

# Marine Corps Visual Information & Excellence in Communication Awards Program SOP – 2020

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## I. ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM

- A. The Marine Corps VIEC Awards competition recognizes Communication Strategy and Operations (COMMSTRAT) units, officer and enlisted Marines and civilians whose leadership, writing, photography, videography, graphic design, and communication planning have demonstrated outstanding achievement in furthering the objectives of the Marine Corps and U.S. Department of Defense (DoD). The period of service eligible for consideration of these awards is 01 JAN 2020 through 31 DEC 2020 (CY 2020).
- B. The VIEC Awards Program brings two programs together: **Defense Media Awards** and **VIEC Awards**.
  1. The **Defense Media Awards** are administered by the Defense Media Activity under the authority of DoD Directive 5105.74, "Defense Media Activity (DMA)," paragraph E3.1.22. There are nine categories in the 2020 DMA competition. The highest-level award is the Defense Communicator of the Year Award, which recognizes the individual who used his or her photography, writing, videography and other skills to communicate information and stories relevant to his or her unit. All Marine Corps first-place winners in the nine categories listed in the DMA SOP below (ie: Defense Communicator, Military Photographer, Civilian Photographer, Military Videographer, Civilian Videographer, Military Graphics Artist, Civilian Graphics Artist, Military Writer, and Civilian Writer of the Year) will be submitted by HQMC Communication Directorate (CD) to compete at the DoD-level. Individual submission for all categories will be executed through the Defense Visual Information Distribution System (DVIDS) Awards Portal through the Marine's local unit.
  2. The **VIEC awards** will compete and be awarded at the Marine Corps-level in partnership with the United States Marine Corps Combat Correspondents Association (USMCCA). Submission for all categories except Communication Plan and the five COMMSTRAT of the Year awards will be executed through the DVIDS Awards Portal under Admin Tools. Category descriptions and submission requirements are found on Page 3-5 of this document. The program includes the following 34 Individual and Unit categories:
    - i COMMSTRAT of the Year: Marine, SNCO, Visual Information Officer (VIO), Officer, and Unit
    - ii Graphic Design: Digital Art, Identity Design, Layout and Design, Photo Illustration, Animation, Marine Corps Graphic Artist of the Year, Marine Corps Civilian Graphic Artist of the Year
    - iii Photography: Photo Series, News Photo, Feature Photo, Portrait, Sports Photography, Marine Corps Photographer of the Year, Marine Corps Civilian Photographer of the Year
    - iv Videography: Short-form Production Video, Long-form Production Video, B-roll Videography, Multimedia Product, Video Story, Video Spot, Marine Corps Videographer of the Year, Marine Corps Civilian Videographer of the Year
    - v Print: Information Story, Feature Story, Communication Plan, Photojournalism, Marine Corps Writer of the Year, Marine Corps Civilian Writer of the Year
    - vi Marine Corps Communicator of the Year

## II. POINTS OF CONTACT

For information regarding entry requirements, unit leaders should send an email to [HQMC\\_45XX\\_Proponent@usmc.mil](mailto:HQMC_45XX_Proponent@usmc.mil) or call (703) 614-1494. HQMC CD POCs are MSgt Jeremy Vought at [Jeremy.Vought@usmc.mil](mailto:Jeremy.Vought@usmc.mil) and CWO5 Jonathan Knauth at [Jonathan.Knauth@usmc.mil](mailto:Jonathan.Knauth@usmc.mil). DVIDS submission process POC is MSgt Brian Buckwalter at [BBuckwalter@dvidshub.net](mailto:BBuckwalter@dvidshub.net) or (678) 421-6820. DVIDS Awards Portal can be accessed at <https://cms.dvidshub.net/awards>.

