

RECRUITMENT & RETENTION

Commander Briefing



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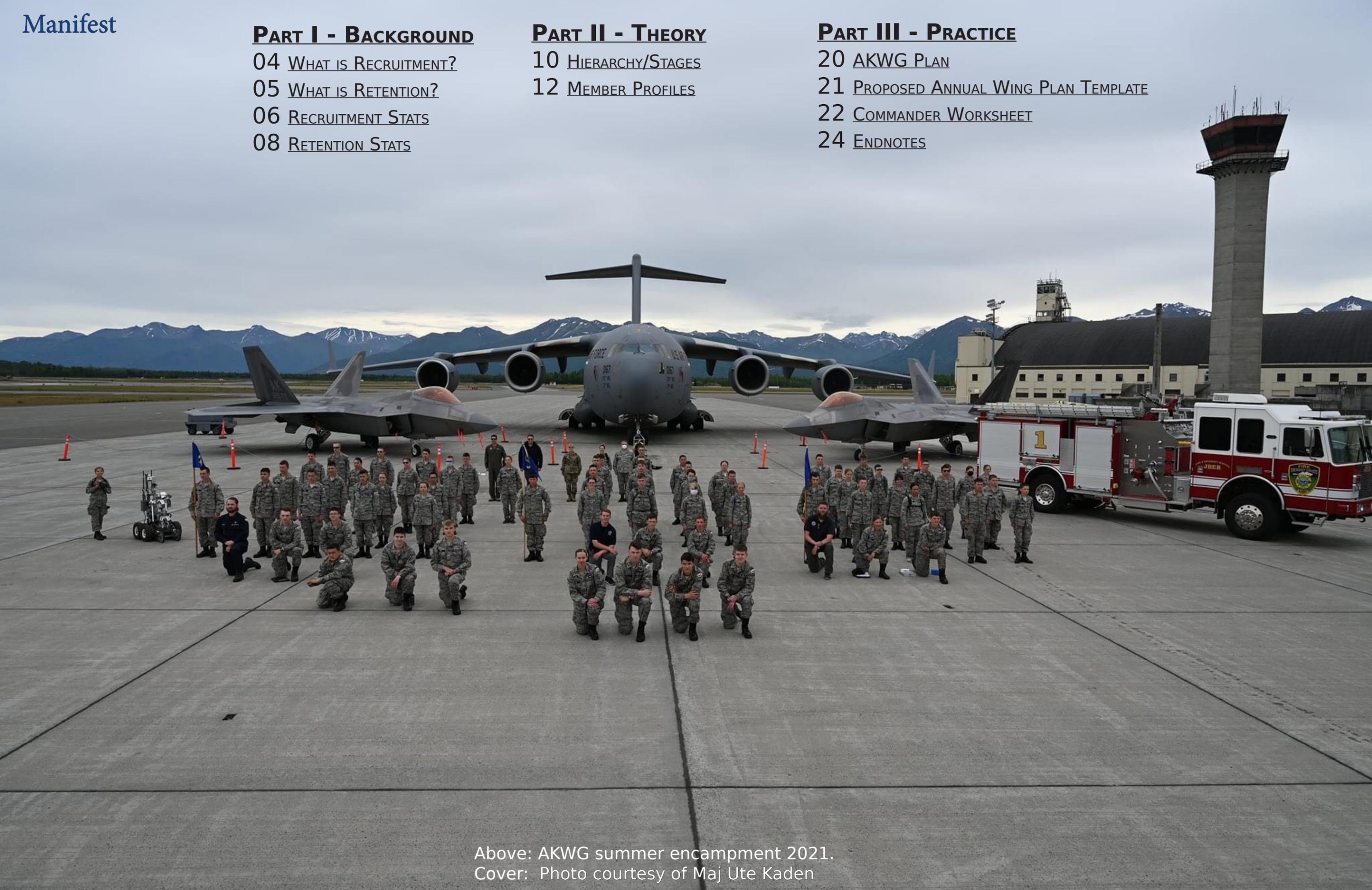
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Above: AKWG summer encampment 2021.
Cover: Photo courtesy of Maj Ute Kaden

How do we get new people to join our organization?

Let's look to USAF and the US military in general for examples.

