

## **AIR FORCE Magazine Coverage of Chapter News**

To: AFA Field Leaders  
From: Robert S. Dudney, Editor in Chief  
Date: October 21, 2005.

Our staff members frequently are asked how to get coverage of a chapter event into the pages of AIR FORCE Magazine. Each year, we address that topic at the Fall presidents' meeting in Washington, D.C. Still, the word has not always reached AFA grass roots members, and misunderstandings persist. We thought it would be a good idea to put the requirements in writing in hopes that this basic information gets wide and frequent distribution. We will post this material on AFA.org, the association's web site.

### **FUNDAMENTALS**

□ Chapter activities (and certain AEF activities) are covered each month in a specific Magazine section. That section is titled "AFA/AEF National Report."

□ A nominal National Report section runs to four pages. It comprises not only chapter news items and photos but also house ads and "AFA in Action."

□ The Magazine point of contact for chapter news is Assistant Managing Editor Frances McKenney. Her direct telephone number is 703-247-5828. Her e-mail address is fmckenney@afa.org. The FAX number is 703-247-5855. Her mailing address is Air Force Magazine, 1501 Lee Highway, Arlington VA 22209-1190.

□ Sending material to any staffer other than Frances McKenney is discouraged. It only slows down the process.

### **WHAT FIELD MEMBERS CAN DO**

□ The process begins with you. You initiate the contact with the Magazine (that is, Frances McKenney). If we are to obtain timely information, we must hear from you, because only you know what has happened.

□ We ask that you provide basic, factual information about your event. Please don't expend a great deal of effort on creating a press release. It's enough, for our purposes, to get the basics: Who? What? Where? When? Why? and How? That will give us a very good idea of what has taken place. Afterward, we will contact you for more details.

□ Each month, we sift through submissions. As we do, we look for a specific, direct link between the event and the AFA chapter. It is useful to state the connection up front. State it strongly and clearly.

### **WHAT NEWS ARE WE LOOKING FOR?**

□ In the National Report, we strive to cover something fairly specific: recent chapter activities. Each of the words is important--the activity should be recent, there should be some chapter

assistance or support, and it should be a specific activity in support of or related to the association's mission.

□ Corollary to the above: We do not use the National Report to cover actual Air Force or military news; those events are covered in other sections of Air Force Magazine, principally "Aerospace World" or "News Notes."

□ Corollary No. 2: We do not report on individual achievements or actions of AFA members, worthy though they may be. Here are some of the kinds of items that do not meet our criteria: Retirements. Awards from organization other than AFA. Visits to foreign lands. Activities of AFROTC cadets. Encounters with famous persons. Attendance at a military-related function not related to the chapter. This list is not exhaustive.

### **KINDS OF THINGS WE'VE USED**

□ Here's a sample of items used because they have reflected a chapter tie-in:

-- A person retired, and an AFA chapter invited him to talk about his 40-year NASA career. (See "More X-15 Legends," February 2004, p. 84.)

-- A member won an award from a college because she had organized a Visions of Exploration program through an AFA chapter. ("A Leader in Visions," July 2003, p. 82.)

-- A successful trip to Washington was had by AFJROTC cadets, assisted by funding from an AEF Chapter Matching Grant and a tour guide secured by a chapter president. ("Field Trip: Air and Space Museum," October 2003, p. 75.)

-- A member met a famous person and arranged for him to speak at a chapter meeting and visit schools. ("Baikonur to Buffalo," July 2005, p. 84.)

-- Chapter officers attended dedication of a memorial built in part with donations from the AFA state and chapter organizations. ("Sijan Remembered," September 2003, p. 118.)

### **WHAT WE CANNOT USE**

□ We don't use press releases about chapter meetings or events on topics not connected to AFA's mission. (This occurs rarely.) The item, "AFA's Mission" is published every month in the magazine's directory. This is the best guide to the mission.

