



AFSA NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

May 2007

AFSA TRAINING PLAN
NEW MEMBER ORIENTATION

The objective of this training plan is for each new member to comprehend how his/her membership enhances the association's objectives. The objectives are outlined in the following Main Points (MP).

MP 1. WHAT IS AFSA? AN INTRODUCTION

MP 2. AFSA AND AUXILIARY CORE VALUES, VISION, AND MISSION – WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT

MP 3. HISTORY

MP 4. AFSA AND AUXILIARY OBJECTIVES

MP 5. STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY

MP 6. AFFECTING CHANGE

MP 7. WHY MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

MP 8. COMMUNICATING WITH MY ASSOCIATION

MP 9. WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME

MP 10. THE OTHER SIDE OF AFSA

MP 1. WHAT IS AFSA?

AFSA is a congressionally chartered professional military organization, founded and incorporated in 1961, and dedicated to the people who have worn and are currently wearing Air Force enlisted chevrons. These are the men and women behind the high-tech machinery, the military protocol--the ones getting the job done every day. We are dedicated to these people who have invested and are investing their lives in the cause of America's freedoms. We are a not-for-profit organization that represents the professional and personal interests of the *Total Air Force* (Air Force Active Duty [AFAD], Air National Guard [ANG], and Air Force Reserve Command [AFRC]) enlisted members in active, retired, or veteran status and their families.

MP 2. AFSA AND AUXILIARY CORE VALUES, VISION, AND MISSION

CORE VALUES

Integrity, Patriotism, Service, and Fraternalism.

Integrity - A firm adherence to a code of especially moral or artistic values.

Patriotism - Defined as a love for or devotion to one's country.

Service - The core value of Service takes on a more philanthropic role than that of the Air Force. This can be considered Service to one's fellow man, taking a supporting role in the community and in AFSA; an integral part of community service.

Fraternalism - Relating to, or the involving of brothers; or relating to, or being a fraternity or society. A similar term might be Brotherhood—the quality, or state of being brothers; an

association for a particular purpose; or the whole body of persons engaged in a business or profession.

VISION STATEMENT

To be the professional military organization of choice for all *Total Air Force* enlisted personnel; active, retired, and veteran. Leaders have the responsibility of communicating the vision regularly, creating narratives that illustrate the vision, acting as role models by embodying the vision, creating short term objectives compatible with the vision, and encouraging others to craft their own personal vision compatible with the organization's overall vision. AFSA's Vision speaks to membership as the "end state" for the organization as AFSA strives to meet this vision; the one gauge is if every eligible member belonged to the organization.

AFSA MISSION STATEMENT

To advocate improved quality-of-life benefits and economic fairness that will support the well-being of Air Force enlisted personnel and their families. AFSA's Mission Statement is its sole reason for existing. Literally everything we do is focused on meeting our mission. If you could highlight the one thing this mission statement speaks to, it would be our Legislative Actions from grassroots activity in the chapters all the way up to our lobbyists on the hill.

AUXILIARY MISSION STATEMENT

Authorized and established by the AFSA, the mission and objectives of the AFSA Auxiliary are "to band together to aid, assist and promote in all matters pertaining to welfare, social and patriotic work for the benefit of the Air Force Sergeants Association, its members, and their families."

MP 3. HISTORY

Prior to the formation of the Air Force Sergeants Association (AFSA), Air Force enlisted personnel did not have an independent voice capable of influencing legislation and governmental policies. This came at a time when Congress was questioning its promises to service members about education benefits, health care, pay, and a fair quality of life--all while we were waging a Cold War. During the post-Korean War era U.S. Armed Services were cut to the bone and attacks upon the military by members of Congress, the press, and even the American public resulted in promotion freezes, low pay and allowances, inadequate housing, and many other inequities. Life in the military was rough and much unappreciated. Enlisted life was the roughest. Many enlisted personnel began to talk about starting an association and DOD feared the unions would try to get involved. Of course unionization was not an option; but there remained the needs to educate lawmakers about enlisted life. Four enlisted visionaries from Bolling AFB, DC, decided to accept the challenge. MSgt Benny W. McGehee, TSgt Virgil Perry, SSgt Donald Ward and TSgt Lee Thompson applied to the District of Columbia for a charter as a non-profit association, which was approved on May 3, 1961. At that time, they applied to the Internal Revenue Service for tax-exempt status. The IRS tax exemption was granted under Section 501

