

AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION
The Force Behind the Force



MARKETING PLAN TO GROW MEMBERSHIP

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“Air Power will always be the business of every American citizen.” General Henry H. “Hap” Arnold

Part 1: Purpose and Mission

Purpose of the Marketing Plan

The purpose of this marketing plan is to present a specialized strategy to address the Air Force Association's declining membership. The information is presented to AFA members to be used as a tool in a worldwide membership drive which will coordinate a global focus on membership at the international, national, regional, state and chapter levels. The purpose is to reverse the decline in membership by improving the renewal rate while at the same time consistently seeking and adding new volunteers.

This marketing plan provides a strategy to share with the delegates at the September 2006 AFA convention, with a goal of synchronized membership drives taking place all over the world. An **AFA Membership Awareness Month** will be held **September 15 through October 15, 2006**.

The best membership recruitment and retention takes place at the chapter level, and only with chapter buy-in will this global membership focus make a difference. In addition, membership must be an ongoing initiative of all chapters. Everyone is a recruiter!

This membership focus coincides with two celebratory and momentous events - the AFA's 60th birthday and the dedication of the United States Air Force Memorial, which will officially open to the public on October 16, 2006. This is the beginning of a focused annual awareness on recruitment and retention.

Mission Statement

The primary focus of the AFA is to support the Air Force and its families. The mission of the **U. S. Air Force** is to deliver sovereign options for the defense of the United States of America and its global interests - to fly and fight in air, space, and cyberspace. The vision of the **Air Force** is: global vigilance, reach and power.

The mission of the **Air Force Association** is threefold:

- 1) to educate the public about the critical role of aerospace power in the defense of our nation, increasing public understanding of national security issues;
- 2) to advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense; and
- 3) to support the United States Air Force and the Air Force family.

Part 2: Situational Analysis

Current Situation - a Snapshot of the Present and a Glimpse of the Past

AFA's membership has been on the decline since the late 1980's. This trend is common among all defense-related membership associations. Numerous factors have contributed to this decline.

- First, the number of military installations has been reduced as the size of our armed forces has declined.
- Second, the age of the membership base, coupled with the fact that fewer and fewer Americans are serving in the military, contributes to a net loss of members.
- Third, the growing number of membership organizations across the country has us competing for people's time.

The net effect is that AFA membership has declined from a high of 237,000 in 1987 to less than 130,000 as of May 2006. As of December 2005, AFA had 129,375 members, a 2.9% decrease from the December 2004 membership of 133,354. In November 2005, membership was at 129,977. During the last quarter of 2005, 691 members were recruited, 205 less than the 896 new members recruited in 2004 for the same quarter (October, November and December). The problem continues to grow - from February 2005 to February 2006, there was a net loss of 276 members.

The following chart illustrates AFA chapter and membership trends.

| Year | # of Members | # of Chartered Chapters |
|------|--------------|-------------------------|
| 2006 | 126,444 | 220 |
| 2005 | 129,375 | 223 |
| 2004 | 133,354 | 235 |
| 2003 | 134,883 | 248 |
| 2002 | 138,035 | 254 |
| 2001 | 142,182 | 263 |
| 2000 | 145,927 | 272 |
| 1999 | 148,534 | 273 |
| 1998 | 152,330 | 291 |
| 1997 | 157,862 | 307 |

In addition, in February 2004, AFA had 2,412 Community Partner members. As of February 2006, there were 2,272, a decrease of 140 Community Partners. Many chapters were recognized for recruiting Community Partners, indicating declining renewals of Community Partner Members. The number of participating convention delegates also continues to decrease - from 374 in 1996 to 260 in 2005.

Based on data from 1997 to 2003:

- the number of chapters declined by 24%;
- the number of state organizations declined by 7%;
- performing chapters declined by 40%;
- active volunteer numbers declined to around 1,000;
- convention delegates declined by 34%;
- active duty membership declined by 54%; and
- membership overall declined by about 17%.

And from 1997 to 2006:

- the number of chapters declined by 40%;and
- membership overall declined by about 32%.

AFA is led by volunteer leaders at the national, state and chapter levels. Chapters are predominantly located in the U.S., with a few also chartered in the Pacific area and Europe. The chapters are currently organized into 40 state organizations which are divided into 14 regions. The states that have the most members are California, Texas and Florida.

On a monthly average, **152 chapters do not recruit a single member**. The average annual number recruited by a state organization is 13. Only seven chapters out of 223 recruit seven or more new members per month, and in most cases it is the same chapters, states and regions that make this recruiting list.

Another telling statistic is that in the last quarter of 2005, 158 AFA chapters failed to meet the quarterly one percent new member goal. In some cases it only takes the recruitment of two new members per quarter to reach this one percent goal. (See chart below.)

| <u>Region/State</u> | <u># of Chapters</u> | <u># of Chapters Meeting Goal</u> |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| New England | 13 | 6 |
| Northeast | 31 | 6 |
| Central East | 18 | 5 |
| Southeast | 15 | 3 |
| Florida | 17 | 6 |
| South Central | 17 | 4 |
| Great Lakes | 20 | 6 |
| North Central | 11 | 4 |
| Midwest | 16 | 5 |
| Texoma | 19 | 7 |

| | | |
|----------------|------------|-----------|
| Southwest | 10 | 2 |
| Rocky Mountain | 8 | 4 |
| Northwest | 8 | 3 |
| Far West | 20 | 4 |
| Total | 223 | 65 |

We have been averaging no more than ten chapters recruiting seven or more members on a monthly basis.

