
The Director's Cut

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

From the Director:

Marines –

Today's commanders must understand the battle of narratives as well as they understand the application of violence. Surrendering the narrative may not have the harsh, immediate, and tangible consequences of the inappropriate application of violence, but it can be deadly over time. For example, public outcry over the abuse of detainees at Abu Ghraib Prison abuse caused the release of known insurgents. These insurgents returned to combat and killed Marines.

The former ISAF commander, as profiled in Rolling Stone Magazine, also failed to win the narrative. Building relationships with the adjacent staffs, our national leaders, allied and coalition leaders, and the media, are keys to winning the understanding and trust necessary for ensuring the national will.

These instances are failures of Strategic Communication. The failure of leadership to ensure standards in Abu Ghraib, and the failure of the leadership to create respect and harmony between ISAF staffs, undermined the foundation of sound policy and performance.

Competing narratives fly over the information battlespace like rocket-propelled grenades. Today's public affairs officers, more than ever, are essential in understanding and winning the narrative. This battle is not won through slick public relations spin, but through the methodical buildup of results that develop over time into a trusting relationship.

The Marine Corps relies on you to advise the commander on a comprehensive communication campaign developed with critical thought and executed with decisive action.

Learn and practice the Marine Corps Planning Process. Public affairs is integral in the initial steps of problem framing. Participate in the operational planning teams. Ensure communication considerations are part of the commander's initial planning guidance and intent.

Through professional reading, expand your understanding of the human condition and increase your value as a contributing member of the staff. Use that insight and knowledge of the cultural nuances involved in communication and understanding to inform staff planning.

You are a MAGTF-officer who must be capable in all aspects of military arts – including the art of the narrative.

Thanks for your continued service.

Semper Fidelis!
Colonel Bryan Salas

Plans:

PA Conference 2010: The intent of this year's PA conference is 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. 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](#).

SM MARADMINS and Privacy Settings: [MARADMIN 365/10](#) provides Marines guidance on responsibly engaging in unofficial internet posting about the Marine Corps and Marine Corps-related topics related to their professional expertise, personal experiences or personal knowledge.

Currently, guidance for the official use of social media is still being reviewed for legal considerations due to terms of service agreements. Please refer to the [DoD Internet-based Capabilities DTM](#) that was released in February.

Thanks to our Navy brethren, [here](#) are step by step instructions on how to set up your Facebook privacy settings.

MCRP MARADMIN: [MARADMIN 368/10](#) announces a conference to develop a new Marine Corps Reference Publication for PA. The purpose of a MCRP is to outline PA tactics, techniques and procedures. See the [MARADMIN](#) for requested attendees based on the PA-DOTMLPF Working Group (DWG), however, anyone interested is welcome to attend.

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:

As the Marine Corps prepares for approaching budget cuts and an evolving role in the future of national security, we must keep our key publics informed of the roles and continued need for amphibious operations. To help you prepare talking points or speeches on this topic, please review the June issues of In the Black:

1. [Value of the Marine Corps as an Amphibious Force](#)
2. [Amphibious Shipbuilding](#)
3. [Marine Corps Operating Concepts \(MOC\)](#)

The full text of the MOC is available [here](#). The MOC, released on 29 June, provides a conceptual guide for current and future force development and operations.

All issues of In the Black are available on the [SC website](#). Be sure to check out the Seabasing/Shipbuilding subfolders under "[Issues and Programs](#)" for more information.

E-mail schelpdesk@usmc.mil if you need assistance with setting up an SC website account.

Marine Band:

"The President's Own" announces auditions for the following vacancies:

Violin - Aug 23-24

B-flat Clarinet - Aug 30-31

For information contact, Operations Officer, U.S. Marine Band, Marine Barracks, 8th and I Streets, SE., Washington, DC 20380-5000 or call 202-433-5714, or [email](#).

LA PAO:

Greetings from the West Coast. As many of you know we continue to be heavily involved in numerous projects which keep us out of the office on a continual basis. I want to thank everyone out there, especially commands at Camp Pendleton, for their continued support to our projects. We are in the middle of working on a limited basis on Transformers 3, and are wrapping up support to Battle: Los Angeles. Battle LA is scheduled to come out in March of 2011 and we are really looking forward to seeing this project finally hit the screen after two years of hard work. We hope to be working with MCB Kaneohe Bay on the movie "Battleship" and try to steal some thunder from our sister service.