(c) (4) of the Internal Revenue Code. In 1975, AFSA received a determination from the IRS and the U.S. Postal Service that AFSA was essentially a “war veterans” organization within the meaning of Section 170 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code. As a result of this determination, AFSA applied to the IRS and received approval for tax exemption under Section 501 (c) (19) of the Internal Revenue Code. Today, AFSA is a fully recognized professional military organization that is highly respected in the White House, on Capitol Hill, and in the Pentagon.

TODAY

AFSA is a leading member organization in The Military Coalition (TMC). Additionally, AFSA is one of the largest associations affiliated with the Council of Military Organizations (COMO) and the Ad Hoc Committee (AD HOC). AFSA is highly respected and well recognized on Capitol Hill, within the White House, and by community leaders, commanders, and senior commissioned and noncommissioned leaders at all levels. AFSA is an international organization with chapters located in the United States, Europe, and the Far East. The International Headquarters is located in the Airmen Memorial Building at 5211 Auth Road, Suitland, Maryland, 20757.

MP 4. AFSA and AUXILIARY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the association as established by the founders have not drastically changed since AFSA’s incorporation in 1961. The following are the association’s objectives:

- To maintain, within the United States AFAD, ANG, and AFRC, a highly dedicated and professional corps of enlisted personnel;
- To uphold fair and equitable legislation and departmental policies, and influence, by lawful means, departmental plans, programs, policies and legislation affecting enlisted personnel of the United States Air Force to include the AFAD, AFRC, ANG, these component retirees, and other Air Force enlisted veterans;
- To actively publicize the roles of enlisted personnel in the United States Air Force;
- To participate in civil and military activities, youth programs, and fund-raising campaigns of benefit to the United States Air Force;
- To provide for the mutual welfare of members and their families;
- To assist in recruiting for the United States Air Force;
- To assemble together for social activities;
- To maintain a superior aerospace defense for our beloved country;
- To devote ourselves to our fellow airmen; and
- To loyally serve the nation and the USAF, and to do all else necessary to uphold and defend the Constitution of the United States.

MP 5. STRUCTURE AND HIERARCHY.

Structure of AFSA and AFSA Auxiliary

AFSA is structured like many professional military organizations into two separate and distinct organization elements: an administrative and a political structure. There is also a political structure for the AFSA Auxiliary

Administrative Structure

The administrative structure consists of the AFSA staff which works at the International Headquarters. These are the paid employees of our association. They take care of the day-to-day operations and manage the various programs and member services for AFSA and Auxiliary members. The AFSA daily operations and decision making authority are vested in the Chief Executive Officer (CEO). The CEO oversees the daily operations and supervises the Directors of Military and Government Relations, Member and Field Relations, Accounting and Finance, and Communications and Technology. The CEO is accountable to and receives direction from the AFSA International President except when the AFSA Executive Council is in session, then from the Executive Council.

Political Structure

The political structure consists of non-paid volunteers, just like you. There are three (3) distinct levels within the AFSA and Auxiliary political structure: the International, Division, and Chapter level organizations make up this structure. All elected officials are responsible and accountable for the efficient operation and management at their respective level. Divisions have oversight of chapters within their respective divisions.

