

The Battle of the Bulge Association® Strategic Management Plan

Introduction

1. Legal Organization: The Battle of the Bulge Association® is incorporated in the state of Virginia and is registered with the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit organization.

2. Address:

The Battle of the Bulge Association, Incorporated

P. O. Box 330

Mechanicsville, Virginia

23111-0330

3. Founding:

The Battle of the Bulge Association was formed by a group of 24 veterans of the Battle of the Bulge in 1981. The organizational ceremony was conducted on the 37th Anniversary of the beginning of the Battle of the Bulge, 16 December 1981, at the Arlington County Virginia courthouse. The desire of the founders for the association was to foster international peace and goodwill, to promote friendship, to perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices involved in the battle, and preserve historical data, artifacts and sites. (This information was derived from the original proclamation signed by the 24 founding members.)

4. Existing Leadership Structure:

The Battle of the Bulge Association® is managed by a Board of Directors, which consists of the current elected officers, five (5) board members-at-large, appointed officers, and the Chairman of the Board.

Elected Officers:

- President
- Executive Vice-President
- Vice President for National and Regional Coordination (Chapters)
- Vice President for Membership
- Vice President for Military and Veterans Affairs
- Recording Secretary
- Treasurer

Appointed Officers:

- Editor
- Historian
- Public Relations Officer
- Parliamentarian
- Judge Advocate
- Chaplain

Duties and eligibility requirements for the elected officers, appointed officers, board members-at-large, and Chairman of the Board are specified in the Association Bylaws.

5. The current (2020) association: The national organization is composed of approximately 1,300 members. Membership is divided into three tiers as follows:
- a. Tier 1 Members, also known as Veteran Members, are World War II veterans who received a battle star for the Ardennes Campaign. There are approximately 550 Tier 1 Members.
 - b. Tier 2 Members may be Regular Members or Honorary Members who receive a hardcopy of The Bulge Bugle® by mail. A Regular Member is any person who is a parent, spouse, child, brother, sister, aunt, uncle or lineal descendant of an individual who has received such credit, or anyone who is interested in the work of the association and wishes to promote the aims of the association. Honorary membership may be conferred on any individual for outstanding or distinctive service to BOBA.
 - c. Tier 3 Members may be Regular Members or Honorary Members who receive The Bulge Bugle® electronically (only).
 - d. Tier 2 membership is distinguished from Tier 3 membership by the payment of additional due (i.e., Supplemental Dues) by Tier 2 members in order to receive The Bulge Bugle® in hardcopy format (vice an electronic copy). The breakdown of Tier 2 versus Tier 3 membership is an unknown at this time.

Since inception, there have been 68 Chapters chartered in the United States, and one chapter in Belgium, however the number of active chapters is diminishing. There are currently 28 active chapters.

The Association Mission Statement

To perpetuate the memory of the sacrifices made by those who participated during the Battle of the Bulge, to preserve historical data and sites relating to the battle, to promote friendship among Battle of the Bulge veterans, their relatives and others interested in the battle, to foster and maintain international relations and good will with all Allied countries who were a part of the battle, and to support Chapters of The Battle of the Bulge Association.

The Association Vision Statement

The Battle of the Bulge Association® will evolve from a Veteran Member-centric organization primarily focused on promoting fellowship among and honoring the Veteran Members to an enduring, financially-sound organization focused on honoring the history of the Battle of the Bulge and the memory of those who fought in the Battle, while promoting fellowship among the descendants of the Veteran Members and others interested in the Battle.

The Association Values

The organization's leadership largely consists of retired U.S. Military personnel and others who are the children of Veteran Members. They, along with the other officers and board members, can be generally characterized by the U.S. Army values of Loyalty, Duty, Respect, Honor, and Integrity.

The association is best characterized by a Spirit of Fellowship. Members, especially Veteran Members, enjoy meeting, reading about, and discussing their shared experiences, and sharing those experiences with others. Non-Veteran members have similarly developed a fellowship with other Members over the years. For those unable to travel to association events, The Bulge Bugle® provides a platform to share these experiences.

Of significance to this plan, the association is not characterized by a Spirit of Volunteerism. While there exists a core of individuals who are willing to hold national elected or appointed offices, there are few individuals willing to invest more than a few hours of actual work in the maintenance and administration of the association. Unlike most organizations of its size and type, the association generally purchases these services.

