

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Army Reserve Project

Army Reserve in Youngstown

O. H. 232

JOSEPH V. RESS, JR.

Interviewed

by

David S. Arms

on

April 19, 1976

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

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INTERVIEWEE: JOSEPH V. RESS, JR.

INTERVIEWER: David S. Arms

SUBJECT: Army Reserves in Youngstown

DATE: April 19, 1976

A: This is an interview with Mr. Joseph Ress by David Arms for the Youngstown State University Oral History Program, April 19, 1976 at the Naval Reserve Center, 315 East LaClede, Youngstown, Ohio, at approximately 11:20 a.m.

Mr. Ress, we will start this interview by my asking you a little bit about your personal background, where you were born, brought up, and educated.

R: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1922. I was educated in the Youngstown school system. I graduated from Chaney High School in January 1939. I worked for various companies, Isaly's Dairy, A & P Tea Company, and the Vindicator as a newscarrrier during my younger days. I became a full time employee of the Ohio Bell Telephone Company in January 1941.

I went into the service with the Ohio State National Guard in Youngstown in July 1940. We were federalized for one year in October 1940. I received a dependency discharge in December 1940 when my dad passed away. I was then engaged by the Ohio Bell Telephone Company as an installer in January 1941. I reenlisted in the Army Signal Corps in October 1942.

A: You are employed by the phone company?

R: Yes.

A: Can I ask what your position is there?

- R: I am a Plant Manager of Special Services in the Youngstown area.
- A: You said you were in the National Guard to start with. What was your position with them?
- R: I was a Private in the Infantry as a machine gunner. I started with them in July 1940. I went to two weeks active duty camp with them the first summer. In October 1940, we were federalized for one year of service.
- A: What made you join the National Guard at that time?
- R: I liked camping out, and was an adventurous type. There were three of us that graduated from high school in 1939 that joined. We joined under the PAL program. I also know some of the members in the unit.
- A: When you say you were federalized, can you explain that briefly?
- R: Yes. World War II was already under way. The National Guard was called into service in October 1940 for one year of active duty training. As it turned out, they stayed on extended duty because the USA declared war. We were sent to Camp Shelby, Hattiesburgh, Mississippi.
- A: Do you recall what you actually did during this training period?
- R: Yes, during our training at the home station here, before we went to camp, we engaged in basic training. We were taught close-order drill, the various marching commands, and formations. I was part of the machine gun crew, and was taught the assembly, and disassembly of the .30 caliber Browning, water-cooled machine gun. I was mounted on a two-wheeled cart, and pulled by two members of the crew. We practiced dry-fire procedures. This was without live ammunition.
- When we went to the two weeks active duty at Camp McCoy, Sparta, Wisconsin, we fired bland and live ammunition on the firing range. We were on field maneuvers for the entire two weeks there.
- A: You were discharged from the National Guard in 1940, and then returned to civilian life, and went to work for the Ohio Bell Telephone Company. Is that correct?
- R: That is correct. I started with the telephone company in 1941.

A: What prompted you to rejoin the military service?

R: When my dad died on November 1, 1940, three of us remained in the family; my mother, my younger brother, and myself. At that time I was twenty, and my brother was seventeen. My father had left a small business, Ress Music Store, and my brother and mother were trying to run it. The business was not doing well. That prompted my starting with the telephone company to augment the family income. When my brother reached the age of eighteen I was no longer considered for family support dependency, and I became eligible for the draft. During this period I became married in May 1942. In October of 1942, five of my co-workers and myself went to the Signal Corps Recruiting Station in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We enlisted in the Army Signal Corps. We were all under draft status, and preferred to enlist in civilian speciality, communications. We were inducted together, and took basic training at Camp Edison, Seagirt, New Jersey.

A: Were you drafted or did you volunteer?

R: As I stated before, I volunteered. That way I was assured of a Signal Corps assignment rather than taking a chance of some other branch of service.

A: What was your interest in the Signal Corps at the time?

