



The Michigan Reservist

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

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

Fall greetings to all of our department members. I do hope everyone is doing well. This October at the National Convention in Memphis, 20 amendments were voted on. A record number. Several would change the basic structure of ROA. Amendment 17 would have disbanded individual State Departments and instead states would be called chapters and clustered into 13 districts with districts reporting directly to national. Michigan would have been clustered with Illinois and Indiana. Voting on this amendment was not taken and instead it was postponed.



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

I wish to recognize LtCol Graydon Dimkoff, USAF, Ret, for stepping forward and accepting the role of VP Air Force for the department. He joins the Executive Committee in the administration of the department.

The EXCOM voted to contribute some of its finances this budget year to support COVID impacted veteran/military support activities. I was proud to present our first check in October to the treasurer of the Freedom Center. The freedom center operates comfort centers at both airport terminals in Detroit for travelling military and their families. We wish our members to know that the department is sensitive to the difficult times facing many of our veteran/military support activities due to the pandemic.



ROA 2021 National Convention Memphis

The EXCOM is currently planning the 2022 Annual Conference, right now we are considering a hybrid in person meeting coupled with zoom access, pandemic restrictions permitting. The conference will be held in April 2022 and details will follow in our February newsletter.

Again, I look forward to your inputs at bronkaj@comcast.net and hope to meet with you when we can return to an in person annual conference in 2022. As always, our thoughts and prayers are with those serving and in harms way.



Jack



Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, NOAA

Captain Ventz Potochnik, USN (Retired), Sea Services, Vice President

Is the Navy Totally Lost at Sea?

Below is an interesting opinion piece regarding the Navy post Afghanistan conflict, and summarizes its readiness. This is an excerpt of an opinion letter written by Stephen Cohen a former member of the board of directors of the U.S. Naval Institute.

The U.S. Navy is adrift in unfriendly seas. Befuddled by tough choices, dogged by inadequate training and crippled by poor judgment, our sea service is ill-prepared to meet its greatest challenges since World War II.

Look at the forces lining up against it: A bellicose China that threatens Taiwan and the entire Western Pacific, as well as a resurgent Russia, bent on claiming the entire melting polar region as its own. Our Navy appears to drift from shoal to shore, pursuing strategies and tactics that seem obsolete from the day they are implemented. From fleet design to basic training, our admirals and senior civilian leaders are behaving in ways reminiscent of Jimmy Breslin's "The Gang that Couldn't Shoot Straight."

The most egregious examples, of course, involved two destroyers stationed in the Pacific. In separate incidents in 2017, each collided with a merchant ship in what were clearly avoidable accidents. A total of 17 sailors lost their lives, and investigations by the Navy and journalists concluded that the collisions stemmed from inadequate training combined with understaffed and overworked crews.

Senior Navy leaders have a responsibility to say to civilian overseers, "No can do, sir. We don't have the resources to be in two places at once." Yet that is precisely what the Navy brass failed to say for years. Instead, their can-do attitude — while heroic in World War II — failed them in an era of dispersed conflicts and inadequate budgets.

Not knowing what ships the Navy should build to accomplish current and future missions is a serious weakness. But so is constructing a fleet that is ill-suited to a mission or simply doesn't work as promised. This is what happened when the Navy introduced two variations of its littoral combat ship (LCS) — small, fast, supposedly flexible vessels that were designed to have "plug-and-play" modules to allow them to be quickly reconfigured for evolving mission needs. Ten years after their introduction into the fleet, the ships are being retired as quickly as possible — less than halfway through their expected service life — to make funds available for an entirely new class of frigate. Admitting a costly error is important; preventing it from being repeated can save both lives and dollars. Disturbingly, there is little evidence that Navy leadership learned from its mistakes with the LCS.

So where did the Navy decide to save money? Several weeks ago, it announced that it would be closing base libraries, 48 auto hobby shops, and cutting back gym and pool hours — in an effort to save \$280 million. Granted, \$280 million is a lot of money, but it doesn't begin to make a dent in billion- and trillion-dollar cost overruns.

