

ON THE ROAD

Fast Track

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA, RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION

Spring 2008

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President's Message

Will D. Philipson, CAPT USN (Ret)



Emphasizing the Citizen Warrior

The Department Convention which is scheduled for April 26th, 2008 will address issues facing the citizen warrior. Wayne

Quist, a scholar who has served in many capacities in the Air Force, will provide the keynote address at the noon luncheon. His topic will examine the history of the Muslim world, its culture and its practices as it impacts the growth of democracy in the countries of the Middle East. It is these cultural morays which make the service of our forces in the area particularly difficult. Those Minnesotans who have served in the region's conflict and those yet to serve in that part of the world will find Quist's illustrated address enlightening.

Other sessions will provide interest for those in every age bracket drawn from our membership and the military community of the area. The information is designed to inform about the programs available to the reserve and National Guard community. Jackie Osterhaus will address family and warrior health issues, some of which we've heard about in the media recently. R. Carlson, Director of the Retired Activities Office of the 934th Airlift Wing, will outline the services provided by the office there. There will be a session to inform personnel and families of the process one faces when being recalled for assignment. Preparation

and knowledge of the things experienced in this process may help families prevent catastrophic events which detract from the situation being experienced.

The evening banquet will emphasize good food and the historical perspective of our Minnesota citizens and warriors. A guest speaker is yet to be determined.

The Reserve Officers' Association and its Departments, Chapters and Units have always advocated a strong citizen warrior program with a membership of about 80,000 serving. It is a Congressionally Chartered Organization providing unified arguments for support of the Reserve and National Guard. It includes officers active through retirement information and pressing for benefits fitting each type. The Association actively pursues support for employment rewards, Defense Education Funding and resource provisions making these citizens operationally proficient for use when needed. Various efforts have been directed toward: 1) Drill, bonus and retirement pay as well as access to health care, educational benefits and base facilities improvement. 2) A better quantity and quality of equipment used for training. 3) Improved training of units through the best professional development and delivery system available.

The Department of Minnesota has been trying to strengthen its communications

President's Message
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VISION

The Department of Minnesota ROA strives to be the premier member organization in all issues affecting Minnesota's Reserve military officers.

News and Notes...

Dennis T. Davis, 1stLt USAFR



This issue of news and notes will be a bit different as there is no additional news that is not already mentioned in the newsletter and no notes of interest.

So I have decided to take this time (and space) and use it to remind us of the importance of the times we live in. Specifically, the election season we find ourselves knee deep in at the present time.

Anyone that knows me would tell you where my political loyalties lie. However, the purpose of this piece is to be thought provoking and not get you to vote like I will but rather to spur you to action and make sure you vote in November.

These are trying times we live in. The country is at war and will have been for seven years when the election happens in November. We have fought a war on terrorism on two major fronts, with minor skirmishes taking place all over the world. We live in a society that can get it 'their way' at the drive through in 60 seconds and expect the same sort of success in fighting terrorism. When things go bad, many want to take their ball and go home, thinking if they quit the game the problems will just go away. When things go well these same people refuse to acknowledge the progress that is made.

Away from the war, we have problems here at home. If one watched the news they would think that we were headed for another Great Depression. There are signs that tell us that our economy is not performing where we would like it to but the negative mantra sells faster and attracts more viewers so that is what we hear. Mistakes have been made over the last eight years but the same can be said for most any previous administration. The housing slump, credit crunch and rising fuel prices have many wondering whether

or not we will make it through these troubled times.

I say all these things not because I believe all of them but it is the world in which we live today. Is it as bad as many would have us believe? Probably not. There are things to be concerned about and it is those very things that should drive us to engage in the political process. I have talked to people in the past that don't vote because they do not feel their vote counts. My response to them is that by not voting your apathy counts for even more than your vote would and the end results of such apathy is typically not appealing. I for one would rather have made the attempt to have my voice heard and perhaps not have the impact that I would have liked than to never have attempted at all.