R: I was an installer in Youngstown for the telephone company. I felt it would be beneficial to me as well as the service to improve my skill in the communication field.

After completing our basic training, I made an overnight hike to Fort Monmouth, Little Silver, New Jersey. I entered the Wire School, and completed the Field Wire Course. During this training period four of us, from various Bell Telephone Companies, were called into the School Commandant's office. We were asked if we would be interested in being commissioned as Second Lieutenants in the Signal Corps. Of course we were, was our reply.

We would have to pass a screening board. We applied, and the four of us passed the board, and were assigned to the OCS / Officers Candidate School / at Fort Monmouth. I graduated in June 1943.

A: What kind of duties were you assigned after that?

R: I was assigned to the Officers School as a student. I completed the Field Wire Course, the Officers Motor Transport Course, and the Officers Message Center Team Course.

The message center concept was a new innovation. Included in the training was Morse code procedure, radio operators procedure, and the teletype repair course.

While we went through the courses as officers, we had the same requirements to complete as the enlisted men. In December 1943, I was transferred to Washington, D. C. I was assigned to Arlington Hall Station, Virginia. I was assigned to a classified training course. In June 1944, I was assigned, as a direct addition, to a unit overseas. I landed in Africa on July 4, 1944.

A: You went to Africa?

R: I stayed in Africa for five weeks until I joined my detachment that had previously departed to Italy. I joined them, and remained with them until August 1945. At that time we were rotated back to the United States with a 30 day delay prior to shipping to the Pacific to relieve a unit there. Of course, that did not come about as the peace treaty was signed with Japan. I was released from active duty in September 1945 from Fort Monmouth with a terminal leave time going till November 1945.

A: Then what happened?

R: I resumed my position with the telephone company in October 1945. As there was no reserve program at the time of separation, we were told that our commission would remain active. There were no retirement programs, or other benefits for reservists at that time.

In January 1946, I received a letter that a meeting would be held in Youngstown to give us information on the future of the Reserve Program. Various meetings were held in the old Central Auditorium in Youngstown with Military representatives coming in from the headquarters in Pittsburgh. They spoke to us on things that were planned for the future. This was done to keep up the spirit of the reservists. They spoke of units that would be formed, and authorized meetings that would be scheduled. They would

be scheduled. They would provide the space, but the actual training would have to be provided by our own initiative.

As the senior Signal Officer in the area, the Captain, I recruited reservists with communication background into a training unit. Many were from the local telephone company. We met, and trained one night a week for two hours. We borrowed communication equipment from various sources for our training. The second year we arranged to borrow surplus equipment from Fort Meade, Maryland. We reconditioned equipment by using parts of equipment to make good units. This continued for about two years.

At that time we received a TO&E (Table of Organization & Equipment) unit designation. We continued to drill, documenting our attendance as required. In June of 1949, the point system for mandatory attendance, and credit for retirement was announced. In July of 1949, it became official.

You received one point for each drill attended, and one point for each day of active duty for training. To qualify for a "good" year for retirement, we had to accumulate 50 points in one year. We also received 360 points, or a fraction there of for our active duty years during World War II. We also received 50 points per year for the years between our separation from active duty to the end of June 1949. We really did not go to camp for active duty for training, two weeks, until 1951. It was our first mandatory two weeks training. We were ordered to Fort Meade, Maryland.

A: Were you getting paid at all after 1949?

R: Yes. We started getting paid for 24 drill days, then went to 36 drill days, and finally went to 48 drill days. In order to meet our 50 point requirements, we scheduled additional non-pay days during the period. We were paid less than 48 drill days. However, as we were either reorganized or redesignated about every 18 months, the change order would designate a duty off date, but the new unit activation order would not be effective for about one to three months. Thus, there would be a lapse of authorized paid drills. We would continue to attend drills on a non-paid status, for points only.

The active duty advisors, prior to 1951, were not assigned in Youngstown, but were out of another area.

Thus, they could not adequately service us.

