

# **Guide to Air Force Heraldry**

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The original version of *A Guide to Air Force Heraldry* was written by William M. Russell of the USAF Historical Research Center and published in 1985. During the years that have elapsed since then, several Air Force regulations and instructions have been issued to aid Air Force organizations with the design, submission, and procurement of organizational emblems and flags. Most recently, the governing policy on Air Force heraldry, AFI 84-105, *Organizational Lineage, Honors, and Emblems*, has been revised with several changes made in Chapter 3, "Air Force Heraldry." Consequently, the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) which receives many requests for assistance and guidance in the creation of emblems, updated this guide to conform to the policy changes and to give the field historian greater guidance. Our success will be measured by the user's ability to develop design proposals meeting current Air Force requirements and the needs of the organization.

Dr. Daniel L. Haulman  
Organization History Division  
Air Force Historical Research Agency  
Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424

## Chapter 1: Heraldry Through the Ages

Symbols have distinguished friend from foe in warfare throughout recorded history. Organizations of the United States Air Force, like other military organizations, employ heraldic emblems as a means of identification and for esprit de corps. The emblems symbolize the organization's history, mission, or function. Emblematic devices are recorded in the earliest biblical period. Osiris, the grandson of Noah used a "Sceptre Royal, insigned on the top with an eye."<sup>1</sup> In the annals of the Trojan War, the Greeks reportedly sported emblems on their shields. Later, the eagle of the Roman legions, a highly visible symbol throughout the empire, represented the might of Imperial Rome. Indeed, before the Middle Ages, all organized tribes and states accepted and used symbols and heraldic devices. None of these devices were hereditary, but they were the predecessors of medieval heraldry.

Heraldry as we know it today had its beginning in the early 12th century during the period between the First and Second Crusades. To ensure recognition while wearing armor and a helmet that partially hid the face, enterprising knights began to use identifying symbols and devices called cognizances, which were painted on their shields and embroidered on the pennons (cloth banners) attached to their lances. This practice spread rapidly as warriors from different European lands gathered to participate in tournaments and fight in the Crusades. The inheriting of these cognizances started in western Europe during the second quarter of the 12th century when men of the knightly class began to display on their shields the devices that had been borne by their fathers. During the late 12th and early 13th centuries, heraldic emblems and devices assumed a distinctive and consistently systematic character that identified individuals, families, nobles, knights, establishments, and communities. At this time, a knight's cognizance incorporated on his personal seal also became his signature in civil transactions.

Among those who played a part in the history of heraldry, the "herald" was perhaps the most important. Commissioned by the sovereign as his official representative, the herald proclaimed the edicts of the king, carried messages between opposing armies, and issued official proclamations of tournaments and the regulations that governed them. In tournaments, the cognizance that each knight displayed helped the herald distinguish among the mass of armored men. To prevent a knight from duplicating someone else's cognizance, heralds eventually compiled Rolls of Arms that listed the cognizances painted on shields and embroidered on the pennons of the medieval warrior, thereby establishing the system known as heraldry.<sup>2</sup>

With the passage of time and technical changes in warfare, the herald became less a public servant and more a genealogist. His role focused increasingly on maintaining the Roll of Arms. By the 13th century, official (that is, recorded) cognizances began to appear on embroidered cloth over the knights' armor as well as on shields and became known as coats of arms. Later the term "coat of arms" became synonymous with the shield, its crest, and its scroll, bearing a name or motto. A description in words of armorial bearings\* is a blazon written in the precise language of heraldry to indicate to a reader without an illustration of the coat of arms the exact

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<sup>1</sup>Eugene Zieber, *Heraldry in America*, 2d ed. (New York: Gordon Press, 1973), p.9.

<sup>2</sup>L.G. Pine, *The Story of Heraldry*, 2d ed., revised (London: Country Life Limited, 1963), p. 12.

\*When a man bore a shield, he was said to bear the devices thereon, and such devices are accordingly called armorial bearings.

arrangement and colors of the design on the shield, crest, or scroll. The shield (either heater shaped or circular) is used for displaying armorial bearings in Air Force Heraldry as an identifying mark for an organization. The charges, or figures, that form a coat of arms are emblazoned on the surface of the shield, called the field.



