

ANNEX M (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO HQMC REPATRIATION OPLAN

References:

- a. DoD Directive 2310.2, "Personnel Recovery," Dec. 22, 2000
 - b. DOD Instruction 2310.4, "Repatriation of Prisoners of War (POW), Hostages, Peacetime Government Detainees, and Other Missing or Isolated Personnel," Nov. 21, 2000
 - c. DOD Instruction 2310.3, "Personnel Recovery," June 30, 1997
 - d. SECNAVINST 5720.44a, "Public Affairs," September 1987
1. PURPOSE: This annex outlines US Marine Corps policies and provides guidance for the conduct of public affairs (PA) activities associated with the repatriation of U. S. Military, USMC civilian employees, and contractor service employees who have been Prisoners of War (POW), held hostage by terrorists, detained in peacetime by a hostile foreign government, were evading enemy capture, or were otherwise missing under hostile conditions.
2. OBJECTIVES:
- a. To provide maximum information to the public and internal audience about returnees subject to consideration of: (1) the health and welfare of the returnees and their families, (2) national security, and (3) the safety and interests of other personnel who may still be held in captivity or who are missing in action.
 - b. To ensure that returnees have the assistance of PA briefings.
 - c. To brief returnees and to protect individuals against inadvertent disclosure of classified security information during PA activities.
 - d. To provide PA guidance and assistance, as desired, to the families of the returnees.
3. RESPONSIBILITIES:
- a. DIRPA HQMC:
 - (1) Exercises overall responsibility for Public Affairs planning and guidance, serves as official release authority for all public communications.
 - (2) In coordination with OASD(PA), exercises Public Affairs responsibility prior to and during recovery operations, until

repatriated personnel are returned to CONUS, or officially transferred to service installations or medical facilities.

(3) Serves as the official Public Affairs contact point for Marine Corps-related issues, in coordination with OASD(PA) and USJFCOM. Provides information from PERSCOM and other relevant Marine Corps commands to OASD(PA) as required.

e. Installation/command PAOs: In coordination with OCPA, will assume Public Affairs responsibility at the time repatriated personnel are received at their installation/facility. Will provide repatriated personnel with necessary Public Affairs guidance and assistance.

4. PROCEDURES:

a. The returnees will generate national, international and internal news interest. Consistent with the policies expressed herein, all personnel involved with the processing of returnees must clearly understand the need for PA activities to be carried out promptly, efficiently and candidly. IAW DoD Directive 2310.4, para. 5.2, the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs) (ASD(PA)) has sole responsibility for overall Public Affairs plans and guidance, serves as official spokesperson, and instructions to all service PAOs. IAW DoD Directive 2310.2, para. 1.2, the Unified Commander, United States Joint Forces Command has overall command responsibility for personnel recovery operations.

b. The news media, both external and internal, have a right and a responsibility to gather information related to returnees. This must be respected at all times. Prompt and accurate responses to news queries and requests will be forthcoming whenever possible, consistent at all times with the paramount need for consideration of the health and welfare of returnees and of national security requirements.

c. Returned U. S. personnel may be interviewed by news media representatives after repatriation when the following criteria have been met and approval has been given by ASD(PA) and CINCUSJFC:

(1) The returnee's physical and mental condition must permit. Only medical authorities can determine this. The individual's health has first priority. There can be no compromise on this requirement.

(2) National security requirements must be satisfied. Only the intelligence specialists can determine this. Debriefing is not a short procedure. Normally, debriefing sessions are for short periods of time from day to day. Intelligence data requires some time and study for evaluation.

(3) Personal consent of the returnee must be received prior to any interview or press conference. The returnee, as is the case for any other serviceman or woman, has a right not to be interviewed if he so chooses. The reason for his refusal is his personal right and need not be divulged. The returnee will be provided appropriate counseling, including legal.

d. News media representatives will be afforded equal treatment. Equal access to the story is a basic principle of Department of Defense PA policy.

e. To facilitate the flow in information, the Division of Public Affairs, DSN 224-4309, is designated public affairs contact point for liaison with OASD(PA) and USJFC. The PA contact will expedite coordination and exchange of information concerning returnees among all elements of the Marine Corps and DOD. Public affairs guidance passed by OASD(PA) to POW receiving points will be coordinated through the contact point when possible. The DIVPA point of contact will be prepared to locate in the Headquarters Marine Corps Combat Operations Center 24 hours a day if necessary.