[USAF vision: To] attract the most talented Airmen and Guardians to preserve the security of America¹.

[Military] recruitment marketing seeks to appeal to potential recruits in the following ways:

- Teamwork and belonging;
- Patriotic service;
- Challenge and adventure;
- Education and skills².

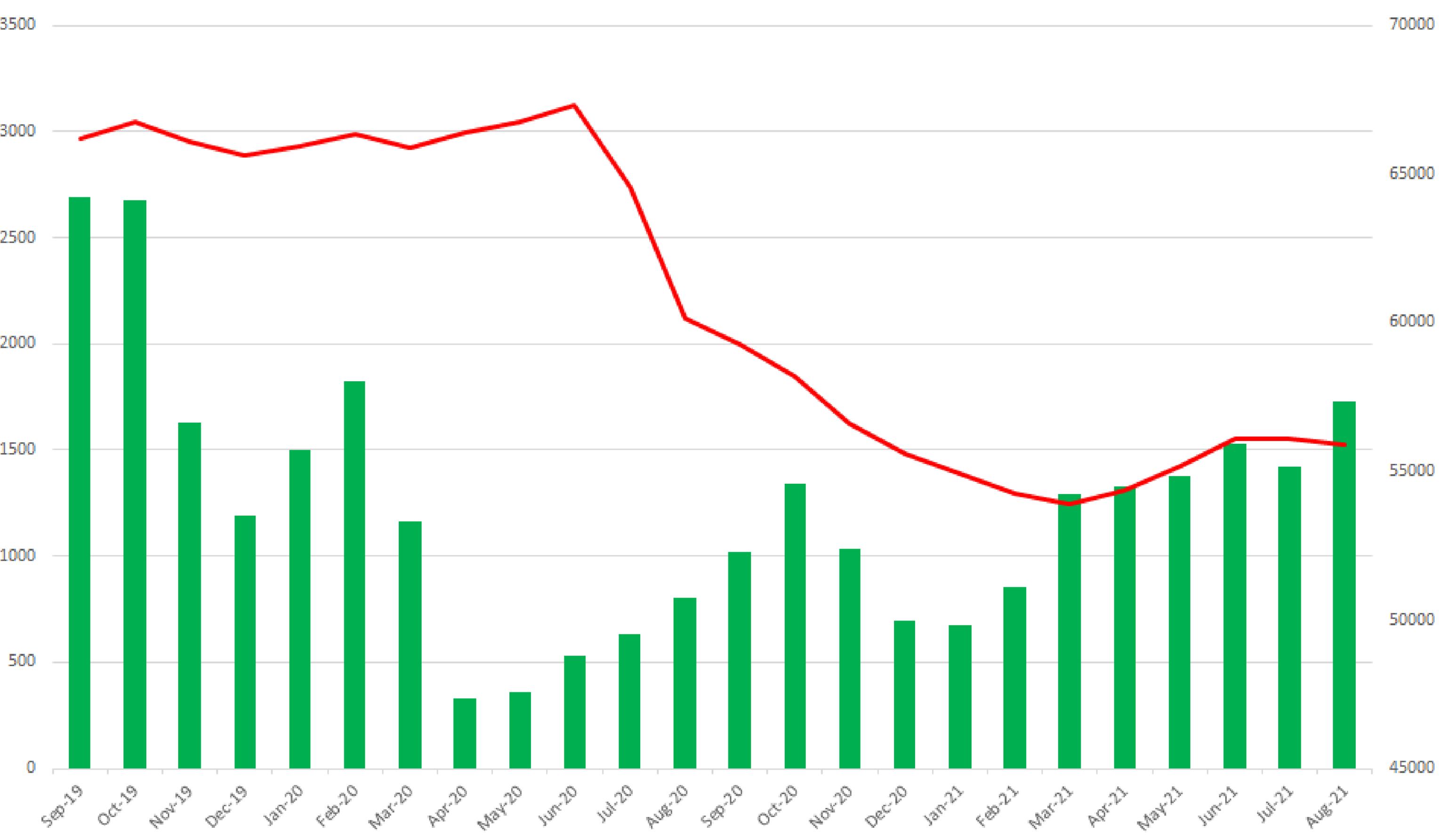


Recruitment and retention are two faces of the same coin.

