South

**“American global interference is over.”**

~ Xi Jinping, G20 Summit, 2030

**T**he year is 2039: Following the successful absorption of Taiwan by the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 2027, the latter's enormously successful Belt and Road Initiative has been validated as the strategic winning hand for global economic domination. Toward the end of the 2030s, a new Cold War between China and the United States emerged, known as the Sino-American Conflict. Like nuclear pacts of the late 20th century, violent hostilities are constrained by a signed, bilateral Cyber Non-Aggression Treaty designed to prevent unintended existential escalation. However, this conflict has devolved into a global struggle between hegemons over the planet's limited resources, with large-scale logistics and control over strategic infrastructure (e.g., the Panama Canal Zone, the Suez Canal, sea lines of communication, etc.) as the principal means of securing regional competitive edges in an economic war.

Of particular concern to the U.S. was the recent completion of the 270-kilometer Central American trans-peninsula dry channel connecting the modern port of Bandera Negra on the Pacific to the coastal city of Los Chiflados on the Atlantic. This effort became necessary due to persistent low water levels in the Panama Canal attributed to climate change. As anticipated, the channel's wholesale cargo throughput greatly exceeded forecasts, owing mostly to enormous public-private capital investment in emerging, high-speed commercial rail technologies and questionable eminent domain land seizure by the host government. Although a staunch military ally of the U.S., this Latin American country was deceived into an economic relationship with the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) a decade prior to secure its future economic solvency, earning itself billions of Yuan—the new global standard—through the construction and control over the high-speed dry channel apparatus. But this earning stream came at a cost. To protect its interests, the CCP installed state-owned enterprises (SOE) to oversee the administration of the channel. The seemingly innocuous placement of these SOEs at key strategic chokepoints revealed a nefarious intent to gain control. Further, recent intel confirmed many of these locations were reinforced with the latest generation anti-satellite technology, masked by seemingly benign commercial railyard support facilities.

At the request of the local government via the U.S. Consulate, the Combatant Commander of the American Hemisphere (AMERICOM) authorized a black operation to neutralize the ASAT sites. Owing to the nature of the operation, the Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander (JFMCC) homeported in Florida, was assigned the mission. The JFMCC further tasked the recently formed 41st Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), which was born from Secretary of



Bandera Negra's dynamic port buzzes with activity, seamlessly connecting to a high-speed rail that transports goods through the trans-peninsula dry channel to Los Chiflados. Amidst this scene of economic prosperity, Chinese Communist Party state-owned enterprises covertly set up anti-satellite weapon systems, revealing the complex and strategic layers of the CCP's engagement in the Western Hemisphere. (U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration generated using OpenAI)

# Marine Forces Reserve



Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jessica Ramirez and her team meticulously review the mission to neutralize the ASAT sites aboard the USS Fallujah (LHA-9), 41st Marine Expeditionary Unit. (U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration generated using OpenAI)

*Defense-directed expansion of modern U.S. Navy amphibious warships following the fall of Taiwan, to cover the Western Caribbean.*

## **(230235ZAPR24) 5.2 kilometers west of the Rio Verde, Central America**

*The waning glow of the crescent moon cast a subtle silhouette of the nearby Chinese anti-satellite site just 1,500 meters away. After spending the past six hours immobile in her hide along with her team, Marine Gunnery Sgt. Jessica Ramirez softly whispers into her tactical microphone, "Razor, puma...comm check, over." Moments later, the barely audible response*



*Jessica Ramirez (Gunnery Sgt., USMCR) poses for a photo in her classroom after becoming a tenured professor of Economics at Louisiana State University. (U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration generated using OpenAI)*

*came through her earpiece, "Puma, lima charlie...cleared to execute in 15 mikes, over."*

*As Gunnery Ramirez calmed her nerves in anticipation of what was to come, she quickly reflected on the past 11 months of her Reserve activation: the Marine Expeditionary Unit-Special Operations Capable workup and deployment; publication of her article in the American Economic Review; gaining tenure as a professor of Economics at Louisiana State University (LSU); the offer for her Reserve Force, Hunter-Killer Team to join the 41st MEU for a one-year assignment; and a one-year sabbatical from her teaching and research duties at LSU. Pride surged through her, knowing she was at the top of her game as a Marine and as a tenured professor. She chuckles at the thought; she must be the poster child for the Marine Corps' institutionalization of Total Force integration and Active/Reserve career permeability programs adopted in the early '30s.*

*Gunny Ramirez regained her focus and swiftly ran through the tactical checklist in her mind. A final comm check with her 8-person Reserve Marine team was followed by a brief check with the operator of the legacy Predator C, a remotely piloted aircraft loitering at 40,000 feet in support of her team's mission. Upon unanimous affirmation of "go" by all parties, she initiated movement of the assault team for the final 500-meter closure to the designated firing positions. Moments later, Gunny Ramirez gave the order to launch the three drones, positioned in a jagged triangle 200 meters apart. A platform developed by the prolific Reserve Marine Innovation Unit in concert with the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency, each of the 20-kilogram advanced polymer attack drones carried 1.5 kilograms of experimental CL-30 munitions and CSPv5 micro-targeting sensor. They quickly ascended in a whisper to their individually designated altitudes (150', 75', and 300', respectively) and different attack vectors. Still undetected and portraying an all-green status on her tablet, she gave the final order for the munitions to rapidly strike their target from three different directions and altitudes.*



*Gunny Ramirez and her squad navigate stealthily through the thick jungles of Central America to employ high-tech, near-silent drones as they draw nearer to their objective. (U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration generated using OpenAI)*



Following a precise and powerful strike on the ASAT site, illustrated by a fierce explosion, the focus shifts to the team's swift and tense retreat. They push through dense vegetation to reach the extraction point, where advanced combat boats and a well-coordinated support team await. (U.S. Marine Corps photo illustration generated using OpenAI)

*Within seconds, a deafening explosion rocked the eight clandestine Marines as all three drones hit their mark and simultaneously decimated the anti-satellite site. The violent explosion's crimson fireball and blistering shock wave shattered the dark, quiet countryside. Moments later, the spotter team reported a 100-percent target elimination but held fast to their positions until the inferno subsided to a point where shadows would be consumed by the darkness. Several minutes later, the Gunny ordered her team's movement back to the designated rally point some 500 meters away before stealthily exfiltrating to the waiting boat teams positioned five clicks away.*

*Still covered by the Predator C overhead, the team quickly moved along their exfil route through the dense brush under the thick canopy of the equatorial hillside. One hundred meters out front, the Marine corporal navigating the team—a Reserve Marine on orders away from his family's Cajun restaurant in Metairie, Louisiana—quietly announced a halt as he rendezvoused with the security element of the boat extraction team from Littoral Craft Company A, 4th Multi-Domain Reconnaissance Battalion, out of Stennis, Mississippi. Having rehearsed this phase multiple times at a Colombian Expeditionary Maritime Support Base, Ramirez's team quietly traversed the marshy shoreline and boarded two Whiskey Alpha III tactical combat craft.*

*These 800-horsepower, jet-drive-powered vessels were covered by two additional Alphas armed with the new GAU-21-A mini-guns. All four Alphas were equipped with the ULTRA-B comm suite and cutting-edge, all-domain navigation systems.*

*With the team fully embarked and under cover of darkness, the Marine coxswains, cross-trained by the Naval Special Warfare Command's Small Boat Team-22, also out of Stennis, silently maneuvered the boats at patrol speed until passing the designated checkpoint 2 kilometers downriver. Once cleared, the boat teams increased speed to 40 knots for the 50-kilometer trip; their only visible signature was the faint glow of phosphorescent trails left in their wakes against the blackness of the river and shoreline racing by. Real-time infrared imagery from the Predator C tracking their progress from above was instantly being fed to the Joint Operations Center aboard the MEU flagship USS Fallujah (LHA-9), quietly positioned several hundred miles away off the coast of Honduras.*

This colorful vignette illustrates several prominent initiatives underway within today's Marine Corps Reserve. These bold efforts, aligned to numerous themes within the Marine Corps' Force Design that supports National Defense Strategy objectives, serve to reap the evolving combat power of the Corps' Reserve force. Many debate whether the Marine Corps Reserve is an operational or strategic force. We believe they are both. Operationally, the Marine Corps Reserve serves a vital function in fulfilling today's continued need for Marine forces supporting Combatant Commander requirements globally. Strategically, the Marine Corps Reserve serves as an essential component to wholesale combat power generation, re-generation, and sustainable infrastructure, enabling both. In fact, a renewed focus on U.S. mass-mobilization policy and processes, increased capital investment in combat power generation infrastructure, and true institutionalization of Active/Reserve Total Force naval operational integration and employment presents a legitimate and viable threat to the CCP. Coupled with the deployed new Marine Littoral Regiment organizational construct, along with its planned new capabilities and multi-domain prowess within the Joint Force, the application of true USMC Total Force integration contributes to deterring adversaries.

This article explores three focus areas to illustrate how we are modernizing our Marine Corps Reserve to meet the challenges the future may present. The first and most important is our Marines.

## People

Marine Forces Reserve is maturing our force to face new and evolving threats from peer and near-peer competitors. Force Design mandated the Selected Marine Corps Reserve (SMCR) to achieve

# Marine Forces Reserve



U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Matthew Walker, a bulk fuel specialist with Marine Wing Support Squadron (MWSS) 471, Marine Aircraft Group 41, 4th Marine Aircraft Wing, Marine Forces Reserve, carries a fuel nozzle during a refueling exercise at Red Beach at Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton, California, March 8, 2024. MWSS-471 collaborated with MWSS-373, Marine Aircraft Control Group 38, 3rd MAW to execute live forward arming and refueling point operations to understand how the reserve component augments the active-duty component during FARP operations. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Mhecaela J. Watts)

an end strength of 36,800 Reserve Marines. Based on current numbers and modeling projections from USMC Manpower and Reserve Affairs, we are on track to achieve that directive.

We expect to reach our manning goal through several innovative or reprioritized programs designed to bring in new Marines and retain our best and brightest for the Reserve Corps. To that end, we are finding success in programs such as the Direct Affiliation Program (DAP), the Diversity AIMED Officer Program (DAOP), exploring new types of service contracts, and the SMCR Selective Retention Bonus.

The Marine Corps invests heavily in its warriors. From the time they arrive at boot camp or the Basic School to completion of their service obligations, the Corps devotes extraordinary resources to

ensure each Marine is fully trained to fight and win our nation's battles. Marines who leave the service after their initial obligation have valuable warfighting knowledge and experience that is a challenge to replace. Rather than losing this valuable talent, the DAP gives active-duty Marines the option of continuing their careers in the Marine Corps Reserve as they transition from full-time warriors to Reserve Marines who also work in the civilian sector. Like Gunnery Ramiree in the opening vignette, the DAP retains valuable Marines who continue to train for combat and are fully prepared for mobilization when the Nation calls. Further, these experienced Marines add greater depth by passing on their skills and knowledge to Reserve Marines in their units.

# Marine Forces Reserve

A recent win for the Reserve Component (RC) occurred last October when Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) assigned a Reserve retention mission of 2,000 enlisted Marines to the Active Component (AC) to retain top-tier warriors by having them affiliate with the Reserve via DAP. Having HQMC designate a DAP recruiting mission while using incentive funds to obligate DAP Marines is a unique first-time action that is indicative of the cultural change taking place at all levels to reap the benefits of a Total Force mentality. We are approaching 1,000 DAP Marines this year who have chosen to continue their careers through the Marine Corps Reserve. The result is a more experienced, combat-ready force.

DAOP. Our Reserve force is stronger due to the diverse and experienced leadership within its ranks. As the Service is tasked with crisis response on behalf of the nation, Marines with varied backgrounds and life experiences who can quickly identify problems, develop solutions, and exploit opportunities are invaluable. We are better when all qualified leaders are empowered to contribute to the mission. To that end, DAOP's mission is to attract, identify, mentor, educate, and develop high-performing enlisted Reserve Marines from historically underrepresented populations to provide them with a better understanding of how to pursue an officer career. The long-term goal is to infuse the senior officer ranks with more different life perspectives. To date, we have had approximately 120 high-caliber Marines, both men and women of all nationalities, apply for the program. We expect more in the future.

Working with Marine Corps Recruiting Command, we've launched new contracts that provide a direct line from active duty to the Reserve force. Marines who join under 4x2x2 contracts serve four years of active duty; if they don't reenlist on active duty, they transition for two years of service in the SMCR and then two years in the Individual Ready Reserve. Like DAP, these contracts keep trained and experienced Marines in Reserve units. It also provides an opportunity to extend their service in the RC if they want to continue after the two-year SMCR obligation.

SMCR Retention Bonus. Finally, many Reserve Marines are taking advantage of the SMCR Selected Retention Bonus. In exchange for extended obligated service, Reserve Marines in select military occupation specialties may receive substantial cash bonuses for continuing their service. This provides continuity and the extension of Reserve-specific experiences and knowledge for Reserve units.

## Warfighting readiness

"We must be the force of choice for our combatant commanders when they seek to campaign to a position of advantage against our adversaries, or to respond anywhere on the globe to a natural or man-made crisis." ~ Gen. Eric M. Smith, 39th Commandant of the Marine Corps



U.S. Marine Corps 2nd Lt. Nkundimana Claude, a fire team leader assigned to Alpha Company, 1st Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, is pinned as a 2nd Lt. during his commissioning ceremony at the Marine Corps Air-Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California, June 17, 2023. Claude moved to the United States from Democratic Republic of Congo, Africa and enlisted in the Marine Corps to become a U.S. citizen. He then graduated from Texas State University and commissioned as an officer. (U.S. Marine Corps video by Cpl. Ryan Schmid)

Marine Forces Reserve actively supports the Service and Joint force as it navigates the complexities of modernization in the effort to ensure the Marine Corps meets all the varied demands for our national defense.

As an operational Reserve, the Marine Forces Reserve provides immediate relief to the AC in support of Service Force Design efforts. The increasing RC activations to relieve AC units during the projected Force Design period have purchased time and space for the Marine Corps to move forward in modernizing the Corps to remain agile and capable during evolving threats. It also delivers training, exercise, and operational experiences to the SMCR commensurate with their AC counterparts. Their experience strengthens the RC's ability to integrate effectively if called upon in support of contingency deployments. Additionally, these deployments foster future leaders who are well-versed in the integration practices essential for seamless collaboration between the AC and RC.

