



Eighth Air Force Historical Society Strategic Plan

I. Executive Summary

The Eighth Air Force Historical Society, or “the Society,” is dedicated to preserving, honoring, and sharing the history and legacy of the United States Eighth Air Force. As the organization transitions into a second- and third-generation membership base, the Society must evolve its mission and methods to remain relevant, sustainable, and impactful. This Strategic Plan for 2027–2030 establishes a high-level framework to guide the Society’s governance, programming, partnerships, and public engagement over the coming years. It is intentionally aspirational yet practical, designed to support board-level decision-making while allowing flexibility in execution.

The Society’s primary role is to capture stories and institutional knowledge - defined here as the collective lessons, experiences, and organizational memory of the Eighth Air Force and its veterans, encompassing what was learned during and after their Eighth Air Force service, and how that knowledge can be preserved and passed on to future generations. The Society serves as the connective hub for all things Eighth Air Force, linking members, partner organizations, and the broader public to the rich history of this institution.

The Society is committed to working internally and with strategic partners, including the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force and others, to preserve and amplify this history. Consistent with the Society’s long-standing joint efforts with its museum partners, the collection and physical stewardship of artifacts remains the role of those museum partners; the Society’s role is to connect people to that history rather than to acquire or house it directly.

II. Mission, Vision, and Core Values

Mission

To preserve, honor, and inspire current and future generations through the history and legacy of the Eighth Air Force, by connecting people to each other and to the broader community of Eighth Air Force organizations, museums, and resources.



Vision

A sustainable, internationally recognized historical society that serves as a leading authority on Eighth Air Force history, educates future generations, and honors the legacy of the men and women of the Eighth Air Force.

Core Values

- **Historical Integrity** – Commitment to accuracy, scholarship (intellectual rigor in research and documentation), and respect for the veterans and their families who served.
- **Community and Connection** – Fostering meaningful relationships among members, chapters, partner organizations, and Eighth Air Force enthusiasts worldwide.
- **Stewardship** – Responsible management of the Society’s resources, membership, and legacy for long-term sustainability.

III. Strategic Environment (2027–2030)

The Society operates in a landscape shaped by several key factors:

- A shrinking population of World War II veterans and the transition to a second- and third-generation membership base.
- Growing public interest in experiential learning, opportunities for members and the public to engage with Eighth Air Force history through reunions, lectures, museum visits, and digital content.
- Rising costs of digital preservation, requiring strategic investment in technology and partnerships.
- An increasingly fragmented digital landscape, with numerous bomb group Facebook pages, websites, and independent organizations, creating both competition and opportunity for the Society to serve as a central clearinghouse.
- The Society’s bylaws do not restrict its scope to World War II alone; the organization serves Eighth Air Force veterans and their families across all eras.

These factors require the Society to balance tradition with innovation.

IV. Strategic Goals and Objectives

Goal 1: Safeguard the Historical Record

Objective: Safeguard the historical record of the Eighth Air Force while expanding access to credible research and digital written materials, including photographs.

Key Strategies: - Maintain and enhance the Society’s website and newsletter as primary vehicles for sharing historical content. Partner with the digital archive initiative involving the National Museum



of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, the National Museum of World War II Aviation, the National Museum of the Air Force, and the American Museum at Duxford to preserve bomb group website data and digital records. Serve as a conduit connecting members and the public to research resources held by partner museums and organizations

Goal 2: Education and Public Engagement

Objective: Develop engaging educational programs and content for students, researchers, and the general public.

Key Strategies: - Leverage digital platforms (website, social media, email communications) to share stories, articles, and historical content on a regular cadence. Enhance reunion programming with lectures, presentations, and special events that educate and inspire attendees. Serve as the clearinghouse for all things Eighth Air Force, aggregating and sharing news, events, and activities from bomb group associations, partner museums, UK-based heritage groups, and other related organizations, so that membership in the Society provides a single source for staying connected to the broader Eighth Air Force community

Goal 3: Membership and Community Growth

Objective: Strengthen the Society's membership base and foster a sense of community among members.