In 1951, the Army Reserve Center at 399 Miller Street, in Youngstown, Ohio, was opened. It was later redesignated the Kefurt Army Reserve Center. We had to meet in the garage annex in 1951, prior to going to camp, as the Army Engineers would not accept the building until the contractor made certain adjustments in the construction.

Shortly, full time advisors, enlisted as well as officers, were assigned to the center to service the reservists in this area. It was about three years later, 1954, that the first Signal Corps advisor was assigned to the center. The assignment of the full time advisors were not based on the branches of the units at the center, but on the availability of persons to be assigned.

We, in the Signal Unit, had about 180 members, but no qualified advisors for long periods of time. Redesignation of our unit continued about every 18 to 24 months. Thus, the required military specialties, required under the new designation, would change, making it difficult to match the current members skills to the new MOS / Military Occupational Speciality / required, and the rank provided.

We went from Wire Operation Company, Radio Relay Company, to Signal Operation Company. There were some that I even forgot about.

This would result in turning in what little equipment we had that was not authorized under the old unit, and ordering new equipment under the new designation. Naturally, the new equipment would be months in coming, if at all. We would have to begin retraining individuals into their new assignment as best we could until some of the new equipment would arrive, or could be borrowed. There was little opportunity to take an active duty trained radio relay technician, and retrain him to become a message center person, or a teletypewriter repairman during the home station training periods. This would cause morale problems with the affected personnel.

During these periods of upheaval, we would have to stand our annual ABI / Annual General Inspection / which focused mostly on general military subjects, and not on our primary function of communication. We were rated on our matching individuals by rank and MOS to the

current unit designation. Many times we would receive low scores due to the activity mentioned previously. Our official written report would then spell out the circumstances for the low score. By then, either with another redesignation or AGI, another year would have passed by.

A: Your saying that only the Signal Units had 180 members?

R: That's right. We had one of the largest contingents here. The Armor had a large unit in the Salem-East Liverpool Area. The 348th Engineer Pipeline Company was also located in the Kefurt Armory.

Once a year all non-divisional Signal Units in Ohio, Pennsylvania, part of Kentucky, Maryland, Delaware, and the Washington, D. C. area were required to attend two weeks active duty for training at Fort Meade, Maryland. Each unit was required to furnish instructors for various subjects, technical and non-technical. We drew our equipment from an equipment pool at Fort Meade, Maryland.

A: Can you explain an average type drill in those days? What did it consist of?

R: I will cover the period from 1951. The drill period would open with an attendance, information. Then there would be about one-half hour of close-order drill. After that, the individuals would go to their respective sections for their assigned training. The last fifteen minutes of the drill would consist of announcement, a final attendance check, and dismissal.

We did have to furnish an annual training schedule, and also break out a detailed quarterly schedule for approval. It had to have a certain amount of hours of mandatory subject hours such as first aid, close-order drill, et cetera. This would take away additional hours while trying to retrain individuals in their newly assigned technical slots. There was no support for this type of training from the active military establishment. We would have to rely on our own skill and initiative.

Another point that disturbed us was, when we would go to the two weeks active duty training, the primary objective was to grade the units on their basic military skills, close-order drill, et cetera, and not rate them on their primary function, as in our case.



In later years our home station training was changed from two hour week night sessions to a two day, Saturday and Sunday, eight hour session each day. These were considered the equivalent of four days of training. We received four points, as well as four days pay for attending the two day sessions.

During the period of 1954 to 1960, we slowly built up a relatively large inventory of signal equipment, as well as motor transport. This resulted in the necessity to devote many hours to preventative maintenance to keep the equipment in operational shape. For instance, the AN/GRC-26 radio consisted of a two and a half ton truck, and a one ton trailer, with a mounted 10KW gasoline generator for power, and shelter mounted on the truck with radio communication equipment installed within. This was manned by a three man team. Just to do the mandatory preventative first and second echelon individual maintenance procedures would take a large part of the weekend training time of the team members. Quarterly, the third echelon maintenance organizational would have to be performed by the motor pool section on the vehicles. The vehicles would have to be turned over to the motor pool which resulted in a loss of the communication equipment for that weekend training. This happened to all of our vehicular mounted communication equipment over a period of time.