Marine Forces Reserve aligns units to globally sourced requirements, including numerous theater security cooperation events. This enhances the Corps' ability to maintain presence in critical areas of responsibility (AORs) such as U.S. CENTRAL COMMAND and U.S. SOUTHERN COMMAND. This strategic allocation of resources enables the AC to focus on other AORs without incurring significant risk, ultimately bolstering overall readiness and effectiveness. Furthermore, the opportunity for Marines to experience varied training experiences during Annual Training periods is a powerful

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U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Edward Reyes, left, and Lance Cpl. Daniel Puente, both mortarman with Weapons Company, 1st Battalion, 23D Marine Regiment, 4th Marine Division, conduct a mortar range during Integrated Training Exercise 4-23 at Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, California on June 12, 2023. As the Marine Corps Reserve's premier annual training event, ITX provides opportunities to mobilize geographically dispersed forces for a deployment; increase combat readiness and lethality; and exercise MAGTF command and control of battalions and squadrons across the full spectrum of warfare. Reyes is a native of Fort Worth, Texas where he graduated from Fossil Ridge High School. Reyes's civilian job is a firefighter. Puente is a native of Fort Worth, Texas where he graduated from Harlandale High School. Puente's civilian job is salesman. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Cpl. Ryan Schmid)

retention tool ensuring a robust and motivated Reserve force with a concrete foundation in diverse cultures and operations.

As a strategic Reserve, Marine Forces Reserve has partnered with planners at Headquarters Marine Corps (HQMC) to prepare for mobilization in support of crisis or major combat operations. By working closely with HQMC, Marine Forces Reserve is aiding in the development of policies and procedures designed to generate required forces swiftly in times of crisis.

Each year, Marine Forces Reserve rehearses force generation and deployment of regimental combat team-sized capabilities to familiarize Marine Forces Reserve HQ staff, major subordinate commands, and individual units and Marines with the complexities

of large-scale activations in addition to participating in integrated training exercises. The muscle memory constructed from both the planning efforts with HQMC and working through the friction of activating and deploying more than 4,500 Marines (on top of the support to other exercises and deployments) every year protects the institutional knowledge required to meet the Joint force's future needs at the strategic level.

Through proactive planning and collaboration, Marine Forces Reserve ensures its capabilities are ready, competent, and effective in safeguarding national security interests. We proactively mitigate stress from the AC to help maintain our Corps' presence and partnerships in key areas of the world. Marine Forces Reserve enables

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the Total Force to position itself as a formidable force capable of meeting the challenges of future warfare head-on. A prime example is the annual UNITAS exercise in the SOUTHCOM AOR.

The Marine Corps Reserve is capitalizing on the opportunity to deploy to Central and South America and the Caribbean to work alongside our allies and partners on first-rate training exercises like UNITAS 24 that increase the Reserve force's overall warfighting readiness. Being dual-hatted as commander and force sergeant major of Marine Forces South and Marine Forces Reserve enables this complementary partnership between units that drives much of our work and yields incredible gains for both commands.

Reserve Marines participating in UNITAS 24 will support not only traditional UNITAS training tracks (such as amphibious operations, humanitarian assistance/disaster relief, and static and advanced fire and maneuver) but will also afford an opportunity for them to experiment with Expeditionary Advanced Based Operations (EABO) and the associated mission-essential tasks. UNITAS 24 is on track to provide Marines with experience in establishing a Littoral Warfare Command (LWC), composed of three EABOs, across 1,200 nautical miles. This LWC is a designated task group comprising all UNITAS 24 ashore forces. The LWC will support the afloat amphibious task group and, along with a hybrid fleet of unmanned systems, will provide distributed sensing and fire capabilities to the Task Force/Joint Forces Maritime Component Commander. Using fixed-wing, passive ground-based sensors, cueing, and unmanned systems to establish and support maritime domain awareness, we can get a common intelligence picture, operational picture, and a web of linked sensors and shooting platforms. In addition to LWC support for the maritime fight, Reserve Marines will also be integrated into all echelons of the multi-national naval staff/operations centers.

Finally, UNITAS and other exercises and operations in the AOR offer Reserve leaders a unique opportunity to observe their Marines in action, witnessing how they operate and overcome challenges in austere environments. These real-world experiences enable our front-line leaders to identify the Marines who thrive in uncertainty and bring teams together to accomplish the mission. Simply put, identify the talent and then provide them more opportunities for growth and leadership responsibilities.

## The future

Marine Corps Force Design planners are developing and maturing an approach to modernization that seeks to balance AC and RC lethality and capacity as the Total Force transitions over the next several Future Year Defense Plans. By selectively delaying RC modernization, this approach offsets periods of reduced AC lethality and capacity (when AC units are in transition to new organizational



U.S. Marines with Lima Company, 3rd Battalion, 23rd Marine Regiment, U.S. Marine Corps Forces Reserve in support of Special Purpose Marine Air-Ground Task Force UNITAS LXIV, and members of partner nations wait for the rest of the team after fast-roping down a UH-1Y Venom helicopter with Marine Light Attack Helicopter Squadron 775 (HMLA 775), 4th Marine Air Wing, as part of the Fast Rope Course at Escuela de Formación de Infantería Marina Coveñas in Coveñas, Colombia, July 15, 2023. Fast roping is a way for Marines to enter a high risk area quickly without having to land the helicopter. UNITAS focuses on strengthening existing regional partnerships and encouraging the establishment of new relationships through the exchange of maritime mission-focused knowledge and expertise. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Lance Cpl. Samuel Qin)

structures and capabilities) by employing highly capable legacy Reserve formations. However, in some instances, concurrent and proportional modernization will take place across the Total Force to capitalize on talent management by recruiting and retaining trained Marines. Additionally, the RC is well-postured to support Service-level concept development and refinement efforts through live-force experimentation, leveraging unique Reserve expertise and partner training opportunities associated with sites at key geographic locations. This will accelerate and inform modernization on ways the Marine Corps Reserve can be most impactful.

For example, the newly established Littoral Craft Companies (LCCs) in Tampa, Florida, and Galveston, Texas, are enabling Marine Forces Reserve to significantly contribute to Service-level littoral maneuver and mobility solutions. These Reserve-unique units will provide capacity and expertise to assist in pioneering the Marine Corps' way forward into small-boat operations. Their initial focus will be 1) supporting concept development and refinement; 2) establishment of small-craft mission-essential tasks, training and readiness requirements; 3) development and codification of tactics, techniques, and procedures; 4) recommendations and refinements to unit organizational structures; and 5) analysis of doctrine,

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U.S. Marines with 4th Amphibious Assault Battalion, 4th Marine Division, and Marines from multiple partner nations float down the Río Sinú during riverine operations and small boat training at UNITAS LXIV near Base de Entrenamiento de Infantería de Marina in Coveñas, Colombia, July 15, 2023. Through event-driven scenarios, UNITAS provides unique training opportunities both at sea and ashore in challenging and uncertain environments to conduct joint maritime operations through the execution of surface, air, amphibious and electronic warfare operations that enhance warfighting proficiency and increase interoperability among participating naval and marine forces. (U.S. Marine Corps photo by Sgt. Juan Carpanzano)

organization, training, materiel, leadership and education, personnel, facilities, and cost (DOTMLPF/C) implications.

Once initial operational capability is achieved, these units will actively address learning demands from the Marine Corps Warfighting Lab (MCWL) through joint and multilateral maritime engagements with the U.S. Navy, U.S. Special Operations Command, and key partners and allies. Early analysis indicates a significant opportunity for the LCCs to expand concept development beyond littoral maneuver into littoral distribution, sustainment, and other maritime warfighting functional areas. This combined effort will pay enormous dividends as the Service continues to refine and evolve EABO, Littoral Operations in a Contested Environment, and other evolving concepts into formal doctrine.

In addition to littoral maneuver, Marine Forces Reserve is supporting MCWL's Service-Level Experimentation Campaign Plan through prioritized activities addressing several concept development priorities. In partnership with the Reserve Marine Innovation Unit, 4th Marine Logistics Group is exploring methods to conduct Additive Manufacturing and Fabrication in an expeditionary environment. Multi-Domain Kill Web design and support (both kinetic and non-kinetic), as well as expeditionary medicine, are additional areas where Marine Forces Reserve is playing an active role. Finally, Service efforts to modernize mass-mobilization policy, processes, and execution will require significant Marine Forces Reserve involvement to update models in response to current and future threats across the spectrum of competition and transition to conflict or protracted conflict with peer adversaries.

## Conclusion

We believe this article conveys the timeless adage, “*you reap what you sow.*” In hindsight, every societal challenge today results from years of actions, inactions, decisions, or indecisions in a web of tangled ideologies and agendas by global leaders across the political spectrum. While our great Nation cannot control the world’s fate, we can nurture strategic relationships with key allies and partners while we develop and sustain a strong advantage over our adversaries and competitors. We must be prepared as a Nation should our strategy of global integrated deterrence fail to prevent a hypothetical cataclysmic outcome. And to that end, we must continue to invest in one of our most precious resources: our citizen warriors. For they are key to helping bridge the military-civilian divide and maintain our All-Volunteer Force.

## Epilogue

*The sweltering heat and humidity consumed all 100,000 attendees at Death Valley, the infamous nickname for LSU’s Tiger Stadium. It’s*

*opening day for the 2040 college football season, and the Tigers have drawn their new archrival, the University of Southern Mississippi’s Golden Eagles. The massive expansion of the aerospace and Defense industries within the new Gulf Coast “Tech Crescent,” specifically coastal Mississippi, greatly increased the population in the region, stimulating vast academic expansion, which elevated USM’s status.*

*Professor Ramirez, sitting in the student section by personal invitation of the LSU Naval ROTC cadre, embraced the oppressive heat, which was reminiscent of her recent combat deployment. Ramirez’s reputation on campus as a teacher-warrior in the Marine Corps Reserve quickly expanded throughout the student body, making her one of the emissaries representing the recent groundswell of patriotic fervor due to the ongoing Cold War that threatened economic stability. Ramirez, all too keen on the subject, embodied the commitment of this Greatest Generation 2.0. Looking back at the previous two decades, she was reminded that it took a true threat to the American way of life to reveal a world where adversaries of democracy insidiously weaponize all aspects of government and civilian affairs to gain advantages and subjugate any who stand in their way. RV*



**Lt. Gen. David C. Bellon** is commander, Marine Forces Reserve. He was promoted to his current rank and assumed his duties as commander in September 2019. Bellon was commissioned as a second lieutenant in 1989 before graduating from the University of Missouri School of Law in 1990. He served as an infantry officer, then as a judge advocate. He left active duty in 1997 and joined the Selected Marine Corps Reserve. As a civilian, Bellon founded his own law firm in 1999. After 9/11, Bellon returned to active duty for four combat tours in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom. His positions included operations officer, intelligence officer, and battalion commander. He fought in battles in Al Fallujah and conducted counterinsurgency operations in Al Haditha. Promoted to colonel, he deployed to Afghanistan in 2009 with the British 6th Division, serving as chief of operations for southern Afghanistan during NATO’s surge of forces to secure Kandahar City. Bellon was promoted to brigadier general in 2013; his assignments prior to his current billet included deputy commander (mobilization), 1st Marine Expeditionary Force; deputy, Marine Forces Command; director, Reserve Affairs; commander, Marine Forces South; and director of strategy, policy, and plans (J5), U.S. Southern Command.



**Sgt. Maj. Edwin A. Mota** attended recruit training at Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, S.C. in June of 1995. Throughout his career, Sergeant Major Mota has been assigned numerous duties and served many deployments, to include Operation MOUNTAIN STORM in 2004, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 4-6 in 2006, Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in 2010. From 2018 to 2020, as the 31st MEU SgtMaj, he deployed and participated in several Theater Security Cooperation exercises throughout the Indo-Pacific Command Area of Responsibility. In April of 2020, Sgt. Maj. Mota assumed the responsibility as Sergeant Major for Marine Corps Forces, South. From August 2021 until June 2023, He served as Sergeant Major for Marine Corps Recruit Depot and Eastern Recruiting Region, Parris Island, South Carolina. Sgt. Maj. Mota holds a Bachelor’s Degree in Business Administration with a focus in Human Resource Management and is a graduate of the Key Stone Course for Senior Enlisted Leaders held at the National Defense University.

## Navy Reserve

# A ready force in a rapidly changing world

By Vice Adm. John B. Mustin, Chief of Navy Reserve, Commander Navy Reserve Force

In an era defined by rapid technological advancements and escalating global threats, the United States Navy Reserve stands at the forefront of a historic transformation. This evolution represents a response to the changing security landscape, as well as a calculated and deliberate reformation aimed at ensuring the Navy Reserve remains an agile, responsive, and warfighting-ready force capable of confronting the complexities of modern-day strategic competition. The Navy Reserve's multi-year transformation is both a dynamic change and a call to action in a complex era of strategic competition, marked by the pacing challenges of global adversaries such as China, as well as the acute challenges associated with Russia.

Building on this historical context, the role of the Navy Reserve has significantly evolved to meet emerging global challenges. For over a century, the Navy Reserve has been an integral part of our maritime dominance, providing the operational support and strategic depth that our nation demands. However, the shifting tides of global power and the onset of multi-domain warfare have necessitated a profound reassessment and recalibration of the Reserve Force's role and capabilities. A clear-eyed recognition of the burgeoning challenges and an unwavering commitment to maintaining global maritime superiority underpin the Navy Reserve's transformational journey.

Central to this journey is a pivot in operational strategies and structural organization. At its heart, the transformation focuses on warfighting readiness, which incorporates a more tailored, billet-specific model. This approach ensures every sailor is warfighting ready based on criteria that are aligned with their specific operational duties and requirements. This new approach to readiness significantly shifts the billet-specific approach to training, aligning sailors' skills with their unit-defined roles, maximizing operational effectiveness, and ensuring their development and advancement.

This strategic shift has profound implications not only for the Navy Reserve but also for national security and maritime dominance in a rapidly evolving global order. It underscores a proactive approach to defense, prioritizing readiness, technological superiority, and strategic depth to navigate the complexities of



Vice Adm. John Mustin, Chief of Navy Reserve, Office of the Chief of Naval Operations, delivers a speech to Officer Candidate School (OCS) Class 07-24 during a graduation ceremony at Officer Training Command Newport (OTCN), Rhode Island, Mar 8. OCS develops civilians and fleet sailors into newly commissioned officers morally, mentally, and physically while also instilling them with the highest ideals of honor, courage, and commitment for service in the fleet as Naval officers.

contemporary and future maritime operations. The Navy Reserve's transformation is a testament to our nation's adaptability and foresight, ensuring that we remain steps ahead in the continuum of strategic competition.

## Warfighting Ready for the present, prepared for the future

As the Navy Reserve adapts, it also anticipates future challenges, which are captured in key strategic documents that outline the path forward. The Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions (NRFI) and Battle Orders 2032 highlight the importance of transformation as the Reserve Force moves into an era of heightened strategic competition. These landmark documents serve as a critical framework and ultimately ensure that the Navy Reserve's transformation delivers a



U.S. Navy Lt. Chris "Slip" Miller, assigned to NAWDC STRIKE, takes his final flight at NAS Fallon, Jan. 23, 2024. Home to the Fighting Saints of VFC-13 and the Naval Aviation Warfare Development Command (NAWDC), NAS Fallon serves as the Navy's premier tactical air warfare training center. (U.S. Navy photo by MC1 Ryan J. Batchelder)

force that is designed, trained, and ready to fight and win—confidently and boldly—in sustained, multi-domain combat operations. NRFI, an “Execute Order” (EXORD), lays the groundwork for this shift, emphasizing the need for a more agile, responsive, and technologically advanced force. Meanwhile, Battle Orders 2032 expands on this vision, setting forth a clear and detailed path for the Navy Reserve to enhance its warfighting capabilities, integrate seamlessly with the active component, and contribute decisively to the United States’ maritime dominance. Together, they signify a paradigm shift, steering the Navy Reserve toward a future where it stands ready, fully integrated, and essential in deterring aggression and securing national interests in an increasingly contested global arena.