Similar Organizations to Our Association

It is valuable to recognize identical and similar organizations, as they may be candidates for information exchange and building of formal alliances to aid in fulfilling our mission. While there are many similar organizations who deal with military historical events, we are the only incorporated membership association in the United States specifically associated with the Battle of the Bulge. Similar organizations include:

- The Battle of the Bulge Historical Foundation (in the process of dissolution)
- The American Legion
- The Veterans of Foreign Wars
- The National World War II Museum in New Orleans
- The Museum of The United States Army at Fort Belvoir, Virginia
- The National Infantry Museum at Fort Benning, Georgia
- Numerous Divisional and Regimental associations

What We Provide

Industry:

1. Publishing: The Bulge Bugle® is a high-quality membership magazine published quarterly. It does not currently contain advertising, however the membership agreed in November 2020 to solicit advertising as a means of offsetting the cost of the publication. The association also published a book available for purchase by the general public titled *The Battle of the Bulge, True Stories from the Men and Women Who Survived*, and receives royalties from sale of the book.
2. Travel: the national association sponsors two travel events annually, the Commemoration in Washington, DC, and the Annual Reunion (location varies). Additionally, the national association periodically plans and sponsors Anniversary Tours to the battlefields in Europe. In June 2020 the Board of Directors determined that these events must be cost-neutral to the association, and in November 2020 the membership agreed to solicit corporate sponsorships for these events.
3. Merchandise: The association's Quartermaster Store provides mementoes such as challenge coins, tee-shirts, key chains and coffee mugs for sale to Members.

Products & Services:

1. First and foremost, the association perpetuates the memory of the sacrifices made by those who participated during the Battle of the Bulge, and endeavors to preserve historical data and sites relating to the battle.
 - a. The Bulge Bugle® documents the history of the Battle by publishing the memories of the Veteran members.
 - b. The association partners with other organizations to conduct podcasts and seminars on the Battle of the Bulge.
 - c. Individual Members, particularly Veteran Members, and Chapters participate in and/or sponsor events to educate the general public, and particularly school children on the historical significance of the Battle of the Bulge.
2. The national association provides opportunities for fellowship among Veteran Members, their descendants and others interested in the Battle of the Bulge.
 - a. The association website (<https://battleofthebulge.org/>), the organization's Facebook page, and The Bulge Bugle® keep Members informed about other Members and Chapters.
 - b. The national association commemorates the Battle of the Bulge each year, during the period 16 December (start of the battle) to 25 January (end of the battle).
 - c. The national association plans and conducts an Annual Reunion each year (conditions permitting).
 - d. The national association periodically plans and sponsors Anniversary Tours to the battlefields in Europe.
3. The association fosters and maintains international relations and good will with all Allied countries who were a part of the battle.

- a. The national association works with the Foreign Ministries of Belgium and Luxemburg to conduct events honoring the Veterans and the memory of the Battle of the Bulge. Typically these are events hosted at the national embassies in Washington, DC and participation by foreign dignitaries at the Commemoration events in December/January.
 - b. Individual Chapters also work with local consulates to arrange similar regional events.
4. The association supports Chapters of The Battle of the Bulge Association®.
 - a. The association bylaws provide a framework for Chapter organization.
 - b. The Bulge Bugle®, the association website, and the association Facebook pages provide Chapter with a forum to publicize their events and member accomplishments.
 - c. The national association provides encouragement to association Members to become affiliated with Chapters.
 - d. The national association licenses the trademarks and copyrights of the association to the Chapters for their appropriate use in furthering the mission of the association and its Chapters.

Suppliers:

1. Printing and mailing of The Bulge Bugle® is done by Apple Press, Ltd., of Exton, PA. *The Battle of the Bulge* book is printed and sold by Barnes & Noble Booksellers and on Amazon (www.amazon.com).
2. Travel support is venue dependent.
3. Quartermaster merchandise is provided by CafePress, Inc., of Louisville, KY.
4. Accounting services are provided by RBI Services, Inc., of Ashland, VA.

Delivery Systems:

1. The Bulge Bugle® is delivered by the U.S. Postal Service. Beginning in 2021, Tier 3 members will receive the magazine as an electronic file by email or by downloading the file from the association website. *The Battle of the Bulge* book is sold at Barnes & Noble Booksellers retail stores or ordered from Amazon and delivered by Amazon, the U.S. Postal Service, FedEx or UPS
2. Quartermaster merchandise is delivered by the U.S. Postal Service, FedEx, UPS, or purchased on-site at national association events (generally in the hospitality room in the host hotel at the Commemoration or the Annual Reunion).

Measurable Goals and Objectives

Goals:

1. The Battle of the Bulge Association® will survive the current fiscal crisis to become an enduring, self-supporting organization.
2. The Battle of the Bulge Association® will evolve from a Veteran Member-centric organization to a Mission-centric organization.

3. The Battle of the Bulge Association® will create partnerships with other similar organizations to increase membership.
4. The Battle of the Bulge Association® will eliminate reliance on financial reserves generated by past sales of Lifetime Memberships, developing and executing balanced budgets wherein revenues meet or exceed expenses.

Objectives:

1. Increase support to historical programs focused on the Battle of the Bulge, (for example, seminars and podcasts), such that at least two events are conducted each year in 2021 and beyond.
2. Increase membership and participation among the second and third generation descendants of the Veteran Members, such that at least 25% of the organization is composed of such members by 2025.
3. Increase membership by partnering with Divisional/Regimental associations of units that participated in the Battle of the Bulge through:
 - a. Publishing articles from other associations or their members in each edition of The Bulge Bugle® and the publication of articles from our organization and members in their publications in 2021 and beyond, and
 - b. Joint-sponsorship of events, such as reunions and seminars/podcasts.
4. Income from Basic Dues will cover the total Operating Expenses of the association (less production of The Bulge Bugle®) beginning in Fiscal Year 2022.
5. Income from Supplemental Dues and Advertising will cover the full cost of publishing The Bulge Bugle® beginning in Fiscal Year 2022.
6. Association sponsored events, such as the December/January Commemoration, Annual Reunion, and support for Anniversary Tours to Europe, will be cost-neutral, beginning in Fiscal Year 2021.