Why Membership has Declined

Many have pondered the reasons for this critical membership decline. It is difficult to correct a problem without knowing the root of the problem. One significant factor is that the percentage of active duty, reserve and guard members within AFA represents only a small percentage of total membership. In 1987 the active duty membership made up almost 100,000 (42%) compared to around only 20% today.

Other often mentioned reasons for membership decline include:

- ⇒ an aging membership population,
- ⇒ a smaller military,
- ⇒ our struggling economy,
- ⇒ lack of perceived value of benefits,
- ⇒ less productive direct mail lists,
- ⇒ competition for volunteer money,
- ⇒ poverty of time,
- ⇒ competing professional military associations, and
- ⇒ failure to target new, untapped sources.

One of the primary reasons that membership continues to spiral down is that some members are not investing the time and energy to invite others to join. It may be a “not my job” mentality, lack of information, poverty of time, no desire to grow the organization or a myriad of other reasons. The good news, though, is that often it is as easy as asking!

Services Analysis / Benefits Offered Members

What gives one an incentive to join AFA? Besides to support the mission, AFA offers a range of valuable benefits. Members look for benefits that enhance their businesses or activities, not merely a basket of products and services. AFA national keeps a relentless focus on providing value to its members. These benefits are mentioned briefly in the membership application and detailed in depth online at www.afa.org. The benefits list below may be helpful in recruiting and retention.

Why Join AFA? Check out these benefits for members only!

Insurance and Health:

Term life insurance, accidental death insurance, CancerCare, TRICARE and Medicare supplements, hospital indemnity, medical discounts (dental and vision), and MetLife Home and Auto insurance

Communication/Information:

Air Force Magazine subscription (a \$21 value), Air Force Almanac, easy-to-use Web tool (Capwitz) to lobby/contact members of Congress; opportunity to participate at the chapter, state, regional and/or national level to support the USAF

Financial Services:

Online/phone Banking (checking, savings, CDs, affinity credit card, debit card, free online bill paying, and 24-hour customer service); home loans, educational loans, and online brokerage

Electronics Discounts

Discounts on Apple and Dell (up to 12%) products, cellular service discounts (\$50 discount for Verizon, 10% discounts for Sprint or Nextel)

Vacations and Car Rental Discounts

Vacation discounts, such as resort timeshares for \$299 a week and car rental Discounts

Education Discounts

Online tuition discounts (e.g., \$250 per credit hour vs. \$335 standard tuition rates for Grantham University); college financing and scholarship information; professional résumé preparation or critique; and online job search assistance

AFA Online Community

Online member directory (locate old friends); free permanent e-mail address; online membership record update; AFA yellow pages for businesses; and message boards (post a reunion)

Networking

Large organization that offers opportunities to socialize and work toward a common goal, from local on base activities to national conferences

Miscellaneous

AFA insignia products and patriotic holiday greeting cards

Pricing

AFA membership fees are very affordable. The options are:

- \$36 a year;
- \$18 a year for students;
- \$18 a year for Jr. Enlisted (E1-E4) or Cadets;
- \$46 a year for residents of Canada or Mexico;
- \$65 a year for other foreign areas;
- \$90 for three years domestic;
- \$120 for three years, Canada/Mexico;
- \$177 for three years, foreign;
- \$500 lifetime membership, single payment
- \$525 lifetime membership, extended payment for either one or two years;

Membership may be paid by check or credit card, by mail or online.

Promotion

Members are recruited and retained through many ways and at all levels - national, regional, state and chapter. Promotion efforts include:

- national AFA direct mail membership renewal reminders;
- direct mail program to recruit new members;
- recruiting new cadets through Arnold Air Society, Civil Air Patrol, etc.;
- discounted membership for cadets and Jr. Enlisted;
- membership challenges issued by National President;
- *Air Force Magazine* inserts;
- advertisements in *Air Force Times*;
- insurance mailings;
- AFA Web site;
- free memberships given Congressional members; and
- local chapter membership drives.

Current Target Markets and Market Potential

Membership is open to any and all. Target markets include:

- active duty military,
- members of the U.S. Reserves,
- members of U.S. National Guard,
- retired military,
- prior military service,
- spouses/widows of any of the above,
- cadets (ROTC, JROTC, AF Academy, OTS, CAP, Silver Wings) and
- all who support AFA's mission, no military service required.

Market size estimates to indicate potential membership size include:

- USAF Active duty military - ~359,300;
- USAF Ready Reserve - approximately 195,000 trained reservists;
- USAF Standby Reserve - approximately 12,000 reservists;
- USAF Retired Reserve - more than 623,000;
- Air National Guard - more than 106,000 officers and enlisted;
- AF Academy - up to 4,000.

The opportunities for recruiting new members are endless!

Competitive Analysis

Military Officers Association of America

MOAA is the nation's largest association of military officers with 370,000 to 389,000 members from every branch of service - including active duty, retired, National Guard, Reserve, and former officers and their families. More than 420 autonomous, MOAA-affiliated chapters are chartered in the United States and abroad. Six out of ten retired officers belong to MOAA, as well as more than 30,000 active duty officers. Auxiliary memberships are available for surviving spouses of deceased officers.

MOAA Member Benefits

Insurance

MOAA offers insurance plans, including TRICARE insurance supplements and term life insurance.

Financial Services

Credit cards, special rates on CDs and money market accounts, cell phone plans and an online store

Legislative Action

Five full-time lobbyists represent the interests of the military community through testimony before Congress and personal contact with elected officials, congressional

staffers, and representatives of the Department of Defense and other executive branch agencies.

Employment Assistance

An Officer Placement Service (TOPS) provides resume advice, job listings, background information on more than one million companies, a career fair, and a worldwide network of fellow MOAA members. A booklet, "Marketing Yourself for a Second Career," is free to members.