How do we keep the members that we already have?

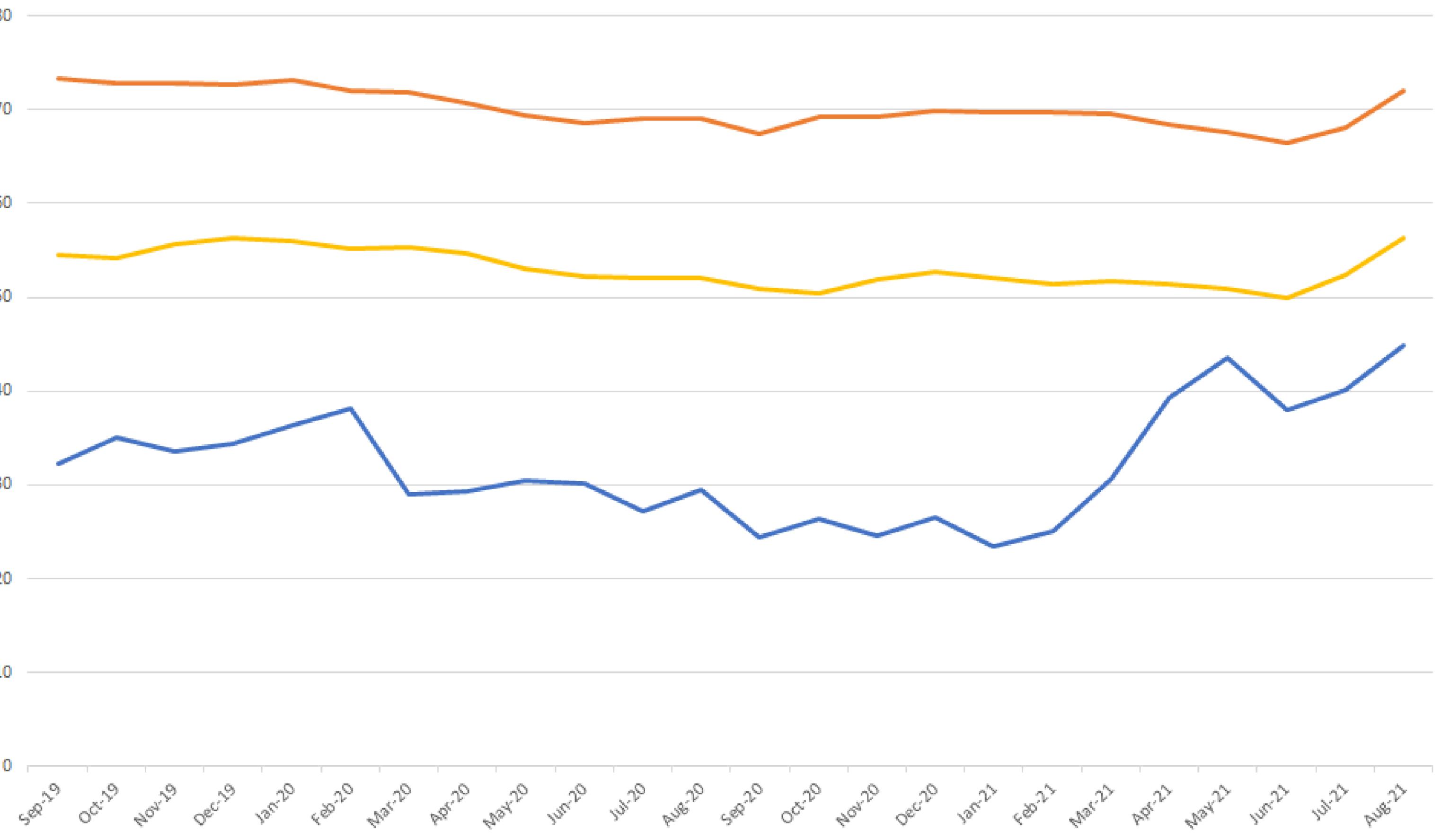
To maximize our recruiting and retention effectiveness, we must have a plan that meets our potential and current members' needs at all stages of their psychological development. Also, we must satisfy each individual's needs at that critical stage and time which either convinces him or her to join or stay, from providing pizza to inducing feelings of integrity.