Action Plans for Fiscal Year 2021:

1. The President will appoint and the Board will approve officers, including an Historian and a Public Relations Officer.
2. The President will appoint and the Board will approve a new position of Advertising Director (non-voting).
3. The Historian, with support from the Public Relations Officer and the Vice President for Veterans & Military Affairs, will formulate and execute an outreach plan focused on historical societies, institutions, and foundations, to organize and present at least two seminars and/or podcasts per year focused on the Battle of the Bulge, with the twin purposes of communicating the history of the Battle and increasing membership in the association.
4. The Vice President for Membership, in coordination with the Vice President for Chapters and the Chapter Presidents, the Historian, and the Public Relations Officer, will develop an outreach plan, which will be implemented at the Chapter level, focused on increasing membership by the second and third generation descendants of the Veteran Members. This plan should be coordinated with the seminar and podcast plan above.

5. The Vice President for Veterans and Military Affairs, with support from the Editor, will continue efforts to partner with other veteran-based organizations (such as Divisional and Regimental associations).
 - a. Partnering should include the placement of historical articles in each organization's periodicals, co-sponsoring of events commemorating WWII, encouraging attendance at such events, and encouraging membership in each organization.
6. The Vice President for Veterans and Military Affairs, with support from the Executive Vice President and the Treasurer, will investigate ways and means to reduce overall operating costs through partnering with other organizations.
 - a. For example, gaining economies of scale by partnering with other organizations to jointly sponsor events.
7. The President, with support from the Executive Vice President and the Advertising Director, will develop a plan to solicit corporate sponsorships and government/private sector grants to offset Operating Expenses and thereby reduce future dues increases.
 - a. The plan should include a cost/benefit analysis of sending someone to a grant writing course(s) and/or soliciting professional assistance in the grant process.
8. The President, with support from the Executive Vice President and the Advertising Director, will develop a plan to solicit contributions in the form of matching gifts from corporations, (i.e., the Member's employer matches gifts from Members to BOBA), and bequests from Members.
 - a. The plan should consider including solicitations for such gifts in The Bulge Bugle® and on the website.
9. The Treasurer, with support from the Budget and Finance Committee, will develop a balanced budget for FY 2022 and submit it to the board for approval, along with suggested amounts for Basic Dues and Supplemental Dues.
 - a. The Operating Expenses of the association (less The Bulge Bugle®) will equal the anticipated income from Basic Dues and sponsorships/grants, (if any).
 - b. The full cost of publishing The Bulge Bugle® will equal the anticipated income from Supplemental Dues and advertising, (if any). (See item 11 below.)
 - c. The full cost of events (i.e. the December/January Commemoration and the Annual Reunion) will equal the income from events.
10. The Treasurer, with support from the Editor, will renegotiate the contract with the publisher, Apple Press, Inc., in order to realize the maximum savings possible as a result of some Members electing not to pay Supplemental Dues (and thereby receive electronic versions only of The Bulge Bugle®).
11. The Advertising Director, in conjunction with the Treasurer, Vice President for Membership, Vice President for Military and Veterans Affairs, and the Editor, will develop and execute an advertising sales plan to sell advertisements in The Bulge Bugle® and on the association's website and Facebook page.
 - a. The plan should include solicitation of corporate advertising, with a focus on selling the ads as donations in the form of a business expenses, as well as so-called journaling, in which Members purchase space to celebrate and/or memorialize other Members, especially Veteran Members.

- b. The plan should also include the development of advertising rates.
 - c. The plan should include development of a membership survey to determine interest in journaling.
12. The Executive Vice President with support from the Chaplain, Public Relations Officer, and Advertising Director, will develop an acceptable advertising content and sponsorship policy for approval by the Board.
13. The Board will conduct a cost/benefit analysis of reducing the yearly editions of The Bulge Bugle® from quarterly to semi-annually. The analysis should consider the role of the publication in the association's primary mission (preserving the history of the Battle), in membership retention, and in communication with the membership, as well as potential loss of advertising revenue or ability to generate any advertising revenue.

Review and Updating:

The President of the association has responsibility for development and maintenance of the Battle of the Bulge Association® Strategic Plan. At his discretion, he may appoint a Strategic Planning Committee to monitor progress and updated the Strategic Plan as required. The committee serves on a volunteer basis and answers to the President and the Board of Directors. The Strategic Plan should be reviewed at least annually and updated as needed. Input for consideration to addition/modification of the plan should be taken from the Board of Directors and the association members. The updated plan will be provided to the President for Board review and approval. Upon Board approval, the plan should be published for the membership.