In other services, Navy, Marine, and Air Force, full time technicians would do the preventative maintenance on the equipment between drill periods. This was a much better way.

A: Who was your reporting senior officer at that time, back in the fifties? Who was the boss for this area?

R: There was a unit advisor, and his enlisted staff from the active military, which would vary in numbers. Sometimes there would be three officers, and five or six enlisted men to as little as one officer, and an enlisted man. The officers would rank from Colonels down to Captain. The names escape me at this time. We also had a second training center, for a period, in a leased building on the north side of Youngstown. It became the main location for the active duty staff in Youngstown. It was located in the former Strasbaugh Motor Company building on Wick Avenue.

A: Who was the commanding general of the area? Who did this unit report to?

R: We were under the Commanding General, Second Army, Fort Meade, Maryland, for many years.

Eventually the Ohio Military District was formed in Columbus, Ohio which then took over jurisdiction of the Ohio Army Reserve units. In 1960 the 83rd Infantry Division, the Reserve Division in Ohio, was redesignated, and was provided with a Signal Battalion for the first time in their TO&E. The previous TO&E only required for a Signal Company. In Youngstown we had a battalion size unit, staffed with competent officers, and enlisted men. We approached the division headquarters staff to become their Signal Battalion. The headquarters was located in Cleveland with various subunits around the state. After an interview with the Commanding General of the division with his advisors, we were told that a decision would be forthcoming. Within a week we were approved, and immediately we were assigned to the division. We became the "new boys on the block" as we were complete strangers to the long established division.

We were organized with battalion headquarters in Youngstown; one company size unit in Youngstown, one company size unit in Toledo, and a company size unit in Marion, Ohio. The unit in Toledo was formerly a Signal Repair Company, and the unit in Marion was formerly an Armored Company.

Again we had to buckle down, and go into an extensive retraining period to qualify the Toledo and Marion units as an efficient operation divisional signal unit. This took a lot of time of our officers and skilled enlisted men from the Youngstown unit. We remained with the division until it was deactivated in December 1965. During this period we attended two weeks active duty for training with the division at various camps, the last three years at Camp A. P. Hill, Virginia.

A: Why was the division deactivated in 1965?

R: This was a result of Secretary of the Army McNamara's effort to deactivate all reserve divisions. There were six reserve divisions across the nation that were wiped out. That action in 1965 was our Christmas present.

A: What happened to all the people that were in this unit at the time?

R: Four choices were provided. First, those without reserve obligations could be discharged. Those with an obligation would be transferred into another remaining unit. Second, those without an obligation could transfer to another service. We had 26 enlisted men who transferred to the Air Force Reserve Unit at the Youngstown Municipal Airport in Vienna, Ohio. Third, those without an obligation could be assigned to another unit if appropriate rank would be available. Fourth, those without an obligation could be transferred into newly formed training units and would only receive points for attendance, but no pay.

The drills would be two hour sessions once a week, 48 sessions per year. However, we did not have any allocation of equipment. On our own, we arranged to borrow equipment from other units to conduct our training. We were obligated to submit training schedules, and attendance rosters. We were required to earn 50 points for a "good" retirement year, or we would be discharged. Enlisted men or our commission Officers would be terminated. We were given an allocation of 15 points after we earned 27 points to help accumulate the 50 points. We also received additional points for taking extension courses. If we wanted to go on two weeks active duty for training, we would have to search out our own slots with some unit. Some of us were able to get mobilization assignments.

A word about extension courses, the officers were required to take extension courses in order to be eligible for promotion. If they failed to meet the designated minimum requirements, their commissions would be terminated, and they would lose all rights to retirement benefits.