Leveraging available technology and envisioning future possibilities is critical to our efforts. Utilizing advanced technological platforms and embracing the potential of artificial intelligence (AI) improves outdated workflows, as well as redundant and inefficient

processes that no longer deliver value. Modern approaches enhance operational impact and ensure our Reserve sailors are more connected, informed, and ready to meet the demands of modern warfare. Technology enhancements improve the operational capabilities of the Navy Reserve and pave the way for further innovations in secure and efficient communication and data management. Leveraging current technological platforms, such as Nautilus Virtual Desktop (NVD), Mobile Application Management Without Enrollment (MAM-WE), and AI, removes outdated, redundant, and inefficient processes, allowing our Reserve sailors to stay more connected, informed, and ready to meet the demands of modern warfare.

NVD represents a significant leap forward in the Navy Reserve’s technological modernization. NVD is a cloud-based solution providing Navy Reserve sailors with remote access to a Navy-Marine Corps Intranet (NMCI)-like environment from personal or government-furnished devices. This capability is revolutionary, enabling Reserve sailors to access their networks, communicate securely, and



DANA POINT, Calif. (Oct. 15, 2022) Master-At-Arms 1st Class Ashley Diaz, a tactical craft navigator and radio telecom operator assigned to Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron (MSRON) 11, reports to a Tactical Operation Center (TOC) while underway during Navy Reserve drill weekend as part of TOC, Boat Maintenance Facility (BMF) and Security Boat Company's (SBC) qualification sustainment training exercise off the coast of Dana Point, Calif., Oct. 15, 2022. MESF is a core Navy capability that provides port and harbor security, high value asset security, and maritime security in the coastal and inland waterways. (U.S. Navy photo by Chief Boatswain's Mate Nelson Doromal Jr.)

manage tasks from any location, thereby extending the operational workspace beyond traditional boundaries.

Alongside NVD's cloud-based capabilities, the Navy Reserve is implementing additional technological measures to bolster security and productivity across its operations. In addition to NVD, MAM-WE demonstrates the Navy Reserve's commitment to innovation and security. MAM-WE allows the secure use of essential software applications and other productivity tools on personal mobile devices without the need for device enrollment in the defense network.

These technological upgrades served as a stepping stone on the path to the Navy Reserve's next groundbreaking initiative, an artificial intelligence web application that streamlines and enhances the operational efficiency of Reserve sailors. The development of Reserve AI Navigator (RAIN) is perhaps the most groundbreaking AI initiative the Navy Reserve has undertaken to date. RAIN leverages AI to provide an intuitive, centralized platform for Reserve sailors to navigate the myriad administrative processes, training requirements, and career management systems within the Navy Reserve. This AI-driven platform can interpret natural language queries, providing quick and accurate responses to a wide range of questions, from career advancement opportunities to mobilization requirements. RAIN significantly improves the efficiency of Reserve operations, enabling sailors to focus more on their training

and Warfighting Readiness rather than bureaucratic hurdles. This commitment to cutting-edge technology and process improvement clearly demonstrates the Navy Reserve's dedication to modernization and to the people at the heart of its operations.

## **Enhancing the force through people-centric solutions**

Listening to and acting on our sailors' needs allows the Reserve Force to streamline processes, make work more efficient, and deliver effective capabilities. For example, the Navy Reserve invested in a force-wide technology refresh, providing the Force with 15,000 new computers, significantly upgrading internet connectivity across 134 Navy Reserve Activities, and transitioning the entire force to Flank Speed. These initiatives deliver easier access to the tools and information the Reserve Force needs quickly and securely. These upgrades mean less time waiting for downloads and more time working on what's important—our training, advancement, and career management—while remaining focused on Warfighting Readiness.

Technological advancements and the focus on efficient processes set the stage for specific program enhancements that directly improve the training and Warfighting Readiness of the Navy Reserve. Maximizing innovation has also led to important improvements in modernizing the way we deliver and track the training sailors need to perform in their mobilization billet. Leveraging a purpose-built program known as "T-Ready," we can track unique billet-based training requirements and provide leaders the information they need to support new sailors from the moment they enter the Reserve Force. This visibility, aggregation, and display of readiness ensures the Navy Reserve is always tracking toward warfighting readiness while also keeping sailors aligned with the resources needed to advance their careers.

As the Reserve Force enhanced its training systems, it also streamlined administrative and operational processes to ensure sailors can transition smoothly between different stages of their military career, including status changes from reserve to active and back. The Reserve Force has also made significant improvements in administrative areas, both in terms of process restructuring and by investing in new technology tools. As a result, since 2022 we reduced Reserve pay liquidation time by 72% and cut down the transition time for sailors moving from reserve to active duty status by 80%. Our strategic investment in the Zipserve 4.0 program has smoothed the activation process, making it easier for sailors to apply for active-duty opportunities and manage their mobilization readiness status. Right now, in real-time, we're stress-testing many of these processes in our mobilization and mass activation exercises.



ARABIAN GULF (Nov. 27, 2023) A T-38 Devil Ray unmanned surface vessel, attached to U.S. Naval Forces Central Command's (NAVCENT) Task Force 59, operates with an equipped Lethal Miniature Aerial Missile System during exercise Digital Talon 2 in the Arabian Gulf, Nov. 27. NAVCENT completed the exercise demonstrating the ability of unmanned platforms to pair with traditionally crewed ships in "manned-unmanned teaming" to identify and target hostile forces at sea. Then, using munitions launched from another unmanned platform, engaged and destroyed those targets. (U.S. Army photo by Sgt. Marita Schwab)

Beyond these operational improvements, the Navy Reserve decentralized administrative processes, enhancing support for sailors and reducing the myriad requirements typically associated with mobilization. As we continue to see a Navy-wide reduction in Individual augmentees, our adaptive mobilization initiative has decentralized the mobilization process, providing sailors with support closer to their homes rather than sending every sailor to Norfolk as we historically have done. This means less travel, less disruption, and more support for our Reserve sailors. These program enhancements ultimately streamline the activation process and provide more certainty for our sailors and their families.

In recognizing that sailors' well-being is critical to their warfighting readiness, the Navy Reserve has initiated several measures to support the personal and professional growth of its members. But we didn't stop there. We fully understand that our sailors are far more important than any ship, aircraft, submarine, or other platform. So, our push forward includes recruiting and retaining the best and brightest the Nation has to offer and developing critical skills that enhance sailors' professional and personal lives—ensuring

that they and their families enjoy the highest quality of service possible by expanding benefits, enhancing their career paths, and giving our sailors more time with those who support them.

## **Developing our sailors accelerates innovation**

This holistic approach to sailor development addresses immediate needs and positions the Navy Reserve for future challenges, paving the way for the introduction of new roles and capabilities. As an example, this year, the Navy introduced a new rating: Robotics Warfare Specialist, which is designed to oversee robotic and autonomous system operations, focusing on both active and passive payload systems and sensors, as well as maintaining these systems. As we seek to grow our knowledge base in rapidly advancing autonomous technologies, we do so in support of Chief of Naval Operations Adm. Lisa Franchetti's plans for building and developing "a team who has the reps and sets in sensors, platform autonomy, and mission autonomy programs, and can provide input in machine-learning

feedback processes.” This has been a total Force effort and mirrors the innovative thinking that the Reserve Force fully embraces.

The expansion into new technological domains necessitates similarly advanced training in cyber operations, further broadening the expertise within the Navy Reserve. Last July, the Reserve Force began training our first Maritime Cyber Warfare Officers (MCWO). MCWO is a new role within the U.S. Navy, focusing on cyberspace operations, encompassing both offensive and defensive strategies. They joined the Computer Network Operator Qualification Course alongside enlisted sailors, receiving fundamental training in offensive cyber operations, marking a significant step in warfighting readiness and capability in the cyber domain. These officers will conduct operational and leadership tours within the Cyber Operation Force and Cyber Mission Force, engaging in tasks like National Mission Teams, Cyber Mission Teams, Cyber Protection Teams, and Cyber Support Teams. Their training will include Exploitation Analysis and Integrated On-Net programs, preparing them for leadership roles relevant to a high-end fight. As they progress, these officers will prepare for O-5 command and higher positions, contributing significantly to entities like Fleet Cyber Command and U.S. Cyber Command. This new officer designator underscores the Navy’s commitment to strengthening its cyber capabilities in response to evolving threats and technological advancements. The Navy is creating a dedicated career path for cyber operations that aims to develop a skilled workforce capable of addressing cyber challenges effectively and the Navy Reserve is aligned in this endeavor.

Similarly, the introduction of a new officer designator for Maritime Space Officers (MSOs) further enhances the Navy Reserve’s capacity to integrate advanced technological solutions across all domains of warfare. These highly trained Information Warfare professionals are tasked with integrating joint space capabilities into maritime plans and operations. The MSO community is formed through lateral transfers and will serve in critical roles at Fleet Maritime Operations Centers, Joint Commands, the Intelligence Community, Naval Warfighting Development Centers, the Naval War College, and in various staff positions supporting operations. The establishment of the MSO designator represents a significant step in augmenting the Navy’s space capabilities. This move aligns with broader Department of Defense efforts to enhance space operations and integration across the services, focused on leveraging space capabilities to enhance maritime operations. The MSOs are maritime space integration and planning professionals, providing a unique blend of previous warfare qualifications, operational experience, and fundamental knowledge of space-related capabilities. They are expected to fill key space-oriented positions globally, ensuring that space technology effectively supports Naval missions and enhances the United States’ maritime dominance.

Strengthening the technological and warfighting capabilities of the Navy Reserve underscores a broader strategic focus on talent acquisition and retention, which is critical for sustaining long-term excellence and readiness. In addition to prioritizing and developing critical skills, the Navy Reserve has improved and enhanced our talent acquisition methods since 2020. For example, the Navy Reserve expanded its approach to identifying talented active component sailors for transition to the Reserve Force beyond our Career Transition Office and our hometown recruiters with a new officer designator—Permanent Professional Recruiter. This career path professionalizes our Reserve Recruiting Officers, dedicating full-time support to the Navy Reserve recruiting mission to help find qualified sailors and officer candidates. These professional recruiters will deploy to Fleet concentration areas to establish market penetration in key locations, facilitating the recruitment and retention of Navy Reserve sailors. While coordinating directly with the active duty-led Navy Recruiting Reserve Command, these skilled recruiters provide an advantage as we expand our aperture in identifying and recruiting the Nation’s very best into the Navy Reserve. Additionally, we are making full use of our Reserve Talent Acquisition Groups (RTAGs), which are newly established specialized units within the Navy Recruiting Command, whose primary mission is to recruit highly skilled individuals into the Navy Reserve with a focus on identifying and attracting talent, especially prior service sailors, with the desired warfighting skillsets. Finally, in March of this year, we also saw the first two Training and Administration of the Reserve (TAR) candidates graduate from Officer Candidate School through the In-Service Procurement Program (ISPP). This is a TAR-specific path for TAR enlisted sailors to become officers.

## **Sailors mean more than guns in the rating of a ship**

Ensuring that the Navy Reserve attracts, supports, and values its sailors and their families is crucial for maintaining a resilient and ready Force. Sailors are our most precious resource—they are the backbone of the Navy Reserve. The institution of the Navy Reserve ensures sailors and their families are supported, valued, and prepared for the future. Understanding the importance of work-life balance, the Navy Reserve introduced initiatives like a multi-year pilot for drill weekend childcare, increased affiliation and re-enlistment bonuses, and, for the first time in history, providing tuition assistance to Selected Reserve sailors. These are tangible benefits that make a real difference in the lives of Reserve sailors and their loved ones. As we continue to face a rapidly changing world, we are demonstrating that the Navy Reserve is a ready Force—able to respond with nearly 60,000 trained, qualified, and mobilization-ready sailors when the nation calls.

# Navy Reserve

These comprehensive initiatives are aimed at supporting sailors and exemplify the Navy Reserve's commitment to its personnel. This dedication boosts morale and ensures the Navy Reserve is an elite Force. We recognize the urgent need to deliver Warfighting Readiness at scale and at a pace and tempo that gives our adversaries pause. From our most junior sailors to our most senior Leaders, we remain unambiguously focused on one thing: sailors who are prepared and ready to perform in our mobilization billets. The Navy Reserve's multi-year transformation is a testament to its adaptability and dedication to maintaining the United States' maritime dominance. This comprehensive evolution, touching every facet of the Reserve Force, from organizational restructuring to technological innovation, represents a significant shift in how the Reserve Force prepares for and engages in modern warfare. This evolution has seen the Reserve Force move away from traditional, support-centric roles to more integrated, front-line capabilities. The shift towards high-end, combat-ready units ensures that the Reserve Force can seamlessly support active-duty operations, delivering strategic depth and enhancing the Navy's overall warfighting capacity.

The Navy Reserve has undergone profound enhancements, moving beyond routine four-hour drill periods at a Navy Reserve Center to more specialized, scenario-based exercises that mirror the

complexities of current and future conflicts. Focusing on Warfighting Readiness ensures that Reserve sailors are prepared and proficient in their designated billet, contributing effectively from day one of mobilization. This approach epitomizes the Navy Reserve's commitment to ensuring that its sailors are ready and relevant to deliver maritime dominance in a complex security environment. The strategic implications of these transformations within the Navy Reserve are profound. Enhancing the Reserve Force's readiness, agility, and technological prowess better equips the Force to respond to the challenges posed by global adversaries.

We live in a dynamic, unpredictable security environment. Now more than ever, our nation demands a Navy Reserve Force that's trained, equipped, and integrated to address a diversity of global challenges. Innovation, speed, and efficiency are baked into the way the Navy Reserve works, positioning the Force as an elite, forward-thinking team. As geopolitical tensions and technological advancements continue to shape the global security landscape, the Reserve Force's ability to adapt and evolve is critical to maintaining the United States' maritime dominance.

Make no mistake, our job is fighting and winning wars. Now let's get busy. 



**Vice Admiral John Mustin** is a native of Alexandria, Virginia. He is a graduate of the United States Naval Academy, where he earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Weapons and Systems Engineering and was commissioned in 1990. He holds a Master of Science in Operations Research from the Naval Postgraduate School in Monterey, CA, and a Master of Business Administration (cum laude) in Finance and Management from the F. W. Olin Graduate School of Business at Babson College. He earned his Joint Professional Military Education from the Air University's Air Command and Staff College at Maxwell Air Force Base.