**Figure 1**  
**Emblem, 7th Bombardment Group**

Figure 1 provides a historical example of a shield, crest, and scroll. The crest is any device displayed above the shield, and it is placed over a wreath of six skeins or twists composed of the principal metals (gold and silver) and colors of the shield. The metals and colors appear alternately in the order named in the blazon. The scroll is the third element in a military coat of arms and is usually inscribed with a motto and placed beneath the shield.

### **Symbols in Emblems**

The basis of the design of an Air Force emblem involves geometric and/or illustrative visual symbols. Symbols are in common use throughout the world, as a glance at the symbols in Figure 2 illustrates. Who would not recognize the striped pole as symbolizing a barber shop or associate a grocery cart with a food market? A mortar and pestle almost universally represent a pharmacy and the three balls identify a pawn shop. These symbols are among hundreds universally recognized; they require no explanation.



**Figure 2**  
**Common Symbols**

Sometimes choices are available among symbols. For example, Aesculapius, the mythical Greco-Roman god of medicine, carried a knotty wooden staff entwined with a snake (Figure 4) representing life-giving powers. This staff was adapted in 1910 for use as the insignia of the American Medical Association. The United States Air Force Medical Service and other medical groups the world over also use this staff to identify the medical profession.



Figure 3



Figure 4

**Figure 3 and Figure 4**

On the other hand, the Caduceus (Figure 3), a staff with two snakes coiled around it, was traditionally the symbol of the herald and now is the official symbol of the US Army Medical Corps, Navy Pharmacy Division, and the Public Health Service. This intertwined snake design dates back some 4,000 years to Babylon. It reappeared in Greek mythology with a pair of wings added, as Hermes' wand. In ancient Rome, messengers carried this symbol as a sign of neutrality, the Caduceus establishing their noncombatant status.

Other symbols appear on the following page. These examples hardly exhaust the subject. One

should understand, however, that Air Force organizational emblems are not representations of actual aircraft or equipment. Instead they are geometric and/or illustrative visual concepts and design relationships that portray the characteristics and qualities with which an organization associates itself or its current or historic mission.

### **Air Force Symbols**

An organization's emblem design should focus on the organization's primary or historical mission. Find symbols that illustrate the key word in your description. A portcullis, a chain, a geometric pattern suggesting bars, a lock, or a scale of justice can all be symbols representing security. The actual badge and gun used to defend a base are not acceptable heraldic symbols of security. The organization can also include symbols that illustrate the organization's history and that reflect the parent organization and the quality and excellence of its personnel who perform the functions. Arranging symbols in a visually interesting way is just as important to an effective design as is selecting the right symbol. Quartering a shield or a disc and placing a symbol in each quarter has become a heraldic cliché. There are hundreds of ways to devise a shield in heraldry. The designer should try to avoid the obvious, use imagination, do research, get help from a graphics shop, or ask the Army Institute of Heraldry for assistance. The elements of design, proportion, symmetry, value, and hue make your design interesting. Simple bold designs with contrast are the ones remembered best, not the overly detailed pictorial ones. Such simple designs also result in more striking and recognizable distinctive patches.

Many of us are engaged in military occupations which support the larger Air Force mission. Everyone's job is important and each organization is a vital link in the defense of the country. However, emblem design should not be all encompassing. A good design visually depicts the organization's mission, history, and qualities, in symbolic form, so that members may wear it proudly.

## Chapter 2: Organizational Emblems

A system of heraldic emblems evolved within the air arms of the allied and central powers during World War I, the first major conflict in which the newly-developed airplane became an instrument of war. On 6 April 1917, America declared war on Germany, and, shortly thereafter, Brigadier General Benjamin D. Foulois became Chief of the Air Service, American Expeditionary Forces (AEF). A year later, on 6 May 1918, Foulois established the policy for insignia of aerial units, declaring that each squadron would have an official insignia painted on the middle of each side of the airplane fuselage. "The squadron will design their own insignia during the period of organizational training. The design must be submitted to the Chief of Air Service, AEF, for approval. The design should be simple enough to be recognizable from a distance."<sup>3</sup>