### III. ELIGIBILITY

- A. Competition is open to all active-duty/reserve Marines (enlisted/officer) and Government Service civilians assigned to COMMSTRAT Units. Marines must hold the PMOS of 45XX.
- B. No individual may enter the competition directly. Individuals will submit products to their unit into appropriate award categories and unit administrators designated on DVIDS will review for competition compliance in accordance with this SOP. Unit administrators will use the “Select Winners” module in DVIDS to push acceptable entries for Branch-Level Judging. Unit Administrators can disregard the “Score Entries” module, as that functionality is unnecessary at the unit level. Entries not approved by unit administrators and pushed to branch-level will not be available for judging.
- C. U.S. government civilian employees assigned to the Defense Media Activity’s military production divisions are ineligible to submit their individual and unit entries to the Military Services’ competitions. They enter the Defense Media Merit Awards (DMMA) competition.
- D. Products entering the competition must be the work of active-duty or reserve Marines as well as U.S. government civilian employees with the photographer, videographer, graphic artist, visual information specialist, public affairs specialist or equivalent occupation specialty. Products created by Marines/Civilians who leave Government Service during the year may enter the competition as long as the material submitted was completed in its entirety while the individuals were on active duty or in a Reserve status and the product fulfills other criteria as specified throughout this guidance.
- E. Individuals can enter products in any award category as long these individuals hold one of the occupation specialties listed above. For example, graphics products created by a photographer or videographer may enter the graphic designer of the year category; video products created by a graphic artist or photographer may compete in the videographer of the year category; and so forth.
- F. Products produced by Marines assigned to “Stars and Stripes” newspapers are not eligible to participate. Non-appropriated fund (NAF) products and NAF personnel are also ineligible.
- G. Products created by government contractor employees are not authorized to compete.
- H. Products created by non-U.S. government employees, also known as local national employees, are not authorized to compete.
- I. Marines/Civilians assigned to combatant commands, defense agencies, DoD field activities (DMA, DPAA, etc.) and joint task forces will submit individual products within the USMC VIEC program. Marines/Civilians submitting unit/team products for the above unit types must submit and compete in the DMMA.
- J. All content must have been acquired/created, produced, uploaded to DVIDS and released to the public by 31 Dec 2020 (2359).

### IV. MARINE CORPS-SPECIFIC MILESTONES

#### 2020

Jan 1	Program year began
Dec 31	Program year ends and final day to upload/publish content on DVIDS for CY2020 award program consideration

#### 2021

Feb 21	Unit Leaders Deadline to submit entries via DVIDS Awards Module (2359 EST)
March 1-21	VIEC judging begins by USMCCCA and HQMC CD
March 29	HQMC CD submits 1 <sup>st</sup> place VIEC winners to DMA for DoD-level competition *only applicable to the 9 DMA “of the Year” categories
April 5	DoD-Level DMA judging begins

April 13-16	Judges provide feedback via livestream. <i>Judging will be complete prior to the feedback sessions. Scores will not be shared nor will winners be announced during these sessions.</i> April 13: Communicator of the Year   April 14: Graphics April 15: Photo   April 16: Video For times and livestream details, visit the Defense Media Awards webpage, <a href="http://www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards">www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards</a> .
April 26	VIEC Award winners announced via MARADMIN
Aug 20	VIEC Awards presented at the COMMSTRAT Training Summit ( <i>date tentative</i> )

## V. COMMSTRAT of the Year Awards

Submission for the five COMMSTRAT of the Year Awards (Marine, SNCO, VIO, Officer, and Unit) will be in accordance with the below. Email award nomination package to [HQMC\\_45XX\\_Proponent@usmc.mil](mailto:HQMC_45XX_Proponent@usmc.mil):

1. **COMMSTRAT Marine of the Year.** The Communication Strategy and Operations Marine of the Year award recognizes the Marine who most displayed exceptional COMMSTRAT performance, leadership, and courage and who embodies the total Marine concept. Eligible to all E5 and below with PMOS 4512, 4541, or 4571.
2. **COMMSTRAT SNCO of the Year.** The Communication Strategy and Operations SNCO of the Year award recognizes the SNCO who most displayed exceptional COMMSTRAT performance, leadership, and courage and who embodies the total Marine concept. Eligible to all SNCOs with PMOS 4591.
3. **COMMSTRAT VIO of the Year.** The Communication Strategy and Operations Visual Information Officer (VIO) of the Year award recognizes the officer who most displayed exceptional technical COMMSTRAT performance, leadership, and courage and who embodies the total Marine concept. Open to Warrant Officers with PMOS 4503.
4. **COMMSTRAT Officer of the Year.** The Communication Strategy and Operations Officer of the Year award recognizes the officer who most displayed exceptional COMMSTRAT performance, leadership, and courage and who embodies the total Marine concept. Open to all officers with PMOS 4502.
5. **COMMSTRAT Unit of the Year.** The Communication Strategy and Operations Unit of the Year award recognizes the unit that has demonstrated superior execution of the 45XX Occupational Field core competencies and provided outstanding, professional communication planning, counsel, training, operations, and products.

### Entry requirements for COMMSTRAT Marine, SNCO, VIO, and Officer of the Year categories

- Each unit may only submit (1) Marine per category
- Summary of action (SOA) nomination letter will be no more than two pages and will highlight 2020 achievements endorsed by the unit COMMSTRAT Director or first O6 in the Marine's chain of command.
- A Biography limited to one page
- Data Sheet
  - Download template at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-715707>
- DVIDS "My Album" Portfolio URL with no more than 15 pieces of content (optional for SNCO/VIO/Officer)
  - Download template at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-718405>
  - Album title name should identify category and Marine name
- Attach any non-content (COMM Plans, Award Citations) to the package, as desired, as enclosures. Limit to five enclosures with no more than ten total pages of enclosures.