Recruitment



Slide courtesy of Maj Michael Moore and Susie Parker.

Retention



Hierarchy of Needs/Stages of Human Development

Abraham Maslow; from Wikipedia.org

Stage	Example	CAP Concern	_Sample CAP Setting(s)
Physiological	Food, Water, Shelter, Clothes	Are our members' basic needs being met?	Pizza increases event participation.
Safety	Health and security (personal, emotional, financial)	Do members feel safe and protected?	Send home if sick; Family to drive cadets to meetings.
Belonging and Love	Family, friendship, intimacy	Do members feel that they belong and are accepted?	Assign relevant duties; Invite to join activities; Don't allow cliques to form.
Esteem	Respect from others and self-respect; status, recognition, fame, prestige, attention, strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence, and freedom.	Are our members' goals promoted and recognized?	Publish accomplishments in monthly magazine or social media.
Cognitive	Creativity, predictability, curiosity, and meaning.	Do we offer our members ways to grow and mature?	Deliberate and brainstorm options for an encampment; Encourage research; Ask questions.
Aesthetic	Humans require beautiful imagery or novel and aesthetically pleasing experiences.	Can we make our surroundings more compelling to our senses?	Get outside more; Understand how our natural environment evolved; Take hikes.
Self-Actualization	Seek and understand how our needs, relationships, and sense of self are expressed through their behavior.	Do we encourage our members to realize their full potential?	Mentor members through the Master level in their areas of specialty.
Transcendence	Spiritual needs.	Do we encourage our members to contemplate why they are here?	Helping a community produces feelings of integrity; Selfless service; Donate blood.





CAP Member (or Prospect): Cadet Alex Alpha

Stage: Physiological

Observed Behavior: Cadet Alpha comes from a very modest background and he always shows up for events when food and drinks are provided.

Motivating Actions: Increase his attendance at squadron meetings by providing snacks; help him find a donated uniform.



CAP Member: Cadet Bridget Bravo

Stage: Safety

Observed Behavior: Cadet Bravo confided to me that she feels vulnerable in an empty parking lot after squadron meetings, especially at night.

Motivating Actions: Reassure Cadet Bravo that you will confirm an appropriate person(s) will pick her up after each meeting; Ensure that all senior members have fulfilled the cadet protection requirements.



CAP Member: SM Chuck Charlie

Stage: Belonging and Love

Observed Behavior: SM Charlie, a respected accountant in the community, is shy and introverted, especially after his recent divorce.

Motivating Actions: Consider offering SM Charlie the open Financial Officer position and let him suggest potential committee members.



CAP Member: 2nd Lt Danielle Delta

Stage: Esteem

Observed Behavior: 2nd Lt Delta just received your signoff on her Technician rating and has been happier all evening than you have ever seen her.

Motivating Actions: Encourage Lt Delta to start work on her Senior rating as you have confidence she can do it if she gets started now and sticks with it. Assign her a duty position in which she can practice her new skills.



CAP Member: 1st Lt Ernestine Echo

Stage: Cognitive

Observed Behavior: 1st Lt Echo always has great ideas about how to improve the squadron.

Motivating Actions: Task Capt Echo with researching and fleshing out a draft plan to increase donations to the unit.



CAP Member: Capt Francesca Foxtrot

Stage: Aesthetic

Observed Behavior: Capt Foxtrot thinks that unit attendance will increase by giving a facelift to the old, dingy hangar.

Motivating Actions: Ask Capt Foxtrot to explore options to upgrade the facilities (or find new ones). A new coat of paint could go a long ways on a limited budget to lift morale.



CAP Member: Maj Gerald Gulf

Stage: Self-actualization

Observed Behavior: Major Gulf really wants to work on Level V but can't take the time off work to spend a week at Maxwell.

Motivating Actions: Encourage Major Gulf to pursue the Volunteer University program.



CAP Member: Lt Col Harold Hotel

Stage: Transcendence

Observed Behavior: Lt Col Hotel recently retired from Big Co and has told you that he wants to spend more time getting CAP visibility in the community.

Motivating Actions: Ask Lt Col Hotel to do a SWOT analysis of the unfulfilled community needs that CAP can supply and suggest that he head up the implementation if it is approved.