Educational Assistance Program

A scholarship fund offers competitive interest-free loans for undergraduate study to unmarried dependent children of active, reserve, retired, or deceased members of the uniformed services.

Retirement Advice and Assistance

Provides assistance and advice relating to military benefits and entitlements, Social Security, and other entitlements

Military Officer and Today's Officer Magazines

A monthly magazine covers legislation, financial issues, second-career opportunities, current military affairs, military history, travel, and health/fitness

Chapter Activities

Chapters offer local opportunities for camaraderie, job networking, and organized legislative action on local, state, and national levels

Air Force Sergeants Association

The AFSA is a federally chartered, nonprofit organization with nearly 135,000 members. AFSA's membership is comprised of Air Force enlistees, both active and retired, of all grades, including Air National Guard and AF Reserve, and offers an Auxiliary program for family members of Air Force personnel. Membership fees:

- \$25 for one year;
- \$44 for two years;
- \$64 for three years;
- \$18 for 18 months for new E1 - E4 members;
- \$350 life membership;
- \$400 life membership extended payments over 3.5 years;
- \$16 one year affiliate (not eligible to vote or hold office);
- \$30 two years affiliate;
- \$43 three years affiliate;
- \$200 life affiliate; and
- \$225 life affiliate, extended payments over two years.

Reserve Officers Association

ROA targets the reserve, active, retired, and former officers and warrant officers of the uniformed services of the U.S. (Army, Marines, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, Public Health Service, NOAA, National Guard, and Air National Guard), plus spouses, widows and widowers of current or former ROA members. ROA has 75,000 members.

Spouse members may not hold national office and do not receive *The Officer* magazine in print form. All members may access *The Officer* online in the members' area of the web site. ROTC and military academy students are eligible to join at special student rates.

ROA Membership fees:

- \$40 for one year;
- \$72 for two years;
- \$102 for three years;
- \$155 for five years.
- **\$100 for 5 year Virtual Membership** (full ROA membership without *The Officer* magazine. All members may access the magazine online in the members section of www.roa.org.)
- \$4 for one year for AROTC/NROTC/AFROTC Officer and WO Candidates;
- \$4 for one year for Service Academy Cadets and Midshipmen/OCS and State Military Academy Cadets.

Life Membership -

- \$490, Under age 31;
- \$480, age 31-40;
- \$450, age 41-50;
- \$420, age 51-55;
- \$390, age 56-60;
- \$360, age 61-65;
- \$320, age 66-70;
- \$280, age 71-75;
- \$250, age 76 and over.
- Deferred and flexible payment plans available for Life memberships.

Spouse Term Membership (spouses, widows and widowers of current and former ROA members):

- \$20 for one year;
- \$36 for two years;
- \$51 for three years;
- \$78 for five years.

*** ROA offers a co-membership discount - members of any nationally recognized military association may take a one-time \$15 off ROA regular term membership.**

ROA Benefits

Professional Development Workshops

ROA hosts several officer professional development seminars during the Mid-Winter Conference. These seminars include senior speakers and briefers from DoD and respective services in joint service and service-specific sessions.

Military Personnel Records Review

Available for Army, Air Force, and Coast Guard Personnel

Education Benefits

A scholarship program assists members of ROA, ROAL, their children, or grandchildren who wish to attend or who are already attending accredited U.S. colleges or universities.

Insurance

ROA members are eligible to participate in ROA-sponsored insurance programs.

Insurance categories include:

- health;
- life;
- cancer;
- accident protection;
- long-term care;
- long-term disability;
- short term medical; and
- major medical.

Travel and Leisure

ROA offers discounts on cruises, selected car rentals, and military history tours

Shopping

ROA offers member savings on audio/video products

Publications

ROA publishes a variety of topics

Career Center

ROA helps with the transition from military to civilian careers.

Legislative Updates

Legislative updates are linked to the ROA's magazine.

Personal Services

- ROA Relocation Services
- Credit Card Services
- ROA Service Departments

Noncommissioned Officers Association

NCOA represents all enlisted members and has close to 100 chapters. NCOA lobbies on pay and benefit issues for enlisted personnel, conducts worldwide job fairs and assists with veterans claims.

NCOA Membership Fees

- \$30 for one year;
- \$80 for three years;
- \$150 for six years;
- \$20 for one year for Auxiliary;
- \$50 for two years for Auxiliary;
- \$70 for three years for Auxiliary;
- \$20 for one year for Apprentice;
- \$400 life through Age 50;
- \$250 life age 51 to 60;
- \$125 life age 61+;
- \$250 life through age 50, auxiliary;
- \$125 life age 51 to 60, auxiliary;
- \$60 life age 61+, auxiliary;

NCOA benefits categories:

- **Social Improvement Programs** to help ensure well-being during active military career, transition to civilian life and throughout retirement.
- **Legislative Representation** to serve as legislative advocate
- **Today's Services** to help save money through merchant program discounts.

Civil Air Patrol

The Civil Air Patrol has nearly 60,000 volunteer members nationwide and overseas, and more than 1,700 squadrons throughout the nation. National dues are \$35 per year, (\$25 for cadets) plus region and wing dues that vary in cost.

Other Professional Military Associations

- Airlift/Tanker Association - professional association of military pilots.
- American Defense Institute (ADI) - promotes a strong national defense, civic awareness and patriotism among young Americans, voter participation by military personnel, and a resolution to the POW/MIA issue
- Association of Air Force Missileers - USAF Missile Badge or the Missile and Space Badge
- Enlisted Association of the National Guard of the United States
- Military, Veterans and Patriotic Service Organizations of America - federation of charitable nonprofit organizations providing assistance and services to veterans and their families.