Being in the military we have perhaps the most unique opportunity there is anywhere in the world...we get to help choose our next boss. Think about that for a minute. As reservists most of us have jobs outside the military that consume 40+ hours a week. When was the last time management came to you and said "We are looking for a new Commander in Chief and were wondering if you would mind giving us your feedback on these two candidates before we make our decision?" I realize this is not a perfect example but the fact remains that this typically does not happen. People tend not to get a voice in who they work for. We in the military however get just such a voice. Now it does not always work out in our favor, the less attractive candidate is sometimes chosen. While we may not always like the results, many in the military have fought and died to protect that right for all Americans.

When the polls open in November, don't waste your voice. You have approximately six months to choose who you feel is best to lead this country. If you have not made up your mind yet, do a little bit of research, there has never been more information available prior to an election as there is

right now. Prepare yourself and set aside time on November 4th to go vote. Our choices are not perfect but one of them will be our next President. Those currently serving in the military along with the millions of veterans and retirees that have previously served make up a substantial block of voters. We can and do influence elections but this only happens if you vote!!

President's Message

continued from page 1

links with its members by revising and publishing a new Strategic Plan provocatively directed toward improved communications and updated programs. As a result of this effort the Newsletter has been placed on a regular publishing cycle and will carry information from the activities encouraged by the Department. The Freedom Fund has subsidized the acquisition of new officers from the ROTC Programs by giving merit awards to promising cadets, providing leadership grants to promising officers and chapter visits. Continued improvement is planned as leadership and grassroots support for the program is achieved.

Certainly balancing dual roles in selected careers is difficult in that deployments interrupt those careers. As citizen warriors who serve more than one boss, personnel must be aggressive, competent, loyal and patriotic. They must remain open to new ideas and possibilities, embracing many changes, facing some failures and hone skills and talents to deal with them. The work load is large and difficult, but the rewards in learning strong leadership skills are great.

As was stated by Major E. Herzog, USA "take control, lead by positive examples and don't let anything stand in your way of achievement to be a better professional."

See you all at the Convention!!

MISSION

Support our National Security through dynamic programs that positively impact locally elected officials, all levels of ROA, and future, current, retired, and former Reserve officers of the Uniformed Services of the United States.

MN ROA Convention 26 April 2008

*Held at the 934th Airlift Wing (Ft. Snelling) Officers Club
Dress: Individual service uniform or business attire
All Minnesota ROA members & guests are welcome to attend!!*

Program

- Business meeting at 1030
- Lunch (Speaker—Topic “The Guard and Reserve: Performance in National Defense”
Colonel Wayne Quist, USAF-RET)
- Service Section reports (Capt Delong, LTC Chambers and Col Nelson)
- Membership updates (Summary of recruiting efforts) (Lt Aasland)
- Communications and Member Public Relations (Lt Davis)
- Legislation (LTC Silvagni)
- Retired Activities Programs in Area (CW5 Hedbloom and a RAO Director, Colonel Ralph Carlson)
- ROTC Support (Colonel Chambers plus a ROTC School Administrator)
- Chaplain’s Support (Lcdr Gordon Lindeman)
- Your responsibility when activated (Cpt Jackie Osterhaus)
- Chapter representative remarks

- Evening Banquet - Social Hour 1800 hours; Program 1900 hours
Speaker (TBA) “Minnesota and the Citizen Military Service Volunteer”
Closing remarks (President elect .. President)



Cut and mail your registration

Please check your entree:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Walleye | <input type="checkbox"/> Convention (includes luncheon buffet) \$16.00 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> London Broil | <input type="checkbox"/> Banquet (select meal choice) \$30.00 |

Number Registered _____ Total \$ _____

Name _____ Rank _____ Service _____

Guest/s _____

Contact phone no. _____

Dinner reservations must be made before 21 April 2008 to insure Club can prepare for attendance. No refunds will be made after that date. Please make check payable to ROA Department of Minnesota and mail to Emil Milacek, Treasurer, P.O. Box 11769, St. Paul, MN. 55111-0769 (POC: 651-450-6401)

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Minnesota’s Reserve military officers.*