Mustin's sea duty assignments include command of Expeditionary Strike Group 2/Task Force 29; commissioning operations officer on USS Donald Cook (DDG 75), and aboard USS Vincennes (CG 49), where he served as combat information center officer, navigator and the Air Warfare Commander of the Independence (CV 62) Battle Group. Affiliating with the Navy Reserve in 2001, Mustin served at Navy Reserve (NR) Carrier Strike Group 2 / USS George Washington (CVN 73) Strike Group during Operation Enduring Freedom. Other staff assignments include NR Chief of Naval Operations for Operations, Plans and Strategy (N3N5) at the Pentagon Navy Command Center; Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 14; NR Carrier Strike Group 10 / USS Harry S Truman (CVN 75) Strike Group; and Personnel Mobilization Team 101. Additionally, he served as the inaugural Littoral Combat Ship (LCS) Navy Reserve Enterprise Director, responsible for the Reserve manning, training and equipping of the 1000-billet LCS surface Reserve force.

Other command tours include NR Joint Staff South; NR U.S. Fleet Forces Command Maritime Operations Center, Greensboro; NR Maritime Expeditionary Security Squadron 6; and Inshore Boat Unit 22, including a mobilization to Kuwait during Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom. His other flag assignments include deputy commander of Naval Surface Forces, spanning the Surface Type Commanders of the U.S. Pacific and Atlantic fleets; as a plankowner and the deputy commander of the re-established U.S. Second Fleet; and as Vice Commander, U.S. Fleet Forces Command.

His awards include the Defense Superior Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal, Navy Commendation Medal, Navy Achievement Medal, Navy Battle Efficiency 'E', Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal and various service, expeditionary, unit and campaign awards.

## The American citizen sailor, a strategic resource

By Force Master Chief Petty Officer Tracy L. Hunt

**S**hipmates, as we steer the course of the Navy Reserve, let's anchor our conversation on three pivotal questions that shape our mission and guide our endeavors. First, are we Warfighting Ready? This means that when, not if, the call for mobilizing the Reserve Force comes, we are ready to deploy—and we are aligned to support our mobilization billets. Second, is the Reserve Force ready to integrate seamlessly with our Active-Duty counterparts? And third, upon arrival, are Reserve Sailors prepared and trained to execute their missions from day one? I can tell you that we have been moving at maximum velocity with aggressive modernization of the Force so that we can answer these questions, and I can tell you now the answer is a definitive yes. Because of the hard work and dedication of Sailors across the Reserve Force, we stand ready.

We began this historic transformation four years ago with the implementation of our Navy Reserve Fighting Instructions (NRFI) 2020, which charted the course for our ambitious modernization, shaping the Reserve Force into an elite warfighting organization of the nation's defense architecture.

This strategic document expounds the multiple activities that our Navy Reserve is effecting throughout the organization to ensure that our Combatant Commanders receive the skilled Sailors they require, precisely and when needed. This crucial endeavor starts by safeguarding our most valuable asset—the men and women of the Navy Reserve and their families who have entrusted us with their care, education, development, and support. At the heart of our Force are our Sailors and civilian workforce, who play a tremendous role in our fight, embodying the spirit and resilience of our great nation.

The Navy boasts an arsenal of advanced weapons, cutting-edge technology, and cyber capabilities. Yet, the true strength of our Force resides within our Sailors. This diverse and formidable collective, forming America's Team, breathes life into the vision set forth in NRFI and other strategic frameworks, translating them into tangible action on the deckplates. Sailors performing the day-to-day operations, safeguarding our national security.

To bolster our Sailors, NRFI outlines a critical Line of Effort: Develop the Force. This directive has advanced numerous initiatives enhancing the lives of our Sailors and, crucially, their families, whose unwavering support underpins their service. Sailors are the

asymmetric advantage of the Navy, and their well-being—officer and enlisted—is in the Chiefs' wheelhouse. By focusing on our Sailors, we enable them to concentrate wholly on the paramount objective of the Navy Reserve: Warfighting Readiness.

In this address, I will explore how the Reserve Force is both meeting and surpassing the mandates set before us in the Develop the Force Line of Effort, ensuring our Sailors are prepared and thriving—because when our Sailors succeed, so does our mission. Together, we fortify the bedrock of our Force, ensuring readiness, resilience, and unparalleled warfighting capability. Let's embark on this journey committed to the excellence and advancement of every Sailor under our command.

In the quality-of-life area, we have developed several programs that are now available to Sailors and their families, addressing basic needs so that they can focus on their service.

### Childcare program

The Navy Reserve Force Weekend Drill Childcare Pilot Program was rolled out to address the child care needs of Reserve Sailors with children ages six weeks to 12 years old within a 50-mile radius of the participating Navy Reserve Centers during drill weekends. It is presently available in fleet-concentration areas of San Diego, Kitsap/Bremerton, Washington, and Jacksonville, Florida; New Orleans, Louisiana; Fort Worth, Texas; Ventura, California; and Baltimore, Maryland. In addition, the Reserve Force is collaborating with neighborhood community organizations to further expand the availability of child care options for Reserve military families.

### Education

In education, Tuition Assistance (TA) is now available, providing Reserve Sailors an opportunity to complete a degree through the U.S. Naval Community College. TA allows enrollment in up to two courses concurrently and is an addition to existing education resources available with Post 9/11 and Montgomery GI Bill and the Navy College Program for Afloat College Education (NCPACE).

### Recruitment and retention

For recruitment, we have expanded our communication strategy to attract individuals who wish to become part of the Winning Team

# Navy Reserve



Navy Reserve Force Master Chief Tracy L. Hunt visits Chief Hull Maintenance Technician Maria Michel, Senior Enlisted Leader, and Commander Claire Dyer, Commanding Officer of Navy Reserve Center, at Navy Reserve Center Everett, Washington during his tour of the region. (Photo by Chief Yeoman Desirai Guillory)

by promoting awareness of the tangible and intangible benefits available to Active Duty Sailors when they transition to the Reserve Force. The Navy Recruitment Reserve Command (NRRC) was established in 2023 to cultivate the recruitment of Sailors specifically into the Reserve. This is a historic first for us to have our own recruiting capability in the Navy Reserve.

We have updated the Selected Reserve Enlisted Recruiting and Retention Incentives, designed to encourage enlistment and retention in the Navy Reserve. There is up to a \$20,000 sign-on bonus for non-prior service enlistments and prior service Sailors at all rates. In

addition, a bonus pay incentive is available for the recruitment and retention of Reserve Health Professional Officers.

## **Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR) opportunities**

New TAR accessions are eligible for shipping bonuses based on the timing of their ship date to recruit training. We have also expanded TAR Reenlistment Bonus eligibility to include additional critical skill sets. The expansion includes increased award levels, providing additional incentive for reenlistment.

The TAR In-Service Procurement Program (TAR ISPP) is a first of its kind, providing qualified enlisted Sailors an opportunity to apply for a commission as a TAR officer directly through Officer Candidate School (OCS). This program solicits applications for various TAR designators based on community management quota determinations before each board.

## **Mental health**

Mental health is essential to having a robust warfighting force, and we are committed to the health and welfare of our Sailors. It is essential that we have physical, intellectual, and mental resilience so that we are ready to perform when called to service. In alignment with Get Real, Get Better, mental health is a top-critical priority for each member of the Reserve Force. We continue to invest in mental health services, peer-to-peer support groups, and counseling services that focus on resources, stress management, and resilience to help our Sailors navigate the challenges of military and civilian life.

There are a variety of resources available to help in the areas of mental health, suicide awareness and prevention, military sexual trauma, domestic abuse, and marital or family issues, among others, many of them available 24/7. There are medical care professionals available at Navy Reserve Centers. The Navy Reserve Chaplain Hotline is specific to the Navy Reserve. The Navy Region Legal Service Office is also available to provide help and services. In addition, there is Real Warriors Live Chat, staffed by trained health resource consultants; Sailor Assistance and Intercept for Life (SAIL) program, available to Active Duty Sailors, including TAR and SELRES on Active Duty orders who experienced a suicide ideation or attempt. The Psychological Health and Outreach Program (PHOP) provides counselors who connect Sailors with mental health care providers and counselors who offer free consultation, education, connection, and resources at all Navy Reserve Centers, which are available to all Reserve Sailors across the country.

In addition, our public affairs team has developed, in coordination with the Judge Advocate General's Corps and Chaplain Corps, a sustained communication strategy that publicizes mental health resources. Beyond this, it endeavors to normalize seeking mental health services as just another part of an individual's overall health, encouraging Sailors to seek help for themselves and their families. The importance of a Sailor being mentally fit, as part of overall health and fitness, cannot be over-emphasized. We foster a culture of transparency where our Sailors can ask the tough questions, recognize their own needs, and be responsive to the needs of their fellow Shipmates at a moment's notice. Being healthy is essential for being mobilization-ready. And our Sailors are not alone. Their Navy family is here to protect them and provide the assistance they may need.

## Conclusion

The Navy Reserve has come a long way since 2020, when it began its aggressive transformation to meet the challenges of the new global and contested battlespace. This was a literal and cultural

shift from the previous two decades of Sailors supporting land-based operations, returning to the maritime domain as the nation's watchstanders. The one and only priority of the Navy Reserve is Warfighting Readiness, and we achieve this by focusing, investing, and prioritizing our most cherished and valuable resource: The American Citizen-Sailor, whether on Active Duty, in the Reserve Force, or in the Training and Administration of the Reserves (TAR), who raised their right hand to defend our nation to ensure that we employ their time effectively so that they spend more time with their families. As our list of accomplishments demonstrates, the Navy Reserve Force has come a long way in its transformation as the nation's elite warfighting organization since we began its aggressive modernization in 2020. And while we continue to develop new ways to support our Reserve Sailors and their families, they are reaping the benefits from the numerous quality-of-life programs and initiatives we diligently implemented throughout the Force for those committed to the Winning Team. Thank you for your service, and Keep Pushing Forward, Shipmates! 



**Force Master Chief Tracy L. Hunt**, a native of Meherrin, Virginia, enlisted in the United States Navy in September 1989. Following the completion of basic training at Recruit Training Command, Great Lakes, Illinois, he completed Seaman Apprentice Training in December 1989. He reported for duty aboard USS Avenger (MCM 1) in Charleston, SC. Hunt's follow on tours include: Shore Intermediate Maintenance Activity, Mobile, Alabama, USS John F. Kennedy (CV 67), Mayport Florida, Navy Reserve Recruiting Command Area Northeast, Washington, Navy Cargo Handling Battalion One, Yorktown, Virginia and Maritime Expeditionary Boat Detachment Four Two Two, Annapolis, Maryland.

Hunt was selected to the Command Senior Chief Program in 2009. In June of the same year, he reported aboard USS Rodney M. Davis (FFG 60), Everett, Washington. His follow-on Command Master Chief tours include: Navy Recruiting District Philadelphia, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, and consecutive tours onboard Naval Air Facility, Joint Base Andrews, Maryland, at Navy Operational Support Center Washington, DC and as the base Command Master Chief at Naval Air Facility Washington. Hunt served as Command Master Chief, Commander, Navy Reserve Forces Command Norfolk, Norfolk, Virginia. He is a graduate of the Senior Enlisted Academy and Command Master Chief/Chief of the Boat Capstone Course. In October 2021, Hunt was selected as the 17th Navy Reserve Force Master Chief.

Hunt's decorations include the Legion of Merit, Meritorious Service Medal (fourth award), Navy and Marine Corps Commendation Medal (second award), Navy and Marine Corps Achievement Medal (sixth award), Army Achievement Medal, Combat Action Ribbon and various personal and unit awards.

Air Force Reserve

## Strategic depth when it matters most

By Lt. Gen. John Healy, Chief of Air Force Reserve

**"At no time in our nation's history has the Air Force Reserve advantage of surge capacity and strategic depth been more critical."**

Chief of Staff of the Air Force, General David Allvin, Intent Message to the Air Force Reserve

Over the past year, the Air Force Reserve celebrated its 75th anniversary. The Air Force Reserve was formally established in 1948. Two years later, when the Korean War began, the Air Force Reserve began a 75-year track record of tactical, operational, and strategic impact on our Nation's defense priorities. Despite not having a mobilization plan, Reserve Airmen surged to bring combat power to the Korean peninsula and provided an experienced strategic depth as many were veterans of the Second World War. Because of their experience, Reservists trained new aircrews headed to East Asia and readied them for combat. The Korean War was the first time the Air Force Reserve surged to augment the Regular Air Force, but it would not be the last. Over the next 75 years, Reserve Airmen provided the Department of the Air Force (DAF) strategic depth and surge capacity in every conflict and contingency. Now, as the DAF reorients to address Great Power Competition (GPC), the Air Force Reserve is ready to continue the tradition of readiness and relevance essential for maintaining a competitive edge. By investing in the Air Force Reserve and ensuring that it can operate seamlessly with the Regular Air Force, the DAF will ensure it can support the Joint Force and meet all aspects of the National Defense Strategy.

### Ready Now and Transforming for the Future

At the Air and Space Force Association Warfare Symposium in February, Secretary of the Air Force Frank Kendall unveiled 24 decisions that are designed to optimize how the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Space Force organize, train, and equip their forces. The DAF is confronting the challenges presented by GPC and seeks to optimize the department in a cost-effective manner. This undertaking is a department-wide effort to achieve a more competitive posture and focus on how it develops people, generates readiness, projects power, and develops integrated capabilities. The Air Force Reserve is all in to ensure the DAF succeeds and will be an integral component in implementation.

Many of the decisions conveyed by Secretary Kendall are impacting the Air Force Reserve. Fortunately, the Task Order I issued when I took command in 2022 emphasized two priorities:



Maj. Alexander Williams, right, 433rd Contingency Response Flight commander, fastens tent ropes at a training campsite during a training event at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas on Mar. 2, 2024. Setting up a CR campsite is usually lead by non-commissioned officers but everyone on the deploying team helps set up and secure camp to expeditiously establish operations. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Jacob Lewis)

Ready Now and Transforming for the Future. Both of these priorities established accountability across the Command to become the Reserve force the Nation needs and has prepared the Air Force Reserve to enact the secretary's decisions. I issued a revision to the Task Order in 2023 which developed metrics that allow us to track our progress. By employing data analytics coupled with new tools and processes, we are making timely and informed programmatic decisions that prioritize readiness. These tools enable us to track our



The sun rises on KC-10A Extender Tail 84-0191 at Travis Air Force Base, Calif., April 14, 2024. Tail 84-0191 completed its final flight across the United States where it was donated to the National Museum of the U.S. Air Force, Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Andrew Hunt)

manning, resources, and execution of funds more effectively, which is transforming the Air Force Reserve Command into a data-dominant command.

The DAF's ability to effectively sustain fielded weapons systems is instrumental in optimizing forces for GPC. Preserving the advantage in air and space during GPC requires combat power generation in contested environments, and maintaining parity with the Regular Component ensures our ability to match pacing threats and secure air and space superiority. Divestiture of legacy platforms and weapons systems without recapitalization and delayed modernization programs prevents the Air Force Reserve from attaining parity and puts our advantage at risk.

