



TRANSCRIPT OF
"STATE OF THE ASSOCIATION"
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2009 MID-WINTER CONFERENCE AND RESERVE COMPONENT EXPO
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Much has happened since we last met in Atlanta. Our nation has concluded the longest presidential election in its history, culminating in the election of our first African-American President. Also, now America is in the worst economic crisis in decades, which is affecting everyone and it is affecting ROA.

As I look out at this assembly today, I see three generations of outstanding patriots: Those who have served in the past, those who are serving now and those who will serve in the future.

Yet these generations are one team, bound by the ideals on which ROA was founded 87 years ago: To promote and support a strong national defense policy for the United States.

So what is ROA today? We are a well respected Twentieth Century organization in a rapidly changing, fast-paced Twenty-First century. Times are changing and ROA needs to change with them.

Last summer, I published my four goals for this year as your president. They were: to focus the attention of the Congress, the Executive Branch, the American People and all ROA members on our nation's serving Citizen Warriors; to concentrate the energies of the association on our chartered purpose, a strong national defense; to modernize ROA's governance documents; and, to establish sound plans for ROA's financial security.

Here, I give you my mid-year assessment of the status of these goals.

First: Focus the attention of the Congress, the Executive Branch, the American People and all ROA members on our nation's serving Citizen Warriors. We have done a great job concentrating ROA's *Officer Magazine* and our defense education forum programs on today's Citizen Warriors, their families and employers. Nearly 700,000 Reserve Component members have mobilized, multiple times since September 11, 2001. They are resilient, flexible and agile. They are truly a fantastic group of Americans and ROA is doing a good job of highlighting their remarkable service to the nation.

Second: Concentrate the energies of the association on our chartered purpose – a strong national defense.

We have indeed concentrated our energies on this goal, especially in written and spoken communications. In everything, we emphasize the need for a strong national defense. I reiterate

to you that we are not a Veterans or Retirees organization, nor are we a benefits-oriented organization. We are first and foremost an organization that always seeks to promote and support strong national defense policy. We are accomplishing that goal. Assistant Secretary of Defense Tom Hall's has stated that during his tenure over 200 provisions in law affecting the Reserve Components were implemented, most of which ROA influenced.

Regarding my last two goals of reforming our governance structure and strengthening our financial condition, I quoted an old piece of sailing wisdom during my inaugural remarks at the convention in Atlanta: *"We can't change the wind, but we can adjust our sails."*

We must modernize ROA's governance documents. In the Presidential Working Group 21's recommendations to the executive committee and in member surveys, it has become ever more apparent that ROA needs to have direct election of our national officers by mail and electronic means. *One member - One vote*. In December, our three service vice presidents submitted a Constitution and Bylaws Amendment to be taken up by the convention this summer whereby every member will be counted. Such empowerment of the members results in inclusion for those who cannot attend conventions, whether they be deployed, elderly or do not have the economic means to attend.

On Jan 31, the Executive committee voiced its unanimous support of the one-member, one-vote amendment.

Lastly, ROA must improve its financial stability. ROA was not immune to the market meltdown last year. For a number of years, the EXCOM has been passing deficit budgets, and while it again passed a deficit budget for 2010, it also passed a policy statement to end deficit budgeting by 2015.

Our Executive Director and financial staff have produced and presented a balanced budget initiative that will eliminate deficit budgets within a 3-5 year horizon. The plan includes expense cuts and revenue increases. Balancing the budget cannot be achieved with only one or the other. We must do both.

The Executive Committee approved this plan at its meeting two days ago and directed the Executive Director to begin executing all aspects that are within his authority to make this plan a reality. For those aspects that require formal governance changes, the Excom will work with the Constitution and Bylaws committee to propose the necessary amendments for the membership to approve.

Now, what can you do to help in these efforts?

Have your Department to adopt a resolution calling on the EXCOM to balance the budget without using our investment reserves for funding current expenses.

Make a personal commitment to understand that changes must be made to our governance structure to make ROA more attractive to today's busy Citizen Warriors.

Get your Department to support the direct voting “*One member – One vote*” amendment at the Orlando Convention in July.

Encourage more members to run for National, Department and Chapter offices by expressing your trust and confidence in their good judgment.

And finally, as I wrote in the *Officer Magazine* this month, make a personal commitment to become a sustaining member by pledging an annual gift to ROA of at least \$50.

Together, as a team, we can accomplish Great Things.

Thank you for your service and enjoy this conference celebrating the Citizen Warrior.