Our documentary slate continues to take the largest share of our pie. While many of these projects don't get the viewership of our larger motion picture projects, they remain our focus because they offer the viewer a more factual-based look at what their Marines are doing. The professionalism and enthusiasm of every Marine we use for these shows amazes each producer in a profound way, and we are seeing many of our producers coming back to us on future projects. Capt Edwards has been working on a lengthy series titled "Best of the Best" and we are receiving great support from the reconnaissance and sniper school houses.

We also have had an increase in requests to 'screen' documentaries on installations. I remind PAOs that while we certainly are happy to have these movies screened, we can not be involved in the marketing or promotion of the project, which is why many of these projects come to us in the first place. These screenings may be used for entertainment and/or PME purposes only.

On this point, I would highly recommend two independent projects, "Restrepo" and "The Dry Land". While both of these cover U.S. Army units, they are probably two of the best combat-oriented projects I have seen.

Along these lines, we have been approached by several journalists who have recently returned from embeds and are turning their embedded coverage into documentaries. Specifically they are utilizing the Canon 5D Mark II's while deployed, which allows them to take extremely high-quality video by utilizing a small camera body. While this advance in technology is interesting, I remind PAOs that the ability to discern between photographers and videographers is now diminishing. While a 'reporter' may be embedded for one agency, when they return it is very easy (or easier) for them to take their video and make their own documentary. Something to think about.

We are happy to have SSgt Rocke back from the career course refreshed and ready to roll again. However we lose Sgt Schwartz to DINFOS for IPC so we'll be short throughout the summer. As always we encourage everyone to reach out to us to ask questions and request guidance; we'll do our best to steer you in the right direction.

RS
LtCol Johnston

RC-Southwest:

Greetings from Helmand,

This is truly an interesting time and place to practice our profession. Not sure if I can say anything that hasn't already been said about events over the last week or so. I would hope that all of our senior leadership across the Department of Defense would have a newfound sense of appreciation for all that we do and bring to the fight. Lots of good professional discussion items for us to use for several years to come.

Notwithstanding the headlines regarding COMISAF, it's been a very challenging couple of weeks here. It is the summer fighting season. Please know that our Marines and our UK soldiers are taking it to this enemy. We are pushing out in every direction. Still some tough weeks in front of us, but we believe that fall will find a greatly changed landscape here. Please keep the faith. We've been in much worse circumstances as a Marine Corps. We will be just fine here.

That said, we could sure use a hand. We have officially been designated Regional Command Southwest, one of six NATO regional commands here in Afghanistan. We came with twice the staff of the MEB; we've added Squadron Leader Kate Calder, RAF, to help further drive and synchronize us with UK Media Operations. We have a team of USN reservists under the leadership of LT Greg Caires, USNR, to support and manage the embed program, but we are still working extremely hard to keep up and plan ahead.

We are working hard to develop and grow a relationship with the Afghan media based in Lashkar Gah. We've had some very inspiring first steps, but our goal is to conduct some significant embeds with this hometown media in the near future. We have a ways to go yet, but I really like where we are headed with this effort.

I want to personally thank GySgt Leone at MARCENT for taking "stuff" off of our plate.

SEMPER FIDELIS

Lieutenant Colonel Chris Hughes
REGIONAL COMMAND SOUTHWEST PUBLIC AFFAIRS

MCRC:

MCRC welcomed Maj. John Caldwell and MSgt Jason Bortz in June as they take the reign of the recruiting Public Affairs enterprise. We also welcomed Mr. James Edwards (MSgt, ret.) as the new Deputy PAO, who had recently been working in MCRC advertising.

Recruiting continues to capitalize on historic success in accessing qualified Marines to join our ranks. All current data points toward a record in quality indicators by the end of the FY, with approximately 99% of all accessions having a high school diploma (or equivalency). The result of this quality infusion has had a direct positive impact on the recruit depots as they have experienced a significant reduction in recruit attrition. As we continue to send our best to the MCRD's this summer, we anticipate positioning ourselves to have a similar strong start pool to begin FY11.

Semper Fi,
Maj. Devine

II MEF:

II MEF is up to its ears in Brits and will be through the entire month. The beginning of July marks the last phase of a three-part combined amphibious exercise II MEF is conducting with the British Royal Navy and Marines called "Operation Auriga 2010". The exercise consists of a series of training events designed to increase the proficiency, interoperability and confidence of both U.S. and U.K. forces in coalition and amphibious operations.