From 1968 to 1973, I was assigned as the Signal School Brigade Commander at Fort Gordon in Augusta, Georgia. This provided me with two weeks active duty per year. I would spend the time with the active duty School Brigade Commander. I also would be given certain assignments to complete. One year I was assigned to rewrite the Signal Officers OCS school course. In 1970 I was assigned to the 83rd Infantry Division training located in Cleveland, Ohio as the Commanding Officer. While this was a two star slot, it was non-promotable as it was only a training unit.

There were seven units left from the old 83rd Infantry Division as training units. This required my driving a 100 mile round trip to Cleveland for my weekly drill session for points only. There was no reimbursement

for gas, toll charges, or pay for the drill period. This continued until my transfer to the Inactive Reserve in 1973. This was my mandatory removal date of five years after my last promotion which was to full Colonel. There were no one star slots available to permit me to remain in the active reserve. I was not sixty years of age, so I would have to wait until March 1982 to be transferred to the Retired Reserve, and start to draw my benefits.

A: There is a school of some kind for the Army Reserve in Farrell, Pennsylvania, is that correct?

R: There is a school there. A school was located in Youngstown under Colonel G. McKenrick for many years. At that time the Ohio Military boundary was also the same as the Ohio State boundary. A separate school was located in Pennsylvania. Its boundary was the same as the Pennsylvania State boundary. In 1965, after the deactivation of the Reserve Division, the military boundary for Pennsylvania was moved to encompass the eastern part of the Ohio State boundary from Ashtabula to East Liverpool. The Youngstown school was incorporated with the Pennsylvania school. Many school cadre officers and enlisted men were cut loose here in Youngstown with no assignments.

A: Here in Youngstown, about how many officers, during your period, were assigned to the Army Reserves on Miller Street?

R: During the period from 1951 to 1970, I would say the units in the Armory had a population of 60 officers, and 700 to 800 enlisted men. This was not all at one time. The actual number of persons changed due to transfers, discharges, and resignation.

I do have to qualify that this center was also responsible for units in the Salem and East Liverpool areas. It was still responsible for Ashtabula to East Liverpool.

A: How often did they drill here?

R: From 1951 on, we started with drills every Wednesday night, 48 drills per year. The various units were assigned different nights to avoid using the Armory facilities at the same time. Later they came out with the mandatory weekend drill assemblies once a month. Again, we were assigned a particular weekend to avoid conflict with other units over the use of the center.

Those that could not attend any or all of the weekend assemblies due to work conflict or emergencies could come in on Wednesday nights, and make up for the four quarters of the missed weekend training. This had to be authorized by the unit commander. This would help the unit maintain its attendance percentage, help the individual to maintain his attendance requirement, as well as get work done.

Other key members of the unit would always come in Wednesday nights to accomplish things that were not done on the weekend sessions. No points or pay were given as they already were meeting their attendance requirements. Those that were meeting on a non-mandatory status on Wednesday nights could get much more done in the three hours than what we could in the eight hour periods on weekends. Of course, those making up a drill would have to be in uniform to receive credit for attendance.

A: Who was in charge of the Armory or the Reserve Center here?

R: This was covered previously, that is, up until 1965. After that period the 83rd ARCOM / Army Reserve Command / was activated in Columbus, Ohio. It assumed control for all reservists that were not assigned to paid TO&E type units. In turn, they would arrange for active duty officers to be assigned to the center. It was never a choice assignment as there were none of the active military amenities that they would find on a regular assignment. There were no PX, officers' clubs, enlisted clubs, commissary, et cetera.

A: In your experiences here, did you have much dealings with the reserve units such as the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines?

R: Yes, in the time frame of 1959 to 1965, we had one of the largest pools of vehicles and signal equipment in the area. The Navy borrowed vehicles, the National Guard borrowed vehicles and signal equipment, and the Marine Corps borrowed trucks. The Air Force Reserve flew in equipment for us at times. We, in turn, used the Marine Corps rifle range for our annual weapons qualification requirements.

