

Presidents Report 2010

This has been a busy year for the Officers, Staff, Committees Unit Representatives, and our Retiree Network of your North Carolina National Guard Association as we work in the interest of our 15,770 members. There have been many visits to bases and armories for ceremonies, dedications, and graduations. There have been trips to Raleigh and to home districts to call on legislators. Our Standing Committee's have met more than 40 times using old-fashioned face-to-face sessions complimented by teleconferencing, email voting, and other tools to offset the increasing workloads for those on our committees. And, we have seen some positives and some negatives during these twelve months.

On the positive side:

* We continued to see "good" membership and insurance numbers, hovering around 83% and 76% respectively. There has been a growth of over 2000 new members since January on 2007 of whom over 1800 are carrying Association insurance.

*Our investments are stable and taking advantage of the upswing in the markets.

*We've been able to significantly lower our operating expenses through the diligent work of our committees and fulltime staff to reduce coast so that we are now expecting to draw only half of what we originally projected to need for the next year. And, if our Experience Refund turns out to be as positive as we hope and is indicated now, that figure could go even lower.

*We are taking the first steps in forming a Junior Enlisted and Officer Committee giving voice to those junior members who have needed a platform such as this for many years. They will be given responsibilities and opportunities commensurate with their goals and involvement.

*Our magazine, the Tarheel Guardsman, the prime method of communicating with our membership is now beautifully published in 4 colors and is being done so at a lowest cost than it has been for many years.

* Our new web site is active and constantly growing as we address the needs of our membership to communicate and as we move from print media to the digital format. It offers the potential for an entire new world of opportunities including e commerce.

* Our opportunities to open new revenue sources are growing as we explore innovative ways to bring funds into the Association coffers. E commerce, Armory/Base calendars, endowments, insurance products, new Corporate Sponsorship and Legacy Bridge Programs offer great potential to bring in monies needed to keep this Association healthy and growing as we work to meet the needs and improve the benefits of our members.

* The Staff is enervated and exited about the future. In addition to their many normal duties, they have made significant cuts to their budget, put in place new security measures to protect your identity, updated their computers and software, and have attended functions when Association members were not available, They have been good stewards and custodians of the Association's building and they are working as a team to make certain they remain a positive asset for all of us.

*We continue to have a very good relationship with the TAG and his legislative staff working constantly working with them on matters of mutual interest.

*.We still offer a good insurance product that is inexpensive and guarantees that beneficiaries will have a check in their hand within 24 hours of the event.

And, on negative side:

*The downside of Association membership numbers is that there are some units that are decidedly below the average indicating a need for greater education and emphasis. Also each 1% increase in membership in the Association has the potential to bring in \$5000.00 and a host of new talent. We need capture that potential.

*The economy, while bottoming out, is still very lethargic leaving companies hesitant to invest, slowing job growth and leaving many unemployed and uninsured. Households are hesitant to spend as discretionary spending has been reduced meaning tough times for raising money for organizations like ours. This situation meant a lower tax base and is put a stranglehold on national and state budgets expected to continue for the foreseeable future. This negatively impacted our expectations in the legislative arena.

*Communications are still a serious problem. We publish 15,000 copies of the Tarheel Guardsman 6 times a year but each issue is at least a month old when our members receive them. Emails are an alternative, however, at present we have only 2200 email addresses, about 14% of membership. This is extremely limiting in terms of providing current or rapidly changing information, getting rapid and representative feedback, and for interaction of our membership. The new web site provides an instantaneous way to get members emails but the word is only slowly getting out. We must have these emails if we are to survive as a relevant Association in my opinion.

Your Association's leadership is trying hard to solve these problems and with your help we will.

On the legislative side we continued with our "First in Line" approach, canvassing about two-dozen of the key members of the NC General Assembly to get a feel for what our approach should be in the short session. Our tentative legislative plan includes increasing our monthly pension, securing a state tax exemption for Title 32 pay, refunding the Tuition Assistance Program, and re-establishing funding for the Family Assistance Centers. How hard we push for these will be determined by these visits, but regardless of the strength of the push, we will be placing this plan in front of the legislators to keep them informed so that when times get better we will first in line.

We continued to watch and interact with our national organizations EANGUS and NGAUS, to insure that issues affecting the health, well-being, manning, training, and equipping of our Solders and Airmen are supported

We have had great support from our committees this year, at considerable sacrifice of their personal time. Under the strong leadership of our Chairpersons, it is in our committees where the real work of the Association was done on behalf of our members. They are to be commended on their accomplishments, their involvement and their commitment. It has been a good, but hard year. We have a ways to go before I am satisfied that this Association is on firm financial footing. But, the future as always is ours to shape. If we address those three constant and bothersome issues of limited time, money, and communication the future is ours and the benefits for our members will be unlimited.