In order to achieve this critical equipment parity, the Air Force Reserve relies on the National Guard and Reserve Equipment Appropriation (NGREA). This valuable source of funding is essential to the Air Force Reserve's preservation of combat capability. While the Air Force aircraft inventory is 29.5 years old on average, the average Air Force Reserve airframe is 40 years old. The Air Force Reserve uses NGREA to modernize legacy aircraft, which is often discarded by the Active Air Force, to increase lethality

and survivability while continuing to provide valuable combat capability. We have focused our NGREA funds on improving the core functions of Rapid Global Mobility, Air Superiority and Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance mission equipment. The Air Force Reserve has a major equipment shortfall, costing approximately \$1.3 billion. We use NGREA funds to reduce this shortage where applicable and implement combatant command and warfighter requirements.

## **Breadth and depth of experience and proficiencies**

Ensuring strategic depth and readiness at levels necessary for GPC requires continuous equipment modernization efforts, which are critical to the future force, but equipment is only one aspect. The Air Force Reserve also provides strategic depth and operational surge capacity to meet pacing threats through the experience of our Reserve Airmen, who are cost-effective and leverage a unique blend of military and civilian experience to bring an outsized impact to the DAF.

Reserve Airmen demonstrate this experience in various career fields. Our aircrews in the Mobility Air Force are categorized as 76% highly

proficient, while in the Combat Air Force they are 86%. Currently, over 54% of Air Force Reserve pilots are Instructor qualified, while 32% are Evaluator qualified. This high ratio of Reserve instructors and evaluators alleviates strain on Regular Air Force instructors and evaluators for initial skills training. Reserve instructors' experience also lowers training costs for new Reserve and Regular Air Force aircrew by shortening training times for new members.

We have capitalized on this by assigning our experienced members to Formal Training Units (FTUs), leveraging Reserve Airmen's significant knowledge and proficiency to train the next generation of aircrew. One notable success has been the Air Force Reserve's role in the B-52, where we maintain 24% of the B-52 fleet and 100% of the FTU mission. Of the three bomber FTUs in the DAF, the B-52 FTU is the largest producer of bomber pilots. We also retain 65% of C-5 aircrews while performing 100% of the C-5 FTU mission. In the next year, the Air Force Reserve will stand up the FTU for the MH-139A Greywolf helicopter, a partnership between the Air Force Reserve, Air Force Global Strike Command and Air Education and Training Command, which will have the Air Force Reserve responsible for the Greywolf FTU mission.

Our instructors are not just employed in FTUs but are also training a variety of Airmen through various Aggressor missions. The Air Force Reserve provides 50% of the Total Force's Space Aggressor capability while executing up to 30% of the Nation's military daily space operations. We recently stood up an Active Associate F-16 squadron that executes the flying Aggressor mission for many Joint and Coalition exercises. In addition to operations, formal training and exercise expertise, 44% of our Reserve enlisted maintainers hold a 7-level Air Force Specialty Code or higher. One of our enduring benefits to the Total Force is retention of the most highly qualified Airmen in the DAF.

## Cost-effective capacity

With nearly three-quarters of our members serving in part-time status, we provide a cost-effective force because the Air Force Reserve only pays members when they are in military status. The Regular Air Force has seen military personnel costs increase due to numerous factors, including rising housing costs. Because reservists do not utilize military housing and are only paid a housing allowance when in full-time military status, we are able to maintain a ready force at a fraction of the cost. The difference in retirement plans is also significant. Reserve members do not typically begin collecting military retirement benefits until age 60. Retirement pay accruals are directly proportionate to military pay expenditures, which are significantly less for Reserve members, who represent 22% of military retirees drawing retirement pay while only collecting 19% of retirement payout costs.



Youngstown Air Reserve Station firefighters approach the aircrew door while responding to a mock aircraft crash at the firefighter training area during an exercise at Youngstown Air Reserve Station, Ohio, April 25, 2024. The training area provides firefighters from the installation's fire department, other Department of Defense agencies and surrounding communities the opportunity to train on live fires on the apparatus which replicates the design of several types of aircraft commonly in the area. (U.S. Air Force photo by Eric M. White)

In addition to cost savings on military personnel pay, the Air Force Reserve provides a mechanism to retain talent by providing continued service options for members who would otherwise separate. The DAF understands the importance of retaining experienced talent from both a cost-effectiveness and capacity perspective. A Total Force Service Commitment is one way to retain these highly trained members. Data shows that members who affiliate with the Air Force Reserve are likely to remain in the DAF for up to 28 years. The Air Force Reserve offers flexible service options designed to retain low-density, high-demand talent, capitalize on investment, and leverage experience. This ensures that a member's talent is retained beyond the initial service commitment and the investment in their training continues to be available to the DAF and Joint Force. The narrative needs to change as a member who joins the Reserve is not "quitting Active Duty"; they are continuing to serve their country – an Airman for life! The DAF retains individuals with high value and proven mission success.



Citizen Airmen of the 932nd Airlift Wing exercise their wartime readiness skills during phase 2 of the Spartan Reserve exercise on April 6th, 2024 at Sparta Training Area, Sparta, Illinois. The Spartan Phase II exercise aims to prepare airmen for complexities of modern warfare through recreating the challenges in a deployed environment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Brooke Spenner)

The Air Force Reserve provides accessible, cost-effective capacity. Our accessibility has been proven repeatedly at scale for both planned and unplanned mobilizations across the spectrum of conflict and contingency. This provides significant capacity to sustain daily operations in missions such as air mobility and space operations while also retaining key wartime functions like air terminal operations, aerial port, and aeromedical evacuation. This capacity will be critical in GPC.

## Pre-planned mobilizations ensure readiness

For the last two decades, the Air Force Reserve has demonstrated its on-demand accessibility time and again through mobilization. Mobilization authorities have existed in their current form since the Fiscal Year (FY) 1995 National Defense Authorization Act.

Most mobilizations are performed below the threshold that requires approval by the Secretary of Defense. Thus far, we've been able to meet the demand through high rates of volunteerism, which has provided a necessary relief valve during the high operational tempo years. However, to further enhance our future surge capacity, we are striving to normalize access based on pre-planned mobilizations and purposeful use of mobilization authorities. This allows predictability for members to prepare for mobilizations and ensures the Joint Force sees access to the Reserve as assured, never assumed.

Recent Levant operations prove that the Air Force Reserve is accessible as aircrew and aircraft were mobilized within 72 hours to fill critical airlift and aerial refueling missions. Since Oct. 7, 2023, the Air Force Reserve mobilized C-5 and C-17 Force Elements under Title 10 U.S. Code § 12302 – to support U.S. Transportation Command (USTRANSCOM) requirements. The mobilization start date was Nov. 28, 2023, for 90 days, and members mobilized within 7 and 11 days of Secretary of Defense Order Book signature—an approval that is typically an 18-to-24-month cycle. These crews executed the Air Force Reserve's first involuntary mobilizations in over 20 years. Air Force Reserve C-17s from the 445th Airlift Wing at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, supported Levant operations within 72 hours to meet U.S. Central Command requirements and seamlessly assumed mission responsibilities from Regular Air Force mission partners. Additionally, unit-equipped C-5s from the 337th Airlift Squadron, Westover Air Reserve Base, Massachusetts, in support of USTRANSCOM missions, joined with the 709th Airlift Squadron, a classic association C-5 unit from Dover Air Force Base, Delaware, to support Levant requirements. Reserve Airmen accomplished over 68,000 man-days. We will continue to provide this capacity to maximize combat effectiveness and reduce risk as the DAF moves into Great Power Competition.

## Optimizing readiness for speed and scale

One of Secretary Kendall's decisions, Wing-Level Organization and Support, reoptimizes DAF wings into Combat Wings capable of building and maintaining readiness to execute wartime functions. Deployable Combat Wings, In-Place Combat Wings, and Combat Generation Wings, along with Base Commands, will be identified and the Air Force Reserve is prepared to offer forces under this new presentation model.

Another one of Secretary Kendall's key decisions is a focus on Exercises for Speed and Scale. In this effort, the DAF will begin planning exercises to train to the demands our forces will face during a rapidly escalating crisis. We will coordinate to ensure maximum Reserve participation in all DAF exercises. If an exercise or wargame

# Air Force Reserve



Reserve Citizen Airmen from the 433rd Airlift Wing arrive at a simulated forward deployment location during Exercise Dragon's Den at Joint Base San Antonio-Lackland, Texas on Feb. 5, 2024. Exercise Dragon's Den players simulate deployment to establish aerial port and delivery support operations. (U.S. Air Force photo by 2nd Lt. Deborah Slusher)

does not take into account mobilizing the Reserve, it is not training how we will fight as a service or a Joint Force.

We will also continue to expand upon our annual Reserve-led Rally exercises. The Rally series began in 2020 and has been conducted annually to provide real-world experience and training to operate from austere locations. The most recent, 2023's Rally in the Pacific, saw over 400 Reserve Airmen from a cross-section of career fields, including Security Forces, Force Support, Logistics, Supply, Medical, Flight Operations and Transportation, simulate deploying with over 185 short tons of cargo from multiple stateside bases to a downrange location in the Pacific. They operated across a 9,000-mile training area, setting up a forward operating base in Guam and temporary contingency locations in Palau and the Philippines.

From a Reserve perspective, I see the need to get out in the field more and build pragmatic warfighting readiness. Giving our Reserve Airmen the opportunity to perform their primary duties while also training to operate from remote bases in the Pacific prepares the Air Force Reserve for GPC while also helping retention. Re-enlistment and exit surveys show that getting the chance to perform their primary duties is one of the top 5 influences for members to stay in the Air Force Reserve. The Rally series shows how the Air Force Reserve has maximized its budget to execute targeted training that increases our connectedness and commitment to serve. To continue providing our members with this type of relevant training, we need timely budgets which enable our planners to effectively develop future exercises.

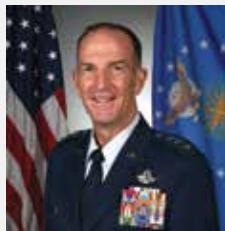
# Air Force Reserve

In addition to Secretary Kendall's key decisions, the DAF established the Air Force - Force Generation (AFFORGEN) model. The intent of AFFORGEN is to enable force presentation to meet Combatant Command requirements in a sustainable, predictable manner while ensuring operational preparedness and required readiness. AFFORGEN is a maturation of the Air Expeditionary Forces model that balances risk between Combatant Command requirements and Air Force readiness and modernization by deploying pre-identified units who have already trained together.

Since 2015, the Air Force Reserve has executed a form of AFFORGEN through Reserve Component Periods. In FY 2024, the Air Force Reserve provided 671 personnel to the initial AFFORGEN 24.1 rotation and another 711 personnel in the 24.2 rotation, totaling 1,382 Reserve personnel. These Airmen include Logisticians, Security Forces, Administration, Personnelists, Civil Engineers, Aerial Porters, and Communications troops. The Air Force Reserve will also provide additional Airmen to augment gaps in the Regular Air Force AFFORGEN manning. For FY 2025, 1,225 Reserve Airmen have been identified to support AFFORGEN taskings, and we anticipate this number will increase. We are also poised to provide one expeditionary air base consisting of 595 personnel in each AFFORGEN phase beginning in April 2025. The

Air Force Reserve is ready to surge and provide the DAF trained and ready Reserve Airmen to meet future taskings.

As the strategic environment evolves, the DAF will continue to evaluate and adjust to ensure readiness for GPC. During this time, the Air Force Reserve is ready to provide surge capacity that is cost-effective, accessible, and experienced. The strengths of the Air Force Reserve are aligned to Air Force Core Functions to ensure strategic depth when it matters most. We remain focused on critical missions consistent with the Air Force Future Operating Concept through legacy platform enhancements and advocacy for new weapons systems. We continue to fight for concurrent modernization and proportional fielding for our equipment, infrastructure, and training to ensure we are embedded in future force design, and to ensure that the experience of Reserve Airmen contributes to our Nation's greatest security requirements. The Air Force Reserve is focused on talent retention to draw from the deep pool of institutional knowledge within our Airmen. This approach allows us to mobilize a large force to augment the DAF when the Nation responds to conflicts or contingencies. The Air Force Reserve provides the advantages of surge capacity and strategic depth, enabling us to build on our legacy from the Korean War of always being ready and able to meet our Nation's call. 



As Chief of Air Force Reserve, **Lieutenant General John Healy** serves as principal adviser on reserve matters to the Secretary of the Air Force and the Air Force Chief of Staff. As Commander of Air Force Reserve Command, he has full responsibility for the supervision of all U.S. Air Force Reserve units around the world.

General Healy was commissioned in 1989 as a graduate of the ROTC program at the University of Connecticut. He was part of the initial cadre for the C-17 Globemaster III program and has more than 5,000 flying hours, including 402 combat hours.

The general has commanded at the squadron, Vice Wing, and Numbered Air Force level. Prior to his current assignment, he was the Deputy to the Chief of Air Force Reserve.

General Healy has earned numerous major awards and decorations, including the Distinguished Service Medal, the Defense Superior Service Medal, the Legion of Merit, and the Defense Meritorious Service Medal.

He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Connecticut and a MA from Webster University.

National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps

## The NOAA Corps: Continuing a 200-year legacy of science and service

By Rear Adm. Nancy Hann, Director, NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and NOAA Office of Marine and Aviation Operations



NOAA is expanding its use of uncrewed systems to collect data on the ocean and atmosphere, and NOAA Corps officers are playing a leading role in that effort. Here, a small boat crew follows NOAA's DriX uncrewed surface vehicle during a test launch from NOAA Ship Oscar Dyson off the coast of Alaska. Photo: Lt. Cmdr. Bryan Begun, NOAA Corps

**F**or a service chief, there are few things more rewarding and energizing than speaking to a new class of recruits. I recently had the privilege of joining a fellow senior officer and leader from one of our most valued partners, the U.S. Coast Guard, for a meeting with a group of officer candidates (OC) from our respective services.

Among our objectives in speaking to the OCs, who train together at the U.S. Coast Guard Academy, was to impart leadership advice. Be decisive, I said. Be humble. Keep your ego in check, so your proverbial hat does not get too tight. Keep your physical well-being in check and practice discipline and moderation so your belt doesn't get

too tight. Don't forget to walk in other people's shoes. Persevere. Be unwilling to give up on things that are really important.

Did those words inspire this diverse group of bright, capable, public-service-oriented individuals who are full of potential? I hope so. Did they inspire me with their optimism and dedication to serving our nation and give me confidence in their ability to execute the mission with honor, respect, and commitment, which happen to be the values of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Commissioned Officer Corps? Absolutely.

As a leader, it is my responsibility not only to impart advice but also to ensure we honor our commitment to ensuring these incoming

officers and those who will serve under their leadership have the resources, support, and work environment they need to do the job they are clearly eager to do on behalf of the American people.

## Environmental intelligence for the nation

As any service member knows, situational awareness and an understanding of the battle space are as essential to mission success as the values mentioned above and all the resources a nation can muster. For more than a century, the mission of providing vital information about the Earth's dynamic physical environment—namely the ocean, atmosphere, and national shoreline—has been entrusted to NOAA, its commissioned officer corps, and their predecessors.

