

Date: 18 May 2011

Subject: Thoughts on Aerospace Medical Association and Aerospace Physiology Society

Fellow AOP warriors,

I had the opportunity to attend AsMA in Anchorage last week. I wanted to share my thoughts and perspective as Associate Corps Chief for Aerospace & Operational Physiology.

First - USAF AOP representation at this conference was very impressive. Our personnel chaired Panels, Poster Sessions, and presented numerous briefs (no alliterations intended). Way to represent!

Second - the continued take-over of various AsMA committees is not limited to the Aerospace Physiology Society (AsPS). For example, Col White was elected as President for the Life Sciences and Biomedical Engineering Branch (LSBEB) for 2012; Lt Col Annicelli was elected President for LSBEB for 2013. In fact, Lt Col Annicelli officially inherits the title of "over achiever" based on his AsMA involvement and leadership: He took over as Chair of the Associate Fellows Group and assumed duties as President of AsPS. :) Lt Col Musselman was selected as Chair-elect Associate Fellows Group was also Secretary for the Associate Fellows Group this year. Lt Col Phares will serve as Associate Fellows Group Treasurer. Maj Massa is AsPS Treasurer. Lt Col Sundstrom is AsPS Member-at-Large. I'm sure there's more, but I've lost count. A testament to the professionalism of our officers.

Third - AsPS discussed ways to recruit new members. The candid discussion "Why should a young officer join AsMA or be involved with AsPS (or other committees)" was interesting. The \$255 annual membership fee can be daunting; it's fair to ask "What do I get in return for this investment?" I'll be very honest: My involvement with AsMA and AsPS over the years has been sporadic. As a young officer, I perceived the information presented at the conference lacked operational application. This year's conference convinced me times have changed: The majority of presentations I attended addressed real world concerns and provided valuable insight into how AOP can/will positively affect human performance.

Fourth - There's another reason my perception of AsMA changed. The opportunity to interact with our Navy and international brethren is invaluable. Simply by being at this conference, I interacted with FAA, Australian Air Force, New Zealand Air Force, Colombian Air Force, civilian, and Navy colleagues; also caught up with a lot of you. Simply put, the networking and collaboration opportunities make membership and attendance at AsMA a slam dunk. If not AsMA, join another AOP-related professional organization -- e.g. Human Factors & Ergonomics Society, American College of Sports Medicine, Society for Human Performance in Extreme Environments, etc.

As the proverb goes, "Iron sharpens iron" - the company you keep will influence your professional development. Rubbing elbows with renowned experts and professional colleagues improves your understanding of our business, opens doors for innovation, and helps you improve your game.

Finally - Please consider pursuing Board Certification in Aerospace Physiology. This exam is no cake walk and will force you to learn the science behind our business. You may not employ this level of detail in your day-to-day mission, but make no mistake: The Airmen we support - aircrew, battlefield airmen, support personnel - expect us to know our stuff. We are "the" human performance experts. Preparing for Board Certification is one way to live up to that reputation and requirement.

Thanks to everyone who supports AsMA and its various functions. You have truly reshaped AsMA and AsPS for the better. KUDOS!

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