□ We cannot use chapter "news" about an event that took place more than six months before. This is also a rare occurrence in the age of e-mail. However, it does happen. Example: We received for the May 2004 issue a press release on an event that occurred in June 2003.

□ We cannot use editorial material that is overtly partisan in intent or tone. Example: A press release stating that a chapter supported a particular candidate in an election.

### **WHY A PARTICULAR STORY DIDN'T RUN**

□ Maybe we didn't get the word. If you sent your chapter news to another AFA department, it will not make it over to the magazine. If you want it in the magazine, send it to the magazine.

□ Maybe the event did not meet the stated criteria. When that happens, we have to set it aside.

□ Maybe we did use it, but you didn't think so. All releases meeting the above-stated criteria will make it into print in one form or another. We do not, however, guarantee use of each and every submitted photo. Sometimes, this leads to a misperception that the Magazine has not covered a chapter's news. That is incorrect. We do not have space for more than two or three photos per issue, yet nearly every press release comes with a photo. Obviously, we have to make judgments about which images are most newsworthy.

### **WHAT ARE OUR PHOTO REQUIREMENTS?**

□ The magazine has limited space for photos, with many from which to choose. You can improve the chances yours will be selected if you meet both our technical and editorial requirements.

□ Digital camera photos must have a resolution at least 900 pixels X 1,500 pixels (i.e., the photo must be taken by a digital camera having at least 2 megapixel capability).

□ If you e-mail your digital images to us, you must e-mail them at the highest resolution supported by your e-mail system.

□ We can use 35 mm camera photos. They must be in focus and of good color quality.

□ We prefer photos showing people in action to photos of "grip and grin" awards presentations or a "birds on a wire" group photos of individuals side by side.

□ As a matter of long-standing AFA policy, we give priority to photos showing top elected AFA leaders--the Chairman of the Board or the National President--in action with members of an AFA chapter.

□ We give greater consideration to photos of younger AFA members--not because this is a Magazine preference but because it was requested by AFA field leaders. They pointed out that it becomes harder to recruit younger members when the photos are only of older ones.

□ We try to emphasize photos of enlisted Air Force personnel, when possible. This also stems from requests by field leaders who said it was hard to recruit enlisted members when the photos only showed officers.

□ We prefer photos of active-duty persons (preferably AFA-related) in military uniform.

### **SOME ACTION PHOTOS WE HAVE USED**

□ Genesee Valley Chapter member showing schoolkids how to use 3D "eyeglasses" (March 2004, p. 76).

□ Hawaii Chapter member supervising airmen cleaning a veterans memorial (March 2003, p. 75).

☐ Flipping burgers at a Gen. B.A. Schriever Los Angeles Chapter membership drive (August 2000, p. 99).

☐ Two majors--one on active duty and the other a World War II WASP--chatting at the Luke Chapter dinner (February 2005, p. 85).

### **PHOTOS OF AFA LEADERS IN ACTION**

☐ Pat Condon and Bob Largent talking to US Rep. John Barrow (April 2005, p. 84).

☐ Tom McKee throwing a baseball from triple-A farm team pitcher's mound (July 2002, p. 92)

☐ John Politi crouched under an F-15, listening to a weapons briefing from the pilot (July 2002, p. 80).

### **“PHOTO-KILLERS” TO AVOID**

☐ Resolution too low (digital cameras).

☐ Image out of focus.

☐ Image too dark because of poor lighting.

☐ Too many tertiary people in the photo.

☐ Objects (lighting fixtures, flagpoles) sprouting out of people's heads.

☐ Subjects holding up beer or liquor.

☐ Image does not show enough of the subject's face.

☐ Odd expression on subject's face (eyes closed, e.g.).

☐ Persons in photo cannot be identified.

☐ Photo is of AFA staff member--not an AFA chapter member.

☐ No true AFA connection (e.g., photos of antique airplanes).

☐ Chapter had photo in the magazine within the past year. (We try to spread around the photo coverage.)

☐ Doctored photos, especially those which alter the face or expression of a subject.

END TEXT