**Figure 6**  
**Emblem, 94th Aero Squadron**

*Within a red circle in perspective, long axis vertical, Uncle Sam's top hat, upper portion, blue background with white stars; middle portion, red and white stripes; brim, white; sweat band, brown; inside of hat, dark blue. (approved 15 Nov 1919 as World War I emblem; canceled 6 May 1924; reinstated 9 Jul 1942.)*

A famous emblem used during World War I appears in Figure 6. The 94th Aero Squadron, originally composed of former members of the Lafayette Escadrille,<sup>\*</sup> became the first American air service squadron to arrive on the Western Front. The hat in the ring design was selected

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<sup>3</sup>Edgar S. Gorrell, *History of the Air Service, American Expeditionary Forces in France, 1917-1918*, on microfilm Series A, Vol 9, (AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL pp. 85-86).

<sup>\*</sup>A group of American volunteers who flew for the French before the United States of America entered World War I.

because it symbolized Uncle Sam throwing in with the allies against the central powers. The War Department on 18 November 1919 approved the emblems of 45 aero squadrons that served in France during World War I.<sup>4</sup>

World War II expanded the use of Air Corps insignia, with hundreds of new emblems appearing both officially and unofficially. The War Department dictated the policy by which Army Air Forces' organizations submitted emblems for approval and rejected only a few. Many organizations failed to submit their designs for approval, however, and consequently in later years members of these organizations found no approved emblem on file.<sup>5</sup> When the Air Force became an autonomous military service in 1947, its leaders authorized an heraldic program that sought to avoid the widespread use of unauthorized emblems.

Army Air Forces Letter 35-46 issued on 10 September 1945 established procedures for designing and submitting emblems for approval. This letter contained policy on the design, approval, and use of organizational emblems. On 1 October 1984 the Air Force heraldic program transferred officially from the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas, to the US Air Force Historical Research Center now, Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA), at Maxwell AFB, Alabama. At the same time, USAF historians at all command levels assumed responsibility for processing emblem requests. Currently AFI 84-105, chapter 3, provides guidance for Air Force heraldry.

### Types of Emblems

The emblem design for units must be on a circular shaped shield or disc, as illustrated in Figure 7 (See AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.4). Units with emblems on discs include named and numbered squadrons, numbered flights, and other USAF organizations that have no headquarters component.



**Figure 7**  
**Emblem for Squadrons and Equivalent**

<sup>4</sup>Ltr, Maurer Maurer to TSgt E.B. Bowyer, 31 March 1964, in RS Heraldry (AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL).

<sup>5</sup>For example, there are numerous letters concerning unofficial World War II emblems on file in Organizational Emblem Files, (AFHRA, Maxwell AFB, AL).



Those organizations in the USAF having headquarters are flag bearing organizations, known as establishments, such as groups, wings, and major commands (MAJCOM). Air Force Instruction 84-105, paragraph 3.3. specifies that a USAF flag-bearing organization should display its coat of arms (i.e., emblem design) on a modified heater-shaped shield, as shown in Figure 8. Flag-bearing organizations must order a full-size flag drawing before requisitioning an organizational flag. For more information on flag manufacture, contact Air Force Life Cycle Management Center, Air Force Clothing and Textile Office, 700 Robbins Avenue, Philadelphia, PA 19111-5096, Telephone DSN 444-3850 or (215) 737-3850.



**Figure 8**  
**Emblems for Groups and Above**  
**(Flag Bearing Organizations)**

Since the heraldry of permanent organizations are continuous, inactivation does not affect heraldry. When an organization is activated again, it should use its approved emblem. An approved emblem should not be revised unless 1) justified by a design violation, and 2) the emblem is not a CSAF approved emblem.

Only organizations that are establishments or units are authorized emblems. Air Force entities that may not request an emblem include:

