



AIA HISTORY

The Association, originally known as the Aeronautical Chamber of Commerce of America (ACCA), was founded in 1919 with the purpose “to foster, advance, promulgate and promote: aeronautics,” and “generally, to do every act and thing which may be necessary and proper for the advancement” of American aviation. Early members included such aviation pioneers as Orville Wright and Glen H. Curtiss, as well as representatives of major aircraft manufacturing concerns in the United States.

During World War II, the ACCA carried on limited functions for the industry while manufacturers focused on the war effort through East and West Coast Aircraft War Production Councils. These councils coordinated industry support with the War Planning Board and the military services. Following the war, ACCA was reorganized and — for the first time — became a trade association. Its name was appropriately changed to the Aircraft Industries Association of America, Inc.

In 1959, the Aircraft Industries Association officially changed its name to Aerospace Industries Association, Inc. to incorporate the new frontier of space. During the following heady years for the industry, AIA established an Aerospace Research Center, played a major role in supporting the trade liberalizing Civil Aircraft Agreement, concluded through the Tokyo Round of GATT negotiations, and assumed the secretariat of ISO/TX 20, the committee responsible for developing international aerospace standards.

The growing international reach of our companies was recognized in 1988 when AIA and the Aerospace Industries Association of Canada signed a Memorandum of Understanding pledging coordination and cooperation on a number of issues. This was the first time two associations had signed an international MOU of this kind. In 1992, AIA received an Export Trade Certificate, allowing its members to exchange information and negotiate for better terms and conditions on participation in international trade shows. The same year, President George H.W. Bush signed an executive order establishing the National Industrial Security Program, which AIA initiated cooperatively with government to replace more than 1,000 separate government security programs and 340 regulations with one program. And in 1994, AIA established the Coalition to Preserve the Defense Industrial Base, a non-profit organization designed to promote and advance the general welfare and long-term viability of the private-sector defense industrial base.

AIA strengthened opportunities for smaller and medium sized companies to have a voice in the affairs of the association with the creation of Associate Membership in 1997. In 2001, AIA was instrumental in the formation of the Commission on the Future of the U.S. Aerospace Industry. The commission’s 2002 report included a recommendation to transform the U.S. air transportation system, which led to the development of the NextGen Air Transportation System initiative. AIA was a leading voice in the fight against the Budget Control Act of 2011 and its mandated indiscriminant budget cuts to defense, civil aviation and space programs.

AIA’s top five priorities for 2015 include securing relief from the Budget Control Act budget caps; achieving legislative or regulatory reform on federal acquisition policies that stifle the aerospace and defense industry; ensuring reauthorization of the Export-Import Bank of the United States; establishing and advocating for industry priorities in the FAA reauthorization legislation; and securing implementation of an Aerospace and Defense Trade Initiative to support civil, space and defense exports.