

**MAJOR GENERAL ARNOLD PUNARO  
REMARKS ON RECEIVING RESERVE OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION  
MINUTEMAN OF THE YEAR AWARD  
4 March 2014**

General Bouldin and General Silva, thank you very much. I am honored to receive the *Minuteman of the Year* Award from the Reserve Officers Association's "STARS" Foundation and to be in the company of the other distinguished awardees. This organization has done a remarkable job, inspiring this tremendous audience of Americans to "**Stand Together for America's Reservists.**" We all join in paying tribute to the sacrifices they make each and every day to keep our nation free. And as awardees we know that none of us succeeds on our own but only with the help of our families and those with whom we serve. A special thanks to my wonderful wife Jan, daughters Julie and Megan and their husbands Sean Robertson and Matt Foley, and my daughter-in-law Laura.

Today's reserve components are very different from the reserves I joined upon leaving active duty in 1974. Back then, we did not enjoy the same support or respect that we have today. Since 9/11, we've had over 893,000 young men and women reservists magnificently respond to our nation's call to arms. The Pentagon and the Congress has kept these young men and women well trained and equipped. I have a keen personal interest in this matter with two sons in the Reserve Components: Major Joe Punaro, in the Marine Corps Reserves and 2LT Dan Punaro in the Army National Guard, who aspires to be one of Admiral Mike Rogers's cyber warriors.

As we look to the future, we need to ensure that tomorrow's reservist is equally well trained and equipped...this will be challenging in this era of fiscal

constraint. We have had and will continue to have strong support from our senior DOD civilian and military leaders like Secretary Hagel, Under Secretary Wright and the Reserve Affairs team, Vice-Chairman ADM Sandy Winnefeld and the Combatant Commanders, and all our superb Reserve Component leaders here tonight. But most times the specific battles over what to fund or cut are fought in the trenches of the military departments. That's why it's imperative decision makers in the Executive branch at all levels and Congress are well informed on the capabilities and cost advantages our reservists bring to the fight, both at home and when mobilized.

The ROA STARS FOUNDATION has a critical role. It **supports** Reservists and their families through pioneering research into the unique impact deployments have on Reservists and their families, and developing first of their kind resources to fill the void of support. It **educates** policy makers and the public about the Reserve Components through very valuable public policy forums here in Washington, DC. I have personally participated in a number of these Forums over the years and can tell you first hand that they are highly influential in building awareness and consensus in Washington policy circles about the critical importance of our Reserve Component members. Finally, the Foundation **defends** reemployment and other rights of Reservists through ROA's Service Members Law Center, the Nation's only legal service dedicated to serving Reservists and their families. Thank you to everyone here tonight who has been so generous in support of STARS.

As Chairman of the **Reserve Forces Policy Board**, reporting directly to the Secretary of Defense, I work with a distinguished and diverse group of citizen patriots who provide advice and recommendations to the Secretary on strategies,

policies, and practices designed to improve and enhance the capabilities, efficiency, and effectiveness of the reserve components. Since the new board's inception in September 2011, the Board has delivered 11 reports with 47 recommendations to the Secretary of Defense of how to improve the Total Force.

A few of our Board members are here tonight to show their support of your great efforts:

- MG Marcia M. Anderson
- Ms. Paulette M. Mason
- Col Robert Preiss, Chief of Staff
- Maj Gen James N. Stewart, our Executive Director, who despite all my best efforts to the contrary, is retiring this summer.

Our Board will continue to provide the Secretary of Defense with sound recommendations on the use of his Reserve Component forces. We meet again tomorrow at the Pentagon. Here tonight is one of our guest presenters who will address our board then: Major General Ranald Munro of the British Army. He is the highest ranking Reservist in the British Army, serving as their Deputy Commander for Land Forces. He will be discussing his country's decision to rely more on Reserve personnel as it downsizes the active British Army.

Now some may think it ironic that one of the top officers of the British Army is here watching me receive the "Minuteman of the Year" Award -- an award invoking imagery of our militia history during the revolutionary war. But, I think that it is tremendously important that, on both sides of the Atlantic, we see value in maintaining capability in the reserves in this unpredictable and unstable world as budgets shrink the active forces.

Finally, we thank our citizen reservists who work full-time jobs, raise families, and yet, take time to put on a military uniform and step into harm's way for the defense of our Nation when duty calls, at home and abroad. Those Guard and Reserve personnel are found in thousands of hometowns across America and they are always "at the ready" as you saw just this week as they responded to adverse weather at home while over 40,000 were serving on active duty around the world.

Thank you very much for this honor and Semper Fidelis!