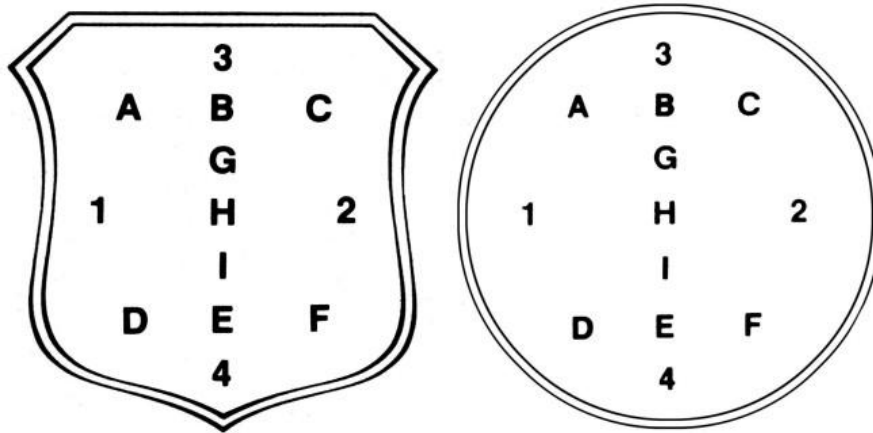
- Headquarters squadron sections
- Alphabetical flights of a squadron
- Operating locations
- Named activities
- Staff directorates, sections, and offices
- Air Force elements
- Provisional units at all echelons (See AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.2.3. for guidance on display of emblems by expeditionary organizations).

### **Chapter 3: Designing An Air Force Emblem**

In designing an emblem for an organization, the most important factors to be considered are the organization's history, its mission (such as reconnaissance, airlift, fighter, medical services, security, civil engineer, etc.), the proper symbols to be depicted in the emblem design, the placement of the symbolic elements or "charges" on the design field, and color selection. An organization may design its own emblem or it may request in submission of its emblem package to the organizational historian that the DoD executive agency for heraldry, The Institute of Heraldry, United States Army, design the emblem. TIOH, working from the mission statement and any historical information the organization provides, will submit a choice of two or three designs to the organization for feedback, then finalize the emblem.

### The Elements of an Emblem

The numbers and letters in Figures 9 and 10 explain the various positions of the field on a shield and a disc. The numbers and letters indicate:



1. Dexter (right-hand side of the bearer)
2. Sinister (left-hand side of the bearer)
3. Chief
4. Base
- A. Dexter chief
- B. Middle chief
- C. Sinister chief
- D. Dexter base
- E. Middle base
- F. Sinister base
- G. Honor point
- H. Fess point
- I. Nombril point

The dexter side of the shield (or disc) refers to the right hand, while the sinister side refers to the left hand side of the bearer. The different positions on the emblem field are important in preparing the blazon--the written description of the design. In heraldry, the smallest change in the position of a symbolic element (or "charge") in the design changes the entire arms. The meaning of a coat of arms with a lion in chief (at the top) differs essentially from one with a lion

in base (at the bottom), and the symbols depicting the organization's mission, history, or qualities face to the right side (dexter) never to the left side (sinister) of the bearer. A description of important heraldic terms is included in the Appendix, A Glossary of Heraldic Terms.

Figure 11 shows a current, approved emblem for an establishment, the 7th Bomb Wing. Notice the difference between this emblem and the historical one in Figure 1, which shows a crest, a differently shaped shield, and a different type of scroll.



**Figure 11**  
**Emblem, 7th Bomb Wing**

The shield design should have only one scroll, as shown in Figure 11. The scroll usually displays an establishment's designation. But a wing or independent group (i.e., a group assigned to an echelon at a higher level than a wing) may choose to display its approved motto on the scroll (AFI 84-105 paragraph 3.3.2.). Either way, the flag-bearing organization must limit the number of characters (letters and numbers) and spaces to 36. To contrast with the flag field, the scroll must be white with a yellow border and blue lettering. When the scroll must be changed because of redesignation or motto change, the establishment should update its heraldry with TIOH (only squadrons and flights may change their scrolls locally). For organizations that have digitized emblems and flag and patch drawings already, TIOH discounts the cost of updated color artwork and drawings. The flag manufacturer must have an updated flag drawing blueprint (large size) showing the revised lettering to embroider the new scroll for the flag. The flag manufacturer will change the scroll on the organization's existing flag for about a quarter of the cost of a new flag. Contact the Air Force Clothing and Textile Office, DSN 444-3850 or (215) 737-3850, for details.

The disc design for units may have either one or two scrolls. The unit designation should always appear on the bottom scroll (AFI 84-105, paragraphs 3.4.1 and 3.4.2). Both scrolls are the same size, as outlined in AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.4.3. Figure 12, the emblem of the 802d Civil Engineer Squadron, is an example of a disc designed with two scrolls. The unit motto "Lead The Way" is on the upper scroll, leaving the lower scroll for the unit designation.



