



## Roosevelt Military Academy Rough Rider Association

### **To All Members and Friends of the Association:**

When I was asked by Mel Bogus to consider running for the Presidency of The RMA Rough Riders Association, I knew two facts for sure:

First...

Succeeding Mel would be a very difficult job for anyone. When I took the podium to speak to our group for the first time on August 24<sup>th</sup> after the election at the business meeting, I stated that I have really large shoes to fill and that he would be a very tough act to follow.

Mel was fully engaged and a total professional on how he empowered the ranks to do their jobs whether elected, appointed or volunteering. I was invited to sit in and listen to the August 14<sup>th</sup> conference phone call board meeting to learn how things were conducted and witnessed that he conducted the proceedings in a business-like fashion with an agenda designed to cover the necessary subjects to ensure that the facets of the upcoming reunion were under control as well as the upcoming elections for officers.

Mel was--and still is--very dedicated to making sure that the Association grows and continues to organize successful reunions in the future. Mel recognized that the Association needed to broaden its net to gain interest from former Cadets, Faculty and Friends of Roosevelt Military Academy. I was impressed that this member of RMA Class of 1947 thought we should be embracing and utilizing modern social media and enlisted his sons to help us learn about and implement such tools to help us be more "main stream" so we can find more Cadets and interested people to participate in our mission.

Under Mel's watchful eye he was fortunate to manage a great, dedicated team to plan and execute a wonderful 2014 RMA Rough Rider Association reunion that was enjoyed and will be remembered by all who were fortunate enough to have attended.

Mel, on behalf of The RMA Rough Riders Association, I Thank You for serving as our President the last 2 years and for the time you will give us while serving on the Board of Directors as the Immediate Past President.

Second...

To be successful in the future, the new officers will need to take advantage of the great wealth of knowledge and experience of the people who have served in the past as well as the present Board of Directors. This pool of talent is dedicated and immense.

We should all realize that some of these individuals have been involved since the inception of the Association and have other interests in life to attend to. With that said, it is important that some new faces step forward to give back to the cause which is why I agreed to Mel's recruitment effort. It is my time to contribute to something that was, and is a very important experience in our lives.

## The Future...

For our Association to continue to successfully promote and conduct reunions, we need people to attend what the majority would consider a worthwhile event at a proper location at the correct time of year.

We ALL need to recruit former classmates who we have not seen at past reunions and get them interested in sharing in on the fun. We will have a better opportunity when we ALL put forth effort to do this and we should soon have additional tools i.e. social media at our disposal.

At the August 24<sup>th</sup> business meeting it was discussed that we should put a poll out to the membership to get a feel for what everyone thinks of our current reunion location or if changes should be made. changes such as our location geography; our hotel if we were to stay at the same geography; the time of year for the reunion; and our Friday night main activity if we were to stay in Rock Island. As we all know, the riverboat cruise is a fun time to bond together but the quality of the food has deteriorated over the years.

One of the important things that I have learned over the years of my involvement is that the City of Aledo really does love us and wants us to be part of their past, present and future. It is evident to me that we are part of their culture by how they have included us at the memorial site downtown; with the paver brick space; and the area that has been dedicated to the legacy of the Academy at the Essley-Noble Museum. This has been personally reinforced to me by conversations I've had with people that I've met at the memorial services, the new statue unveiling and the wonderful pancake breakfasts that I have been fortunate to have attended. This was just as a former Cadet visiting at the Aledo sesquicentennial and three reunions- not as an Association officer. I know that the proceeding officers have established some wonderful relationships with the leaders in Aledo that we, the new officers, are charged with maintaining.

It is OUR organization and every voice will be heard so please do respond to the poll when it is launched so we can begin planning for the 2016 reunion as soon as possible.

In closing, I am using most of Sunday's newspaper to stuff Mel's shoes so I can begin my journey as your President with getting too many blisters on my dogs.

Best regards to you and your family,

*Jeff Koppel*

Jeff Koppel  
President