



# *The Michigan Reservist*

*The Official Publication for the Reserve Officers Association  
Department of Michigan*

Issue 2 – 2021

## **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Jack W. Bronka, LtCol, USAF, Retired, President

I am honored to be elected as your Department President. First, I would like to thank Commander Semerad for leading the Department for the past two years. He has significantly raised the departments visibility with ROA National.

As for myself, I am a MSU AFROTC graduate spending four years on active duty then 20 years in the active reserve, with assignments at Wright Patterson, March AFB and thirteen years at Selfridge with the 927th Tactical Airlift Group.

At our April annual Zoom Conference, we heard an excellent speaker on the Michigan Missile Launch Initiative. Also, the following members have been elected to serve as officers of the Department

President: LtCol Jack Bronka, USAF

VP Army: LTC Louis Wilson, USA

VP Sea Services: CAPT Vantz Potochnik, USN

Secretary/Treasurer: Col Don Gates, USA

Web Master/Newsletter Editor: LTC Scott Murdoch, USA

ROTC Coordinator: COL Keith Sousa, USA

I look forward to communicating with you on a regular basis, especially those who have agreed to receive communications via email. Approximately 20% of our membership has already done so. I intend to share the information that I will be receiving by attending ROA National town hall sessions. I urge you convert to email so we can communicate. Also, the Michigan Reservist, our newsletter, will be sent out quarterly.

On another note, our department needs a Vice President for Air Force. I have vacated that position upon becoming president. If you can join the EXCOM for our quarterly Zoom business meetings as well as writing Air Force articles for our newsletter, please reach out to me at [bronkaj@comcast.net](mailto:bronkaj@comcast.net).

Our department is holding its own with membership with over 700 members. Our losses have been closely offset with new members both life and term memberships.

I look forward to your inputs and hope to meet with you when we return to an in person Annual conference in 2022.

Jack



Jack W. Bronka, LtCol, USAF, Retired, President





**Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, NOAA**  
Captain Ventz Potochnik, USN (Retired), Sea Services, Vice President

# Strange Things are Happening

To quote a 1950-60's comedian, Red Buttons, "Strange things are happening" in the Sea Services and the Department of Defense in general.

According to the Commander of the Navy Reserve Force, there will be a transition from an operational status back to a strategic reserve status. As things wind down in Southwest Asia and pivot to the Pacific, the Navy Reserve will go back to being an augment force supporting the active duty component. Does this mean an end to in theater deployments every couple of years and back to supporting gaining commands? Stand by for further instructions. Also, do we go from Navy Operational Support Centers (NOSC's) back to Navy Reserve Readiness Centers (NRRC)? Reserve strength is now in the mid 50K range. Will this increase or decrease further?

As the Marines reconfigure to independent and amphibious operations, they are divesting their armor and artillery assets. They say they will depend on the Army to provide these capabilities. Will the Marine Corp Reserve lose the armor-arty mission or will they gain it?

The Coast Guard is being eyed to assume more DOD tasking but the budget does not support the increased activity. HH-65 Dolphin helicopters are being kept operational by scrounging parts from hanger queens and any other source available.

The Public Health Service (PHS) is slowly ramping down their support activities for COVID-19 inoculation and patient care.

Lots of talk about focusing on the Pacific and the People's Republic of China challenge but little is being said about PRC activity in the Arctic and Antarctic. PRC deployed 2 ice breakers this sailing season and are maintaining a sophisticated ice station facility year round in the Antarctic. They are also eyeing operations in Arctic, possibly using Russian support facilities. The Canadians recognize the threat to them and have planned for a new year round port and harbor facility and a completely new airfield complex. But, as usual, they don't have the money to provide for their "defense". The U.S. to the rescue?

And at the Pentagon, the new Secretary of Defense is pushing for instruction in critical race theory. Some in Congress are questioning this turn toward "wokeness" and what the effect on it will have on national defense. It looks to be another social experiment being foisted on the troops with little regard for moral, readiness, cohesion and other "minor issues" effecting combat capability.

Lastly, the U.S. and NATO are withdrawing from Afghanistan by Fall. What are the consequences, good and bad? Not many will miss the opportunity to deploy to this exotic location.



Captain Ventz Potochnik, U.S. Navy(Retired), Vice President, Sea Services



## From the Army Vice President

Louis Wilson, LTC, US Army Retired, Army Vice President

# Army's IVAS Goggles Let Troops See Through Walls

Modern warfare is transforming into a war of technologies. The U.S. Army is actively becoming the most technologically advanced army on the planet. The Army is developing an Integrated Visual Augmentation System (IVAS) goggles for close-combat forces. This capability plans to send thousands of new goggles into the field. The goggles can help soldiers to see in the dark, check around corners, and display digital maps and other tactical data on the goggles' lenses.

These new goggles can access feeds from the omnidirectional cameras mounted on the outside of armored vehicles. They permit the soldiers protected inside an armored Bradley vehicle, to "see" through the vehicle's walls, providing a clear picture of the scene outside.