Moreover, nothing could be more shortsighted or have a more devastating impact on Naval morale than cutting these services. The Navy's backbone is its personnel. It's insultingly bad policy to tell sailors they are not important enough to merit ping-pong tables. Such penny-wise-pound-foolish decisions send a clear message to the people willing to serve their country: "You and your spouses and your children really don't matter. Your quality of life is unimportant to us."

The stupidity of this decision is staggering. Every young officer and NCO learns from day one that their most important job is taking care of their people. Ships, strategies, tactics are all secondary to people. When I mentioned this decision to some enlisted Marines, they were staggered: "Do they not understand what impact this will have on mental health? Are they not aware of the suicide problem plaguing the military? It is the little things, like gym availability and pool hours, that contribute to morale and mental health. Otherwise, it's just drinking and tattoos."

Sadly, they are right. The Navy's leadership — civilian and uniformed — needs a dramatic wake-up call. Accountability must mean something. The Navy needs a clean deck, and well-thought-out policies that honor its traditions.





From the Army Vice President

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

THAAD Air Defense Missile Program

The U.S. Army has a “layered defensive shield” to protect high-value sites against hostile incoming air born attacks. The Patriot PAC-3 together with newer the Terminal High-Altitude Area Defense (THAAD) missile systems provide protection.

The THAAD missile system is an easily transportable defensive weapon system to protect against hostile tactical and theater ballistic missiles, at ranges of 200km and altitudes of up to 150km. It provides the upper tier of a defensive shield to protect high-value strategic or tactical military sites and population centers. The THAAD missile intercepts exo-atmospheric and endo-atmospheric threats. The sites would also be protected with lower and medium-tier defensive shield systems, such as the Patriot PAC-3, which intercepts hostile incoming missiles at 20 to 100 times lower altitudes.

In 1992, Lockheed Martin Missiles and Space and other industrial partners were awarded a \$689 million contract to develop the THAAD system. Raytheon was selected as sub-contractor to develop the ground-based radar.

The U.S. Army is also working to integrate the Patriot medium-range air-and-missile defense system with



THAAD in response to operational needs on the Korean Peninsula and Middle East. Those efforts use the same principles of decoupling launchers and radars so that an operator can use a THAAD radar (which can see farther than a Patriot radar), but decide to engage a Patriot interceptor depending on the threat picture. The ability to use the THAAD radar gets more out of the Patriot Advanced Capability-3 Missile Segment Enhancement (PAC-3 MSE) missile fired from Patriot units, which outperforms the organic Patriot radar.

The need for THAAD has grown as the Army integrates the system, along with the Patriot Air-and-Missile Defense system, into a more robust regional missile defense architecture capable of defending against near-peer threats like China and Russia. The MDA is eyeing THAAD as an element for a more layered approach to homeland defense against intercontinental ballistic missiles. The agency unveiled plans in its FY21 budget request in February 2021 to create a more layered homeland defense system that would include regional missile defense capability already resident with the Navy and Army to bolster homeland defense against ICBMs.

The MDA is requesting \$139 million to develop the THAAD underlay as part of the homeland defense architecture along with \$135 million to integrate the Aegis BMD system.



The MDA is eyeing THAAD as an element for a more layered



From the Air Force Vice President

Graydon W. Dimkoff, Lt. Col., USAFR, Retired, Vice President Air Force Section

F-35A Lighting II Live-Frie Exercises and Jet Fuel from Thin Air

The 356th Fighter Squadron made history as the first F-35A Lightning II Unit in the Pacific Air Forces to participate in an air-to-air weapons evaluation at Tyndall Air Force Base, October 8th-23rd. This is only the second fifth- generation platform to be evaluated on live-fire air-to-air weapons employment in support of national defense strategy objectives.