g. Public affairs guidance will be provided to next of kin of returnees when they are initially notified of the returnee's return to United States control or anticipated return. The Casualty Assistance Officer making the notification to the family will use Appendix 1 as the substance and outline for this guidance.

h. All personnel who will have direct contact with the returnees at processing sites overseas and in the CONUS must have understanding of possible PA problems and a thorough familiarization with PA guidance contained herein. Accordingly, the responsible commanders shall initiate procedures for briefing such personnel.

i. Questions relating to PA not specifically covered by this guidance shall be referred directly to DIVPA. Appropriate Command (internal) Information print and broadcast coverage of repatriation will be conducted by DIVPA and affected command public affairs activities and organizations, consistent with issued public affairs guidance (PAG)

j. Public affairs activities associated with the return of POWs are divided into three separate phases:

(1) Repatriation:

(a) Public affairs activities will be the responsibility of:

1 USJFC prior to and during personnel recovery operations.

2 Major Marine Corps Commands and their installations upon receiving repatriated POWs - coordinated fully with DIVPA and OASD (PA).

(b) News media may observe and photograph the turnover, arrival and departure of returnees in a manner, which precludes direct contact. Photographs of seriously wounded and ill personnel will not be permitted.

(c) In the event non-U. S. Government escorts are involved in the return of POWs to military control; no action will be taken to prevent contact between such escorts and the news media.

(d) Names of released prisoners will not be confirmed until next of kin have been officially notified. At that time, release of the returnee's name, grade, date of capture, branch of service and home of record are authorized. The possibility exists that families of returned service members may receive initial information about the release through the news media. Nevertheless, official next of kin notification procedures must be complete before release of personal information about the returnee.

(e) Routine biographical information, IAW SECNAV 5720.44A, The Privacy Act, may be released concerning returnees. OASD(PA) will make initial release of such information, and information regarding CONUS destination of returnees.

(f) Official photographs taken from the personnel files of known POWs will not, under any circumstances, be released before individual returnees have been positively identified, and next of kin notified of their return to U. S. military control. OASD(PA) will make initial release of such photos.

(2) In Transit. Public Affairs Officers at enroute bases will brief news media that photography of returnees at enroute stops is authorized only if the returnees disembark and provided no medical reason exists to the contrary. Interviews and news conferences with returnees will not be authorized during medical evacuation. All PA related activities will first be coordinated with USJFC and OASD(PA).

(3) CONUS. Public Affairs at receiving installations or hospitals will normally be the responsibility of those commands.

(a) Commanders will ensure that the PAO at each hospital or receiving installation is authorized prompt and continuing access to debriefing summary reports of returned prisoners. This access will be used solely to assist the PAO in preparing the returnees for news media interviews. All PA activities will be coordinated with OCPA and OASD(PA).

(b) The PAO will, at the earliest opportunity, give each returnee an individual briefing, if practical. Returnees will be briefed that the PAO is available to assist them in all of their dealings with news media.

(c) During medical processing and intelligence debriefing period, Public Affairs Officers should keep the media regularly informed regarding the daily activities of the returnees, their overall physical conditions, and planned activities, consistent with information security and privacy requirements.

(d) Interviews and news conferences will not be authorized until approval has been received from ASD(PA). At such time the PAO will again meet with the returnees and assist them in preparing for interviews. A legal officer will furnish advice concerning formal contracts or agreement with the media. Each returnee is to be made aware of their right not to speak with the media.

(e) A public affairs representative will be present during news interviews and conferences with returnees. When returnees are authorized leave, they will be briefed on PA matters. Before departing, returnees will be provided with a PA POC from whom they can request PA guidance and assistance while on leave.

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Brigadier General,
Director of Public Affairs

Appendices:

- 1 - Public Affairs Assistance for Families of Returnees
- 2 - Public Affairs Briefing for Former Prisoners of War Returned to Marine Corps Installations or Naval Hospitals

APPENDIX 1 (PUBLIC AFFAIRS ASSISTANCE FOR FAMILIES OF RETURNEES) TO
ANNEX M (PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO HQMC REPATRIATION OPLAN

(NOTE: The following information is provided for use by Casualty Assistance Officers when they notify next of kin that their family member has been returned to United States control from either POW or MIA status, detained, missing, or isolated personnel status or that return is anticipated).

