

SOA Executive Committee

Minutes of the Meeting

14th January 2015

1. The SOA Executive Committee met on the 14th January 2015 in the PAO Conference Room. Attendance apologies received from Steve Covington, Alan Jeavons, Ray Healy, and Jean-Marie Boulet. The Agenda and the minutes from the previous meeting of 19th November 2014 were approved.

2. Action Items from the previous meeting and General Assembly:

- a. SOA Membership List. The SOA Membership list is being converted to a usable application and will be provided to all members in tabular format sorted by Name and by Nationality. The membership list will be distributed via email once a year. Current version to be completed by end of January. (Action: MO)
- b. Newcomers Welcome Guide. The current Newcomers Welcome Guide will be updated to include SOA membership information. (Action: JW)
- c. SOA Ambassadors. The search has begun for volunteers (active and retired personnel) to be ambassadors to the NMRs and to each of the SHAPE national representations in an effort to increase awareness of SOA and to enhance recruiting activities. (Action: GB)
- d. Facebook Account. The ExCom gratefully approved the transition of the US Chapter Facebook Account to become the official SOA Facebook Account. Volunteers are sought to become Facebook Account administrators in addition to the current US Chapter administrators. (Action: GB)
- e. SOA Web Page. Training is ongoing to enable access for SOA administrators to the SOA Web Page. The current web page will be updated when the training is completed. (Action: JV & JW)

3. Implementation of the SOA President's Objectives:

- a. The newly elected SOA President, General Shaud, has written a letter to the SOA membership with a number of proposals to improve the SOA. This letter was distributed to the membership. These proposals include:
 - reports to promote understanding of Alliance activities,
 - support and advocacy of Alliance activities,
 - assuring relevance of SOA,
 - increasing SOA membership,
 - receiving members feedback,
 - effective and useful communications to members,
 - informing members about NATO, SHAPE and SOA activities;

The Action Items mentioned above are the beginning of the efforts to achieve the President's Objectives. There will be more action items to continue with that process including response to SOA members feedback as it is provided.

4. Strategic Decisions for the 2015 Symposium:

- a. Decisions have been made based upon the feedback from the members that attended the 2014 Symposium and the consideration of the events that will occur in and around Mons in 2015 as a Cultural Capital of Europe.
- b. The agenda for the 2015 Symposium, 8-11 October, will follow tradition. Bus transportation will be provided as needed.
 - 1) Thursday Evening –Welcome Reception.
 - 2) Friday – General Assembly, Lunch at SHAPE Club, NATO/ACO update briefing(s), Evening Concert, and other events as available.
 - 3) Saturday – Social Program, Golf Tournament, and Annual Dinner.
- c. The hotel selection will be based upon easy access, adequate parking, reasonable cost, and good accommodations. The Welcome Reception will be at or near the hotel. (Action: VL)
- d. Friday daytime activities will be at SHAPE, with the Evening Concert in Mons.
- e. The Saturday Social Program with focus on the Mons 2015 theme to include a tour of the Mons 2015 environment and special exhibitions. (Action: JV)
- f. The Golf Tournament will occur Saturday morning at RGCH. (Action: JMB)
- g. The Annual Dinner location will be determined soon. (Action: CH)
- h. Bus transportation will be provided as needed. (Action: JMB)

5. October 21 letter from US Chapter:

- a. Electronic Outreach. The formation of the SOA Facebook Account and the updating of the SOA Web Page are the first steps in achieving greater electronic access for SOA members.
- b. Financial Outreach beyond the annual scholarships. The SOA Scholarship Program will remain a fundamental part of the SOA financial contributions to SHAPE related programs. Requests are being made to the NMRs to identify their national activities similar to the Wounded Warrior and Help for Heroes programs. In the interim, SOA will join with the SHAPE Golf Association to conduct the annual Help for Heroes Golf Tournament where profits and charitable donations go to the Help for Heroes program. (Action: JH)
- c. Affiliation with other similar professional organizations. The NMRs are being asked to identify professional organizations similar to SOA and the NATO Defense College. The Belgian and Dutch Officers Associations have already been identified. (Action: GB)
- d. The above activities are the first steps for SOA to expand its presence and contribution in supporting the goals of our organization and SHAPE.

6. Additional Orders of Business

- a. Consideration is underway for the reintroduction of Associate Membership to expand membership opportunities. The criteria for membership will be identified and provided to the membership for agreement as this will require an amendment to the SOA Constitution.

b. SOA Social Activities for 2015

1. Visit to the Auto Museum in Brussels – date TBD (Action: JV)
2. Visit to the Van Gogh Exhibition in Mons – early Spring (Action: MV)
3. Visit to the Ascenseur and river cruise – early Summer (Action: JW)
4. Tops in Blue Concert – date TBD (Action: RH)

7. Next Meeting

Wednesday 25 March 2015 at 14:30 in the PAO conference room.