**Figure 12**  
**Emblem, 802 Civil Engineer Squadron**

This design represents a change in policy; consequently, one may often see a unit emblem with the motto in the lower scroll and the unit designation in the upper. As a unit with this configuration exhausts current supplies of patches and other emblem renditions, it should make the changes in the scrolls to conform to AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.4.1. This may be done locally, and a copy sent via history channels to the AFHRA. The typeface and type size should be as follows: All caps, for Corel Draw use Switzerland black condensed, or for Microsoft products use Arial black, 36 points, except "ST," "TH," and "D" at the end of numbers should be 25 points. On the scroll(s) of the disc, the number of characters and spaces must not exceed 30; to accommodate this number, the scroll(s) may extend up to 90, 120, or 150 degrees of the arc. Both must be of the same arc length and have borders for quality manufacture. The border of the disc and scroll(s) must match the color of the lettering, per AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.7.5.6.

Emblem designs must not duplicate other emblems. On the other hand, an organization wishing to incorporate on its own emblem, an element common to its parent organization's emblem may do so.

### **Using Colors in Emblems**

The colors of an emblem often have significance but that is always secondary to the symbolism of the emblem. The colors of the Air Force, ultramarine blue and Air Force yellow, should appear in the design; the blue represents "the sky", the primary theater of Air Force operations, while Air Force yellow represents "the sun" and the excellence required of Air Force personnel. A note of caution, ultramarine blue, while it represents the sky, is not a light blue; an ultramarine blue shield or disc is fairly dark and requires charges of good contrast. A rule of thumb when assigning color to design elements is to use colors that contrast: dark on light, light on dark. Heraldry divides colors into two categories: metals (gold, yellow, gray, silver, and white) and colors (i.e., non-metals – reds, blues, greens, etc). The cardinal rule of heraldry is no metal on metal and no color on color. The positive and negative association of twelve colors appears below for field personnel who are considering the design of organizational emblems.

**RED (heraldic GULES).** Positive: blood of life, boldness, Christ, courage, hardiness, liberty, magnanimity, passion, patriotism, planet Mars, sentiment, strength, valor, warmth (of fire), and zeal. Negative: anarchy, blood (spilled), danger, death throes, Satan, fire (burning), passions, revolution, war, and wounds.

**ORANGE (heraldic Tenne).** Positive: ambition, benevolence, earthly wisdom, endurance, fire, flames, hospitality, marriage, pride, and strength. Negative: malevolence and Satan.

**GOLD (heraldic metal OR).** Positive: honor, majesty (royalty), mystic aspects of the sun, riches, and wisdom. Negative: idolatry.

**YELLOW (also heraldic metal OR).** Positive: constancy, dissemination, divinity, elevation of mind, excellence, highest values, honor, illumination, intellect, intuition, justice, light, loyalty, magnanimity, riches, ripened grain, sun, supreme wisdom and wisdom. Negative: cowardice and treachery.

**BROWN.** Positive: the earth and lesser nobility. Negative: Barrenness and poverty.

**GREEN (heraldic VERT).** Positive: adaptability, auspiciousness, gladness, fertility of fields, freshness, hope, immortality, joy, love, life, nature, prosperity, sympathy, vegetation, planet Venus, wisdom, and youth. Negative: disgrace, envy, jealousy, lividness, madness, opposition, and sinisterness.

**BLUE (heraldic AZURE).** Positive: (light blue) calm seas, charity, cold, constancy, daylight, devotion, innocence, planet Jupiter, justice, loyalty, piety, sincerity, sky, thinking, and truth. Negative (dark blue): doubt, discomfort, night, and stormy seas.

**PURPLE (heraldic PURPURE).** Positive: empire, humility, jurisdiction, love of truth, loyalty, memories, planet Mercury, nostalgia, patience, power, rank, royalty, sacrifice, and spirituality. Negative: martyrdom, mourning, penitence, regret, resignation, and sublimation.

**BLACK (heraldic SABLE).** Positive: constancy, dignity, determination, divine doctrine, fertilized land, humility, mighty, night, prudence, regality, planet Saturn, sophistication, sorrow, and starkness. Negative: death, despair, evilness, grief, morbidity, nothingness, penitence, sickness, sin, and void.

