

ROA Celebrates Centennial; Launches into Second Century of Service to America

Since 1922, America's only national military organization solely and exclusively focused on support of the Reserve and National Guard



WASHINGTON, DC, USA, October 14, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- With its

centennial national convention in the

Washington, D.C., area, Sept. 30 to Oct 2, now "on the books," the [Reserve Organization of America](#), formed on Oct. 2, 1922, and congressionally chartered in June 1950, looks forward to its second century of service to American military readiness.

“

We are smarter and leaner and legislatively keener than we were before. Your ROA has been racking up victories in the Congress and the Pentagon even as we have revitalized ourselves.”

ROA National President, Capt. Robert H. Carmack, U.S. Coast Guard (Ret.)

“We are smarter and leaner and legislatively keener than we were before,” ROA’s national president, retired U.S. Coast Guard Capt. Robert H. Carmack said in his convention opener. “Your ROA has been racking up victories in the Congress and the Pentagon even as we have revitalized ourselves over the past several years.”

The convention opened with presentation of the Colors by the Joint Armed Forces Color Guard from the Military District of Washington and presentation of the John R. Delafield Achievement Award to retired USCGR Capt. Henry E. Plimack for his dedicated support to ROA’s communications programs. The opening keynote by

Reserve Forces Policy Board Military Executive Maj. Gen. John B. Hashem, USAR, expressed the need for strong Reserve and National Guard forces, and applauded ROA’s alignment with the board’s work to achieve that readiness.

Recognition of exemplary conduct in support of the Reserve Components followed, with ROA’s Twice the Citizen Award of key people in the June 29 Supreme Court victory of retired USAR Capt. Le Roy Torres of Texas. The victory affirmed the supremacy of federal Uniformed Services Employment and Reemployment Rights Act (USERRA) law over disgraceful state attempts to circumvent that law and rob activated members of the Reserve Components of their livelihood.

The ROA Twice the Citizen Award goes to citizens who have shown exemplary support of ROA programs – which support military readiness of the Reserve and National Guard (the “Reserve Components”), and the care provided to families and veterans of Reserve Component service.

Twice the Citizen Awardees were:

Capt. Le Roy Torres, who as a serving Army reservist in Iraq in 2007 was exposed to burn pit toxins, returned home with worsening debilities. He was forced to resign as a Texas State Trooper without accommodation by the governor of Texas. His courageous fight to the Supreme Court and his victory there will benefit veterans for generations.

“Without ROA, this would not have been possible,” the lead trial counsel said of the Supreme Court victory. “Thank you again for your tireless support of not only our case, but for all Reserve/Guard personnel.”

Rep. Joaquin Castro (TX-20), the Torres’ congressman, who championed their case.

Andrew Tutt, Arnold and Porter law firm attorney who argued the Torres case before the Supreme Court.

Brian Lawler, Pilot Law partner and retired U.S. Marine Corps lieutenant colonel who provided invaluable counsel on the case.

Dr. Anthony Szema, Clinical Associate Professor of Medicine, Occupational Medicine, Epidemiology and Prevention, Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell, and Director, International Center of Excellence in Deployment Health and Medical Geosciences, Northwell Health, who advised on pulmonary and internal medicine issues.



ROA's founders in the Willard Hotel's Crystal Room, Oct. 2, 1922



ROA members and guests celebrate the association's centennial in the original Washington, DC, Willard Hotel Crystal Room.

Scott Felder, Wiley Rein LLP attorney and partner, and retired Army judge advocate general lieutenant colonel who provided invaluable counsel on the case.

Dr. Robert F. Miller, Patricia and Rodes Hart Chair in Medicine and Professor of Clinical Medicine, Vanderbilt University, who advised on pulmonary issues.

The Sergeant First Class Heath Robinson Honoring our Promise to Address Comprehensive Toxics (PACT) Act of 2022 was signed into law Aug. 10 by the president; it is already providing expanded VA health care and benefits for veterans of Vietnam, Desert Storm and the recent war afflicted with debilities and illnesses from battlefield toxins such as emissions from burn pits.

Receiving Twice the Citizen Awards for their leading role in passage of the PACT Act were:

Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand of New York.

Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida.

Rep. Mark Takano (CA-41), chairman, House Committee on Veterans' Affairs.

Rep. Raul Ruiz (CA-36).

Mrs. Rosie Torres, Burnpits360.org founder and wife of Captain Torres.

Jon Stewart, television personality and veterans' advocate.

John Feal, founder of the FealGood Foundation.

ROA was also centrally involved in the fight for the PACT Act and will continue to engage on the topic of battlefield toxicity.

ROA's new Citizen-Warrior Coalition enhances military readiness in the Reserve Components, by attracting the support of private-sector employers for the hiring and retention of serving members of the Reserve Components. The Citizen-Warrior Coalition, of critical importance, offers these citizen-warriors service- and career-enhancing benefits, in part funded by its industry partners.

Among benefits, ROA is pioneering a mentorship program, and has developed an in-demand [STARS](#) in Schools kit that directs parents and educators to resources useful in supporting children of deployed parents. Unlike children of active-duty parents who attend on-base schools, those with a parent or two serving in the Reserve or National Guard attend "civilian schools" which are often unfamiliar with the stresses and demands associated with a parent's deployment.

Associated with the Citizen-Warrior Coalition, ROA's convention featured a panel discussion, "The Role of the Private Sector in Preserving the All-Volunteer Force." Fox News Correspondent Jennifer Griffin moderated the panel which comprised representatives of private-sector employers; military leadership, including Command Sergeant Major of the Army Reserve Andrew Lombardo; The Secretary of Defense Reserve Forces Policy Board (RFPB); DoD's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR); and experts on USERRA and human relations law.