This expertise extends back to the dawn of our republic, when, in 1807, President Thomas Jefferson signed a bill establishing the Survey of the Coast. Its mission: complete "an accurate chart of every part of the coasts." Voicing support for the legislation, one member of Congress argued that if they had accurate charts, mariners "would no longer need to rely on the imperfect or erroneous accounts given of our coast by foreign navigators." He concluded with the hope that their lives, along with "the interest of our merchants and the benefits to the revenue," would be regarded as "ample compensation for making a complete survey of the coasts of the United States."<sup>1</sup>

Just over 100 years later, Congress and President Woodrow Wilson saw the need for a commissioned, uniformed service dedicated to providing mapping and charting expertise to the nation. Their vision was realized in 1917 when the president signed a bill establishing the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Corps.

During World War I, many survey officers assumed vital roles within the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps as artillery orienteering officers, mine-laying officers in the North Sea, troop transport navigators, and intelligence officers. This integration with and support for other services was repeated during World War II, with officers serving in North Africa, Europe, and throughout the Pacific as artillery surveyors, hydrographers, amphibious engineers, beach masters, reconnaissance surveyors, service school instructors, and in a wide variety of technical positions.

By 1970, when NOAA and the NOAA Corps—formerly the Coast and Geodetic Survey Corps—came into existence, the service's mandate had grown to include operating a fleet of oceanographic and hydrographic survey ships and specialized aircraft. It also expanded to collecting data essential to the systematic study of the structure and behavior of the ocean, atmosphere, and related ecosystems.



NOAA Corps officers pilot and navigate NOAA's specialized environmental data-gathering aircraft, including the agency's "hurricane hunters." Lt. Cmdr. Brett Copare and Lt. Cmdr. David Keith are seen here at the controls of a NOAA Lockheed WP-3D Orion during a flight into Hurricane Lee. Photo: Lt. Cmdr. Andrew Utama, NOAA Corps

This spring—some 54 years later—the graduates of NOAA Corps Basic Officer Training Class 143 will take up the mantle of supporting NOAA's science, service, and stewardship mission. They will join their fellow officers and civilian colleagues to operate, manage, and maintain ships that map the seafloor, monitor oceanographic and atmospheric conditions, and support fisheries research. The aviators among them will pilot the agency's aircraft, which collects data essential to hurricane and flood predictions, nautical charting, disaster response, and resource management.

When not at sea or in the air, they and their fellow officers will apply their training, operational experience, and expertise in science and engineering to advance new technologies, lead program, and project teams, and respond to severe weather events, oil spills, and other emergencies. It is an honor to serve with them as we work together to understand nature's supremely impactful, largely untamable, and often mysterious forces—always with the goal of protecting lives and livelihoods.

<sup>1</sup> [A Century of Lawmaking for a New Nation: U.S. Congressional Documents and Debates, 1774 - 1875](#). Annals of Congress, House of Representatives, 9th Congress, 2nd Session Pages 151 & 152 of 1298.



These NOAA Corps ensigns, seen here with one of NOAA's two Lockheed WP-3D Orion aircraft, stand ready to support a wide variety of missions, from hurricane hunting to snow and coastal mapping surveys. Photo: Sophie Talbert, NOAA

## Building NOAA's 21st century fleet

Like any uniformed service, it is imperative that we equip and support our members to the best of our ability, whether they are fresh out of basic training or well into their careers. Asking them to serve aboard ships and aircraft that have not received necessary maintenance investments, technology upgrades, and quality-of-life improvements as they sail and fly into extreme environments is unacceptable.

To ensure our continued ability to safely gather and provide a steady stream of environmental intelligence to the nation, our fellow services, and the public, we are recapitalizing our ship and aircraft fleets and conducting major mid-life and service life extension programs.

NOAA's current fleet of 15 research and survey vessels provides data that underpins NOAA products such as weather forecasts, seasonal and long-term climate products, fisheries, protected species stock assessments, and nautical charts, all of which sustain the national economy. As underscored by recent national conversations about the global supply chain, ocean-going trade is a key component of the economy, with 90% of all traded goods transported via the sea. From 2005 to 2021, the average capacity of a container ship grew by 200%. These changes in the commercial shipping industry necessitate continuously updating charts with precision navigation information so deeper-draft ships can come into and depart from U.S. ports to keep commerce flowing.

# NOAA Corps

Commanded by NOAA Corp officers and crewed by civilian mariners, NOAA's ship fleet plays a critical role in providing charting and mapping information that keeps more than 350 of the nation's ports in the U.S. Marine Transportation System operating. Not only do NOAA's navigational products support the regular operations of global commerce, but after major hurricanes, NOAA's ships quickly survey navigational routes so ports can reopen. During the 2020 hurricane season, NOAA surveyed more than 1,000 nautical miles, which were key to reopening 11 ports and waterways to commercial, military, and private traffic.

Our challenge has been operating a fleet that has an average age of nearly 31 years, with the oldest ships entering service in 1967. By 2030, NOAA expects six additional ships to reach the end of their service lives.

I am pleased to report that since 2016, NOAA, with congressional support, has drastically reduced our ship maintenance backlog and commenced a midlife repair program for the agency's largest research vessel, NOAA Ship *Ronald H. Brown*, and five high-endurance NOAA fisheries survey vessels.

With support from the U.S. Navy, two 244-foot oceanographic ships are currently being built for NOAA in Houma, Louisiana. Once commissioned, *Oceanographer* and *Discoverer* will support a wide variety of NOAA missions, ranging from oceanographic research and exploration to studying marine life, climate, and ocean ecosystems. Two new coastal mapping and charting ships will follow. Both classes of vessels will incorporate the latest clean-energy technologies, including vessel emission controls and high-efficiency diesel engines. They will also have the ability to launch and recover uncrewed systems.

Even the most modern fleet cannot function effectively without adequate shoreside infrastructure. We have, therefore, made such investments. Last year, we opened our newly renovated port facility in Ketchikan, Alaska. NOAA also awarded a contract to renovate the agency's pier facility in North Charleston, South Carolina. This year, construction will begin on a new NOAA marine operations center at Naval Station Newport in Rhode Island, where we will continue to work alongside our Navy and Coast Guard partners.

In addition to ships, NOAA's world-class NOAA Corps and civilian workforce also instrument, maintain, and operate a fleet of highly specialized aircraft to support national and economic security and to monitor and adapt to changing environmental conditions.

NOAA aircraft missions include hurricane reconnaissance and surveillance, atmospheric river research, and tornado studies to provide timely and accurate weather and water forecasts. NOAA also conducts aerial surveys to obtain soil and snow moisture measurements for flood forecasts, watches and warnings, river level forecasts, and drought outlooks. In addition, NOAA aircraft



Since 1917, officers of the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and its predecessor, the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey Corps, have commanded the agency's fleet of oceanographic research and survey ships, which provide data essential to managing the nation's ocean and coastal resources and understanding our environment. Photo: David Hall, NOAA

support mapping, charting, and geodesy for developing accurate and updated nautical charts.

When there is a natural disaster, imagery from emergency response flights of hurricane damage can be processed by NOAA's National Geodetic Survey immediately upon the aircraft's landing and posted online for public access. NOAA aircraft data also directly support Department of Defense decisions such as aircraft repositioning and ship routing.

Like our ship fleet, NOAA's aircraft fleet also faces significant challenges. These include aircraft age and obsolescence, finite resources for recapitalization, and staffing.

Among our mandates, as stated in the Weather Research and Forecasting Innovation Act of 2017, is to improve weather research through advances in observational, computing, and modeling capabilities to support substantial improvement in the prediction of high-impact weather events.

As part of NOAA's commitment to fulfilling that mandate and continuing its legacy of providing high-quality weather data to the nation, NOAA's "hurricane hunter" aircraft, highly experienced flight crews, engineers, and scientists employ a unique combination of the world's most sophisticated weather sensors to collect data vital to accurate hurricane forecasts, the prediction of extreme weather events, and the study of our atmosphere.



NOAA Corps pilots Lt. Hayley Betker (L) and Lt. Cmdr. Colleen Conley (R) and sensor operator Lt. Julia Waldsmith (back) aboard a NOAA Beechcraft King Air aircraft during a coastal mapping mission. These missions are critical to monitoring changes in the national shoreline. Photo: Lt. Hayley Betker, NOAA Corps

These teams currently conduct their critical work aboard NOAA's two Lockheed WP-3D Orion aircraft. Built in the mid-1970s, these specialized but aging airplanes are the only aircraft in the world that are currently equipped to fulfill NOAA's airborne data collection missions. The service life of NOAA's P-3s will end in 2030, at which point their replacements must be operational.

Following an exhaustive review of alternatives to the P-3, which is no longer in production, NOAA has determined that the Lockheed C-130J is the most appropriate replacement. Powered by four turboprop engines, this proven, versatile, U.S.-built aircraft is ideally suited to operate in hurricanes and other extreme weather, as it can fly in conditions in which jet aircraft cannot. NOAA has also determined that four C-130Js will be necessary to meet the anticipated demand for tropical cyclone surveillance, research, and reconnaissance in the Atlantic, Gulf, and Pacific regions.

In 2023, NOAA awarded a pre-production contract for the long-lead-time materials for one C-130J aircraft with an option for a second aircraft. With the award of this pre-production contract, NOAA has reserved its place in the production line and anticipates achieving mission readiness prior to 2030. Funding has not yet been made available for the two additional C-130Js.

We are also in the process of replacing NOAA's aging Gulfstream IV-SP high-altitude jet, which supports hurricane surveillance, atmospheric river research, and gravity measurements. NOAA expects to take delivery in 2025 of a new Gulfstream G550 jet. In addition, NOAA is bringing a new Beechcraft King Air 350CER

aircraft on line this year and has secured funding through the Inflation Reduction Act for a second G550. This second jet will enable NOAA to survey multiple concurrent storms in the same and different ocean areas of responsibility. It will also provide needed hurricane surveillance redundancy.

The growth in uncrewed aircraft and marine systems, or UxS, presents additional opportunities for meeting and enhancing NOAA's data collection capabilities. NOAA's initial decentralized approach to UxS utilization gave agency scientists great freedom in choosing and deploying them for research applications, but created challenges in addressing technology, safety, policy, staffing, training, and standardization issues.

NOAA now provides operational support, policy input, training, and guidance for uncrewed system operations through the agency's NOAA Corps officer-led UxS Operations Center. This centralized and comprehensive approach to acquisitions, training, and operations is increasing the use of UxS, as well as efficiency and safety within the agency. Our expanding use of UxS is being facilitated by partnerships with the University of Southern Mississippi, Scripps Institution of Oceanography, the U.S. Navy, and other public and private sector partners.

An ongoing challenge as we recapitalize our fleet is ensuring qualified, trained personnel are in place to support both existing and new assets and the expansion in demand for mission support. We must appropriately adjust the number of NOAA Corps and civilian personnel to maximize the utilization of current and future assets while competing successfully with commercial aircraft, ships, and uncrewed system operators for pilots, professional mariners, and maintainers.

To meet the pilot recruiting challenge, we are—for the first time—offering licensed pilots the opportunity to apply for a direct-to-flight NOAA Corps career pathway. We are also leveraging and expanding our partnerships with academia and such organizations as Aerospace Discovery at the Florida Air Museum, Experimental Aircraft Association, Women in Aviation International, and others to raise awareness of NOAA Corps aviation career opportunities.

While NOAA Corps officers command the agency's ships, civilian professional mariners are the backbone of our fleet. Like other ship operators throughout the nation, hiring qualified mariners in the post-pandemic era has been an uphill battle. Based on feedback from the NOAA professional mariner workforce and exit interviews, we launched an initiative in 2022 to offer expanded shore leave as part of a quality-of-life improvement effort. After coordinating across federal agencies and governing authorities, and with congressional support, we are now able to provide this additional benefit. Hiring and retaining these skilled individuals will help the NOAA fleet meet the growing demand for data collected at sea, and



Officer Candidates from NOAA Corps Basic Officer Training Class 143 plan a hypothetical departure from Newport, Rhode Island. Photo: Officer Candidate William Hempel, NOAA Corps

we are excited to be taking a major step forward to strengthen our workforce.

### **Promoting a safe, respectful workplace**

Even if we are successful in securing and maintaining the best available equipment and technology, it means little if our service members and civilian colleagues are not provided a workplace that is respectful and where discrimination, sexual harassment, and sexual assault are not tolerated.

We recognize that there is nothing more impactful to safety than a respectful workplace in which concerns can be expressed without fear of reprisal. We are flying airplanes into hurricanes. We are operating ships in the Bering Sea with 40-foot waves. Not having good communication among one's crew is one of the most significant threats to safety. We are already doing dangerous work. We cannot

have undercurrents of fear and disrespect present on the bridge, the flightdeck, the engine room, or anywhere else.

Therefore, we are making it clear what is and is not tolerable, what is expected of each individual, and what the consequences are of not following our rules of conduct. This means going beyond just showing PowerPoints and training videos. It means having difficult and sometimes uncomfortable conversations to understand when bad things happen and why they happen. It also means working closely with managers to ensure they understand their obligation to actively promote a respectful work environment and that they are a vital link in the safety chain.

This is when “be decisive,” “don’t forget to walk in other people’s shoes,” and “be unwilling to give up on things that are really important” come into play. Without team members who feel valued, heard, and confident in their leaders’ commitment to act and advocate on their behalf, there can be no mission success.

## Taking the helm

As graduation season approaches, I have high hopes and expectations for the members of BOTC 143 as they embark on their NOAA Corps journey. If those of us in leadership positions have done our jobs, they will inherit and command a NOAA fleet that is modern and capable and lead a workforce that is motivated, inspired, well-trained, resourced, supported, and mission-ready. 



Like Lt.j.g. Trevor Grams, most NOAA Corps officers have a degree in math, science and/or engineering. Many also have prior military service. Photo: Ensign Megan O'Neill, NOAA Corps



**Rear Adm. Nancy Hann** leads the NOAA Commissioned Officer Corps and is also responsible for the leadership and management of OMAO's operational assets, including the agency's fleet of 15 research and survey vessels and nine aircraft. She has served in many operational and management assignments, most recently completing tours as NOAA Corps deputy director, OMAO deputy director for operations, commanding officer of the NOAA Aircraft Operations Center, and OMAO's chief of staff. Hann has served aboard NOAA aircraft as both a pilot and flight meteorologist and has supported a variety of scientific missions and multiple unmanned aircraft missions as a pilot and project manager. Her previous experience includes serving as executive officer at the NOAA Marine Operations Center-Atlantic, associate director at the Atlantic Oceanographic and Meteorological Laboratory, and NOAA liaison to the U.S. Pacific Command. She has served aboard two NOAA ships and is a certified diver. Hann holds a master's degree in public administration from the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University, a master's degree in aeronautical science and space studies from Embry Riddle Aeronautical University, and a bachelor's degree in marine science and biology from the University of San Diego. She has received numerous awards, including the NOAA Corps Meritorious Service Medal and multiple Department of Commerce medals.

# Sixty-six new Law Review articles published in 2023

By Capt. Samuel F. Wright, JAGC, USN (Ret.)