I was also the officer in charge of the AOMS / Army Organizational Maintenance Shop / at that time. There were three civilian, motor vehicle, qualified technicians and one signal technician. They provided the

interface between the units and the field maintenance shop at Lordstown. There was no extra pay or credit, just work, for this responsibility. I was required to make the annual evaluation on these civilians. Oh yes, the Post Office also borrowed the trucks during the Christmas season. The Army Reserve Units were given very little money or allowances for equipment maintenance and training needs. For instance, our self-contained photo van would exhaust our quarterly allocation of funds to our unit just for chemicals and papers for that sections' training. These individuals would have to be trained, and ready to function as this was the only photo section in the entire 83rd Division. This would leave nothing to other training needs. It was a tough way to go. Many times our unit officers would reach into their pockets for a few dollars. There would be times that other units would not use up their allocation. We, then, would receive it to augment ours.

- A: How about the participation in community affairs? Was the Army Reserve active in this?
- R: Our unit had open houses at the armory once a year. We participated in parades. Poland and Youngstown would have parades on Armistice Day.
- A: Did you encounter any other problems?
- R: One of the other problems was the recall of equipment due to the military demands of the active duty force. This would upset our training schedule, as well as curtail the training.
- A: What would you say was the reason that the majority of the reservists came to drill? You indicated that they came in, and didn't even get paid for a lot of it. Is that the patriotic spirit? They weren't in it for the money?
- R: From the period of 1946 to 1951 it was strictly patriotism. Plus, I think they liked the association of their military counterparts, even though they might not have been in the same unit during the war years. The fact that many worked at the telephone company made it even more enjoyable. After that period the offer of pay and retirement benefits added to the spirit of the program. We maintained a reenlistment rate of 80 percent, which is one of the best in the area.

As far as pay was concerned, their rate was very low. We are talking only about three or four dollars per

session. Since then the pay scale did rise along with the added responsibilities. We had a saying; "The pay is good, but the hourly rate is not worth a darn."

We also wired our center for internal communication, and installed our military equipment.

A: Did you see a change in your experiences in the Army Reserve? Was there a large change in the attitude of the Reserve itself?

R: Yes, up to the time the draft started again; especially during the Vietnam period, the Reserve Program just continued on a low key steady pace. When the draft heated up, we saw a large influx of those going to college wanting to join to avoid being drafted. This is not to say that non-college types also wanted to join for the same reason.

I was very fortunate in having as a civilian unit aide, Mr. Nicholas Fabian, who was also a warrant officer in my unit as administrative aide. He did a good job of screening the prospective enlistees for their suitability of being a contributing person in our unit. They would have to pass the preenlistment test with a score of 100 or better. This was an active Army requirement. He then would make them aware of what I would expect of them. He also advised them of the conditions that would prevail if they failed the expectations and induction into active duty. During the Vietnam period, the obligors' attendance held up, but when the Vietnam activity ceased, we noticed a definite attendance decline in the obligors.

Many were placed on active duty for six months, and then returned to the unit. This was very demoralizing to the good members of the unit. This put a great additional burden on company commanders because they had no police powers, or powers under the Articles of War to impose punishment and enforce discipline. In a Reserve status it can not be used. Registered letters had to be sent before an individual could be dropped from the units roster.

A: In your personal opinion, what do you see for Reserves in the future?

R: I can only speak of the time frame from 1965 to the date of this interview, 1973, as a non-unit officer. I think that there was a tremendous waste of talent of senior officers that were pushed aside, and were

just allowed to finish out their time. We tried for various assignments, but there was a lack of vacancies for Major and up. Most of the units in this area required Captain grade company commanders. There is practically no vacancies for senior grade officers. Those few that have a senior officer slot stayed there until their retirement.

My personal, frank opinion is that the Reserves were not supported adequately with advisor-trainers, and logistical support. It is a credit to the Army Reserve members that the program succeeded as well as it did.

During my two weeks annual tour at Fort Gordon, Georgia, I saw a large turnover of highly skilled instructors there due to reductions in the input to the schools. The instructor could only remain for a two year tour, and had to be rotated out. I think that assigning these skilled individuals into a large center in various large metropolitan areas, they could provide centralized communication training on equipment common to more than one service. The same holds true for automotive and administrative type skills from other branches or services. I think that this type of cooperative training would have been very beneficial, and cost effective.