- National Guard Association of the United States - created in 1878 for the purpose of obtaining better equipment, standardized training and a more combat-ready force by petitioning Congress for resources.
- National Military Family Association
- The Order of Daedalians - professional association of military pilots.
- Retired Enlisted Association
- The Retired Officers Association (TROA) - A professional organization of Retired Officers of all U.S. services. (Goes to MOAA Website.)
- United Armed Forces Association - current and former military/civil service personnel

Part 3: Environmental Problems and Opportunities

Trends, events, conditions that are external and uncontrollable by the AFA - but that impact our membership - include:

- Social and cultural factors - Generation Xers and other younger generations are not as likely to join large associations.
- Demographic - income, gender, ethnicity. The primary "face" of AFA is an older, white male, which no longer reflects the diverse force. The membership is aging, just as the rest of the U.S. with the youngest boomers nearing retirement.
- Economic - the size of the USAF force is shrinking.
- Technological
- Political - although AFA exists solely to support the USAF, the AFA is not given any preferential treatment over any other "outside" organization. For example, it is often difficult to obtain publicity in base newspapers, not easy for AFA volunteers to work with PAOs; and base global emails may be prohibited to announce AFA events.
- Legal, regulatory, ethical

SWOT Analysis

This SWOT analysis identifies AFA's:

- strengths,
- weaknesses,
- opportunities and
- threats.

Strengths

Although declining, AFA still has a membership of around 126,000, which is a large organization that advocates your interest on Capitol Hill. The Association has experienced volunteers who offer a wealth of skills and talents and who care enough to address the membership decline. In the last two years, AFA has worked to expand its skill set and volunteer base by recruiting more minorities and more diversity in talent, such as educators and a range of community partners.

Also, often AFA membership recruitment is as easy as taking time to ask. It is always a number game, but there are many patriotic citizens who have never heard of the AFA, but will join when asked because they love America and want to support the United States Air Force.

Some chapters shine time and time again in recruiting members. For example, in December 2005, some ten chapters recruited at least seven members.

And some state organizations do a great job recruiting new members. In December 2005, these states had the most new recruits: Colorado, Florida, California, Washington and Arizona.

Also, AFA offers a wealth of online recruiting and promotional resources, such as the Membership Resource Guides or the Membership Action Plan which provides ideas and initiatives to help AFA chapters recruit and retain members. Another example is the PR 101 guide on how to achieve publicity and get your AFA chapter in the news.

Weaknesses

On the other hand, some AFA chapters rarely recruit any members, as demonstrated by the pitiful statistic that on a monthly average, **152 chapters (out of 223) do not recruit** a single member. The average number recruited by a state organization is 13, and only seven chapters recruit seven or more new members per month.

Many local chapters are not meeting AFA national goals and objectives. It is apparent that even money (support payments) does not motivate chapters to comply with national requirements. And, as discussed, AFA has an aging membership population and a smaller military force from which to recruit and to support than in the past.

For the past several years, chapter level recruiting efforts have been marginal. There may be several reasons for this.

- Local chapter leaders may have become stagnant and satisfied with the "status quo."
- Chapter leaders may not understand the process by which chapters get credit for new member recruitment; nor understand the rewards for doing so.
- Chapter leaders are not familiar with the base membership drive program;
- Chapter leaders may be unaware of potential recruitment opportunities to expand membership into new areas.
- Chapter leaders may not know how to use the tools and resources at their disposal to help them track their membership statistics.

Opportunities

At the national level, continue to use technology to recruit and retain members such as e-mails, online services, the Web site. Also explore new technological ways to offer member services, such as DVDs and pod casts. Continue to concentrate on understanding member needs and offering benefits that respond to those needs and enhance the member's business, changing with society and the economy. Offer the best value for our members' investment.

In the field, members could aggressively seek more community partners. Reserve and guard membership levels in the AFA are less than five percent. These members and other target groups are vast untouched sources of membership to local AFA chapters.

Threats

People in the U.S. have less spare time to volunteer than ever before. American workers put in more work hours than anyone else in the industrialized world. Stress levels are on the rise, but still almost every year, U.S. workers increase the hours they work. Cocooning continues to be a cultural trend, with people desiring to perform the majority of their social interactions (working, entertaining, relaxing, etc.) from home, rather than outside of the home. This trend was strongly reinforced by the 9/11 tragedy, which caused many to review their lives and consciously decide to do less away from home. This trend is here to stay, according to economic studies.

Part 4: MARKETING STRATEGY FOR MEMBER RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

The Membership Committee suggests that a synchronized, worldwide membership drive take place **September 15 through October 15, 2006**. This would be the first of annual membership awareness campaigns which would result in a concentrated focus on recruiting and retaining members, the lifeblood of our organization. The theme for 2006 will be: **“Air Power will always be the business of every American citizen.”** For 2007, the theme would focus on the 60th birthday anniversary of the September 1947 founding of the USAF.

Chapters are asked to undertake locally designed activities to emphasize membership in the manner appropriate for their unique area. Tools will be provided to help host a successful campaign. In addition, membership needs to be top-of-the-mind at all times, with recruiting and retention a focus year-round regardless of the activity planned by the chapter.