## Entry requirements for COMMSTRAT Unit of the Year category

- DVIDS “My Album” Unit Portfolio URL with no more than 20 pieces of content
  - Content types and variety are highly encouraged to show breadth of production
  - Download template at <https://www.milsuite.mil/book/docs/DOC-718405>
  - Album title name should identify category and unit name
- Attach any non-content (COMM Plans, Production Reports, etc.) to the package, as desired, as enclosures. Limit to eight enclosures with no more than 16 total pages of enclosures.
- Summary of action (SOA) nomination letter will be no more than four pages. SOA must be signed by the unit COMMSTRAT Director AND endorsed by the first O6 or higher in the unit’s chain of command (IE: COS, CG, AC/S G3, MIG CO, etc). The SOA letter must include 2020 achievements worthy of award and must include individual paragraphs on how the unit accomplished each the (14) COMMSTRAT Core Competencies (details outlined in MCT 5.6 through MCT 5.6.13).

 <b>45XX OccFld Core Competencies</b>	
Communication Counsel	→ Serve as trusted advisors to commanders and staffs
Research	→ Use quantitative and qualitative research to inform decisions/actions
Planning & Integration	→ Support operational/Service planning, develop communication plans and lead communication synchronization
Assessment & Evaluation	→ Measure performance and effectiveness of pre-identified objectives
Engagement	→ Engage publics via traditional and social media, face-to-face outreach
Issue Management	→ Identify, mitigate and respond to potential or emerging issues
Crisis Communication	→ Respond to crises with timely and accurate information
Concept Development	→ Develop a communication product plan that supports commander’s intent
Imagery Acquisition	→ Capture still and motion media
Product Creation	→ Combine/edit media into finished communication product
Product Dissemination	→ Transmit finished product to intended audience
Product Management	→ Manage communication product from acquisition to archive
Marketing	→ Support Marine Corps communication and recruiting efforts
Training	→ Provide communication training to joint force, interagency, partner nations

## VI. VIEC Award Categories

VIEC categories are as follows and must be in accordance with DMA rules below. Submission into these categories are through DVIDS Awards Portal.

### Defense Communicator of the Year

(1) **Marine Corps Communicator of the Year:** *(Category description and requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 6 and Appendix B)*

### Graphic Design Categories

*(Category descriptions and requirements listed in Appendix B below)*

(1) **Digital Art** *(individual award)*

(2) **Identity Design** *(individual award)*

(3) **Layout and Design** *(individual award)*

(4) **Animation** *(individual award)*

(5) **Photo Illustration** *(individual award)*

(5) **Marine Corps Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year** *(Category description and requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 7 and Appendix B)*

(6) **Marine Corps Graphic Designer of the Year** *(Category description and requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 8 and Appendix B)*

### Photography Categories

*(Category descriptions and requirements listed in Appendix B below)*

(1) **Photo Series** *(individual award)*

(2) **News Photo** *(individual award)*



- (3) **Feature Photo** *(individual award)*
- (4) **Portrait** *(individual award)*
- (5) **Sports Photography** *(individual award)*
- (6) **Civilian Photographer of the Year** *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 9 and Appendix B)*
- (7) **Military Photographer of the Year** *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 10 and Appendix B)*
- (\*) **Photojournalism**: See requirements listed in Print Categories section below.

## **Videography Categories**

*(Category descriptions and requirements listed in Appendix B)*

- (1) **Short-form Production Video** *(unit OR individual award)*. Entry must be less than 10:00 minutes. DVIAN is required for unit entry. VISION ID required for individual entry. All contributors should be listed in the Credit and Caption Line for unit entry. Category found under Submit Products>Team.
- (2) **Long-form Production Video** *(unit OR individual award)*. Entry must be more than 10:00 minutes. DVIAN is required for unit entry. VISION ID required for individual entry. All contributors should be listed in the Credit and Caption Line for unit entry. Category found under Submit Products>Team.
- (3) **B-roll Videography** *(individual award)*
- (4) **Multimedia Product** *(individual award)*
- (5) **Video Story** *(individual award)*
- (6) **Video Spot** *(individual award)*
- (7) **Marine Corps Civilian Videographer of the Year**: *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 11 and Appendix B)*
- (8) **Marine Corps Videographer of the Year**: *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 12 and Appendix B)*