Successful completion of the weapons system evaluation program marked a milestone for the 356th fighter squadron as it took a crucial step toward becoming the first Initial Operational Capability F-35A squadron in PACAF. “An F-35A stationed in the Pacific is one thing, an F-35A stationed in the Pacific that has successfully passed WSEP is another,” said Chief Master Sgt. Scott Grabham, 53rd Weapons Evaluation Group, chief enlisted manager.



Can Jet Fuel Be Made Out Of Thin Air?

According to an article published Oct 22nd, 2021, by Corrie Poland of Air Force Operational Energy, the Air Force is looking into groundbreaking transformational technology. Separate from carbon capture and storage or carbon utilization, carbon transformation can turn carbon dioxide from the air into nearly any chemical, material or fuel, including jet fuel.

In 2020, Air Force Operational Energy endorsed the carbon transformation company Twelve, to launch a pilot program to demonstrate that their proprietary technology could convert CO₂ into operationally viable aviation fuel called E-Jet.

For the Air Force, the implications of this innovation could be profound. At the height of the war in Afghanistan, attacks on fuel and water convoys accounted for more than 30% of casualties. Fuel demand is only expected to increase as weapons systems and operations require increasing levels of power.

More information on this story can easily be accessed by googling “Jet Fuel Out Of Thin Air”.



ROTC Director

ROA Department of Michigan, Colonel Keith Sousa, US Army Reserve (Retired)

The academic school year has begun, and the ROTC/JROTC programs are now in full swing. The focus of this article is on JROTC. The JROTC program began with the National Defense Act of 1916, which established organized JROTC programs at public and private educational institutions. In 1964, Congress expanded the program to all military services and changed from active duty to shared support from the services and schools.

As congressionally mandated by Title 10 United States Code, Section 2031, each military service must have a JROTC program “to instill in students in United States secondary educational institutions the values of citizenship, service to the United States, and personal responsibility and a sense of accomplishment.” JROTC’s mission; “To Motivate Young People to be Better Citizens”, is the guidepost for the programs success. *

JROTC cadets will learn to appreciate the ethical values that underline good citizenship, develop leadership potential and learn to live and work cooperatively with others, think logically and communicate effectively both orally and in writing, appreciate the importance of physical fitness in maintaining good health, fitness, wellness and good nutrition, develop mental management abilities and to understand the importance of high school graduation for a successful future, as well as learn about college and other educational and employment opportunities.**



In Michigan there are JROTC programs located throughout the state that represent; Air Force, Army, Marine Corps and Navy. The Reserve Organization America (ROA) in Michigan provides certificates and medal sets for outstanding cadets in Anchor Bay High School, Benjamin Carson High School (Detroit), Cass Tech High School (Detroit), Detroit International Academy, Flint Northwestern High School, Hancock High School (Hancock), Jackson Area Career Center, King High School (Detroit), Osborn High School (Detroit), Renaissance High School (Detroit), Union High School (Detroit), Wayne Memorial High School, Genesee Career Center (Flint), Communications Media Arts High School (Detroit), and the Taylor High School.

The curriculum for JRTC programs includes course work on leadership, civics, geography and global awareness, health, wellness, language arts, life skills and U.S. history. In addition JROTC cadets learn military drill and ceremonies, rank recognition, military courtesy, land navigation, weapons familiarization, and physical fitness. Programs are for freshmen through seniors in high school. Instructors are generally retired active duty military, or retirees from the Guard or Reserve forces, and include officers, warrant officers and non-commissioned officers. Although only a small percentage of ROTC cadets actually join the U.S. military after graduating from high school, the skills they learn by participating in a JROTC program will help them to be better students, but will also help them as they start their life journeys’.

Award ceremonies for high schools and career centers are normally conducted in the spring each year, before the end of the academic year. If you are interested in assisting in a JROTC program, contact the instructors at the respective schools within the state. Also, if you wish to present certificates and medal sets to cadets on behalf of the ROA, please contact me at: 1OldSoldier53@gmail.com or by cell phone at (313) 580-5408.

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The Michigan Reservist

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