I invite the reader's attention to [www.roa.org/lawcenter](http://www.roa.org/lawcenter). You will find more than 2,100 "Law Review" articles about the Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA), the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act (SCRA), the Uniformed and Overseas Citizens Absentee Voting Act (UOCAVA), the Uniformed Services Former Spouses' Protection Act (USFSPA), and other laws that are especially pertinent to those who serve our country in uniform. You will also find a detailed subject index to facilitate finding articles about specific topics. The articles are available for free to everyone, not just ROA members.

I am the author of more than 90% of the "Law Review" articles that ROA has added to its website in the last 26 years, but I am 72 and will not be around forever to author and update these articles. Accordingly, over the last three years, I have recruited three understudies who are young enough to be my granddaughters. The Law Review Library is my legacy, and I am making great efforts to ensure that this legacy will continue after my demise.

Over the last three years, I have recruited three understudies who are young enough to be my granddaughters. They are 1st Lt. Lauren Walker, 1st Lt. Tara Buckles, and 2nd Lt. Allison Sturgeon (all Marines).

All 66 new "Law Review" articles added to the ROA website in 2023 are important and relevant, but the most important articles are Law Review 23013 (March 2023) and Law Review 23061 (November 2023). Both articles are about *Torres v. Texas Department of Public Safety*, 142 S. Ct. 2455 (2022). As a result of that important Supreme Court precedent, Texas and the other 49 states will no longer be able to hide behind the hoary doctrine of sovereign immunity ("the King can do no wrong") to avoid being held accountable for flouting USERRA. This is important because 10% of National Guard and Reserve part-timers have civilian jobs working for state agencies.

Law Review 23005 is about enforcing the USERRA rights of Reserve Component personnel who work for the Federal Government indirectly, through contractors. Law Review 23026 is about recent Court of Appeals decisions in three separate circuits holding that a person who is away from a civilian job for uniformed service can be entitled to *paid* military leave under USERRA's "furlough or leave of absence clause." Law Review 23033 is about the SCRA provision that enables a person to terminate an apartment lease upon enlisting in the armed forces or when an active-duty service member is transferred to a distant location.

The federal Veterans' Preference Act gives individuals who have served on active duty in the armed forces a five-point preference in getting hired for federal civilian jobs, and that incentive can be valuable in helping the services meet their recruiting goals. Unfortunately, persons who entered active duty after 8/31/2010 are not eligible for this veterans' preference under current law. See Law Review 23055.

A person who leaves a postsecondary education program to perform voluntary or involuntary uniformed service is not protected by USERRA because the educational institution is not the person's employer, but another federal law provides similar protections. See Law Review 23062.

H.R. 3943 would, if enacted, make major improvements in USERRA. I discuss those improvements in detail in Law Reviews 23063, 23064, 23065, 23066, and 24006.

## Please join and support ROA

This article is one of 2,100-plus "Law Review" articles available at [www.roa.org/lawcenter](http://www.roa.org/lawcenter). The Reserve Officers Association, now doing business as the Reserve Organization of America (ROA), initiated this column in 1997. We add new articles each month.

ROA is the nation's only national military organization that exclusively and solely supports the nation's reserve components, including the Coast Guard Reserve (6,179 members); the Marine Corps Reserve 32,599 members); the Navy Reserve (55,224 members); the Air Force Reserve (68,048 members); the Air National Guard (104,984 members); the Army Reserve (176,171 members), and the Army National Guard (329,705 members).

ROA is more than a century old—on 10/2/1922, a group of veterans of "The Great War," as World War I was then known, founded our organization at a meeting in Washington's historic Willard Hotel. The meeting was called by General of the Armies John J. Pershing, who had commanded American troops in the recently concluded "Great War." One of those veterans was Captain Harry S. Truman. As President, in 1950, he signed our congressional charter. Under that charter, our mission is to advocate for the implementation of policies that provide for adequate national security. For more than a century, we have argued that the Reserve Components, including the National Guard, are a cost-effective way to meet our nation's defense needs.

Through these articles, and by other means, including amicus curiae (“friend of the court”) briefs that we file in the Supreme Court and other courts, we advocate for the rights and interests of service members and educate service members, military spouses, attorneys, judges, employers, Department of Labor (DOL) investigators, Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) volunteers, congressional and state legislators and staffers, and others about the legal rights of service members and about how to exercise and enforce those rights. We provide information to service members, without regard to whether they are members of ROA, but please understand that ROA members, through their dues and contributions, pay the costs of providing this service and all the other great services that ROA provides.

If you are now serving or have ever served in any one of our nation's eight uniformed services, you are eligible for membership

in ROA, and a one-year membership only costs \$20 or \$450 for a life membership. Enlisted personnel as well as officers are eligible for full membership, and eligibility applies to those who are serving or have served in the Active Component, the National Guard, or the Reserve. If you are eligible for ROA membership, please join. You can join on-line at <https://www.roa.org/opage/memberoptions/>.

If you are not eligible to join, please contribute financially, to help us keep up and expand this effort on behalf of those who serve.

Please mail us a contribution to:  
Reserve Organization of America  
1 Constitution Ave. NE  
Washington, DC 20002

## The Family Readiness Support Committee

By C. W. “Mike” Hutchinson, Jr., Chair

**O**ur mission, as stated on the ROA website, is: “The Family Readiness Support Committee acts in an advisory capacity on all matters of policy and procedure relating to family matters. The committee also conducts programs in support of reservists’ families and manages the Family Support special interest group.”

ROA is committed to supporting our reserve component of the United States Military. There are many facets of this commitment; support of our military families is one of them. Our current president, Layne R. Wroblewski, and the executive committee have selected new committee members to support our mission of taking care of the families of those serving our country. The committee members are as follows:

- Mr. Culas W. Hutchinson Jr., Chair
- Col. Denise A. Enders, USA (Ret.), Vice Chair
- Col. Paul J. Hettich, USA (Ret.), Committee Member
- Col. Stanley G. Remer, USA (Ret.), Committee Member
- Cmdr. James M. Semerad, USN (Ret.), Committee Member
- Mrs. Anne Groskreutz, Past Chair
- Maj. Gen. Jeffrey E. Phillips, USA (Ret.), Staff Liaison

We look forward to acting on behalf of ROA to support our military members and families. Each of us brings a long history of family support and look forward to working with you to continue this mission.

Thank you, Anne Groskreutz, for chairing the committee and passionately serving for so many years. Thank you to previous committee members who have and will continue to support reservist families.

Historically, this committee has spearheaded initiatives to support our mission. This includes an annual writing contest for the youth of military families; preparation of kits loaned to ROA members who attend events in support of military families; and advocating for issues related to proposed legislation in support of military families.

Our committee will continue to support these initiatives. We look forward to being an integral part of ROA and the future of supporting our military families.

Please contact us with your thoughts, concerns, and/or questions. 



## Department of Michigan

Lt. Col. Louis Wilson, U.S. Army (Ret.)

**T**he ROA-Michigan Department is alive and well. When the COVID pandemic threatened to shut down our annual state conference, we sought creative solutions, and offered an all-virtual conference, for the first time, and moved forward. It was a success and allowed ROA members from across the state access to our conference. Since that time, we have continued to offer the state conference in both in-person, onsite, and virtual formats. Our next conference is scheduled for 20 April 2024.

Our Michigan Department bylaws and constitution had become outdated and no longer reflected how we currently functioned. The existing documents were undated and perhaps 20+ years old. Our EXCOM worked together as a team to research old documents, refer to ROA-National sources, and write a new bylaws and constitution that fit our organization today. This team project brought new energy and interest to our group. The proposed new documents were first presented on our website, [www.roami.org](http://www.roami.org), and will be presented to our membership for approval at the State Conference.

With a goal of outreach and interaction with military organizations throughout Michigan, we are involved with the following: R.O.T.C. units throughout Michigan; Retiree Activities Council at Selfridge; ANGB, International Armed Forces Council, and the U.S. Naval Sea Cadets. We look forward to more in the future. 

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## Department of Tennessee

**D**ept of TN ROA represented in the 75th Chattanooga Armed Forces Day Parade, one of the oldest in the Country. Many dignitaries were represented including Congressman Fleischmann, Vice Chief of Staff Army LTG Mingus, Gen BB Bell, local Chattanoogan — Grand Marshall (retired 4 Star) and Armed Forces Day luncheon speaker. There were over 130 entrants in this years parade! 



Photos by Col. (Ret.) Judi Davenport

## **ROA's Communications and Marketing Committee, two missions for our Second Century of service**

By Capt. Henry E. Plimack, USCGR (Ret.)

**T**he Communications Marketing Committee's dedicated 18 members serve as the eyes and ears of ROA. Our committee is also tasked with marketing our association for outreach, partnering, visibility, and recruiting opportunities for our association. This effort enables us to expand our ability to lead the nation's efforts to ensure the reserve components are strong and ready and reservists' family members are well-cared for.

On the communications side, the committee monitors social media instruments and searches for appropriate content to keep the membership informed and enhance the leadership's ability to make informed decisions.



Editors are eligible for both recognitions if they fulfill the requirements cited in the publication guidelines. An example is our very talented editor of the Department of Kentucky Chapter 168 "Spotlight on 168," Cliff Burnstein.

Websites are also judged. Their recognition is the *Sword and Screen Award* and the *Brigadier General Sarnoff Award*.

An excellent example of a website is from the Department of Missouri: Fred Lydic webmaster, with their *MOROA Transmitter* editor, Richard Kallemeier completing this professional communications team:

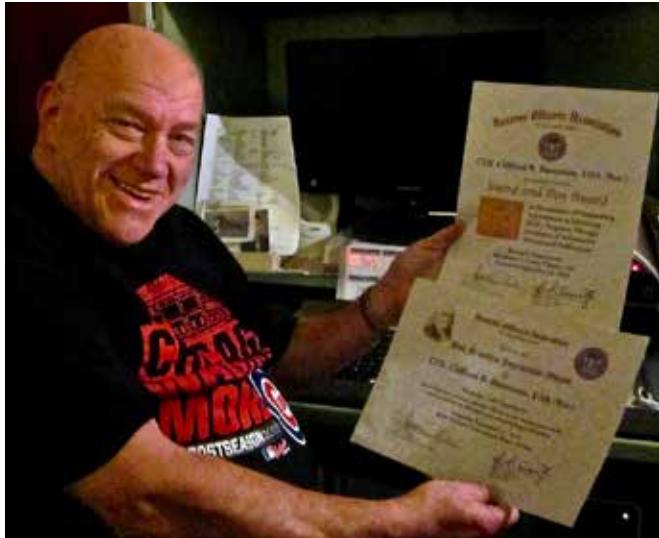
It is our committee's responsibility to also raise awareness of ROA's achievements and legislative success stories, spotlighting our public policy priorities for the second session of the 118th Congress.

However, our marketing role must go outside of our membership and reach our target audiences: Congress, the uniformed services (especially the reserve components), the public, partners, and potential donors. Such an effort will require assistance from professional organizations that have access to each of these demographics. It is essential that they know each audience and how to reach them.

Our committee met in Jan. to establish our objectives.

If you are a photographer, writer, journalist, videographer, or media guru, consider joining our Communications and Marketing Team!

If you have any questions about the committee, or this article, feel free to contact us at [ROAinfo@roa.org](mailto:ROAinfo@roa.org) 



## This marketing primer might be helpful:

At its core, marketing requires market research and advertising in developing a strategic methodology for promoting our association. The goal is to attract prospective members while simultaneously fostering a sense of loyalty among current members.

For ROA, marketing initiatives might include:

- Crafting compelling membership packages that highlight the value of joining.
- Identifying and targeting our niche audience with tailored messages.
- Using data-driven insights to personalize member experiences and outreach.
- Employing content marketing to share our association's accomplishments.
- Leveraging social media and email campaigns to reach outside our membership.
- Organizing events and webinars that address the professional and personal needs of the Reservists.
- Communication is the broader process of creating and exchanging information between two or more parties. In the context of ROA, strategic communication serves to inform, educate, and build relationships with stakeholders, including members, partners, the Services, potential donors, and the public. Effective communication is the lifeblood of ROA, enhancing our reputation, trustworthiness, value, and impact.
- For ROA leaders, understanding the nuanced roles and interplay of marketing and communications is crucial for crafting a sustainable and successful strategy. This dynamic interplay is not just about broadcasting messages but about building relationships and creating spaces where members feel valued, heard, and motivated to engage. It's not a choice between marketing and communications; it's about the art of harmonizing them to achieve a collective vision.

# What is CIOMR?

By Col. Ann Campbell, USA (Ret.)

The Confédération Interalliée des Officiers Médicaux de Réserve (Interallied Confederation of Medical Reserve Officers (abbreviated to the anglicized form [CIOMR](#)) was founded in Brussels in 1948 by Belgium, France, and the Netherlands. Today, the national reserve forces, reserve officers associations or federations, and (military) medical organizations of many, if not most, NATO countries are members. Also, reserves or organizations of non-NATO countries can be Associate Members. These nations may also be offered Observer status. The U.S. member of CIOMR is the Reserve Organization of America (ROA).

**Who can participate in CIOMR Events?** Official delegations and individual delegates are members of the health care professions, dentistry, and veterinarians. Attendees at meetings and events of the CIOMR may also include noncommissioned officers of these professions or associated professions. The integration of warrant officers and noncommissioned officers into CIOMR programs and activity is positively encouraged.

**When and where was the 2024 CIOMR Mid-Winter Meeting?** CIOMR held its 2024 Mid-Winter Meeting (MWM) from Monday, Jan. 29 to Friday, Feb. 2 2024, in Brussels, Belgium, at the NATO Headquarters building.

**Who from the U.S. participated in the 2024 CIOMR Mid-Winter Meeting?** Participants included both retired and active reserve officers and NCOs. The largest contingent included medical reserve officers from the Army Reserve, with representation from the Army National Guard and the U.S. Air Force Reserve. The Army Reserve participants also included three senior Reserve Officers: Maj. Gen. W. Scott Linn, Brig. Gen. Jennifer Marrast Host, and Col. Peter Olsen.

**What were the highlights of the 2024 CIOMR Mid-Winter Meeting?** The CIOMR Mid-Winter Meeting was held in Brussels,



CIOMR Council Table. Photo Col. Ann Campbell

Belgium, from Jan. 28–Saturday, Feb. 3 2024. The event was hosted by Johan Munch, Lt. Col., Norwegian army. Many junior officers participated in the Junior Medical Reserve Officer Workshop (JMROW) program. The meeting included planning for the 2024 CIOMR Summer Congress and a Junior Medical Reserve Officer Seminar.