Tricare Updates

PART 1: According to the HayGroup 2007 Benefits Prevalence Report, raising military pharmacy copays by 100% to 400% as recommended in the FY2009 Defense budget proposal would put military pharmacy benefits among the lower half of civilian plans. For generic drugs purchased in retail pharmacies, the defense budget proposes raising the beneficiary copay from \$3 to \$15. According to HayGroup, 83% of civilian employer plans charge less than that for generic drugs, with almost 20% charging \$5 or less. For brand-name drugs in retail stores, the Pentagon proposes raising the Tricare copay from \$9 to \$25. The HayGroup survey indicates that almost half of civilian employers (45%) charge less than that. For brand-name, non-formulary medications, the Tricare copay would rise from \$22 to \$45 -- more than what 68% of civilian plans charge. In fact, many civilian plans are reducing or eliminating copays for generic drugs and medications used to treat chronic diseases like diabetes, because studies have found that higher copays actually deter many patients from taking medications that reduce the need for much higher-cost procedures later in life. The Tricare copays also would exceed those offered under many plans available to legislators and federal civilians. Most telling of all, Wal-Mart offers over 360 medications at a copayment of only \$4 to anyone who walks in the door. Perhaps the purpose of the Pentagon-proposed fee hikes is to push more beneficiaries to use Wal-Mart rather than their Tricare benefit. That would certainly save the Defense Department money. But it wouldn't make military people feel very good about their military health coverage.

Additionally, the administration's FY2009 budget would deal heavy blows to Medicare and many older beneficiaries. Physician reimbursement cuts of almost 10% originally planned for JAN 08 will go into effect in JUL 08 unless Congress acts to reverse them, and the budget envisions further cuts in JAN 09. The new budget would repeal annual inflation adjustments to the income levels used to means-test Part B premiums. If enacted, that would push more people each year into paying significantly higher Part B premiums impacting on TFL users while at the same time reducing their access to medical care providers willing to accept Medicare payments. This year, the higher premiums apply to single seniors with incomes over \$82,000 (\$164,000 for a married couple) as opposed to \$80,000/\$160,000 last year. The budget proposes freezing payment levels through FY2011 for inpatient care, skilled nursing facilities, hospice care, and ambulance services, and a freeze through FY2013 for home health agencies. [Source: MOAA Leg Up 15 Feb 08]

PART 2: The Senate Armed Services Committee has rejected a Pentagon proposal to increase health insurance costs without even seeing the details, but is now worried if there will be enough money in the 2009 defense budget to fully cover health care costs. Rejection of the proposal to Tricare Standard and Tricare Prime costs and to raise copayments for prescription drugs — something the Defense Department assumes will generate about \$1.2 billion in savings — was first disclosed in a 26 FEB letter from committee leaders to the

Senate Budget Committee. About \$500 million of the savings would have come from charging higher fees for military retirees under the age of 65 and their families enrolled in Tricare. The remaining \$700 million in savings would have come from higher copayments for prescriptions filled at retail pharmacies, something that would affect active-duty family members, reservists and their families and retirees and their families. There also would be a modest fee for older retirees covered by the Tricare for Life plan. The letter, signed by committee chairman Sen. Carl Levin, D-Mich., and ranking Republican Sen. John McCain of Arizona, asks the budget committee to provide \$611.1 billion in new budget authority for the Defense Department for fiscal year 2009, which begins 1 OCT 08. This is the amount requested by the Bush administration and includes \$70 billion in a so-called bridge fund that would partly cover the 2009 costs of continued military operations in Iraq and Afghanistan.

The budget committee, chaired by Sen. Kent Conrad (D-ND) is in the process of preparing a resolution spelling out revenue and spending guidelines. Levin and McCain did not ask the budget committee to increase the defense budget to make up for rejection of the \$1.2 billion in Tricare fees. But they said they are “concerned” about whether there is enough money because the Bush budget assumes not just the fee increases, but also the controversial transfer of \$1.3 billion from the national defense stockpile fund to cover health costs. There are a variety of ways Congress could cover those costs, including increasing the defense budget, diverting money for

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The Major Dan Anderson Freedom Fund

The Department of Minnesota, Reserve Officers Association

CAPT Larry DeVries, CEC USN (Ret.)

The Major Dan Anderson Freedom Fund (MDAFF) has formally existed since April 2002. The idea for its inception, however, was developed in 1999-2000, when the Department of Minnesota of The Reserve Officers Association (ROA), determined that it would be beneficial to have a companion non-profit organization that would support its goals of furthering the education and preparation of junior officers. As the concept of the organization developed, a corps of volunteers was recruited, and initial funding was received from individual contributions and a variety of fund raising activities.