AFA Membership Awareness Campaign tools include:

- Gen. T. Michael Moseley’s letter of logistical support for professional Military Associations
- Applications and supporting materials to reflect the “new” AFA
- Public Service Announcements (PSA)
 - Print PSA which can easily be tailored for the local chapter
 - Broadcast PSA which could be given to local radio and TV stations
- Sample news release to announce membership drive
- Sample news release to announce membership drive results
- Table top displays for use at AFA events
- Membership video
- AFA.org online resources:
 - What's In It For Me Leaflets tailored to:
 - Veteran/Retiree
 - Enlisted
 - Air National Guard
 - Air Force Reserve
 - Company Grade Officer
 - Civilian
 - Community Partner
 - AFROTC/AFJROTC Cadet

- Member Benefits/Membership Ad
- AFA Public Service Announcements
- AFA Membership Video
- AFA Logos
- Public Relations 101 PowerPoint
- Public Relations 101 Guidebook
- Membership application form
- Community Partner application form
- Student membership application form
- Membership Resource Guides:
 - AFA Membership
 - Organizing and conducting an AFA Membership Drive
 - Understanding the AFA
- Chapter Rejuvenation Plan

Membership Resource Guides

The Membership Resource Guides are especially helpful. The Resources are designed to help achieve successful membership drives. Four different guides are posted online at AFA.org:

Guide I - AFA Membership - Explains the "nuts and bolts" of the chapter's membership program. The important aspects of membership - the mechanics, retention and acquisition are explained to provide the necessary background for developing a healthy, growing chapter membership.

Guide II - Organizing and Conducting an AFA Membership Drive - addresses planning and organizing a successful membership drive. A suggested time schedule is included. Specific details that should be taken into consideration when conducting the drive on an Air Force Base are included in this Guide and are italicized.

Guide III - Understanding the Air Force Association - Contains a variety of information about the AFA that has been found to be useful in previous years. This section provides an excellent summary of the Association's activities and provides background information for all people working with the membership program.

Guide IV - Samples and Other Good Stuff - Following are samples of press releases, a briefing outline, a membership plan and other materials you will find helpful in developing your membership program and conducting the drive.

Membership Recruitment Ideas

The following is just one example of the wealth of helpful information on the AFA Web site.

Run a Year-Round Membership Drive

Target on one area each month or quarter. e.g., educators in October, gift memberships in November, spouses in December, every member get a member in September, Community Partners in May, etc. **Source** - CO State AFA 1996

Give AFA Memberships as Awards or Thank-you Gifts

Chapter sponsored military award winners at local base, speakers, etc. **Source** - Delaware Galaxy Chapter 1998

Recognize Chapter Members Who Recruit

Recognize chapter members who recruit new members at a chapter or state meeting. **Source** - Virginia State Organization 2002

Prepare a Chapter Fact Sheet for Recruiting Purposes

This should be maintained by the chapter and kept current. The fact sheet should list annual chapter activities, officer names and contact information, and general meeting dates. It might also list Community Partners, Vision Classroom information, and other community activities in which the chapter takes part. **Source** - Central Florida Chapter, Alamo Chapter, www.afa.org/members/mrg/alamo.pdf

Hold a New Member Recruiter Drawing

At your quarterly meeting, present a small gift to a person that has recruited new members during the last quarter. Run it in a contest drawing format - for every new member signed up during the last three months, the recruiter's name is placed in the drawing. (For example, if a person recruits five new members, he has five chances to win.) **Source** Chuck Zimkas, Lance P. Sijan Chapter 2003

Always Carry Membership Applications

The membership application can be folded to easily fit in your wallet. Make sure there is always one there. Chapter, State, Region and Committee leaders are encouraged to ask each other to see the application they are carrying. If the person that is challenged does not have an application on them, he or she should donate \$5.00 to AFA. **Source** - Jack Steed; Chuck Zimkas, jsteed@nicholscauley.com

Teacher Workshop Gains New Members

The Hurlburt Chapter 398 conducted a Teacher Workshop as part of their Aerospace education activity programs. The plan was to host up to 100 teachers for a workshop on base, tour the flight line and view static displays, tour the full motion aircraft simulators & rehearsal devices, have lunch, and then receive briefings on AEF, grants, awards, Visions, CAP, etc. The chapter charged \$40 per person for the workshop, gave them a free membership in the AFA, received the \$10 rebate, and still had \$14 to

spend for lunch. The difference was made up by Community Partner donations for door prizes, snacks, coffee, etc. Forty-seven teachers participated and the chapter had 47 new members! **Source** - Hurlburt Chapter 398 VP for Community & Industrial Affairs, EMax@friedauer.net, www.afaflorida.com/hurlburt

Sample Letter for Family and Friends of AFJROTC Cadets

A sample letter has been prepared for families and friends of AFJROTC Cadets that encourages them to become AFA members and provides reasons for their membership in AFA. The letter will be forward upon request. **Source** - Membership Committee, Jack Steed, jsteed@nca-cpa.com

Sample Letter for Family and Friends of Potential Air Force Recruits

The letter encourages families and friends of potential Air Force Recruits to become members of AFA and provides reasons for their membership in AFA. The sample letter will be furnished upon request. **Source** - Membership Committee, Jack Steed, jsteed@nca-cpa.com

Pay One Year Dues for Chapter Members Who Recruit 5 New Members in One Year

The Richard D. Kisling chapter offers to pay the dues of any chapter member who signs up five new members in a one year time frame. If a chapter member recruits three Community Partner members, the recruiter will receive a \$100 savings bond. For four CPs, the recruiter receives a three-year dues payment. **Source** - Chapter Newsletter, jgalbreath@afa.org

Marketing Methods to Attract New Members

Recruitment and retention are most effective at the chapter level. Marketing tools for local chapters to consider implementing include:

- ✓ regular membership drives;
- ✓ face-to-face personal selling;
- ✓ informational CDs;
- ✓ posting nationally produced posters/flyers;
- ✓ chapter Web site;
- ✓ writing feature stories for the local newspaper on chapter events;
- ✓ direct mail to potential members;
- ✓ newsletters;
- ✓ programming;
- ✓ recognition and awards;
- ✓ special events;
- ✓ photos published in local newspapers and magazines; and
- ✓ media releases.