Summary of Stages to Enhance Retention (the same applies to Recruitment once you get to know the prospect)

Member Name	Stage	Observed Behavior	Motivating Actions
Alex Alpha	Physiological	Cadet Alpha comes from a very modest background and he always shows up for events when food and drinks are provided.	Increase his attendance at squadron meetings by providing snacks; help him find a donated uniform.
Bridget Bravo	Safety	Cadet Bravo confided to me that she feels vulnerable in an empty parking lot after squadron meetings, especially at night.	Reassure Cadet Bravo that you will confirm an appropriate person(s) will pick her up after each meeting; Ensure that all senior members have fulfilled the cadet protection requirements.
Chuck Charlie	Belonging and Love	SM Charlie, a respected accountant in the community, is shy and introverted, especially after his recent divorce.	Consider offering SM Charlie the open Financial Officer position and let him suggest potential committee members.
Danielle Delta	Esteem	2 nd Lt Delta just received your signoff on her Technician rating and has been happier all evening than you have ever seen her.	Encourage Lt Delta to start work on her Senior rating as you have confidence she can do it if she gets started now and sticks with it. Assign her a duty position in which she can practice her new skills.
Ernestine Echo	Cognitive	1 st Lt Echo always has great ideas about how to improve the squadron.	Task Capt Echo with researching and fleshing out a draft plan to increase donations to the unit.
Francisca Foxtrot	Aesthetic	Capt Foxtrot thinks that unit attendance will increase by giving a facelift to the old, dingy hangar.	Ask Capt Foxtrot to explore options to upgrade the facilities (or find new ones). A new coat of paint could go a long ways on a limited budget to lift morale.
Gerald Gulf	Self-Actualization	Major Gulf really wants to work on Level V but can't take the time off work to spend a week at Maxwell.	Encourage Major Gulf to pursue the Volunteer University program.
Harold Hotel	Transcendence	Lt Col Hotel recently retired from Big Co and has told you that he wants to spend more time getting CAP visibility in the community.	Ask Lt Col Hotel to do a SWOT analysis of the unfulfilled community needs that CAP can supply and suggest that he head up the implementation if it is approved.

While recruitment and retention statistics are aggregated for the unit, there are many specific actions that a commander can do to improve them through individual actions.

AKWG Annual Plan

Please refer to the attached AKWG Annual Plan and Keyword & Ad-copies spreadsheet.

OK, so how did I translate the theory into practice? I decided to focus on the stage of **Esteem** as that seems to be where the greatest proportion of our members are now and its qualities are fairly straightforward to articulate and deliver.

Message

The qualities that I want to convey with respect to what CAP can offer a candidate in the stage of Esteem for recruitment or retention are respect from others and self-respect, status, recognition, fame, prestige, attention, strength, competence, mastery, self-confidence, independence, and freedom.

Delivery Method - Recruitment

Since no one can be everywhere at once and since kids tend to prefer digital forms of communication, I propose to recruit cadets through a Google Ads campaign. The spreadsheet indicates which keywords and phrases might be most effective to reach the target demographic.

Delivery Method - Retention

I am limiting my focus on retention to recognize each and every member of the wing at least once per year as it is easy to document compliance. Hopefully, individual squadrons can acknowledge their volunteers in specific and genuine ways that will have the greatest affect on retention.

I was able to get helpful input and firm goal committments from the Cadet Advisory Council.

Thank you in advance for reviewing it.

Proposed Annual Wing Plan Template

Attached is my proposed national template for all regions and wings. Whereas each unit will have distinct circumstances and objectives, I believe that a shared starting point will help to keep us focused on exactly what we plan to accomplish and how.

The template is modeled on the 4 Step planning process of Public Affairs so it should already be familiar to many of you. It probably needs some strategic insights from our Diversity-focused members.

Remember to solicit input from cadets and all of your stakeholders.

I look forward to your comments and suggested editions.



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**Volunteers serving America's communi-
ties, saving lives, and shaping futures.**

Endnotes

- 1 <https://www.recruiting.af.mil/About-Us/Fact-Sheets/Display-Article/714536/Air-Force-Recruiting-Service/>
- 2 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Military_recruitment