"Now guys aren't hanging out of vehicles in dangerous situations trying to get views on what's going on," said Sgt. Philip Bartel of the 1-2 Stryker Brigade Combat Team in a recent press release. "Leadership will be able to maneuver their elements, and get view-on-target without having to leave the safety of their armored vehicles," added Bartel. "Maneuvering elements with that kind of information will minimize casualties, and will overall drastically change how we operate and increase our effectiveness on the battlefield."

The Army designed the IAVS goggles to perform like heads-up displays (HUD) used on fighter jets.

Similarly, IAVS goggles can display information like maps, video, and night vision directly in a soldier's field of view. Soldiers have recently had tactical data available. But, with IAVS, they now have instant access, a decisive advantage during combat. Rather than burrowing through their pockets for a paper map that could be based on expired intel, soldiers can quickly call up a digital map on their IAVS without looking away from the objective target. The IAVS system can also integrate with soldiers' weapons through a rifle-mounted thermal imaging night vision scope, additionally displaying a soldier's surroundings within their field of vision. This would allow soldiers to point a rifle, while taking cover, or around corners to check out what's waiting through a scope without exposing their

body to potential enemy attacks. Soldiers may also utilize IAVS to gain access to micro-drone cameras flying overhead across an active combat zone.

Made by Microsoft, the new goggles have been going through rigorous testing by soldiers during the past year. This is the Army's way of providing a true heads-up display or HUD, which wasn't accomplished in previous technological goggle attempts. Currently, soldiers must stop what they are doing to consult with a handheld device or paper to get information. No longer, these new goggles will project the vital information in real time. It's a technology Army leadership committed to as a part of their 2018 defense strategy.

In April of 2020, developers adjusted the design to take the wearer's temperature and vital body signs, which is important as the world continues to battle COVID-19, or functioning in a CBR environment. By October of 2020, Army Special Forces, Rangers, and soldiers with 25th Infantry Division, 10th Mountain Division, 82nd Airborne Division, and members of the Marine Corps had tested the device.





## From the Air Force Vice President

Jack W. Bronka Lt. Colonel, USAF, Retired, Air Force Vice President

### USAF Active Duty Rebalancing

Those of us who have been around a few years will recognize this effort once again. It should help out the Reserve Force.

Hundreds of airmen have decided to leave the Air Force as part of the service’s effort to rebalance a glut of troops who stayed in longer than expected amid the coronavirus pandemic.

In December, it was announced that the active-duty Air Force had grown to around 334,600 people, about 900 more than the goal it wanted to hit by September 2021. More people were choosing to remain in the Air Force, across nearly all career fields, than at nearly any other time in the past 20 years, he said.

As of April 16, nearly 800 airmen were approved to leave active-duty service through a waiver allowing them to retire by Sept. 1 or to separate by Sept. 29, or through the Palace Chase program, said Air Force spokesperson Capt. Leah Brading. Palace Chase lets active-duty members transfer the remaining time in their military commitment to serve in the Air National Guard or Air Force Reserve — a boon that comes as ANG retention is faltering.



Service commitment waivers must repay the government for portions of bonuses they haven’t yet earned, special pay, education assistance and other financial incentives, according to the Air Force. Palace Chase participants do not have to pay back unearned bonus money, but the service will recoup education costs once members finish their time with the Guard or reserves

The service also said it planned to cut its enlisted recruitment goal by about 1,800 people to avoid further burdening the system.

Above is a partial extraction from a recent Air Force Times issue





# The Michigan Reservist

## 2021 Annual Department Conference

The Department of Michigan had another successful virtual Department Conference this year. The conference was held virtually via zoom.

The Conference Key Note Speaker was Gavin Brown the Executive Director of Michigan Aerospace Manufacturers Association MAMA. Mr. Brown briefed the Department regarding the Michigan based space launch initiative. MAMA is a membership association providing the global aerospace industry with state-of-the-art technology, multiple manufacturing disciplines and extensive manufacturing capabilities. MAMA is focused on growing Michigan's Aerospace industry through synergy with the engineering and manufacturing competencies of the automotive industry.

The MLI is a public-private partnership that provides a collaborative platform for academia, industry, and governmental agencies to access near-earth space. The MLI will provide vertical and horizontal rocket launch capability as well as a control center for post-launch operations. The MLI leverages Michigan's unique advantages for polar orbit satellite launches: location, infrastructure, skilled workforce, economy and advanced manufacturing capability..

Launch facilities are located in Oscoda for Horizontal Launch and Marquette for Vertical Launch.

The Department Conference also included some excellent briefings from the Executive Director of ROA, MG Jeff Phillips. He gave an excellent briefing on the state of the organization and Legislative initiatives. Some of those initiatives include:

- 21-01 Military Spouse Employment Tax Credit
- 21-02 Child Care Support for Reserve Component Families
- 21-03 Full Funding and Protection for Reserve Component Full-time Support Personnel
- 21-04 Federal Benefits on Title 32 and State Active Duty Orders

Although the conference was virtual, a lot of time and effort was devoted to making an important and informative Department Conference. We wish to thank those who attended as well as those who worked so hard to make the event happen and highly encourage you to attend next year either in person or virtually!

## US Spaceports



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## The Michigan Reservist

Opinions expressed herein are those of the editor or columnists and are not necessarily those of the Department of Michigan or the Reserve Officers Association of the United States.

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