Use the resources posted online the AFA website. One good reference is "Understanding the AFA" of the Membership Resource Guides. Members need to be informed so that they can answer questions and be an AFA spokesperson.

All of these tools will communicate the AFA message, create awareness and hopefully create a desire to join the local chapter.

Chapters should establish a member "liaison" to various Air Force-related activities and organizations. These may include but are not limited to the following.

- Aerospace industry;
- Veterans groups;
- AFROTC in both high schools and universities;
- Air Force Reserve and Air National Guard units/bases;
- Active duty bases;
- Business/civic leaders;
- Chambers of Commerce;
- Base Welcome Center; and
- Scouts and other similar organizations.

Membership Building Ideas

1. Schedule your meetings in new locations where it will get new visibility, such as at libraries, community centers, bookstores, coffee houses, etc. Get the site to help promote your special appearance. Invite guests.
2. If you meet in a public location, have a sign which announces your meeting location, date and time.
3. Have an appreciation meeting and honor a community member at the special meeting. Ask the guest to say a few special words about AFA.
4. Obtain permission to quote the special guest, and use it in marketing materials. "According to Base Commander XXXX, he has been a member of AFA for 20 years because he has found it to be...."
5. Carry the AFA membership applications with you and distribute them to prospective members at every opportunity.
6. If you don't have a chapter Web site, design one that is visually appealing and creative.
7. Use publicity. Send the local media news releases and photographs about AFA chapter activities, new officers, awards, golf tournaments, etc.
8. Send personal notes to members you have not seen in a while. Let them know you have missed them and the date, time and location of the next meeting.
9. Have your chapter become a member of the Chamber of Commerce.

10. Speak at your Chamber of Commerce.
11. Host a Chamber of Commerce Business After Hours.
12. Create chapter business cards made with your meeting dates, location, time and a contact number. Pass them out everywhere.
13. Chapters highlight their annual accomplishments in their quarterly newsletter and distributed this information at meetings, recognition events, state conventions and provide copies to the Commander and Command Chief.
14. Give copies of *Air Force* magazine and chapter newsletters to libraries, doctors' offices and dentists' offices. Staple your chapter's business card and meeting schedule to them.
15. Offer guest speakers to the local AFJROTC classes.
16. Offer seminars to AFJROTC high school students on career planning.
17. Display at work AFA plaque of membership, and any awards.
18. Wear AFA tie tacks, ties, scarves, etc.
19. Develop and distribute AFA chapter bookmarks.
20. Put an AFA license plate or sticker on your car.
21. Invite the media to your meetings. Give them a reason to attend, such as a well-known speaker.
22. Place an AFA-sponsored military exhibit in the local museum or welcome center.
23. Form a community outreach team that contacts civic organizations and offers a program on what AFA does for the community.
24. Make a list of everyone you know who would benefit from AFA. Invite them to the meetings and ask them to join.
25. Ask your dentist, doctor, hair stylist, etc., if you may leave AFA brochures in their offices. Make sure the business card is attached to call for more information.
26. List your AFA involvement on your resume.
27. Communicate that membership is the responsibility of *every* member.

28. Personally donate a year's membership to charity auctions.
29. Develop a key communicators' e-mail list and keep them informed about AFA activities.
30. Award pins or a year of membership for recruiting a specific number of new members.
31. Once a quarter, have a "guest lunch" where every member brings at least one guest.
32. Create a holiday invitation (St. Pat's Halloween, spring, etc.) and ask each member to hand out invitations to friends and coworkers. Plan your agenda around a holiday theme.
33. Place flyers/posters at: library, coffee shops, colleges, churches, recreation centers, City Hall, post office, bookstores and Chambers of Commerce.
34. Develop and distribute AFA talking points to use when recruiting prospective members or giving presentations.
35. Develop a public relations campaign to keep your chapter in the public eye.
36. Collect testimonials about AFA from base leaders and community opinion leaders and use them to promote your chapter.
37. Offer to give guests a ride to the meeting.
38. Develop a slogan and use it on your letterhead. For example, as coined by Dr. Dan Callahan, "EDIMGIAFAD - Every Day in Middle Georgia is Armed Forces Appreciation Day."
39. Do not discuss the membership crisis in front of guests.
40. When guests visit, make sure to welcome them warmly. Ask for their contact information, and call and/or e-mail them a thank you for visiting. Invite them to come to another meeting.
41. Develop a mentor program to encourage both new members and to help retain members.
42. Have an occasional social meeting to recognize and meet the family and co-workers of chapter members.
43. Enhance membership retention by ensuring that every member is a stakeholder in the success of the chapter. Put every member on a committee, and make sure

each has a specific task to do.

Source for suggestions 1-42: Adapted from Toastmasters.



Sample News Release Announcing Membership Drive

Carl Vinson Memorial

Chapter 296, Air Force Association

News Release

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: January 24, 2006

Contact: Beth Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, AFA Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter
(428) 938-4744; elizabethburris@hotmail.net

AFA Chapter Kicks-off Membership Drive

WARNER ROBINS, GA – The Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter of the Air Force Association (AFA) is holding a membership drive in February to recruit new members and encourage membership renewal. A kickoff meeting will be held Tuesday, January 31, 2006, from 10:00 a.m. until 11:00 a.m. in the Base Theater.

Air Force Association membership is open to anyone interested. Veterans, active duty military, military spouses, civil servants, business partners and other interested persons are invited to join. A membership fee of only \$36 a year offers these benefits:

- 12 monthly issues of AIR FORCE magazine,
- yearly Air Force Almanac,
- financial services,
- group insurance,
- travel services, and
- education/career assistance.

