

UKNDA NEWSLETTER – JANUARY 2009

Happy New Year to you all. I hope you all had a wonderful Christmas and enjoy the New Year when it will be time to buckle down once again to help us to:

SUPPORT OUR ARMED FORCES

because now, more than ever before, they certainly need all the help they can get.

THIS NEWSLETTER IS VERY MUCH BY WAY OF BEING AN “END OF YEAR PROGRESS REPORT”

And, on the whole, I do mean PROGRESS. Just occasionally I suffer from a bit of the ‘slough of despond’ when it seems that new memberships are coming in too slowly and the UKNDA still doesn’t have sufficient numbers (or the finance) to achieve our purpose as effectively, quickly and efficiently as we ought to. So here is a summary of what we have done, what we are doing and how well (or how badly) we are making progress. Our assessments are indicated as follows:

GOOD: We will press on to develop these further. More of the same.

SATISFACTORY: We need to work harder. More of the same – but better.

UNSATISFACTORY: We have to work **very much harder** and better!

A SUMMARY OF KEY PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES

NETWORKING: We are working hard at developing and increasing our “Network of Contacts”. As regards the Ministry of Defence we have requested interviews with the new Secretary of State (John Hutton), the First Sea Lord, Chief of the General Staff & the Chief of the Air Staff which we hope and expect to achieve early in the New Year.

On the 11 Dec 08 we held a Meeting & Presentation (by Prof Tony Edwards) with PROSPECT Trade Union. We hope to hold a UKNDA/PROSPECT joint-fringe meeting at the Labour Party Conference in Autumn 09.

On the 16th Dec - CEO & PRO meet with Ian Godden – Chairman of the Defence Industries Council and President of SBAC and further meetings are planned for early in the New Year.

Assessment: **GOOD**

PRESS RELEASE ROUTINE – Members will have noticed a steadily increasing number of UKNDA News Releases. Recent News Releases have resulted in a flood of supportive e-mails and much to be welcomed spikes of interest in our web-site.

GOOD

DRAMA DOCUMENTARY PROJECT– For reasons of confidentiality and keeping our powder dry (i.e. retaining the initiative) we will not be releasing any further details on this subject unless and until we have got this promising project all sewn up and ready to go. **GOOD**

BUILDING A NATIONWIDE NETWORK OF UKNDA BRANCHES. There are now embryonic branches in: Warminster Newcastle Nottinghamshire London (Kent). Lots of interest coming in nationwide. Great potential. **GOOD**

RECENT MARKETING/SURVEY OF MEMBERS –
High rate of responses (25%+ of our members) Interesting and useful results. **GOOD**

REDESIGN OF WEB-SITE. Progressing. Completion Feb 09? **SATISFACTORY**

GAINING THE SUPPORT OF SERVICE CHARITIES & ASSOCIATIONS.
We are identifying details of Presidents, Chairmen, Secretaries and HQ addresses of the hundreds of Service Associations and Charities so that our President may then approach them to seek their help in extending the size, scope, resources and influence of the UKNDA. **SATISFACTORY**

CELEBRITIES – Little further progress. Most recently Susan Hampshire sent a photo, her good wishes & £100. We now have eight “celebrities” signed up. The difficulty is being able to contact celebrities directly, many of them being ‘protected’ by an almost impenetrable shield of agents, PAs and Secretaries and we can never be sure that our letters ever reach their intended addressee. **UNSATISFACTORY**

FUNDING – We have sufficient funds on deposit and coming in (from renewals of annual membership new memberships and occasional donations) to sustain our current rate of expenditure for at least the next six months. A renewed campaign of letters to clearly identified potential donors is needed and being planned.

UNSATISFACTORY

INCREASING MEMBERSHIP NUMBERS – Generally disappointing. Recently averaging barely 1 new membership a day. However there is some recent evidence of a slight increase (due to better more frequent News Releases?) and at least one in five of new members are paying £100 for Life membership. **UNSATISFACTORY**

So – all in all something of a mixed bag. We are certainly ‘punching above our weight’ on getting our MESSAGE out, but urgently need to raise our game as regards MEMBERS and MONEY.

And now some more general news.

