
The Director's Cut

DivPA's Monthly Newsletter to the Marine Corps' PA Community

From the Director:

Marines –

The most significant threat to U.S. national security is the national debt. This economic crisis has the potential to affect everything from immigration to our negotiating leverage as a great power – this must be solved. This is not my analysis, but that of national leaders in the Executive and Legislative Branches. How the Nation got in this situation, and how to fix it, is a political question. As professional communicators, it's on this landscape that we find ourselves, and it's on this dirt we must maneuver to articulate the value the Corps provides the Nation.

Our civilian leaders will make hard decisions about where to accept risk as we work through these difficult times. Their decisions will be informed by our communication as we speak to Americans through the media, congressional engagement and directly through community grassroots programs. Marine communicators whose work supports the Corps' greater institutional goals will have significant impact in this environment. This is not easy, and is usually the province of senior officers, not so in our field...you can make a strategic difference! Prepare yourself. Increase your credibility by being the best MAGTF Marine you can be, be intellectually curious and read voraciously. Never miss an opportunity to articulate the unique role we play in the national security equation:

We are a forward-deployed, seaborne, general-purpose crisis response force. We bring persistent presence from the sea and can operate with little to no host-nation footprint. We respond quickly across a wide spectrum of contingencies, from the application of tremendous violence to the delivery of humanitarian relief, from the Hindu Kush to Port au Prince. We are scalable and can bring either an iron mountain of logistics or targeted humanitarian-aid across the beach or from the air. The strength of the Corps flows from the young Americans who accept our challenge and are committed to something greater than themselves. After their active-duty service, Marines return to their homes as leaders in their communities.

Share the Courage of our Marines, while keeping a clear site picture on our greater communication goals. Good hunting.

Semper Fidelis!
Colonel Bryan Salas

Plans:

Marine Corps Order 5720.77 Public Affairs: A new [Marine Corps Order for Public Affairs](#) has been published and is out on the street. Col. Salas signed the new order into effect 8 July and leaders are responsible for educating themselves and their Marines on the new order.

PA Conference 2010: It's not too late to register for this year's PA Conference! This year, we hope to provide PME similar to what a corporate professional would receive at a Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) conference. The conference, Aug. 23-27 in Reno, will be headlined

by several nationally-renowned speakers. Another highlight will be an IO panel that will discuss what IO does in a deployed environment and how PA and IO capabilities can better work together to achieve maximum effect in today's information environment. Schedules for both the [PA Leaders Conference and the Sergeant's Conference can be reviewed here](#). A complete conference schedule will be available soon. See the PA conference [MARADMIN](#) for further information. Please ensure attendees register for the conference [here](#) and pay their conference fees [here](#). Any questions concerning the conference can be directed to [GySgt Varnadore](#).

MMOA Road Show Schedule: MMOA released [MARADMIN 435/10](#) announcing the FY11 monitor road show schedule. Marines are encouraged to schedule an appointment with the monitor whether they're a FY11 mover or not.

New Military Public Affairs Credential, APR+M: A new credentialing effort to provide public affairs and communication certification for military, contractor, and Department of Defense public communication professionals launched May 26, 2010.

The Accreditation in Public Relations + Military Communication (APR+M) is an enhanced certification from the well-established APR. The mark will be awarded to candidates who master the Accredited In Public Relations (APR) knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs) plus joint public affairs relevant topics. APR+M signifies someone who meets all the qualifications of Accreditation in Public Relations (APR), PLUS a rigorous course of study surrounding military public affairs in joint operations.

The APR+M Council will hold the first APR+M Readiness Review Panel during the PRSA 2010 International Conference in Washington, D.C. this October.

Additional information on APR+M is [available here](#).

Re-enlistments: It is time for first termers to begin their re-enlistment packages. Marines may execute re-enlistments beginning July 1. Many Marines were forced to make lateral moves or separate from the Corps this year because they missed the boat spaces. Please ensure you are accurately recommending your Marines for re-enlistment and submitting their packages in a timely manner. Any questions about FTAP Marines can be directed to [GySgt Varnadore](#).

Strategic Communication:

Amid debate over the proper role and the overall future of the Marine Corps, an [article in American Interest magazine](#) by well-known military analyst Dakota Wood says the Corps must redefine its niche in the constellation of U.S. military power or it could end up without one. Wood is a retired Marine lieutenant colonel who is now a senior fellow at the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments.

Jim Pinkelman
Director, SC Branch

DMA Marine Element:

Are you uploading your stories, photos and videos to Marines.mil? Check out your unit's activity on Marines.mil by reading this [report](#).

Please keep in mind the following while examining the graph(s):

Tab One: **Items Created**

- This is total year-to-date items that were created and posted on Marines.mil since 1 Jan.