## **Print Categories**

*(Category descriptions and submission requirements listed in Appendix B)*

- (1) **Information Story** *(individual award)*
- (2) **Feature Story** *(individual award)*
- (3) **Communication Plan** *(unit OR individual award)*. Submit via email to [HQMC\\_45XX\\_Proponent@usmc.mil](mailto:HQMC_45XX_Proponent@usmc.mil). Communication Plan must outline and describe the RPIE (Research, Plan, Implementation, and Evaluation) process. Sections must include a problem or opportunity statement; the research conducted to understand the problem/opportunity, the specific public identified, and the knowledge, attitude, or behavior change that was sought; communication tactics planned and implemented (include URLs of produced content, media engagements, social media posts, printed products, ect.); measures of performance (MOPs) and measures of effectiveness (MOEs); and an evaluation of the results. Include a list of all contributing Marines to the development of the Communication Plan.
- (4) **Photojournalism** *(individual award)*
- (5) **Marine Corps Civilian Writer of the Year** *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 13 and Appendix B)*
- (6) **Marine Corps Writer of the Year**: *(Category description and submission requirements listed in DMA SOP below on Page 14 and Appendix B)*



PUBLIC AFFAIRS

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY  
6700 TAYLOR AVENUE  
FORT MEADE, MD 20755-7061

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER/G-6, HEADQUARTERS,  
DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY  
SECRETARY OF THE ARMY, CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
SECRETARY OF THE NAVY, CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER  
SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE, DIRECTOR OF  
PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF U.S. MARINE CORPS  
COMMUNICATION, HEADQUARTERS MARINE CORPS  
CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, U.S. COAST GUARD

SUBJECT: Request for Nominations to the 2020 Defense Media Awards

This memorandum is the call for nominations to the 2020 Defense Media Awards. Attached is the fifth iteration of the DoD-level awards program guidance designed by your designated public affairs and visual information representatives.

There are no significant changes to this year's nomination criteria. The number of categories remains at nine: Defense Communicator of the Year, Civilian and Military Graphic Designer of the Year, Civilian and Military Videographer of the Year, Civilian and Military Photographer of the Year, the Thomas Jefferson Civilian Print Journalist of the Year and the Thomas Jefferson Military Print Journalist of the Year.

Each Service may submit one nomination for each category. Submit nominations in accordance with the attached guidance no later than March 29, 2021.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Chad McMeen at (301) 677-2042 or DefenseMediaAwards@mail.mil. Thank you for your support.

HAVERSTICK.PAUL.RIC  
HARD.JR.1111813945

Digitally signed by  
HAVERSTICK.PAUL.RICHARD.JR.1111813945  
Date: 2020.12.02 08:28:24 -05'00'

Paul R. Haverstick, Jr.  
Colonel, U.S. Army  
Acting Director

Attachment:  
As stated



# Defense Media Awards

Nomination Guidance for Calendar Year 2020

Defense Media Activity  
6700 Taylor Ave.  
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755  
[DefenseMediaAwards@mail.mil](mailto:DefenseMediaAwards@mail.mil)

# Defense Media Awards

## Nomination Guidance for Calendar Year 2020

### Table of Contents

I.	ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM.....	1
II.	POINT OF CONTACT .....	1
III.	MILESTONES .....	1
IV.	ELIGIBILITY .....	2
V.	ENTRY CRITERIA .....	3
VI.	ENTRY DISQUALIFICATION AND REJECTION .....	4
VII.	HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES.....	4
VIII.	AWARDS.....	5
IX.	NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS.....	5
X.	AFTER-ACTION REVIEW/MEDIA AWARDS GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE.....	5
XI.	JUDGING GUIDANCE .....	5
XII.	AWARD CATEGORIES .....	6
A.	Defense Communicator of the Year.....	6
B.	Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year .....	7
C.	Military Graphic Designer of the Year .....	8
D.	Civilian Photographer of the Year .....	9
E.	Military Photographer of the Year .....	10
F.	Civilian Videographer of the Year.....	11
G.	Military Videographer of the Year.....	12
H.	Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year .....	13
I.	Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year.....	14
	Appendix A, Federal Laws and DoD Policy.....	15
	Appendix B, Product Definitions.....	16
A.	Graphic Design Products .....	16
B.	Photo Products .....	16
C.	Video Products .....	17
D.	Written Products .....	18
E.	Other Terms .....	19