More importantly, however, is the support the local chapter provides Robins Air Force Base and the Houston County community. Initiatives of Chapter 296 include:

- sponsorship of at least five \$500 scholarships to young airman assigned to the base;
- Family Science Nights in local elementary schools in support of the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center;
- *USA Today* Visions classrooms in local Houston County schools, providing teachers newspaper and curriculum to encourage aerospace education
- hosting annual and quarterly awards programs for base employees, local teachers and Air Force Junior ROTC cadets, and
- an annual "Thank a Veteran" 5K run with revenues used to support a POW/MIA memorial at the Museum of Aviation.

MORE
AFA Chapter Kicks-off Membership Drive / page 2 of 2

The mission of the AFA is three fold:

1. Educate the public about the need for aerospace power and its role in a strong national defense.
2. Advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense.
3. Support the United States Air Force and the Air Force Family.

Interested persons may complete a membership application online at www.afa.org. The February 1-28, 2006, membership drive is led by 1Lt Sandy Smith. She may be contacted at either sandy.smith@robins.af.mil or (428) 926-1234.

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Carl Vinson Memorial

Chapter 296, Air Force Association

NEWS RELEASE

FOR RELEASE UPON RECEIPT: March 15, 2006

Contact: Beth Burris, Vice President, Public Affairs, Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter, (444) 988-4734, elizabethburris@hotmail.net

AFA Membership Drive Big Success

WARNER ROBINS, GA - The Carl Vinson Memorial Chapter 296 of the Air Force Association (AFA) has concluded its official membership drive which was held in February. The Chapter recruited 157 new members, exceeding its goal of 125 by 26%.

Over 50 key workers participated in the drive, but a few recruiters were responsible for 30 percent of the new members. The top recruiters and drive co-chairman were recognized during the Warner Robins Air Logistics Center (WR-ALC) Staff Meeting held March 25 by Maj Gen (Sel) Collings, Center Commander.

The top recruiters who each brought in 10 or more members were:

- ◆ Staff Sgt. Bruce Klima, 19th Air Refueling Group;
- ◆ Lt. Brian Bagget, WR- ALC Combat Electronic Directorate;
- ◆ Lt. Shawn King, WR-ALC Support Equipment and Vehicles Directorate; and
- ◆ Lt. Sharon Lisa Simpkins, 78th Logistics Readiness Squadron.

Co-chairmen of this years drive were Lt. Thomas Snyder of the WR- ALC Combat Electronic Directorate and Lt. Chris Ladrado of the WR-ALC Special Operations Directorate. The top performers and co-chairmen each received a chapter coin, certificate of appreciation, and a Museum of Aviation membership.

The leader of the membership drive was Capt. Sean Wade of the WR-ALC Combat Electronic Directorate. For his leadership, he was also presented an autographed book "God is My Co-Pilot" by Gen. Robert Scott.

MORE

AFA Membership Drive Big Success/ page 2 of 2

“The effort of these hard workers is appreciated, and puts the chapter in line for possible national recognition for membership growth at the next AFA National Convention. But membership goes beyond the drive, and there is no better way to support the Air Force and the local community than joining the AFA,” said Lynn Morley, chapter president.

Association membership is always open to active duty military, civil service workers and retired military or civil service. Businesses are also invited to join as a community partner. Benefits of membership include:

- a monthly AFA magazine
- yearly Air Force Almanac,
- financial services,
- group insurance,
- travel services,
- education and career assistance.

More importantly, however, is the support the local chapter provides Robins Air Force Base and the Houston County community. Initiatives of Chapter 296 include:

- sponsorship of at least five \$500 scholarships to young airman assigned to the base;
- Family Science Nights in local elementary schools in support of the Georgia Youth Science and Technology Center;
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- hosting annual and quarterly awards programs for base employees, local teachers and Air Force Junior ROTC cadets, and
- an annual "Thank a Veteran" 5K run with revenues used to support a POW/MIA memorial at the Museum of Aviation.

The mission of the AFA is three fold:

1. Educate the public about the need for aerospace power and its role in a strong national defense.
2. Advocate aerospace power and a strong national defense.
3. Support the United States Air Force and the Air Force Family.

To learn more about the chapter or join visit their web-site at www.cv-afa.org.

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NOTE: A photo is provided. Left to right: Maj. Gen. (Sel) Mike Collings, Staff Sgt. Bruce Klima, Lt. Brian Bagget, Lt. Thomas Snyder, Lt. Shawn King, Lt. Sharon Lisa Simpkins, Lynn Morley, Lt. Chris Ladrado and Capt. Sean Wade.

Focus On Retention

Meeting the growth challenge requires an active chapter-level program to retain current members as well as to recruit new ones. An effective chapter-level retention program has three elements. The first element is leadership. Each chapter must assign a Vice President for Membership with responsibility for facilitating the recruiting and retention processes. Second, each chapter strategic plan should include a metric for 95% annual retention and a detailed plan to accomplish this goal. The third element is synchronizing the chapter-level retention effort with the direct mailing renewal process operated by AFA headquarters. We will examine each of these three elements here.

The Chapter Vice President For Membership

The most important element is leadership. The chapter vice president for membership plans and facilitates the process and reports performance to the chapter executive council. The chapter vice president for membership duties include:

1. Chairs the Membership Committee.
2. Establishes programs to recruit new members into AFA and the local chapter.
3. Reviews each month's chapter membership update roster provided by national headquarters to determine those chapter members whose membership is expiring that month, contacts these members either personally or by phone, and reminds them to renew their membership.
4. Contact chapter members whose membership has expired and who have been dropped from the chapter roster and encourage them to renew their membership. These names are also provided on each month's chapter membership update roster furnished by national headquarters.
5. Serves as liaison to the Base AFA Annual Membership Drive.
6. Attends monthly Executive Council meetings and reports recruiting and retention activities and statistics.

