



DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR FORCE
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF OF STAFF
UNITED STATES AIR FORCE
WASHINGTON DC 20330

MAY 27 2010

MEMORANDUM FOR ALMAJCOM-FOA-DRU/CC
DISTRIBUTION C

FROM: HQ USAF/CC
1670 Air Force Pentagon
Washington, DC 20330-1670

SUBJECT: Support for Military Associations

Air Force personnel continue to reap great benefits through their interaction with various military associations and other professional groups. In both the profession of arms and numerous occupational professions, these organizations exist to support, promote, and develop the interests of our Armed Forces and military professionals. Military associations include such organizations as the Air Force Association, Air Force Sergeants Association, the Non-commissioned Officers Association, The Reserve Officers Association, and others that focus on military services and personnel.

Through the years, military associations have provided numerous forums that foster military professionalism and development. In addition, these groups work hard to increase awareness of our mission with the American public and foster strong and mutually beneficial relationships among government, industry, and civic leaders.

On occasion, military associations may ask for help in disseminating information about their activities or seek logistical support for their events and programs. The facts and circumstances of each contact with a military association will dictate whether and how Air Force personnel should respond. The attached background paper provides a brief overview of Department of Defense and Air Force guidance concerning relations with and support of military associations, including examples of the more frequent circumstances with general guidance applicable to each. Advice in particular circumstances is available from your servicing legal office or the Air Force Ethics Office (SAF/GCA).

Military associations represent an important non-governmental dimension of our country's strong interest in national defense. To the extent Department of Defense and Air Force policies allow you to do so, I encourage your involvement with and support of military associations.


NORTON A. SCHWARTZ
General, USAF
Chief of Staff

Attachment:
Background Paper on Interaction with Military Associations

BACKGROUND PAPER ON INTERACTION WITH MILITARY ASSOCIATIONS

Air Force (AF) personnel and organizations interact with a wide range of non-Federal entities, including military associations. Commanders and senior leaders should ensure that all personnel are aware of the guidance (and limitations) on official or personal involvement in, or support of, military associations. This paper provides guidance on common issues regarding AF interaction with National Military Associations and other military associations. Commanders and supervisors should make decisions on requests involving military associations on a case-by-case basis, with the assistance of the supporting legal office.

“National Military Associations” (NMAs) are “[a]ssociations that are directly oriented to the U.S. military; national in scope; and focus their efforts on active duty, National Guard, and/or Reserve activities.” DoDD 5410.18, *Public Affairs Community Relations Policy*. NMAs must be designated by the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs and are very limited in number. The list of NMAs is found at DoDI 5410.19, *Public Affairs Community Relations Policy Implementation*, paragraph E10.A1, and includes the Air Force Association, the Non-Commissioned Officers Association, and the Reserve Officers Association. Once an organization is designated an NMA, the Secretaries of the Military Departments are delegated approval authority to provide military support for the NMA's annual conference, including limited transportation, communications, medical assistance, and security and administrative support. **Regional and local chapters of an NMA are not eligible to receive these additional services.** These chapters and other military associations may receive support in accordance with DoD 5500.7-R, *Joint Ethics Regulation (JER)*, Chapter 3, “Activities with Non-Federal Entities.”

Other military associations (some are referred to as “professional military associations”) are described as “non-profit, non-commercial, tax-exempt organizations that focus on advancing the interest of the Armed Forces and military professionalism.” These groups may be narrower in scope than NMAs, and oriented toward military veterans, specific military units, occupational fields/skills, campaigns, gender, ethnic group or region. Examples of these other military associations are the Air Force Sergeants Association, the REDHORSE Association and Tuskegee Airmen, Inc. There is no official process or authority to recognize other military associations or to grant them special consideration like an NMA. Generally, support to these associations is governed by DoD 5500.7-R.

Disseminating Information on a Military Association

- Official channels may be used to distribute information notifying DoD personnel of events of common interest sponsored by military associations, consistent with public affairs regulations.
- Per AFI 33-119, *Air Force Messaging*, commanders may authorize non-Federal personnel limited use of AF e-mail to support military association-sponsored events, except for fundraising and membership drives, after determining all of the following: (1) Serves a legitimate public interest; (2) Does not interfere with the performance of official duties or detract from readiness; (3) Conforms to theater combatant commander and MAJCOM policies; (4) Is of reasonable duration and frequency; (5) Does not overburden the communications system; (6) Does not reflect adversely on the DoD or AF; and (7) Does not create a significant additional cost to the DoD or the AF.
- Commanders may permit military associations to set out membership applications, leaflets or flyers in installation common areas, as long as similar groups are given the same privilege.