Tabs Three (**Items Created Data**) and Four (**Raw Activity Combined Totals**):

- These two tabs depict the "raw activity" posted on Marines.mil since 1 Jan. They show all of the items added Marines.mil in 2010. Please note that many of the items added were created in previous years. This occurred because units sometimes add historical pieces or, most likely, there were several months delay between the time the story was written and when it was posted online.

What the report does not depict is the number of pictures that are loaded with the incorrect VIRIN. For example, if a unit loaded several pictures with a VIRIN of the number "1", a dateline of the number "1" and a byline of "devil dogs". The report does not account for folks that may have just had their camera settings off-kilter or mistyped a story date of 2010 as 2001. There are even a few images added with a picture date of 1900 — is it a database error or are the photos actually that old?

Of the 13,281 records pulled for 2010, more than 4,200 (appx 30%) of the images added by all units have unusable file names. Some are catchy though like "thinking" or "sea mango fruit"; "blood" or the ever-interesting Marine Corps image filenames of "immigrant" or "oleander flower".

We're working on finding a better way to automate the process so units can gather the information at will, rather than compiling the analyzed data in a pivot table analysis on excel. This may also improve the quality control on the content loaded onto the database.

RC-Southwest:

Greetings from Helmand province,

July was probably the longest, shortest month in our collective lives. While the sheer number of media embeds was down a bit, the "extracurricular activity" was up, way up.

Many of you will remember from Iraq, our higher headquarters will often generate a number of visits and activities for us. They are all very well-intentioned but take an inordinate amount of time, energy and most importantly "air-lift." These visits just cannot replace the standard media embed. We still like to see that reporter spend a couple of weeks with us here on the ground with a unit. We still see reporters consistently returning to the same city or unit throughout their tour of duty here or even being personally invited back by commanders. It's just how the embed program was designed to work. It still works.

July saw a number of incidents, claims and allegations straight from the MSTP vignette list. It is a complicated environment here, folks. "Lying to people" is about the only real weapon our enemy still has. Unfortunately, he is quite good at it and the outrageous lies still attract a certain amount of media attention. It's just the way it is.

Ramadan is right around the corner. Predictions vary on whether or not this will see an increase in violence or a decrease. Elections follow right on the heels of Ramadan. We are working closely with Afghan leadership on both of these endeavors, supporting their efforts. We have been feverishly working toward developing a relationship with our local Afghan media and have planned significant upcoming events to ensure they have the necessary rapport and access for coverage of our operations.

I frequently tell Lieutenants Eric Flanagan and Justine Roberts that one year deployed here is worth three years of service anywhere else. I might have that figure wrong. It might be one to five. Practically every day, we negotiate a myriad of issues that most will only see once or twice in a career. It is tough duty, it's challenging duty, but we would not trade it for anything else. It's an important time right now for our nation and for the Marine Corps. Helmand province is a front row seat to the world right now.

We eagerly await the arrival of Captain Craig Thomas in September and genuinely appreciate DIVPA's support in loaning him to us.

SEMPER FIDELIS,

LtCol. Chris Hughes
REGIONAL COMMAND SOUTHWEST PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DVIDS:

This summer, the U.S. Third Army's Digital Video & Imagery Distribution System will roll out its next generation of upgraded capabilities with the implementation of the "DVIDS 4.0" plan. DVIDS 4.0 represents a series of significant improvements in response to user feedback and requests received from the field. Today, DVIDS is pleased to announce the first installment of that series – "DVIDS Direct."

[DVIDS Direct](#) is a web-based, product submission portal that bypasses the main [DVIDS website](#), allowing busy public affairs professionals to quickly upload media products from military networks and low-bandwidth environments. DVIDS Direct:

- Provides a low-bandwidth, no-frills interface to upload video (SD and HD), photo, publication, news and audio products. With only metadata and upload buttons, DVIDS Direct enables users with slow Internet connections to submit content to DVIDS, and it provides a better alternative to email.
- Enables users without a DVIDS Transmitter to submit all content types directly to DVIDS.
- Can be accessed at [here](#).
- Users can log in with their current DVIDS username and password and begin uploading immediately with their chain of command's permission.
- Circumvents most firewall issues by using the standard HTTP port 80.
- Accepts files up to 2GB. For larger files, DVIDS still uses "DVIDS Delivery".
- Makes adding products a snap. For news stories, simply paste the text into the story field. For photos, video or audio, select the "browse" button and click the digital file.
- Gives submitters control over the metadata and credit fields, ensuring that product information is complete and accurate.
- Facilitates faster posting to the DVIDS website and action by the DVIDS media relations specialists.
- Will be the sole submission method for most file-based products in the future.

Again, DVIDS Direct is the first of several innovations being fielded this summer as part of the DVIDS 4.0 upgrade. Stay tuned for more leading-edge developments. Next...a faster, redesigned website with an HD 16X9 player and a refined search.

For questions, comments or suggestions, contact DVIDS 24 hours a day at: toll free 877-DVIDS-24/7, commercial 678-421-6612, or DSN 312-367-1792/1761.