The Strategic Plan to Renew Members

The second element of retaining members is to describe retention goals, activities, and responsibilities in the chapter strategic plan. Each chapter should include a metric of 95% retention as their goal. One key to retention is recruiting for all the right reasons in the first place. Volunteers active in chapter activities remain engaged in perpetuity and minimize the effort required to achieve the 95% target rate. The following renewal rates are published by AFA in the "Membership 101" Guide 1 on page 10. These numbers support the idea that retention is strongly related to why the individual joined in the first place. If the member sought out AFA membership to satisfy their personal needs, then there is an equally strong need to remain a member and a very high probability that they will renew. The annual and three-year membership renewal rate of 85% appears to support this theory. On the other hand the numbers for "first time" members are dramatically lower probably because their membership experience or involvement lacked the interest and/or intent to renew their membership. Forming a bond with the organization is critical to long-term membership.

| | |
|--------------------------------|-----|
| Annual Member Renewal Rate | 85% |
| Three-Year Member Renewal Rate | 85% |
| "First Time" Member | 40% |

Two of the most effective mechanisms for renewing new members are phoning them to remind them to renew and inviting them personally to the quarterly membership meetings. These activities need to appear as part of the chapter strategic plan.

Synchronizing Chapter-Level Actions with National Headquarters

The most important activity in retention is reminding members that their subscription is expiring and it is time to renew. The AFA national office supports this activity in two ways. First, AFA national office publishes a list each month by chapter of those memberships expiring in the next 30-60-90 days in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet format. This list is available to local chapter officers authorized by login and password to access their chapter lists at the AFA field resources web page. Second, AFA national office also sends a letter to each member sixty days in advance of the membership expiration date to remind them that they need to renew their membership. This reminder from AFA headquarters should be supported by a letter or personal phone call from the local AFA chapter to the member to renew. A phone call is a personal one-on-one contact and more effective than a letter. A face-to-face contact especially by the original recruiter is the most effective method. Very often this face-to-face contact by the original recruiter is rewarded by the individual extending the renewal to a three-year or life-time membership. In any case, each chapter must appoint an executive council member responsible for developing and operating this mechanism. Retaining members and recruiting new ones is a job best performed by a well-lead team of recruiters.

PART 5: GETTING READY FOR THE 2007 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE SUGGESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Market Research

To help with your chapter's marketing efforts and to determine programs your members would support, a survey of your members could identify target market characteristics:

- Demographics (age, sex, income, race, neighborhood);
- Benefits desired;
- Value placed on each benefit;
- Benefits knowledge;
- Why they joined;
- Why they continue to renew - what makes AFA special and differentiated from the competition;
- how members learn about AFA services (advertising, direct mail, word-of-mouth);
- Patterns or habits your members and potential members share - where they shop, what they read, watch, listen to;
- Qualities members value most about AFA services - selection, convenience, service, reliability, availability, affordability;
- Qualities members like least about AFA services;
- Prospective members not currently being reached.

A survey of past chapter members who did NOT renew would also be beneficial, to identify:

- Demographics;
- Benefits desired;
- Benefits knowledge;
- Why they joined initially;
- Why they did not renew;
- Positioning - perception of AFA in relation to competitors' offerings;
- Attitude regarding AFA's services.

Best Practices

Exactly what are the most outstanding recruiting chapters doing? How do they retain their members? Each month review the membership statistics and contact those chapters that increased in membership. Identify and share the methods that have been most effective, what works and what does not. Help other chapters by sending your findings to AFA National to post the suggestions online in the members' only

section. It might be helpful to e-mail the best recruiting practices to our state and chapter presidents.

Maximize other Contacts

AFA must find new markets not previously targeted. Cross reference your chapter AFA membership list with other local lists and recruit those who are not on the AFA rolls. Check the memberships of your Military Affairs Committees, Chambers of Commerce, other PMA chapters, your church or civic group (e.g., Rotary, Civitan, Kiwanis.) Get a list of base contractors. Recruit either individual members or community partners, whichever fits.

Membership Incentives to be Considered by National

1. Not all potential members or members desire to receive the *Air Force* magazine, which has a \$4 cover price (\$48 a year) and is assigned an annual value of \$21 by AFA. Perhaps AFA national could offer an option of membership without the subscription for \$20 a year.
2. A similar idea for the national office is to offer a Virtual Membership. Virtual members would have full online access to the "members only" section, but receive neither the magazine nor any other direct mail pieces, such as the video offering. Instead all contact would be through either the free AFA member e-mail account or an e-mail address provided by the virtual member. The fee could be similar to the Reserve Officers' Association virtual membership of \$100 for five years.
3. Partner with a select group of PMA to offer a co-membership discount with an annual discount of \$15 to join two. Each partner PMA would receive \$7.50 less, which should be offset by the increased number of new members. Or give members a one-time \$15 discount when joining AFA at the same time as any nationally recognized military association. (ROA offers this benefit.)

Conclusion

As with any non-profit, volunteer organization, membership retention and recruitment are vital to continuity. To ensure that we have a strong voice in local communities and on Capitol Hill, please encourage help AFA grow. The Membership Awareness Month is only 30 days, but we can all promote AFA 365 days of the year. Take a few moments to reflect on what AFA means to you, what it means to our military members and what it means to the future of our nation. Then show your passion and enthusiasm for your organization- it's contagious! Thank you for what you do for our Air Force Association and our Air Force every day. And remember, "*Air Power will always be the business of every American citizen.*"

2006 AFA Membership Awareness Month: September 15 to October 15