Though Marine Corps operations have focused almost exclusively on land warfare in Iraq and Afghanistan for the past nine years, amphibious operations continue to be the mainstay of our mission, and we are using Auriga as an opportunity to highlight our amphibious character and remind the public that amphibious operations are one of our core capabilities. To this end, we have devoted a portion of our website exclusively to the exercise. Imagery, releases, articles, and links to external news coverage of Auriga can be found [here](#).

In the meanwhile, Public Affairs personnel throughout the MEF are in a state of flux. Maj Aisha Bakaar, 2d MAW PAO, has accepted orders to Guam leaving Maj William Klumpp to be her replacement mid July. 1stLt Kristin Dalton has taken over at New River Public Affairs while 1stLt Michele Perez, 2nd MLG PAO, is on her way out the door to fulfill a six-month IA billet in CJTF-HOA. Finally, Capt Adrian Ambe has taken the helm as 2d Marine Division PAO and is standing by to assume responsibilities as PAO for 2d MarDiv (FWD) when II MEF (FWD) stands up this summer.

Capt Timothy Patrick

III MEF:

The Press Section said farewell to Cpl Warren Burton in May and LCpl Antwain Graham in June and welcomed recent DINFOS graduate 2ndLt Lindsay Pirek, who is the new Press Officer. Additionally, we received four new hard chargers from the schoolhouse, LCpls Heather Choate, Matheus Hernandez and Michael Iams and PFC Gary Welch. In May GySgt Jerry Wright reported aboard and now oversees the Okinawa Marine newspaper staff and Distribution section.

In May LCpl Antwain Graham flew to Cambodia with Combat Logistics Regiment 35 to document a medical/dental civic action project in support of Cambodian Interoperability Program 2010. At the same time, 1stLt Jordan Cochran and LCpl J Nava were in mainland Japan at the Yausubetsu Maneuver Area with 3rd Battalion, 12th Marines as part of the Artillery Relocation Training program.

Also in May, LCpl Anthony Ward Jr. flew to Guam to participate in funeral honors for former Marine John Gerber, who was the founder of the Pacific War Museum in Guam.

Cpl Daniel Flynn graduated from the Intermediate Photojournalist Course at DINFOS in May.

In June, LCpl Abigail Wharton deployed to Cambodia with Marine Aerial Refueler Transport Squadron 152 to support a Pacific Partnership 2010 medical civil action project. Also in June, Cpl Rebekka Heite deployed to Mongolia with Marines from III MEF's Special Operation Training Group to cover the Nonlethal Weapons Executive Seminar.

Cpl Megan Angel and LCpl Aaron Hostutler are currently at DINFOS attending the Digital Multimedia Course and are slated to return mid July.

In late June LCpl Ward departed for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, to fill an individual augment billet in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Ward is replacing LCpl Justin Wheeler who is wrapping up a 6 month IA billet at Guantanamo and will return to Okinawa in late July.

The 31st MEU saw some turnover in June as Capt Jorge Escatell PCSed and 1stLt Caleb Eames arrived to assume 31st MEU PAO billet.

The Plans Section is experiencing a major turnover as 1stLt Nick Eisenbeiser moves to the Media Section and SSgt Mike Freeman moves to Distribution. 1stLt Cochran took over as Plans Officer and GySgt Cindy Fisher took over as Plans Chief. Sgt Rodolfo Toro also joined the Plans team.

The Media section provided three high visibility escorts from May through June. The Center for Digital TV and the World sent two photojournalism students to Okinawa to conduct a video documentary to be published as a multimedia piece for the Washington Post. The students reported on the local population on Okinawa and featured a Marine master sergeant. Dan Rather Report program, part of HDNet, also sent a video crew to film various training and bases on Okinawa as part of a story about the USMC move to Guam. Nippon House Kiki (NHK Broadcasting Corporation) completed an hour-long news documentary for national release that encompassed the majority of Marine Corps training on Okinawa.

In late June LtCol Dave Griesmer arrived to take over as Director of the Consolidated Public Affairs Office and LtCol Douglas Powell will PCS in early July for his next assignment with Training and Education Command at Quantico.