MAJ Scott Betts
Director of Operations
DVIDS Hub

II MEF:

As we prepare to stand up II MEF Fwd to lead the fight in Afghanistan, PA Marines throughout II MEF are engaged in pre-deployment training and getting acquainted with their respective MSC staffs. Marines from the Command Element, 2nd Marine Division, 2nd Marine Air Wing and 2nd Marine Logistics Group will soon be juggling resources and manpower to satisfy the requirements of a forward command - not yet deployed - and a parent command that will rely on them until personnel return from current deployments.

We currently have Marines in support of Black Sea Rotational Force, AFRICAN LION and CONTINUING PROMISE deployed to Africa, Europe, and Central and South America, with more warfighters ready to deploy in support of numerous theater security cooperation events highlighting important security relationships with allies and coalition partners. As a whole, II MEF Marines are participating in a host of bilateral exercises and training opportunities at all points on the globe from Canada to Columbia, and from Georgia to Bosnia and the U.K., and PA Marines are working hard to push the narrative focusing on these current operations.

Semper Fi,
Capt. Tim Boyce
II MEF PAO

III MEF:

Greetings from Okinawa!

Throughout the month of July III MEF/MCBJ public affairs continued our busy support schedule around the Asia Pacific region. LCpl. Kentavist Brackin covered Exercise Angkor Sentinel in Phnom Penh, Cambodia; 1stLt. Jordan Cochran, GySgt. Jerry Wright and LCpl. J Nava spent a hot, summer day in the Republic of Korea covering Exercise Invincible Spirit; Cpl. Rebekka Heite returned from Mongolia after covering III MEF Special Operation Training Group Marines training local security forces and armed forces in crowd control operations and non-lethal techniques; and LCpl. Justin Wheeler returned from a six month IA billet in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in support of OEF. Cpl. Paul Zellner attached to Combat Logistics Battalion 3 and departed to participate in enhanced Mojave Viper pre-deployment training at the Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center Twentynine Palms, Calif. He is scheduled to deploy with CLB-3 to support OEF this fall.

MajGen. Maryann Krusa-Dossin's change of command was the biggest on base media event of the month with local TV and print media as well as Japanese and American dignitaries in attendance. Krusa-Dossin's change of command and retirement marks the end of a career that included a tour as the Director of Marine Corps Public Affairs.

August is a noteworthy month for our Corps. The 15th marks the 65th anniversary of the end of World War II. Marines made history then, and we continue to make history today.

LtCol. David Griesmer

31st MEU:

PA Professionals,

Greetings and salutations from the only permanently forward-deployed Marine Expeditionary Unit in the Marine Corps, which also regularly spends 6 months (and sometimes up to 8 months) of the year away from our home base in Okinawa!

The Public Affairs Section of the 31st MEU is currently preparing for the unit's fall patrol of the Asia-Pacific region. The 31st MEU is not far away from embarking aboard the USS Essex, and the major elements are spooling up training and exercises - all with the goal of keeping the MEU's readiness high. All of the major elements of the MEU are newly arrived within the last few weeks. The majority of the command element has also changed over in the last two months, making for a unique challenge - most of the Marines (including the leadership) assigned to the unit are new to the job. On this deployment, the MEU is scheduled to participate in the 60th anniversary of the Inchon landing, the Amphibious Landing Exercise 11 in the Republic of the Philippines, the Korean Incremental Training Program in the Republic of Korea, and might have time for some port visit libo as well!

We have a great team of PA professionals here who are ready to go into action. The newest member of our staff is LCpl. Tyler Vernanza, 4341, who just arrived as an augment from CPAO. Next up is Cpl. Michael Bianco, a 31st MEU veteran who has been here almost two years. Cpl Bianco is the repository of historical data as everyone else is new! GySgt. Jimmy Stare is our heavy-hitting PA Chief, and in his short two months with the unit has already produced numerous popular video products and made a huge impact on our readiness. The unit is fortunate to have GySgt. Stare, who is a 2009 & 2010 Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association Merit Award Winner and the honor graduate of the Military Motion Media Program at Syracuse University. His wealth of knowledge and expertise has raised visibility of what the 31st MEU does.

There is a lot on our plate: reviewing SOPs, preparing for embark, coordinating the PA plan across the MSE's, all the many tasks that come with deploying. We have also launched new [31st MEU Facebook](#) and YouTube sites that have been very popular. The Facebook site has grown in the past month to over 700 members! We are also looking at a revision of our internet website - more to follow as that develops.

For now, we'll be continuing to cover training and exercises, but we'll keep our eyes on the goal of being on ship in a few short weeks. The 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit remains on-call, a force in readiness, the tip of the spear in the Asia-Pacific region. Look for our print and video stories as we get underway! Oooh-Rah!

Getting ready to get on the boat,
1stLt. Caleb D. Eames
PAO, 31st Marine Expeditionary Unit