A: You're pretty much involved with the Reserve Officers Association. Could you give me a little brief history of your experiences there, or, maybe, of the ROA itself?

R: In 1946 the Mahoning Chapter of the Reserve Officers Association held their first reorganizational meeting here in Youngstown. It had been active prior to World War II, but suspended meeting during the war years. That chapter was organized at the end of World War I.

Colonel L. Boals was one of the founders. He was the former music critic for the Vindicator Newspaper in Youngstown. Some of my junior officers, as well as myself, attended the meeting strictly out of curiosity. All of the time we were on active duty we were not contacted by the Reserve Officers Association to join. It was evident to us that there was a need for supporting this type of organization because there was no other organization that could be the spokesperson for all reservists.

We became very active, holding various posts in the local organization. I was membership chairman for



over 25 years. At the high point, this chapter had about 500 officers that used to meet once a month at the YMCA auditorium in Youngstown. We generally had about 200 attending. Over the period of time, as our members progressed in their civilian occupation, they found less time for the Reserves. Many of them did not join Reserve Units, and either resigned their commissions, or were discharged for failing to accumulate the minimum number of points required for retention.

Our present strength is 107 members. We have officer members scattered all over the United States that still prefer to remain assigned to our chapter. Although they may attend with another chapter, they want the hometown news, and remain assigned to our chapter.

I personally feel that the Reserve Officers Association has done quite a job in the past. It is the only organization with a federal charter that represents reserve officers of all branches and services. There are many other organizations, but they only serve a small specialized segment. It has done a lot of good in pushing legislation on the national level that benefited the Reserve Program. The chapter elects officers on an annual basis. This gets the members involved in their organization. The state and national organization holds annual conventions. They also hold annual elections of officers.

We have been active in Youngstown. This chapter was active in securing the Air Force Reserve base at the Youngstown Airport. There were attempts to wipe out the Air Force Reserve here, but we got up a delegation, went to Washington, and talked to our congressman. It was Congressman Mike Kirwan at that time. Through his efforts the unit remained, and is still there today. Also, there were attempts to close the Army Reserve Center here, but with the efforts of the ROA's delegations to Washington it remained.

I think that many of the younger officers who were commissioned during the Korean and Vietnam era were not interested in returning to civilian life without any military ties. Most of the time when a new officer would join my unit, and was not a member of the ROA, I would tell them I would pay their first years dues. If at the end of the year they felt that the ROA's efforts benefited them as reservists, they would repay me. It almost never failed that they

would become lifelong members of the ROA. Other unit commanders in this area used similiar approaches.

The ROA was ative in veteran affairs. We were assigned a cemetery, and it was our responsibility to provide and display flags on Veterans Day. We also participated in local parades. We have had a site just donated to us at the corner of North Newport Drive and Market Street in Boardman. We are trying to get it set up with flag poles and suitable markers. We are attempting to build a memorial for the reservists of Mahoning County that they can be proud of.

A: Is there anything else that you would like to add, Colonel Ress? I have run out of my own questions. Maybe there is something that came to mind that you would like to add?

R: I think that there could probably be a much closer relationship between all Reserve forces in this area. The Air Force, of course, has their association, and the Naval Forces have their Navy League Association. We have some members that are members of both, but I think if all the Reserves would have pulled together it would have been more successful.

The other thing is, going back to what I stated previously, the cooperative type training is the only thing left now to keep the reservists active, and trained in current procedures. The cost today of each unit trying to do its own individual type training on common MOS's, clerk-typists, administrators, and supply, I think, would be a cooperative effort of savings and instructors. Assigning the active duty people now into the instructor type of assignment would provide a better and current education for the members. I really think this should be reviewed and pursued. I think the military of all branches would gain much more on these common MOS's by having a school set up within an easy commuting distance of the reservists who have to be trained.

A: Thank you. That's a really interesting point of view.

END OF INTERVIEW