International

The AFSA and Auxiliary International levels exercise oversight and control over the whole of AFSA or Auxiliary. There are two distinct structures at the AFSA International level, the International Executive Council consisting of six international elected officers and the 14 Division Presidents. The Executive Council meets prior to and at the conclusion of our annual Professional Airmen's Conference. The second structure is the International Executive Committee consisting of the elected leadership: the International President, International Vice President, and component Trustees for Air Force Active Duty, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve Command, and Retired and Veterans Affairs. There are also four elected Division President's Representatives. The Executive Committee meets periodically, as required, to conduct the associations business. The Executive Committee recommendations are forwarded to the Executive Council for a final decision. The AFSA Auxiliary International level consists of an elected Auxiliary International President, International Vice President, and three Trustees. Although the Auxiliary operates as a separate entity, their activities and operations fall under the AFSA Bylaws and Policies and Procedures.

Division

The next organization level is the AFSA Division. The AFSA division leadership, designated as an Executive Council consists of an elected President, Vice President, and elected or appointed Trustees. They are responsible and accountable for the overall management and execution of

AFSA policy, as directed by the International President. The Auxiliary organization at the division level is represented by an elected or appointed Auxiliary Division Coordinator. This person is responsible and accountable for advice and consent to the Auxiliary Chapters and is a non-voting member of the Division Executive Council, unless otherwise governed.

Chapter

This is where the action takes place. This is why we exist—for our members. If it happens in AFSA, it begins at the chapter level. The chapter leadership, designated as an Executive Council, consists of an elected President, Vice President, and elected and or appointed Trustees. The Auxiliary Chapter also has the same leadership structure. All levels of AFSA are responsible and accountable to the members, but the chapter is the members' home. Every member should become familiar with the AFSA and Auxiliary structure. As a new member, you are highly encouraged to become familiar with the mission and internal workings of your chapter. You should receive a welcome package from your chapter outlining the local activities and programs. We want you to be a proactive and responsive member because the more involved you become; the more effective your AFSA and Auxiliary chapter and division will be in its mission to support the enlisted corps. You bring unique and special skills and talents to the table. Only you know what you really want to gain from your membership, and only you limit your opportunities and influence. We, as your association, are here to assist you and let you know that we will fight the legislative and policy battles in an effort to provide better pay, benefits, and overall quality of life for you and your family. Find your particular niche and go for it.

Leadership Opportunities

There are countless leadership opportunities at all levels of AFSA and the Auxiliary. The AFSA Bylaws and Policy & Procedures outline the duties and responsibilities at each level for the respective offices. When the leadership opportunity presents it, make sure you read that information and become familiar with AFSA's business practices. If in doubt, just ask a question.

MP 6. AFFECTING CHANGE

AFSA is YOUR association. You are a shareholder in everything we do and how we accomplish our mission. We are only as strong as our members, so we need your voice and experience. As you may have noted, our mission requires that we educate members of congress to advocate our position on issues affecting you and your family. We do that through one-on-one office visits with elected and appointed leaders who make the decisions that affect your and your family members' lives. We educate them on your sacrifices, your service, and your dedication. We also help congressional staff members draft legislation for introduction on the floors of Congress. But we can't do these things without you. You are in a very unique position to affect change in your personal life and the lives of your contemporaries. As with any organization, there is a chain of command. However, you can call directly to the headquarters and raise an issue or express your point of view. The positions that AFSA takes, are the positions that the majority of our members tell us to take. You can call the headquarters and speak directly to our Military and Government representatives (educators), the people who speak to those who can make the decisions and changes in the laws that affect you. This gives you the clout to affect change in your life, in your career, and in your family's lives.

MP 7. WHY MEMBERSHIP IS IMPORTANT

AFSA is a grass roots organization, and we depend on every member to accomplish our primary mission; improved quality of life for all enlisted personnel and their family members. AFSA is a membership organization and without a large membership base, your association wouldn't have the power to influence members of congress and other governmental leaders. The Auxiliary plays a very important role in our membership efforts. Normally, they are the individuals who run the home, manage the funds, and raise the children. The Auxiliary is in tune with what is going on and what is needed to improve their overall quality of life.

It's important to note that AFSA exists for the benefit of ALL persons who qualify for membership. Every member's voice carries from the chapter through the division level to International Headquarters, where their concerns and issues are effectively transmitted to the right people in the Congress and the Pentagon. The extent of any particular AFSA member's influence is directly proportional to their personal involvement in the association.