**GRAY (heraldic metal ARGENT).** Positive: discretion, humility, maturity, penitence, renunciation, and retrospection. Negative: barrenness, depression, egoism, grief, indifference, inertia, neutralization, old age, and winter.

**SILVER (also heraldic metal ARGENT).** Positive: charity, chastity, clear conscience, faith, moon, innocence, purity, and test of truth. Negative: blank, cold, ghostly, spectral, and void.

**WHITE (also heraldic metal ARGENT).** Positive: daylight, innocence, perfection, purity, truth, and wisdom. Negative: same as for silver above.

## Chapter 4: Processing Air Force Emblems

The commander of an active organization desiring an emblem or requesting a modification of an approved emblem should consult with the wing or MAJCOM historians to ensure compliance with USAF requirements and to avoid delays in the emblem process. Parent organizations of units scheduled to be activated, or existing units that expect to be redesignated, must submit to the Air Force Historical Research Agency (AFHRA) the command special order authorizing the action. AFI 84-105, Chapter 3, Paragraph 3.6., should serve as the authoritative guide in the processing of Air Force emblems. The information in this chapter of the "Guide to Air Force Heraldry" supplements the AFI. Organizations seeking an emblem or a modified emblem should always follow the chain of command, going first to the wing, then the MAJCOM historian, for consultation, guidance, and endorsement of the proposed emblem.

### Base Level Action

1. Organization submits a proposed emblem design to the wing historian's office.
2. Since each organization will pay for its emblem from its own funds, the emblem design submitted must be accompanied by a Department of Defense Military Interdepartmental Purchase Request (MIPR, DD Form 448) for the proper verified amount.
3. Wing historian reviews emblem package for compliance and verifies that it includes:
  1. Cover letter signed by the organization's commander.
  2. Copy of MIPR certified by the organization's accounting and finance office. This form should specify the requested emblem items, such as initial or updated digital color artwork, initial or updated digital flag drawing and/or patch manufacturer's drawing. It should also specify the unit's **business partner number (BPN)** and DSN and e-mail address of finance POC to whom the MIPR Acceptance should be sent.
  3. Copy of the emblem design in primary colors in Joint Photographic Experts Group (JPEG; .jpg) format.
  4. Ensures that the design:
    1. Contains the colors Air Force Yellow and Ultramarine Blue.
    2. Contains no more than six colors (including black and white).
    3. Is dignified and in good taste.
    4. Contains elements that are either vertical, crossed, or face to the right (emblem left).
    5. Contains no more than three elements (see Glossary for definition of an element). Does not contain very small, detailed art work that will be rendered unrecognizable in reductions to patch size. The most effective patch designs are simple and bold with high color contrasts.
    6. Is symbolic of history, accomplishments, and mission.
    7. Has no specific types of aircraft, missiles, or other equipment.
    8. Has no symbols of a morbid character, games of chance, caricatures, or cartoon-type characters.
    9. Has no maps or outlines of specific geographic landmarks.
    10. Has no numbers or letters within the design area.

11. Does not duplicate any known, existing emblems.
5. One copy of a statement (one paragraph maximum) explaining the significance of the design and (if desired) motto.
  1. The emblem significance statement explains what the emblem's symbolic elements portray or signify to the organization's personnel. Each element in the design must have a meaning, representing the organization's history, mission or qualities. For different organizations, identical elements will have entirely different meanings. A stylized aircraft symbol may represent the flying mission in the emblem of a tactical squadron, and the same symbol in a supply or maintenance squadron may represent support rendered to the flying mission.
  2. An emblem motto must not infringe on registered trademarks such as a corporate slogan, be in good taste, and avoid the use of words that may be offensive. The motto should not be more than 36 letters and spaces for shields or 30 letters and spaces for discs. No numbers, commas, dashes, or dots may be used in the motto. In years past, the motto was almost always written in Latin. Although English is now preferred, other languages may be used (See AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.7.4).
  6. The name, DSN, and e-mail address of the emblem project officer.
4. The wing historian reviews the emblem request package for compliance with AFI 84-105 and either endorses the request or returns it to the organization for corrections, if needed.
5. If endorsed, the historian forwards the emblem package to the MAJCOM, SOA, FOA reviewing/endorsing history office.
6. The history office at higher echelon reviews the emblem package for compliance, and either endorses it to AFHRA/RSO, or returns it for correction.