**What topics were covered in the Junior Medical Reserve Officer Seminar (JMROS)?** CIOMR also hosted its annual Junior Medical Reserve Officer Seminar (JMROS) concurrently with the CIOMR MWM. The seminar program included: (1) Introduction to NATO and NATO medical structures, (2) opportunities to meet with NATO staff in a classified environment to understand the multiple functions of NATO, with a focus on medical outputs, (3) a workshop on NATO geopolitics with a focus on military health care within the alliance, (4) a workshop on operational medicine at the Queen Astrid Military Hospital, (5) a scientific symposium on telemedicine, artificial intelligence and big data in military medicine, (6) keynote speeches within the main CIOMR and CIOR Mid-Winter Meeting, (7) participants' delivery of presentations to senior officers from across NATO, and the receipt of feedback on briefing skills, (8) fireside chats with senior medical reserve officers from across NATO, (9) a battlefield study tour of first world war battlefields in Belgium, and (10) opportunities to network with fellow junior officers.

**When and where will the 2024 CIOMR Summer Congress (SC) be held?** CIOMR will hold its 2024 Summer Congress from Monday, July 29 to Friday, Aug. 2 2024, in Tallinn, Estonia. 

# What is CIOR?

By Col. Judi Davenport, USA (Ret.)

**L**et me preface this article by saying that the Reserve Officers Association, dba the Reserve Organization of America (ROA), is involved with several international programs involving reserve personnel. The programs ROA is involved with from an international perspective are the Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers (CIOR), Interallied Confederation of Reserve Medical Officers (CIOMR), Interallied Confederation of Senior Non-Commissioned Officers (CISOR), and The Pan-American Union of Armed Forces Reserve Officers (UPORFA). It should also be noted that the ROA national president, Lt. Col. Layne Wroblewski has appointed an international program officer and former CIOR U.S. VP, Col. James Sweeney, who will coordinate International programs and issues with the EXCOM.

CIOR was founded in 1948 by the reserve officer associations officers of Belgium, France, and the Netherlands; ROA joined CIOR and CIOMR in 1958. Today CIOR represents the interests of more than one million reserve personnel across 34 nations, including five associate-member nations and one potential-member nation, making it the largest military reserve officer organization. CIOR is linked closely to the National Reserve Forces Committee (NRFC) and reports annually to the Military Committee of NATO (MC), which in turn recognizes CIOR's key role as a reserve advocate promoting the professional development of reserve officers. CIOR, as a formal NATO affiliate, is a nonprofit, non-political organization of member nations' national reserve officer associations. CIOR also has a memorandum of understanding with NRFC, CIOMR, and CISOR. Only one reserve association per country may be admitted to CIOR as a member (signatory of NATO), Associate (a reserve association from a country that is a party to the NATO's cooperative structure, or a country of interest to NATO), an Observer (a reserve association not allowed by its national authority to be a member or associate of CIOR), or a Guest (a reserve association from a country that does not already have a reserve association which is a Member, Associate, or Observer of CIOR). CIOR is a legal body under Belgian law. ROA has been a member organization of CIOR for over 65 years.

CIOR provides advice on reserve issues to the NATO MC, promotes the importance and the role of reserves in NATO and at a national level, and fosters the professional development of reserve officers. One of the main building blocks in the CIOR constitution and bylaws is that member organizations have to represent all reserve branches of services of that particular country.

The ROA was founded in 1922 (with over 100 years of service to this country) by Gen. John "Black Jack" Pershing and some twelve dozen WWI veterans who wanted to ensure the military would never experience unpreparedness as experienced before WWI. It should never be forgotten that Congress chartered ROA to support and promote the development and execution of a U.S. military



Interallied Confederation of Reserve Officers military competition leaders deliberate over teams in Vermont, July 24, 2021. Team USA sends teams of three to the CIOR MILCOMP, an annual competition among NATO and Partnership for Peace nations. Photo by Calvin Reimold

policy to provide adequate national security. The membership of ROA comprises members of the federal uniform services (Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Space Force) and the other uniformed services (U.S. Public Health Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration), plus the Army National Guard and the Air Force National Guard. ROA is truly the premiere organization to represent the Reserve Component, all services, all ranks! Today, more than ever, reserves are used in the total military force of most countries, and it is imperative that the joint environment, multinational involvement, and cooperation be paramount. The foresight of the Department of Defense to designate ROA to be the United States representative to all NATO reserve associations has been strategic in nature.

The leadership structure of CIOR is also multinational and divided into four areas. The presidency team consists of an international president, secretary general (SG), assistant secretary general (ASG), treasurer, legal advisor, and the permanent-rep to NATO. The CIOR Council is a national vice president (VP) from each member organization and their national ASGs. The Working Committees (receive presidency guidance) and the Working Groups. The presidency group rotates on a two-year basis among member organizations. The current presidency team is from Tallin, Estonia, but will be changing over to a Nordic presidency for the 2024-2026 term at the Summer Congress (SC) in Tallin, Estonia. The 2026-2028 presidency team will be from Denmark. The Member Organization (i.e., ROA) consists of a VP (U.S. is a former ROA National), ASG, and delegates (an individual authorized by the member reserve association to participate in CIOR activities on the council, on a committee or on a working group).

Per the CIOR Constitution, Article 14, "the Board or Council shall be assisted by the Committees and Working Groups as established in the Bylaws." There are eight working committees (C), which consist of one member and two observers from a member country to CIOR: Young Reserve Officers (YRO-C), Military

Competition (MILCOMP-C), Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC-C), Language Academy (CLA-C), Cyber Reserve (CR-C), Strategic Communication (STRATCOM-C), Defense Attitudes and Security Issues (DEFSEC-C), and Legal Affairs (Legal-C).

Over the years, CIOR has adapted to the changing environment, but the goals have remained the same. The three main goals of CIOR are to advise on reserve issues to the NATO MC, promote the role and importance of reserves in NATO and at the national level; foster the professional development of reserve officers. CIOR has a proven track record of sharing best practices on reserve issues through its events with the NRFC and partnerships with CIOMR and CISOR. The opportunities CIOR provides in professional development are of a high caliber, cost-effective, coupled with individual networking from a multinational perspective, which benefit individual reserve members, their member nations, and NATO. Raising awareness of current reserve issues, adapting to policy changes, and understanding the importance of how NATO works and how individual countries utilize their regular and reserve components are essential in today's unstable world environment. It is critical to promote interoperability and cooperation while respecting national traditions in the development of individual reserve members who will serve national and international interests in the future.

The importance of participation in CIOR and the partner organizations, CIOMR and CISOR, can not be overstated. There are basically two main open meetings a year: the Summer Congress (SC) (held Jul/Aug) and the Mid-Winter Meeting (MWM) (always held in Brussels around Jan/Feb). There are two In-Between Meetings (IBM), which are coordination and planning meetings with the president, council members, and international committee chairs for CIOR activities. The IBM also coordinates with NRFC projects for inclusion at the MWM and SC.

What programs for reserve members does CIOR offer that you can attend or participate in?

- **Young Reserve Officers Seminar (YROS)** – three-day seminar providing international experience to junior officers and increased awareness of alliance security issues.
- **Young Reserve Officer Workshops (YROW)** – five-day workshop for junior officers' first exposure to a multinational environment of NATO. CIOMR has a medical-specific workshop
- **Reserve Officers Workshop (ROW)** – five-day workshop about concepts and principles of the NATO alliance, including reserve roles, missions, and doctrine.
- **Language Academy (CLA)** – two-week intensive courses for English and French as a second language with Standardization Agreement (STANAG) testing (a NATO Standardization document that specifies the agreement of member countries to implement a standard) at the end of the studies.
- **Civil-Military Cooperation Exercise (CIMEX)** – three-day tabletop civil-military exercise added in 2018 into the NATO Military and Training Education Program (MTEP).

- **Military Competition (MILCOMP)** – three-day team competition at the SC consisting of shooting (pistol & rifle), obstacle course, utility swimming, and orienteering with additional tasks, i.e., range estimation, map reading (each member of the team must complete the competition events together). There are currently only 20 USARC slots on Team USA. Additional information is available at [www.usar.army.mil/CompetitivePrograms/](http://www.usar.army.mil/CompetitivePrograms/). The CIOMR has a medical-specific competition as well.
- **International Cyber Event (ICE)** – Sharing knowledge how on national cyber forces and cyber reserves.
- **CIOR Academic Work** – three-day seminar and one-day symposium on current geopolitical issues, security policies, and reserve issues.

If you would like to learn more about CIOR, get involved by serving on a committee, participating in the young reserve officer events, MILCOMP, Civil-military exercises, the language academy, or attending as a delegate, please let the CIOR U.S. VP or ASG know through ROA or go to the ROA website at [www.roa.org](http://www.roa.org). The next event will be the Summer Congress in Tallin, Estonia, July 29 to Aug. 2, 2024. The date for the MWM in Brussels is TBD. The SC schedule for 2025 is being worked out with 2026, possibly Austria and 2027, possibly France; stay tuned! All options are being looked at, including countries combining to host an SC. It is imperative to have the ministries of defense behind any country willing to host. Information will be posted on the ROA website as dates and places are locked in.

A special thank you to the reserve chiefs who have supported the ROA international programs. The young reserve officers, committee members, and non-commissioned officers who have come on orders and participated in the programs, events, and committees are resources well spent for our reserve leaders of the future. It also allows those future leaders who might serve assisting the forces of NATO Allies in achieving interoperability, efficient use of resources, and enhancing operational effectiveness in a world of multinational involvement for the reserve force

Further thanks to Lt. Col. Milt Houghton for his many years serving as the U.S. ASG, and welcome to Lt. Col. Peter Powell, Active Guard Reserve stationed in Stuttgart, Germany, with U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) for stepping up to serve as the current ASG. Also, all those who attended the SC in Helsinki, MWM in Brussels, and those who will attend the upcoming SC in Tallinn, Estonia, on orders and not from the council, committees, professional development programs, working group participants, MILCOMP competitors, language academy, CIMEX, and delegates a heartfelt thank you for your support!

Be well.

Col. Judi Davenport, USA (Ret.) CIOR U.S. VP

# Mentors are an often overlooked key to success

By Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Rita Broadway, president and Col. (Ret.) Tony Kanellis, executive director, Senior Army Reserve Commanders Association (SARCA)

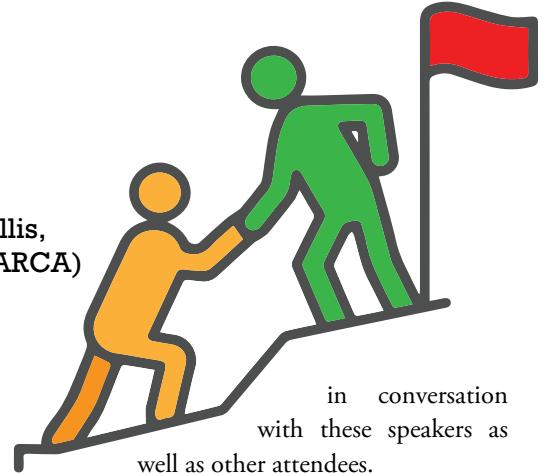
**A**military career in the Reserve or National Guard can take a lot of twists and turns and still be successful. While you may think your situation is unique, it may not be that different. The challenge is understanding which assignments, schools, or commands are essential and where you can have an acceptable substitute experience. Besides military assignments, some civilian career experiences and education can demonstrate that you are ready for senior-level assignments. One proven method for gaining this understanding is by having an ongoing relationship with someone who has been down the road already. In short — a mentor.

The traditional view of a mentor is someone who is senior to you and in your organization. Those relationships are essential and invaluable. If you ask, almost every general or flag officer will tell you they had a senior leader who saw something in them that they may not have seen themselves. Their counsel and coaching helped steer them to a particular assignment or opportunity.

Have you run into a peer who knew they were smarter, more talented, and even worked harder than someone who was selected over them? They may have been right. What they are often lacking is an understanding of how they come across to others. Their evaluation report may have said all the right phrases, but savvy readers inherently know that something is not right. On the other hand, there are people that everyone just seems to like. They are not the smartest or most talented, and they will quickly agree with that assessment. What they are is likable. This likability developed over time, across other organizations, and with many encounters. Make no mistake, these people must have solid intelligence, talent, and work ethic. Their solid skills, combined with likability and an understanding of the “system,” are what enable them to move ahead of their peers.

How do you learn the “system?” This one is a little trickier because a mentor in the system may not have a full understanding of all its nuances. A person who has not only been in the system but has retired and had time to reflect on his or her experiences can provide a unique perspective of what was essential and what was not necessary in hindsight. This additional mentor can offer that inside perspective as an outsider.

Professional development seminars organized by military-related associations can provide many opportunities for connecting with outside mentors. For example, at the SARCA meeting in October, we heard from Mr. Steve Austin, assistant chief, Army Reserve; Lt. Gen. A.C. Roper, vice commander, U.S. Element, NORAD and deputy commander, U.S. NORTHCOM; and the 84th Training Command, Ft. Knox, KY Command Team - Maj. Gen. Edward H. Merrigan, commander, and Command Sgt. Maj. Scott A. Hinton. During breaks, attendees had time to connect and engage



in conversation with these speakers as well as other attendees.

At SARCA, we feel that our retired and currently serving members, who are all Army Reserve generals or colonels, can provide that additional perspective. These leaders know what worked and what did not work. This knowledge can be invaluable when balancing a civilian career and family responsibilities. You sure do not want to spend three nights a week and three weekends a month on reserve duty if all those so-called requirements are not essential or can be accomplished in another manner.

Sometimes, that civilian career or family situation requires that you take a break from serving in a reserve unit. Maybe you need to move to the Individual Ready Reserve or to an Individual Mobilization Augmentee position for a few years. Can you do that without ending your military career? A retired mentor can not only advise you on this, but they can also give you plenty of examples of others who did the same thing or suggest limited engagement opportunities so that you are still serving but just in a much more civilian career- or family-friendly way.

Communication is essential to making all this work. Your immediate bosses need to know what you want to accomplish in your military career. Do you want to command? Do you want to change career fields? Do you need to take a break after this assignment? The same is true for your civilian employers and family. Additional conversations with your mentors can also help you figure out a viable path for all of your responsibilities and aspirations. These conversations will also expose you to others’ suggestions and ideas—some you may not have considered. In short, frequent communication with a variety of people will increase your likability.

Both our retired and currently serving members can offer advice to mid-career Army Reserve or Army National Guard officers who are navigating all three worlds. Occasional ongoing conversations can result in exploring opportunities you may not have thought of and may even give you reasons to take your career in a different direction. If you are interested in exploring outside mentorship, send us a note to our inbox at [sarcamembership@gmail.com](mailto:sarcamembership@gmail.com).

Certainly, there are many other opportunities to find a retired outside mentor. Your local ROA [chapter or department](#), MOAA or AUSA chapter, or even a church or community group may yield a retired senior leader who is open to a mentoring relationship. The key is to put yourself out there by attending the meetings, being open to what others have to say, and being available for conversations. The cost is minimal, and the opportunities are invaluable. Just know—you are not alone! 



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## THE CALL . . .

There is no limit to what a dedicated group of people can accomplish when they band together with One Voice in One Fight. One Voice with one message and One Fight with one goal — position ROA to best serve past, present, and future reservists and their families into the next 100 years.

Our freedoms depend on the citizen-warriors who stand ready when called. Our nation's future is in their hands; supporting them is in ours.

**ONE  
VOICE,  
ONE  
FIGHT.**

