

ROA opens membership to all ranks, adopts fitting 'DBA' name



ROA "mustangs," five past national presidents who were first enlisted before becoming officers, gather at the association's national convention in Omaha, Neb., Sept. 29. From left, Col. Ralph Carlson, USAF (Ret.), Maj. Gen. Roger Sandler, USA (Ret.), Maj. Gen. Evan "Curly" Hultman, USA (Ret.), Brig. Gen. William Basnett, USAF (Ret.), and Col. Paul Groskreutz, USA (Ret.). On Sunday, ROA members voted to expand membership eligibility to all ranks in a historic move to increase the association's inclusivity.

In a historic move to increase inclusivity and better reflect the Reserve force it serves, ROA members on Sunday voted to expand membership eligibility to all ranks in all of the nation's uniformed Reserve Components. The expansion is immediately effective and means that ROA's membership is now open to any serving or former member of the U.S. military, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, or NOAA who served under honorable conditions.

"ROA is the only national military group that solely and exclusively focuses on support of America's Reserve Components," said the association's executive director, Jeff Phillips. "We represent all ranks, their families, and veterans of the Reserve force; now we welcome all ranks into membership."

Previously, ROA membership was open to noncommissioned officers, warrant officers, and officers in these services. The association, all male at its 1922 founding, opened membership to women officers in 1927 and Naval officers after World War II. Currently 20 percent of all new members are NCOs, although recent experiences indicate that percentage could climb.

Meeting in Omaha, Neb., ROA members also approved a proposal to establish a new "doing businesses as" name that reflects the expanded membership criteria. Retaining its chartered name and the abbreviation "ROA," the association can also be known by the DBA, "Reserve Organization of America."

Membership dues were also the target of reform, with annual dues halved to \$20 and life membership dues simplified from a scale of charges based on age, to a single \$450.