

## HOW IT ALL BEGAN

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San Antonio is a unique and historical city. It comes as no surprise, therefore, to learn that the American Society of Military Comptrollers had its historical beginnings in San Antonio.

Although the Alamo City Chapter of ASMC was not founded until 1972, chapter documents and newspaper clippings confirm that the American Society of Military Comptrollers had its roots in San Antonio. It is the successor to the Society of Military Accountants and Statisticians, which was founded in San Antonio on 12 May 1949.

It was 8 March 1972 that six members of the At-Large Chapter at Fort Sam Houston petitioned the national headquarters for a chapter charter. Those members were Ralph E. Walton, James G. Weber, Edith K. Ross, Dorothy A. Walton, Sally B. White and Dorothy J. Latham. Original membership consisted of Fort Sam Houston personnel; however, chapter records indicate that "future recruitment efforts will be directed toward other military installations in the San Antonio area."

As of 1 May 1972, the Alamo City Chapter had recruited 35 members. The first formal meeting was held 16 Jun 1972 at the Fort Sam Houston Officers' Open Mess. Chapter officers were installed and the Charter was presented.

A membership roster of January 1975 lists 72 members, all from Fort Sam Houston organizations with the exception of 6 members from the Air Force Audit Agency at Lackland AFB. A roster of June 1975 lists 132 members, almost double January's membership. During this period, the Armed Forces Management Association, a Randolph Air Force Base management society, decided to affiliate with the Alamo City Chapter of ASMC. Randolph members joined and encouraged comptroller personnel from other Air Force installations to join.

In February 1975, Colonel J. H. Smith, Comptroller at Lackland Air Force Base sent a letter to all Air Force Comptrollers in the San Antonio area, urging their support for membership in ASMC. Col Smith had transferred in from the Denver chapter and was interested in increasing Air Force involvement in the local chapter. The following meeting, in April 1975, was the most successful yet for the local chapter. Guest speaker was Congressman Henry B. Gonzales, with total attendance of 236.

Col R. K. Baliles (Air Force), Chapter President, writes in the first Alamo Journal for FY79: "For the next year, we plan to become even more active. The Executive Committee is lining up a list of distinguished speakers and is working on several major projects. The most ambitious project is to make a pitch to host the 1981 National Symposium--a project which could result in up to 1,000 members visiting San Antonio." The membership goal for FY79 was set at 250 members.

While the Alamo City Chapter had bid to host the 1981 National Symposium, the chapter was asked to host the 1980 Symposium and chapter members voted unanimous agreement. Col Robert Toney of ATC accepted chairmanship and committees were formed. Obviously, the time for planning such an event was cut short, but the Symposium was the most successful yet for ASMC, with the largest attendance up to that time - 637.

As a result of the FY80 National Symposium, local chapter membership grew to 300 by September 1980. Almost the entire membership had taken an active part in the Symposium and enthusiasm was high. It was this momentum that set the pace for the next few years when the Alamo City Chapter became "Number One" and stayed there for many years. The chapter won this distinguished award 1982, 1983, 1984, 1985, 1986 and 1987. Starting in 1981, the National Symposium was redesignated as the Professional Development Institute. In May 1987, under Col Jim Youngston's tenure as President, the Alamo Chapter hosted Professional Development Institute VII which was a resounding success for both ASMC and the chapter.

Membership has continued to grow, as the chapter succeeded in bringing excellent speakers to both meetings and symposia. There are currently over 1000 members in the Alamo City chapter.

Our current president, Mr Art Coleman has set the theme for this year as "Restructuring for the 90s" and challenged the membership to prepare themselves to accept the tremendous changes we face in the 90's through professional development and education, two primary objectives of ASMC. The Alamo Chapter is ready and willing to adapt to change and to meet this challenge.