

Communication: Themes and Messages

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PURPOSE: As part of the public affairs function, the Communications Director of ROA develops clearly defined messages on issues relevant to the Uniformed Services Reserve Components and the Association.

It is the content of the message, not the specific words used, which is the important part of this document. Words can change depending on the use of the message so long as the intent of the message remains intact.

ROA THEME: ROA needs a clear, consistent message that every member of the organization, including its staff, can understand and clearly articulate in one or two sentences. The statement answers the question, “What is ROA?” It communicates who and what ROA is and states its mission and purpose. It does not attempt to communicate everything about ROA, otherwise the average member would not be able to internalize the statement, and the basic message would be lost. The wording of the message is:

“The Reserve Officers Association is the 63,000-member professional association for all uniformed services of the United States. Chartered by Congress and in existence since 1922, ROA advises and educates the Congress, the President, and the American people on national security, with unique expertise on issues that affect the 1.5 million men and women now serving in America’s Reserve Components.”

THEMES AND MESSAGES:

THEME: The Citizen Warrior

MESSAGES:

- Since September 11th, 2001, over 700,000 members of the Reserve and National Guard have been mobilized to serve on active duty, playing an indispensable role in the Global War on Terrorism.
- ROA, being the only association representing Reserve officers in all the uniformed services, is in a unique position to advocate the needs of the Citizen Warrior.
- Citizen Warriors are a unique breed of individuals who put their lives and families on hold to serve their nation. ROA understands and seeks to explain these challenges and provide support to both Citizen Warriors and their family members.
- When America goes to war, so do its Citizen Warriors.
- Citizen Warriors increase the military’s capabilities with the skills and expertise they use every day in their diverse trades and professions.
- ROA is the only association that puts the needs of Citizen Warriors first — always!

THEME: ROA for the 21st Century

MESSAGES:

- ROA is a 21st Century organization supporting a military policy for the U.S. that will provide adequate national security.
- Since it's founding, ROA has always been focused on the future versus the past.
- In an era when Reserve Components are increasingly important to national defense, ROA's valued Congressional Charter is more relevant today than ever before.
- The Reserve and National Guard of the 21st Century must include a sustainable Operational Reserve.
- Our primary focus is unequivocally to make the Reserve Component more effective by strengthening the training, equipping, recruiting, and retention of those serving.
- ROA advocates for issues at the forefront of minds of those serving in uniform today.
- ROA reflects the experience of almost 90 years, focusing on the unique needs of reservists helping to shape the Nation's national security policy in the 21st Century.
- ROA is expressly tailored for those security challenges facing our Nation beyond the 21st Century.
- Modernizing and revamping our governance documents is a necessity to efficiently manage our organization.
- ROA has scaled back to only one convention each year to improve the quality of the event held in the winter.
- ROA is focusing on being a good steward with the dollars we have during a difficult economic period, ensuring that we continue to meet the needs of our Citizen Warriors.
- ROA is discovering and implementing new and innovative ways of conducting business.

THEME: Education

MESSAGES:

- As a flagship program of ROA, the Defense Education Forum is a nationally recognized leader in strategic defense education.
- Education and advocacy are the twin pillars of the modern ROA. Working together, they help us achieve ROA's Congressional Charter.
- Our education programs highlight national security issues, influence policy makers, and bring greater visibility to the needs of the Reserve Component.
- The Defense Education Forum produces persuasive products and educates national leaders on items of importance to national security.

THEME: Public Support of the Operational Citizen Warrior

MESSAGES:

- Public support is crucial for sustained military operations. Reservists have a closer tie to the general public than the Active Component.
- Our country must invest in our National Security. With less than one percent of our country in uniform, we must have the right tools to get the right one percent serving for the correct length of time.

THEME: ROA's Non-Partisan Legislative priorities

MESSAGES:

- The ROA is committed to assuring that the Reserve and National Guard continue in a key national defense role, both at home and abroad.
- The ROA advocates for continuously and fully funding equipment and training for the National Guard and Reserves.
- The ROA advocates for providing adequate resources and authorities to support recruiting and retention requirements of the Reserves and National Guard.
- The ROA advocates for programs and policies to better support citizen warriors, their families and survivors.
- The ROA advocates for a moratorium on reductions to the Guard and Reserve manning levels.
- ROA takes an independent stand on issues to best support the Guard and Reserve.
- ROA has established Top 10 priorities that drive our legislative agenda:
 - Resetting the Force with Modern Equipment and Facilities
 - Fully Funding Each Service's Training Accounts
 - Wounded Warrior Support Especially Traumatic Brain Injury and PTSD
 - Fixing Reserve Retirement
 - Tricare Reserve Select (TRS) Coverage for the IRR and "Gray Area" Retirees
 - Safeguarding Military Voting Rights
 - Enhancing the Protections of USERRA
 - Expanding the services of the newly established Servicemembers' Law Center
 - Improving the Servicemembers Civil Relief Act
 - Fully Funding Family Readiness and Support Programs

THEME: National Security

MESSAGES:

- ROA advocates for adequate funding for equipment and training, recruiting and retention incentives, and employment initiatives for all members of the Reserves.
- Chartered by Congress, ROA advises our country's leadership in developing military policy that leads to strong national security.
- A strong Reserve is crucial to our national and homeland security.
- Having strong reserve forces - well-trained and adequately resourced, ready to serve the nation in time of war - has always been ROA's guiding principle.
- It is imperative that leaders focus on the balance required to support the unique needs of both an Operational and Strategic Reserve.

THEME: Reserve Force Benefits

MESSAGES:

- Equitable rights and benefits for drilling Reservists are essential to recruiting and retaining America's best and brightest for a strong Reserve Component.
- While the nation has made progress toward improved policies for Reserve Forces, more needs to be done.
- ROA influences Congress to improve recruiting and retention incentives.
- ROA engages in dialogue with DoD and Congress on military personnel benefits when they are necessary to sustain a Reserve force in consideration of national security.

THEME: Financial considerations

MESSAGES:

- Maintaining a larger active military is more costly than sustaining a strong Reserve.
- Training new Reservists to replace those who leave the service is more costly than sustaining those forces already in place.
- Spending and compensation for serving Reservists should more closely reflect the Reserve's contribution to national and homeland security as it has grown.
- While the Reserve Component budget is a very small part of defense spending, the return on investment is exponential.

THEME: Law Center

MESSAGES:

- Employer Support for the Guard and Reserve is crucial to our national security.
- ROA is the only association that offers free legal services to service members, making us distinct among our peer organizations.
- Citizen Warriors need strong civil and employment rights for when they are called to serve their country. ROA's Servicemembers' Law Center fights to maintain and improve such laws.

THEME: Junior Officers

MESSAGES:

- ROA believes it vital to bring junior officers into the Association to adequately prepare them for their roles as the ROA leaders of the future.
- ROA seeks to inform the junior officer on matters relating to his military service and to national security.
- ROA counsels the junior officer in the development of his abilities and leadership as a Citizen Warrior.