

From Local to Global, AOC Chapters Expand the Reach of EW Education

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AOC's chapters started hosting technical conferences shortly after the association's formation. Prior to the early 2010s, they were major collaborators with AOC Headquarters in the hosting of the [Annual AOC International Symposium & Convention](#) in different locations around the United States. For sound reasons, during Lt Gen Robert Elder's term as AOC President, a decision was made to hold the symposium in the Washington, DC, area every year.

In fact, an early 1980s decision to not return to San Antonio for the convention spurred the Billy Mitchell Chapter to start its FiestaCrow Symposium in 1983. FiestaCrow continued on the odd-numbered years until its final iteration in 2011. But the tradition of chapters hosting technical conferences precedes FiestaCrow by decades.

The first chapter-led technical conference was executed in 1967 – only three years after the formation of the AOC – by the Southwestern Crows at White Sands Missile Range, NM. Not only did the chapter organize this one and another in 1970, but they also secured a US Senator as the keynote for both. Also in 1967, the Point Mugu Crows joined forces with another chapter to host the Pacific Region's first classified meeting, which was held at the Pacific Missile Test Center.

The chapter-level conference fever was contagious as the San Diego-based Cabrillo Crows started their own annual classified conference in 1971 that by 1997 had morphed into the very first classified electro-optic warfare conference ever held in the United States.

Also in the Pacific Region, the Golden Gate Chapter began hosting conferences in 1975. It focused on microwave, solid-state and computer data processing, and it included banquet speakers such as Dr. Bill Perry, GEN John Shalikashvili, and Secretary of State George Schultz. Sadly, as the defense industry changed following the end of the Cold War, especially in Silicon Valley and the San Francisco Bay area, this excellent two-day technical event eventually faded away by the mid-1990s.

The 1980s also found AOC chapters in the Mountain-Western Region hosting several technical conferences, often in partnership with the DOD. In 1982, the Querque Crows in Albuquerque, NM, joined forces with the Air Force Test & Evaluation Center to host an EW conference. In 1986, the Golden Spike Chapter partnered with the Air Force's Ogden Air Logistics Center to host another EW conference. In 1988, the Pike's Peak Roost (formerly in the Mountain-Western Region) worked with NORAD to host a conference. In the odd-numbered years, crows from this region flocked to San Antonio for FiestaCrow.

The Mountain-Western and Pacific Crows inspired their fellow Crows in other areas of the country. In the Northeastern Region, the Patriots' Roost started hosting their annual two-day technical conference in 1982. This outstanding annual event continues to this day and gets bigger and better each year. In the Central Region, the Kittyhawk Chapter began their annual classified conference – now called “Kittyhawk Week” – in 1971 as a single classified presentation by a NORAD brigadier general followed by a dinner presentation by Sen. Joseph Montoya. It continues to this day and as the name

implies, it is now an entire week of crow camaraderie. In the Southern Region, the Dixie Crows began hosting their excellent Dixie Crow Symposium in 1976. It also continues to get bigger and better with each passing year.



Many AOC chapters organize EW conferences and symposia. Pictured here, attendees at the EW South Africa Conference and Exhibition in 2019.

The international chapters have also been an integral part of this rich history of chapter-led technical conferences. In 1983, a three-day EW Technology Symposium was put on by the AOC's NATO Nest. Of note, attendees from every NATO nation were present at this conference – a Herculean feat of security paperwork processing, as classified papers were involved. This has morphed into [AOC Europe](#), which is held at the same time of year as that first conference in 1985. In the western Pacific, the Taipei Chapter even preceded the NATO Nest event, holding their first annual convention in 1983. This was preceded by the AOC Japan Chapter, which started holding an annual technical EW symposium in 1981 and these continue to this day. There are many other AOC chapter conference and symposia organized across the globe today, including chapters in Australia, France, India, Israel, Republic of Korea, and South Africa.

This rich history and the steadfast commitment of so many chapter-level leaders who have gained experience planning, organizing, and executing regional symposiums bodes well for the future of the AOC. There will continue to be the AOC

symposium, as well as chapter-led conferences with a presence from HQ. These are always topics of discussion and debate on the AOC international board of directors.

Editor's Note: To view all upcoming AOC chapter events, visit crows.org.