MDAFF is recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501 (c) (3) non-profit organization. Over time, this status has facilitated fundraising efforts aimed at our members, individuals interested in our mission, and other contributors.

The activities of fundraising and disbursement of funds raised have resulted in over \$10,000 being expended in two major areas: 1) funding of merit awards for Minnesota ROTC cadets and midshipmen, and, 2) funding of

scholarships for junior officers attending ROA educational events. The Freedom Fund continues to appeal to ROA members for funds for its efforts on an ongoing basis. Minnesota ROA members should consider the Freedom Fund as the fundraising arm of the Department of Minnesota ROA.

The target for the Freedom Fund's Minnesota Campaign 2008 is to raise an average contribution of \$25 from each of our Minnesota ROA members. This target represents an aggressive approach to replenish recent expenditures as well as continue the Fund's programs into the coming year.

The Board of Directors structure of MDAFF consists of five designated directors who are the elected officers of the Department of Minnesota Board - President, Executive Vice President, Secretary, Comptroller, and Immediate Past President. In addition, there are three At-Large Directors who are elected for staggered three year terms.

The MDAFF Board elects its own officers - President, Vice President,

Secretary, and Treasurer - from the eight Board members noted above. The Board will have met at twelve monthly meetings during FY2008

For the 2007-2008 year, the Board consisted of the following individuals:

CAPT Larry DeVries, USN (Ret.)
President, At-Large Director

Col Martin Coyne, USAF (Ret.)
Vice Pres. At-Large Director

CW5 Bruce Hedblom, AUS (Ret.)
At-Large Director

2ndLt Andrew Williams, USAFR
Secretary, Designated Director

LT Emil Milacek, USN (Ret.)
Treasurer, Designated Director

CAPT Will Philipson, USN (Ret.)
Designated Director

MAJ John Rosnow, USAR
Designated Director

Maj David Zenner, USAFR
Designated Director

We thank the members of the Board of Directors for serving this year.

May we count on your contribution?

DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA RESERVE OFFICERS ASSOCIATION FREEDOM FUND

I wish to make a donation to continue the work of the Freedom Fund as follows:

- \$ 25
- \$ 50
- \$ 100
- \$ 200
- \$ 250

Name _____

Address _____

Telephone _____ E-Mail _____

I pledge to honor my donation commitment of \$ _____ each year as follows: 2 Years 3 Years 4 Years 5 Years

Mail to: The Major Dan Anderson Freedom Fund • P.O. Box 11769 • St. Paul, MN 55111-0769

Contribution Form

Form REV03

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Tricare Updates *(continued from page 4)*

other defense programs or by using off-budget money from the war supplemental to pay for some health care costs. Pentagon officials are not giving up on their proposed fee increases for Tricare. David Chu, the under secretary of defense for personnel and readiness, told the armed services' personnel subcommittee on Wednesday that the Defense Department was willing to modify its proposal to get it passed.

The Defense Department has not submitted details, but Chu and other

military officials said their proposal would be based on the recommendations made late last year by the Task Force on the Future of Military Health Care. In its report, the task force proposed some large increases. A 30-day supply of prescription drugs that now costs \$3 at a retail pharmacy would cost \$15, while brand-name drugs that are now \$9 would be \$25. For retirees in Tricare Prime, the military's managed care plan, family coverage that now costs \$460 a year would increase to \$900 and to \$1,750 by 2011 under the plan that calls

for phased increases. For retirees in Tricare Standard, who now pay no enrollment fee, the proposal would charge \$5 a month for enrollment and would change the current annual deductible of \$300 to \$490 - \$960 by 2011, again applying income-based charges. There also would be a \$10 increase in the annual enrollment fee for Tricare for Life, the military insurance plan for Medicare-eligible retirees. [Source: *Air Force Times*, Rick Maze article 28 Feb 08]

25% More Weekends: Reflections of a recent retiree

Lt Col Gary Chambers USAFR (ret)

Sunday, March 02, 2008 was the culmination of my 30 plus years in the Air National Guard and Air Force Reserves. Looking back to when I enlisted in October 1977 in the Kentucky Air National Guard, I never would have guessed that I would retire in the land of nine months of winter/three months of skiing – and like it.