Membership is developed through recruiting new members and retaining existing members and by educating and encouraging participation at the chapter level. Like you, when people know the benefits of AFSA and the Auxiliary, they will join to make "our" collective voices louder.

MP 8. COMMUNICATING WITH MY ASSOCIATION

There are multitudes of ways you can gather up-to-date information about what AFSA is doing on your behalf. You may call the headquarters directly to ask questions or speak to your lobbyist. Then, there is your AFSA website, www.afsahq.org which contains a wealth of information and links to sources that you can use. You can also use the web site to access your personal membership information, change your address, or update your personal data. AFSA publishes a weekly newsletter highlighting important issues of the past week and announcing upcoming events. AFSA operates the Capitol Hill Update line (updated on Tuesdays and Fridays) where you can call to hear a recording of the latest issues on the Hill. The number is 301-899-3500 or toll free at 1-800-638-0594. Your membership includes a subscription to the *Sergeants Magazine*, our flagship publication. It contains a wealth of information, messages from our International President, and the latest information on what we are doing to help you and your family. The magazine also highlights junior enlisted personnel and what they contribute for our Air Force. We also feature timely articles on concerns of our members. Finally, AFSA headquarters distributes information via our Pyramid Distribution System that goes through the Division Presidents to your Chapter President. If you have a question, all you have to do is ask.

MP 9. WHATS IN IT FOR ME

An AFSA and Auxiliary membership is an investment in you and your families' lives—today and in the future. Aside from the obvious benefits of being among friends who share a common interest, your participation helps you to become a well-rounded professional Airman. You are encouraged to participate in professional military organizations. AFSA is the vehicle of choice

for enlisted Airmen. AFSA can, and does, foster and promote leadership and management skills in our members by getting them to chair committees and manage chapter projects. We afford you the opportunity to learn while doing and; prepare yourself for greater responsibility, all while investing in your future. You have the opportunity to serve as a Chapter, Division, or International Officer. The choice is up to you.

If you have not already made the connection, AFSA and the Auxiliary, at all levels, function as a team with a singular purpose and focus. It is that purpose, focus, and teamwork that makes us the **Professional Organization of Choice** for The Total Air Force family.

In order to maximize your new opportunity, we have three challenges for you. First, recruit one new member. Second, attend your next chapter meeting. Third, volunteer to help with a project. We believe if you meet these three challenges, your AFSA or Auxiliary career will take you to new and exciting opportunities. Welcome to the greatest professional military organization today!

MP 10. THE OTHER SIDE OF AFSA

The information provided above is an educational overview and explanation of AFSA's history, mission, and organization. As you can imagine, within AFSA there is a lot of work to do. However, that is only one side of our association. We also encourage and promote **FUN**. We all need fun to relieve stress and relax. We want your AFSA experience to be a fun filled adventure as well as an educational and leadership opportunity.

You noted three distinct organization levels and we indicated the chapter-level is where the majority of the work is done. The same principle applies when we are having fun. Chapters can and do provide several different entertaining and fun filled outlets for members and their families to enjoy. Some examples include picnics, Christmas parties, golf outings, fishing tournaments, trips to local points of interest, etc. You must check with your respective chapter to see what is on the social calendar.

Your Division, because of their geographic size, may only have one social function and that would normally take place during the Division Convention/Conference. Normally, each Division hosts a pre-conference/convention welcome party for all the attending delegates. It is an opportunity to sit back, relax, and talk with other AFSA members on a variety of topics. It is also an excellent opportunity to renew old acquaintances and make new ones. Each Division also hosts an Honors Banquet to recognize outstanding AFSA members.

The AFSA International host an annual Professional Airmen's Conference. This conference serves a three-fold purpose. It is designed to provide professional development through briefings on a wide variety of topics of interest to all Airmen. Second, AFSA members conduct the associations business and receive updated reports on the status of their association. Finally, the social setting allows you to meet with and discuss issues with old and new friends.