- Pursuant to DoD/GC guidance, when commanders refer to association membership or fundraising activities, they should remain neutral and avoid the use of words like “endorse,” “support,” “encourage,” “recommend,” or “urge.” The point is to convey basic factual information—not to encourage support or to endorse a particular military association.
- Commanders may issue official letters thanking military associations for support of the organization or community. These letters may be disseminated through official channels.

Logistical Support of Military Association Events

- NMAs are entitled to expanded support for their national annual conferences or conventions, in accordance with DoDI 5410.19, Enclosure 10.
- Otherwise, military association events may be provided support in the form of limited use of DoD facilities and equipment when the head of the DoD Component command or organization determines all of the following: (1) Support does not interfere with official duties; (2) Support is in DoD public affairs or community relations interests; (3) It is appropriate to associate DoD and AF with the event; (4) The event is of interest and benefit to the community, AF, or DoD; (5) The AF is willing and able to provide the same support to comparable events by other associations; (6) Support is not prohibited by other statutes or regulations; and (7) No admission fee is charged (beyond reasonable costs of sponsoring the event).
- Limited use of DoD facilities and equipment may be provided to support a charitable fundraising event by a military association only when the head of the DoD Component command or organization determines (1)-(6) noted in the preceding paragraph, the sponsoring association is either not affiliated with the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC) or, if affiliated with the CFC, the Director, Office of Personnel Management, has no objection to DoD support of the event, and the fundraiser takes place away from the Federal workplace.
- DoD personnel in their official capacities may be authorized to participate as speakers or panelists at military association events, in accordance with the JER, public affairs and travel guidance.

Attendance at a Military Association Event

- Commanders may permit excused absences for reasonable periods of time for their DoD personnel in a personal capacity to voluntarily participate in the military association activities.
- Commanders may approve permissive TDY to attend a military association meeting/seminar if there is a direct relationship to the member’s primary military duties and attendance clearly enhances his or her value to the Air Force.
- Commanders may permit their employees in their official capacities to attend military association conferences/meetings at Federal Government expense if there is a legitimate Federal Government purpose (beyond merely maintaining professional credentials).

Management of, or Serving with, a Military Association

- DoD personnel in their official capacities are prohibited from participating in the management of military associations without authorization from the DoD/GC.
- DoD personnel in their personal capacity may participate in the management of a military association provided they act exclusively outside the scope of their official position. A DoD

employee may not serve in a personal capacity as an officer or on the Board of Directors if offered because of his/her DoD assignment/position. The following restrictions generally apply:

- May not participate in one's official capacity in any particular matter concerning the military association.
- May not represent the military association before a Federal agency.
- May not solicit funds for the military association from subordinates or prohibited sources.
- May not use Government resources, funds or personnel to support the military association.

Serving as a DoD Liaison to a Military Association

The Head of the DoD component command or organization may appoint an employee as a DoD liaison to a military association after a determination there is a significant and continuing DoD interest served by such representation. Liaisons serve as part of their official duties, represent DoD interests in an advisory capacity only, and must make clear their opinions do not bind DoD or the AF. Liaisons may not be involved in management or control of an association.

Endorsement of a Military Association

- DoD personnel in their official capacities may not state or imply inappropriate endorsement of a military association.
- DoD personnel in their personal capacities may not use their official titles, positions or organization names in connection with military association activities as this tends to suggest official endorsement or preferential treatment by DoD. However, military grade and department may be used as part of an individual's name (e.g., Captain Smith, U.S. Air Force).
- DoD personnel may acknowledge past contributions, services, or assistance if factual and limited to the purpose of recognizing the contributions of a military association.

Military Associations and Gifts

- Normally, AF personnel cannot accept gifts offered because of their position. However, there are exceptions under which an employee may accept a gift; they include:
 - Unsolicited gifts valued at \$20 or less, per source, per occasion not to exceed a \$50 cap on all gifts from a single source during a calendar year (a gift to a spouse or family member is deemed a gift to the employee, and counts toward the caps).
 - On occasion, military associations may host events to which AF personnel are invited, and for which they are not charged. Free attendance from the sponsor at a "Widely Attended Gathering" may be accepted when the AF has determined attendance is in AF's interest because it will further agency programs or operations and the event will be widely attended by a large number of persons with diverse views or interests.
- Military associations frequently provide support to various AF activities. Where the offer of support originates with the association it may be accepted by way of a documented gift to the AF. However, DoD personnel "shall not solicit, fundraise for, or otherwise request or encourage the offer of a gift." DoD 7000.14-R, *DoD Financial Management Regulation*, Volume 12, Chapter 30, paragraph 300502. To the extent possible, gifts from military associations to the AF should be "in kind" and not in the form of funds.