There came a time when I knew it was right to make the transition. I had not reached the mandatory separation but I saw no further goals attainable in the time remaining. That coupled with more opportunities in my civilian field made it an easy decision. What is not so easy is parting with a group of people that have become an extended family.

A hallmark of the Guard and Reserves is the longevity of service within a local unit. I was more of an exception having served in four ANG units and one AF Reserve unit. My wife served her whole career within the 934th. This longevity in

service carries over to increased job competency. When I was in the Alabama Air Guard, there was a crew chief on the same RF-4C for twenty-two years. His pride in his aircraft was evident every time I flew it.

The friendships forged in deployments and exercises endure forever. Reservists see the world as few others get to and definitely not as tourists. Problem solving is second nature, what could be a crisis is just the beginning of the next adventure. Once you retire, you see the value of all those life skills cultivated over a career.

Will I miss it? My initial reaction is to say no because all the good memories are as fresh today as when they happened. Sure there were the not so good times but the bad memories were buried long ago. Friendships endure. I do confess that I will enjoy having 25% more weekends, especially those when the only sunny days were during a Unit Training Assembly.



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2008 Legislative Update

Robert A. Silvagni, LTC USAR (Ret)

As of March 20th the 2008 session of the Minnesota Legislature has been primarily working to deal with the state budget shortfall. The legislature will be looking for places to cut program funding including funds programmed to support Veterans, military family support and education benefits. I recall from last session there was a bill introduced to fund college level education for non citizens (who never served this country) while educational benefits for our returning military members was not being funded at requested levels. It took calls, letters and inquiries to our legislators to help prioritize the need for funding educational benefits for veterans.

If you want the Minnesota Legislature to address and fund veteran issues, then you need to take the time and write them. Tell them we want a more military/veteran friendly state by debating and passing policies that will enhance the lives of Minnesota veterans and its citizens serving on active military

duty, the Guard and Reserves.

The legislation proposed in 2007 dealing with exemption of military pensions from state income tax has not been brought to the table in either the Senate or the House of Representatives during the 2008 session. If enacted, this legislation would remove an economic barrier for citizens of Minnesota who are retiring from the military and want to live in Minnesota. Data compiled by Mr. Ralph Donais indicate that Minnesota has less than 1% (16,539) of the total veterans collecting military pensions in the United States. He says that this figure should be 3% or (approximately 48,000) veterans collecting military pensions. It seems reasonable that a military retiree would settle in Wisconsin, Iowa, or South Dakota where their military retirement is not taxed.

In closing, if you want action from the Minnesota Legislature, you need to make personal contact with your legislators and request your friends and neighbors do the same.

Spring ROTC Awards and Recognition

Spring 2008 ROTC and JROTC awards ceremonies are being scheduled. Each unit receives an ROA medal and certificate to present to an outstanding cadet chosen by the school. These presentations take place during formal awards ceremonies and are part of recognizing the achievements of the cadets. Volunteers to present the ROA award are always needed. The presentation itself is very short with no speaking involved. There are always excellent opportunities afterwards to mingle with students, parents and other presenters. If you would be interested in being a presenter, please contact Col Marilyn Chambers at aroved@att.net or 651-308-5088. There are 12 metro JROTC schools, one in Duluth and one in Bemidji. The next issue of On the ROAd will include a summary of activities from the various schools and detachments.

\$\$ DEPARTMENT OF MINNESOTA "BUCK A YEAR"

Yes, I want to help pay the cost of publishing "On the ROAd Fast Track."
(Make checks payable to Minnesota ROA and mail to Newsletter Editor,
Dept of MN ROA, P.O. Box 11769, St. Paul, MN 55111-0769)

Benefactor	\$20.00	Donor	\$5.00
Patron	\$15.00	Supporter	\$2.00
Sponsor	\$10.00	Buck a Year	\$1.00

Name _____

Chapter _____

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Lt Col Gary Chambers returns from his final flight before retiring on March 2, 2008 from the Air Force Reserves after more than 30 years of service

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