Key Strategies: - Implement targeted outreach to attract second- and third-generation family members, historians, and aviation enthusiasts - Identify geographic clusters of members in major metropolitan and military communities (e.g., Atlanta, San Antonio, Colorado Springs) and grow local chapters through facilitated gatherings and chapter formation. Increase the frequency and quality of member communications beyond the quarterly magazine, including regular email updates, event announcements, and stories from across the Eighth Air Force community. Strengthen the reunion as the Society's signature offering, the one event that uniquely brings together Eighth Air Force families, historians, and enthusiasts from all bomb groups and fighter groups in one place. Expand coverage into post WWII Eighth Air Force activities.

Goal 4: The Magazine

Objective: Maintain and enhance the Eighth Air Force News magazine as a cornerstone of member engagement.

Key Strategies: - Publish four issues per year on a quarterly cadence, ensuring a pipeline of quality content including World War II and post-war Eighth Air Force stories. Develop an editorial strategy and content calendar to ensure a steady flow of articles, photographs, and member-submitted stories. Evolve magazine content to include post-World War II stories and articles that broaden its reach to a wider audience. Use the magazine to highlight partner organizations, UK heritage groups, and bomb group activities, reinforcing the Society's role as a clearinghouse



Goal 5: Partnerships and Institutional Relationships

Objective: Build and maintain strategic partnerships with museums, heritage organizations, and related groups.

Key Strategies: - Deepen collaboration with complimentary organizations such as the National Museum of the Mighty Eighth Air Force, the National Museum of World War II Aviation, the National Museum of the Air Force, and the American Museum at Duxford, including continuation of the Society's joint study efforts with museum leadership. Engage with UK-based historical institutions, and small museums dedicated to individual bomb group airfields, supporting their missions and connecting them to the Society's membership. Explore partnership with the 2nd Air Division Association and other related organizations to share resources and expand reach. Promote partner organizations' events, trips, and activities through Society communications

Goal 6: Financial Sustainability & Fundraising

Objective: Ensure long-term financial stability.

Key Strategies: - Diversify revenue streams (membership, donations, sponsorships, grants, planned giving). Develop a structured fundraising and donor-engagement strategy, recognizing that current operations remain substantially dependent on donations - Strengthen grant-seeking capabilities. Build and protect financial reserves

Goal 7: Governance, Leadership & Operations

Objective: Maintain a strong, transparent, and forward-looking organization.

Key Strategies: - Clarify board roles, committee structures, and fiduciary responsibilities. Support leadership succession planning. Improve internal policies, procedures, and compliance. Leverage technology to improve administrative efficiency

V. Key Initiatives (Illustrative)

Over the 2027–2030 period, the Society may pursue initiatives such as:

- A comprehensive oral-history preservation campaign
- Expansion of digital archives and virtual exhibits
- A signature annual symposium or national conference
- A targeted membership-growth and chapter-formation program
- A major fundraising or capital campaign tied to preservation or education goals

Specific initiatives should be prioritized annually by the Board based on resources and opportunity.



VI. Metrics and Accountability

To ensure progress, the Society will track measurable benchmarks across each goal area, with historical baselines incorporated as they are obtained:

- **Membership growth and retention** – Track annual membership counts, new member acquisition, and renewal rates.
- **Reunion attendance** – Track annual reunion attendance figures and trends.
- **Digital reach and content usage** – Monitor website traffic (page hits, unique visitors), social media engagement, and email open rates.
- **Magazine publication** – Confirm four issues published per year and track member satisfaction with content.
- **Partnership outcomes** – Number of active partnerships, collaborative projects, and cross-promotional activities with other museums and organizations.
- **Financial performance** – Revenue, expenses, reserve levels, and long-term financial sustainability.

The Board should review strategic progress at least annually, with adjustments made as the environment and membership evolve. This is a living document.

VII. Conclusion

The 2027–2030 Strategic Plan positions the Eighth Air Force Historical Society to honor its legacy while preparing for the future. By focusing on safeguarding the historical record, education, membership and community growth, the magazine, partnerships, financial sustainability, and sound governance, the Society can remain a vital steward of Eighth Air Force history for generations to come.

This is a living document and will be updated as the Society evolves and new information becomes available.