Appendix C, Caption Examples..... 20

    A. Graphic Caption..... 20

    B. Photo Caption..... 20

    C. Video Caption..... 21



## I. ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM

- A. The Defense Media Awards competition honors excellence among military and civilian broadcast journalists, graphic designers, writers, photographers, public affairs (PA) and visual information (VI) practitioners, mass communication specialists and videographers. It also fosters an environment of innovation and growth, leading to more effective communication programs. The awards are administered by the Defense Media Activity under the authority of Department of Defense Directive 5105.74, "Defense Media Activity (DMA)," paragraph E3.1.22.
- B. PA and VI representatives of each Military Service created and approved entry requirements and category descriptions for the 2020 competition.
- C. There are nine categories in the 2020 competition. The highest-level award is the Defense Communicator of the Year Award, which recognizes the individual who used his or her photography, writing, videography and other skills to communicate information and stories relevant to his or her unit or command.

## II. POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding entry requirements, individuals should first contact their Military Service's contest coordinator. For general information, send an email to [DefenseMediaAwards@mail.mil](mailto:DefenseMediaAwards@mail.mil) or call (301) 222-6757.

## III. MILESTONES

### 2020

Jan. 1	Program year began
Dec. 31	Program year ends

### 2021

March 29	Deadline to submit entries.
April 5	Judging begins.
April 13-16	Judges provide feedback via livestream. <i>Judging will be complete prior to the feedback sessions. Scores will not be shared nor will winners be announced during these sessions.</i>
	April 13: Communicator of the Year
	April 14: Graphics
	April 15: Photo
	April 16: Video
	For times and livestream details, visit the Defense Media Awards webpage, <a href="http://www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards">www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards</a> .
April 23	Winners list sent to Services' PA/VI chiefs, Services' contest coordinators, and National Guard Bureau public affairs office.
April 30	Winners list posted to Defense Media Activity's social media platforms.
May 7	Winning entries posted to Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS).
May 7 (Tentative)	Conduct after-action review with Service representatives.

#### IV. ELIGIBILITY

- A. No individual may enter the competition directly. Only one entry per category may be submitted from each of the following:
1. **Chief Master Sgt. Douglas W. Morrel Media Awards** (U.S. Air Force)
  2. **Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communication Awards Competition** (U.S. Army)
  3. **Chief Journalist Alex Haley Awards** (U.S. Coast Guard)
  4. **Visual Information and Excellence in Communication (VIEC) Awards** (U.S. Marine Corps)
  5. **Russell Egnor Navy Media Awards** (U.S. Navy)
  6. **Defense Media Merit Awards (DMMA)**. Sponsored by the Defense Media Activity, the DMMA competition is open to U.S. government civilian employees assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and joint task forces to submit their individual work products. These organizations also submit their team-produced products to the unit award categories.
- B. The Military Services are responsible for establishing Service-specific rules and procedures to judge and select their qualified entries for submission to the Defense Media Awards competition. The Services also will ensure military nominees meet quality force standards for their respective service prior to their entrance to the Defense Media Awards competition.
- C. The Defense Media Activity is responsible for establishing rules and procedures to judge and select qualified entries from the DMMA competition for submission to the Defense Media Awards competition. U.S. government civilian employees assigned to the Defense Media Activity's military production divisions are ineligible to submit their individual and unit entries to the Military Services' competitions. They enter the DMMA competition.
- D. Products entering the competition must be the work of active-duty, Reserve, and National Guard members of the Armed Service as well as U.S. government civilian employees with the photographer, journalist, photojournalist, videographer, broadcast journalist, graphic artist, mass communication specialist, public affairs specialist or equivalent occupation specialty. Products created by service members who leave the Armed Forces during the year may enter the competition as long as the material submitted was completed in its entirety while the individuals were on active duty or in a Reserve or National Guard status and the product fulfills other criteria as specified throughout this guidance.
- E. The Military Services and the Defense Media Activity can enter products created by individuals in any award category as long as these individuals carry one of the occupation specialties listed in the previous paragraph. For example, graphics products created by a photographer or journalist may enter the graphic designer of the year category; video products created by a graphic designer or journalist may compete in the videographer of the year category; and so forth.
- F. Products produced by personnel assigned to the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Civil Air Patrol are prohibited from competing unless they meet the eligibility criteria stated in paragraph D of this section.

- G. Products produced by personnel assigned to “Stars and Stripes” newspapers are not eligible to participate. Non-appropriated fund (NAF) products and NAF personnel are also ineligible.
- H. Products created by government contractor employees are not authorized to compete.
- I. Products created by non-U.S. government employees, also known as local national employees, are not authorized to compete.
- J. Those assigned to combatant commands, defense agencies, DoD field activities and joint task forces, must refer to the DMMA competition rules for entry information.
- K. