

MSR Committee Report on Final Consultations

The Committee plan was to assemble with a group of up to 8 invited potential members with some connection to the Naval Reserve to ask their opinions on :

- Whether the new UNTDA mandate would be of interest to a broader membership group; if so -
- What should that membership structure be; and
- Proposals for new names that could result from a changed membership structure.

On July 21, the four members assembled with the following invitees:

- LCdr Dave Arsenault , serving, former CPO1;
- Paul Edwards, Ret'd CPO1
- Eric Blay, serving Lt(N), HMCS YORK
- Christine Hughes, Retd' LS
- Gord Basaraba, Ret'd CPO2
- Stephanie McAndrew, serving AWSE PO2
- CPO1 Todd Kelly was unable to join due to a work arising.

The committee spent time explaining the work done over the last year to arrive at this point, and launched into the questions, with the following result:

1. Whether the new UNTDA mandate would be of interest to a broader membership group

Generally the mandate of social orientation, preservation of the memory and stories of the contribution of the Naval Reserve, communication of broader social /supports to veterans, and reconnection with the core Naval Reserve (including NRDs) was well received.

Questions or comments included:

- a. What would the relationship be to existing groups, like the NRD alumni groups, regional CPO1's or occupations (Bos'ns, Stokers etc) informal facebook groups? The response was that being of national footprint, UNTDA could provide a general linkage between all the various local or regional groups, though not to replace them, more to increase awareness and connections; also would offer the critical mass to host or manage larger gatherings, conferences commemorations, where UNTDA and local entities could collaborate;
- b. The idea of mentorship and networking opportunities was very well received;
- c. UNTDA could provide an 'alumni home' to those reservists who never spent much time in NRDs;
- d. Caution that the scale of expansion could be unwieldy and would benefit from a deliberate plan ;
- e. The need to place special emphasis on inclusion of the Quebec NRDs, ensuring they are an essential part of the new UNTDA; and
- f. The opportunity to explore parallels to army / militia's regimental associations, or similar functional branch associations.

2. What should that membership structure be?

Points of discussion included the fact that currently there is no national association of or for Canadian Naval Reservists, that the funding of NRD Messes no longer facilitates membership of retirees, so they become "homeless", and that in some cases currently serving members may have more in common with those in the same trade or with the same ship experience than with those of the same NRD.

There was agreement that the mandate as discussed above was of interest to all ranks, with emphasis perhaps on the networking and (formal? informal?) mentoring to the more junior candidates – and that

such a new association could co-exist, or at least not supplant the other mentioned associations such those connected to CPO1s and the like.

The conclusion therefore was a full and broad endorsement that the membership should evolve beyond the original construct of ‘officer’ / ‘university graduate’ to become a more general, inclusive alumni association for anyone with service in the Naval Reserve, at any rank level. It was proposed that this organisation could be, as was suggested in the original Board consultation, positioned to re-establish linkages with the Naval Reserve and NRDs, and could also serve as a ‘hub’ for the various spokes of other Naval Reserve informal interest groups (regional alumni, social media groups, trade / occupation groups etc).

3. Does a New Structure Require a New Name?

The final question was to explore possible names for such an expanded organisation, and two immediately were offered, and which are recoded here not to limit any future name discussions which the Board may initiate, but rather to convey the spirit of the immediate reaction by the attendees. In all cases, names would have to be tested in French to validate best fit for both official languages.

While tongue-in-cheek direction was offered that no new name could result in the acronym ‘NRA’, two names were immediately proposed, interestingly by the two youngest attendees:

- a. Naval Reserve Community NRC / Communauté de la réserve navale CRN
- b. Naval Reserve Alumni Association (of Canada) NRAA or NRAAC / Association (canadienne) des anciens de la réserve navale AARN

The proposal of the use of the word ‘community’ was to suggest a broad and loose gathering of anyone with a Naval Reserve connection; ‘association’ of course being a more typical nomenclature.

Recommendation

The committee understands that, after an interim update discussion with the Board by Daniel and Ross, there is clear appetite by the Board to move ahead quickly on the membership structure discussion/ decision, and an understanding that perhaps the name can take a bit more time to determine if it can be done so with the new, expanded membership.

Therefore, we recommend that the Membership Structure Review Committee need not convene the second and final step in our original plan – to test the names with a broader ‘focus group’ which we had discussed at our session together. Rather, we recommend that the Board reengage in the question only after any decision on whether to accept the recommendation of the membership structure, and, if so, whether it is important to have already implemented this new, more inclusive structure before openly re-starting the new name discussion.

Thanks again for the opportunity.

Marta Mulkins ,Daniel Haché, Ross Connell and Ken McCaw