Upgrading the Web-site This coming month our web-site managers “Web-feet” will be ‘polishing up’ our web-site. While the recent UKNDA Members’ survey (for which see full details below) indicated a very high level of satisfaction with the current web-site (over 90% thought the web-site was easy/straightforward to use and was good or very good) there is always room for improvement. There is a considerable amount of information throughout the site and some pages – the Home page in particular – were getting rather ‘cluttered’. Web-feet are working to ‘unclutter’ and simplify the HOME Page and to rationalise the top and side of the page where there are presently too many Page Indexes. We hope this work will be finished by the end of next month and you will be advised when this is done.

Web-site FORUM. The long promised Members-only FORUM is now ‘live’ on our web-site; indeed it was open at the end of November last year. UKNDA Members can access this FORUM (and, if you wish, access and amend **your own personal details** as stored on our membership database) via the Home Page of our web-site:

www.uknda.org. All you need to enter the FORUM site is to enter your e-mail address and the password you may have recorded when you first registered your membership. If you did not enter a password, or your password doesn't appear to work – fear not – just contact Andy Coley, our web-site manager at: webmaster@uknda.org - and he will sort you out with a new password which, when you get into the site, you can change to something you can remember easily.

UKNDA Survey of Members and Registered Supports – The Results.

The recent Survey of UKNDA Members and Registered Supporters was completed by more than 400 of you – for which “*Thank You all*”. The information and answers you provided are fascinating and most useful in helping us decide how best to improve and develop this Association of ours.

You can see the whole un-edited set of results for yourself via the following link:

<http://www.opinionmaker.com/surveys/statistics.asp?URN=E0@3C@D9@AB>

and I do encourage you all to visit that site the results of which are hugely positive and encouraging.

We need YOUR Photographs for our new brochure – please.

We need your help. We plan to produce a promotional UKNDA folded brochure to induce people to SUPPORT OUR ARMED FORCES (and then join the UKNDA). The brochures must have immediate "pick me up appeal". For the Brochure to have that appeal we must have striking, dramatic, evocative photographs.

If you have any good photographs (and you own the Copyright and will give us your written permission to use the photos!) featuring members of our Armed Forces in a striking, dramatic, evocative/operational situation - please send us a digital copy by e-mail (to pro@uknda.org and copy to me: ceo@uknda.org) or hard copy by post to: UKNDA Ltd., PO Box 819, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 9FF

Membership Numbers

A number of you have asked for regular reports on membership numbers – so here are the latest figures. As I type this at 0800 on 31st December 2008 the UKNDA comprised: 1532 Members and 1128 Registered Supporters – giving an overall total of: **2660**.

These figures highlight two major points of concern.

One: These figure in themselves are still far too low to carry any significant numerical “clout”. We are, however, now punching ‘far above our weight’ with our steadily increasing profile in the Media.

Two: Of our 1532 members 601 of you are now shown on our database as being “inactive” i.e. those who either have not yet paid their initial subscription or (the great majority) who have not yet renewed their recently lapsed annual subscription. If that group includes you do please renew at your earliest convenience for three very good reasons. We need your presence to add to our numbers. We need your subscription to add to our financial resources and above all we need your support.

To RENEW your subscription either send a cheque made out to “UKNDA Ltd” to: Membership Secretary, UKNDA Ltd., PO Box 819, Portsmouth, Hants PO1 9FF – or click on the link that was included in your renewal reminder e-mail. If you have any problems or queries please don’t hesitate to contact David Robinson (our Membership Secretary) at the above address or by e-mail to: secretary@uknda.org and, if you know it, please quote your membership number which will help him track down your membership details.

Finally, having read this far, please don’t just nod sagely and pass on but instead “Go forth and multiply”. Over the last year the UKNDA has really begun to make its mark but, as you will have seen from the above Progress Report, there is a very great deal for us still to do. With a General Election coming ever nearer, 2009 will be a crucial year for the future of our Armed Forces and the Defence of this Country. The UKNDA is now needed more than ever before especially since we are the ONLY such organisation campaigning in this field.

And that is about it for 2008. To plagiarise the RAF’s motto – in 2009 the UKNDA must and will continue ONWARDS AND UPWARDS.

Happy New Year.

John Muxworthy

Cdr. RN CEO UKNDA

1st January 2009