The panel was preceded by a riveting discussion between Griffin and Tim Kennedy, serving National Guard NCO, former mixed martial arts champ, and founder of Save Our Allies; Kennedy as a private citizen “on the ground” helped refugees safely leave Kabul.

The convention heard a “State of the Association” update from Executive Director Jeffrey E. Phillips, echoing the need for strong Reserve Components -- and ROA’s undiminished role in that fight. While COVID ravaged much of the association’s revenues, he told the members that ROA is back, financially stable with recovering revenues and a capital campaign that has topped \$4.5 million, and growing programs to fulfill its century-long mission.

Following Phillips, ROA’s new director of legislation and military policy, Matthew Schwartzman, wowed attendees with his comprehensive brief on ROA’s legislative agenda, which includes duty status reform, “24/7/365” military healthcare for all members of the Selected Reserve, reducing effects of inflation to sustain family financial readiness, and ensuring Reserve Component equipping and training interoperability with the Active Component.

Association business included service section meetings, consideration of resolutions, and election of new officers, including National President-elect Layne R. Wroblewski, a lieutenant colonel in the U.S. Air Force Reserve and corporate CPA. A convention high point was the ROA STARS Foundation’s reception in the Willard Hotel’s grand Crystal Room. The room was the site of the 1922 Washington, D.C., inaugural convention and founding. Before the reception, members and guests attended a wreath laying at the new memorial to General John J. Pershing nearby.

But before service sections convened, the convention was treated to a musical surprise of historical note. Playing patriotic numbers between sessions, a 12-piece ensemble of the Rockville Concert Band played “The R.O.A. March,” composed in 1949 by ROA member Lt. Col. Carl J. Koenig, and not heard in decades; perhaps one or two in the audience had ever heard it! ROA staff had found the score in some old files. Executive Director Phillips asked the band’s conductor, Dr. Juan Gallastegui, if his band could play it (Gallastegui is also Phillips’ trumpet teacher). The jaunty “Souza-esque” piece brought cheers -- and a few gasps when the executive director got out his trumpet and joined in.

New to ROA are two writing contests, the Alex A.C. Gerry Writing Contest, won by retired USAF Col. Richard E. Nelson III, a longtime ROA leader, for whom Taps was sounded in April, for the entry, “Reserve Forces are Essential to National Security and So is ROA.” The award was accepted by Colonel Nelson’s son, Richard Nelson IV, a serving Navy lieutenant and like his dad, a military pilot.

The Children’s Writing Contest winning entries were “He Walked Through the Door,” by twins Isabella and Olivia Fishman, and “My Story as a Military Child,” by Joseph P. Hettich. Each prize brings a roundtrip to Washington, D.C., plus \$1,000 for expenses. Winning entries for the awards are in the August ROA Reserve Voice Online, on ROA’s website.

Interviewed by Executive Director Phillips, the association's Budget and Finance Committee chair, retired USAR Lt. Col. Hazel Robinson, reflected on the discomfort she felt as an African American lieutenant assigned to an Army post named for a Confederate general. (ROA, alone among national military organizations, had written the president and Congress supporting "base renaming" in 2020.)

Reminiscences by Maj. Gen. Roger Sandler, a former Chief of Army Reserve, and Maj. Gen. Evan "Curly" Hultman, Army veteran of WWII, both past national presidents, drew parallels between the perils faced in the past by the U.S. confronting growing tyranny and today's national security environment.

With members in black tie and mess dress, and spouses in elegance, the annual convention banquet applauded the award of ROA's premier expressions of recognition. The ROA Minuteman Hall of Fame Award went to departing Chief of the Air Force Reserve Lt. Gen. Richard W. Scobee, accepted by Command Chief Master Sergeant of Air Force Reserve Command Timothy C. White, Jr., who made remarks on General Scobee's behalf. The Minuteman Hall of Fame Award went posthumously to an ROA founder and champion of the Reserve forces, General of the Armies John "Black Jack" Pershing.

The Harry S. Truman Achievement Award went to Col. Judi and Col. John Davenport for their lifetime of service to ROA; Judi is immediate past national president.

The ROA Minuteman of the Year Award will be made separately Oct. 18 to retiring U.S. Sen. Roy Blunt of Missouri, for his longstanding support of the Reserve Components and national security.

Fittingly, the banquet keynote address linked the evening to ROA history with remarks by Clifton Truman Daniel, a grandson of another ROA founder and champion, President Harry S. Truman. A National Guard artillery battery commander in WWI and later an Army Reserve officer, Truman as president signed ROA's congressional charter on June 29, 1950.

Closing the convention, National President Carmack thanked ROA's sponsors which include AMBA, BMBFC Law, Capital Bank, Condor Communications, Humana Military, John and Judi Davenport, Reserve Organization of America Dept. of Virginia, and United Healthcare. He then launched ROA on its second century of service to America. Its second century promises to offer as many -- or more -- opportunities for ROA's contributions as the first.

Maj. Gen. Jeffrey Phillips
Reserve Organization of America
+1 202-230-9463
[email us here](#)

This press release can be viewed online at: <https://www.einpresswire.com/article/595972433>

EIN Presswire's priority is source transparency. We do not allow opaque clients, and our editors try to be careful about weeding out false and misleading content. As a user, if you see something we have missed, please do bring it to our attention. Your help is welcome. EIN Presswire, Everyone's Internet News Presswire™, tries to define some of the boundaries that are reasonable in today's world. Please see our Editorial Guidelines for more information.

© 1995-2022 Newsmatics Inc. All Right Reserved.