

## Letter for Cap from an Old LDO Salt

Congratulations on your election as President of the Naval Weather Service Association! May you have smooth seas and following winds during your two year tenure.

I read with great interest your open letter in the May 2017 Aerograph about the need for new (younger) members. Past NWSA presidents have also expressed concern that very few active duty or recently retired sailors have joined. They too have asked how we might attract new members— unfortunately, little success has occurred. You also pointed out that: “the Naval Meteorology and Oceanography Community have completely changed since your retirement (1996). Too true! Perhaps we need to assess whether our current NWSA organization is relevant or redundant to today’s active duty or recently retired AG, WO—Aerographer, LDO—646X, Officer—1800.

Since its inception the NWSA main purpose is to promote a sense of camaraderie for retired members of the Armed Forces who had links with the Navy meteorology and oceanography community. We do this mainly through annual reunions, regional get togethers, and the Aerograph publication. These venues provide us a forum for vignettes about past and present AGs, and provide members the opportunity to renew or develop new friendships. The Bellinger mailing list gives us a means to contact shipmates, who are members, who don’t attend reunions and/or regional get togethers.

This camaraderie becomes moot for active duty or recently retired members of the Navy meteorology and oceanography community if they see few to none of their peers that have joined the NWSA. Why join an association that does not have your contemporaries or people you have met while in the Navy? Especially, as there are other ways to promote a sense of military camaraderie or to renew or develop new friendships. For example: Facebook Navy AG’s has 2.1K plus members and Facebook Aerographer’s Mates has 1.1k plus members, LinkedIn provides for professional contacts, and Together We Served members post information about themselves for shipmates.

I think we are redundant to today’s active duty AG. They have a different, highly advanced, technology tool box to observe, analyze, forecast weather than their 20th century counterparts had. They also have to constantly maintain, upgrade their military and naval skills because of the war time high ops tempo environment in which they are serving. They have to do more with less. And while they might enjoy hearing sea stories from us old salts, when they have the time, about the past, most of these stories have no bearing in their environment. From their prospectus, they have more important priorities— preparing for deployments, taking care of their families, etc., then listening to old timers talk about a Navy that doesn’t exist for them— about ships long since decommissioned, duty stations that no longer exist, AG tasks/functions that no longer exist or are not relevant to the 21st century. In time, they may join NWSA, if the association still exists, when they start to become the old salts, or on the other hand they may create their own organization that better reflects “their” Navy at some future point in time.

Rob Josephs (LCDR, U.S. Navy Retired)

PS: It appears to me that the majority of NWSA members are content with the way things are. Here’s why I believe this. This past year, May 2016, NWSA implemented two (current member) suggestions to try increase member participation and pique the interest of potential new members. One was that a blog be established on NWSA’s web page. One blog entry was posted in July 2016. To date, not one response! To date no other blog entries have occurred— no constructive comments and/or suggestions for the NWSA organization, its website, or the Aerograph. The other suggestion was establishing an NWSA Facebook page. To date there are 70 members— not much chatter/traffic since its inception. The last reunion-convention had 70 plus attendees but only about 35 were active voting members attending— the past few reunions-conventions had about the same level of attendees. (Note: Some questions NWSA should ask itself. Although reunion-convention venues change they are held either in April or May. Why are these months chosen in particular? When was the last membership survey done to find out what members want in way of a reunion or in the way of an association? Why not post these questions on the NWSA blog to have members and nonmembers put forward questions that they would like to see on a

survey? If done soon the questions could be edited/published as a survey in the November Aerograph with the results available for the next reunion.