## **Guidance and Administration**

All requests for emblems and flag drawings are processed through command channels (history offices) to AFHRA/RSO, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-6424. The history offices at each echelon above the organization requesting the emblem review can return the package to the originator for reaccomplishment, but the reasons for doing so must be clearly identified. The MAJCOM/HO must endorse the emblem before AFHRA will process it. In all cases, the AFHRA will support the decision of the MAJCOM/HO on the disapproval of a proposed emblem. When all requirements are met, AFHRA sends the emblem package to TIOH for final rendition. TIOH will standardize designs for correct sizes, colors, and manufacturing needs; improve elements, if necessary; provide blazon or description and manufacturing notes including cable numbers for full or subdued insignia (patches); insure heraldic correctness; and prepare drawings for patches and for flags. AFHRA receives the final emblem artwork, on average, 60 to 90 days of sending it the emblem request to TIOH, and forwards the package (except for flag drawings) to MAJCOM/HOs for distribution to the requesting organization. No organization should order patches, decals, or other renditions until it receives the final emblem package.

Frequently, organizations ask why they should pay for emblem packages when they have good graphics capabilities to design and update their own emblems. Several good reasons exist to justify the expense of an officially procured emblem package. First, AFI 84-105, paragraph 3.2.

requires that an organization use an officially approved and registered emblem. Such an emblem can only be obtained by following the process outlined in the AFI. Second, having a registered emblem provides continuity and standardization in Air Force Heraldry, particularly in an organization when it undergoes personnel change or organizational changes, such as station change, redesignation, or inactivation and subsequent activation. Through all such changes, the organization retains its emblem, with its associated history and symbolism. Third, a registered emblem package provides the organization with a digital copy of the emblem, the approval letter, finished line drawing, subdued color rendition, description including significance and color codes, and, if ordered, flag drawing for an establishment or manufacturing drawing for a unit. Copies of all these are held at the MAJCOM and at AFHRA as backup, in case the emblem package is misplaced at the organization.

AFHRA has observed that units often have quality control problems in procuring patches. The best way to overcome such problems is to include a request for a Manufacturing Drawing in the proposed emblem package. This drawing gives the specifications for correctly manufacturing patches, including the size, which is based on MAJCOM patch specification of 3 and 1/16th inches high and 3 inches wide. TIOH provides such a drawing, for a reasonable fee. Some MAJCOMs require that every unit submitting an emblem package order the Manufacturing Drawing, and AFHRA strongly encourages all units to do so.

### **When an Organization Inactivates or Moves Without Personnel or Equipment**

Every organization's emblem belongs only to that organization and cannot be used by any other organization. Regardless of name changes through redesignations, the emblem remains with its original organization. When an Air Force permanent organization with an approved emblem is scheduled to be inactivated, the flag or guidon and other heraldic items held at local level must be included in the organization's History Box, so that these items can be reissued the next time the organization activates. See AFI 84-103, "Museum Systems," for further guidance on compiling the History Box. When an Air Force organization with an approved emblem is scheduled to move without personnel or equipment but will remain in the same command, it should send its emblem and lineage and honors history files to the MAJCOM history office; that office will pass the files to the reassembled organization at its new location. If the organization is transferred to another command, the heraldic files should be forwarded to AFHRA/RSO, which will process the files to the gaining command.

### **Requests for Emblem Data**

The wing or organizational historian retains a heraldic file of each assigned organization's registered emblem and will provide copies if the information is not available from the unit itself. The MAJCOM history office also retains a heraldic file on each registered emblem of subordinate organizations to answer requests for emblem information. Requests for unit emblems from outside the command may be referred directly to AFHRA/RSO. AFHRA generally treats unofficial requests for emblems as it does all other unofficial inquiries. The inquiry is placed in a queue and answered in turn. Usually, several months are required to answer unofficial inquiries, but veterans and their organizations receive priority. On the other hand, AFHRA lacks the resources to answer requests involving extensive research, such as those sometimes submitted by



patch collectors. Such requesters are generally referred to published sources and commercial enterprises.