"The news media already have or soon will have your family member's name, grade, date of capture and hometown. There will undoubtedly be intense news media interest in his return. You can expect to receive calls and possibly visits from your local news media and from national news media very shortly after his name has been released.

"You, of course, have a right to talk with the media. You also have the right not to talk, if you so desire. Because our information on your (military member's) release is not yet complete, and because other Americans are still being held by the enemy or are still missing in action, you may want to confine your initial comments to the information that your family member will provide when you talk with him.

"You are not required to sign any releases for radio or television appearances, though you may be requested to do so by the reporter, cameraman or producer. If a release form is presented to you, make sure you read it carefully, understand its implications and, then, make your own determination to sign or not sign.

"The U. S. Marine Corps will continue providing you with additional information as quickly as possible. We will also tell you when family member is returning to the United States

"If you need assistance from an Marine Corps Public Affairs Officer for your dealings with the press, radio and TV, either today or subsequently, please let me know and I will arrange for such assistance. Public affairs assistance will also be available to you and other members of your family at the installation or hospital where your loved one will be assigned. "

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APPENDIX 2 (PUBLIC AFFAIRS BRIEFING FOR FORMER PRISONERS OF WAR
RETURNED TO MARINE CORPS INSTALLATIONS OR NAVAL HOSPITALS) TO ANNEX M
(PUBLIC AFFAIRS) TO HQMC REPATRIATION OPLAN

1. The return of our prisoners of war is an event of national and international importance. As such, it has been and is the subject of intense interest by the media.
2. Therefore, your own stories will be of particular interest to the American and world publics.
3. Your imprisonment has inhibited your receipt of national and international news and the perspective related to these complex matters. Nevertheless, you can expect that your current views and opinions will be sought by the news media.
4. As Public Affairs Officers, we work with the news media on a daily basis. We assist the newsmen in gathering information about our military activities, materiel, and personnel so that they can report full and accurately to the American public. Similarly, we are responsible to insure that no special interests are served at the expense of your personal desires or our national interest. In short, we are here to help you during this time of intense national interest.
5. Public affairs assistance will be available to you and to your family during the processing period, during any period of hospitalization and at any future time you may need assistance.
6. We will assist in arranging media interviews in accordance with your wishes. Should you be contacted directly by a media representative, notify me immediately. All press interviews with you will have to be cleared with the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs in Washington. We will obtain this clearance for you if you desire such an interview.
7. You are not required to talk with reporters or pose for pictures if you do not wish to do so. To decline is fully within your rights. You are not required to sign any releases for radio or television appearances though you may be requested to do so by the reporter, cameraman or producer. If a release form is presented to you, make sure you read it carefully, understand its implications and, then, make your own determination to sign or not sign.
8. If you decide to talk with news media, you have every right to speak as you wish. However, you may wish to give special consideration to certain areas, which could have an impact on you, other family members, prisoners still detained, and national security.
9. Let me make the following suggestions for your consideration and discussion:
 - a. Be careful to avoid disclosure of classified information concerning your imprisonment, such as resistance techniques and any covert activities that you or your fellow prisoners may have devised.

b. Stick to your own personal experiences rather than to information, which you heard from other sources. For your own credibility and accuracy, avoid using hearsay.

c. Consider carefully the possible ramifications of your statements before you speak. You may be quoted around the world.

d. You should be aware that the enemy for propaganda purposes might use what you say. Also you should consider the possible effect of your statements on others not yet released. Press clippings will undoubtedly reach foreign governments for their use in whatever manner they may desire.

e. Since other families may not know what you know about other prisoners, especially those not returned, it would be better not to discuss this subject until our casualty personnel can study your information and notify the families involved. We have tried to protect your families by providing them with all information before it is given to the public media. I know you will want to do the same for other prisoners.

f. If you have any questions pertaining to your dealings with the news media, we will always be available to help you. I would suggest that you move in a deliberate manner in any matter dealing with the news media. Media interviews will be "on the record" and anything you say will probably appear in print or heard on the radio and TV.

g. Your family will probably also be approached by reporters. We will be available to assist them also. Dependents will normally be asked about things you told them.

h. Before you leave the hospital, we will provide you with the names and telephone numbers of public affairs personnel of the Division of Public Affairs, HQMC. Call them if there are any questions in your mind, check with them first so they can help you wherever possible."

i. Although we recognize the interest of the American public in learning about your experience, be assured that your individual health and welfare, your requests and your personal desires come first.

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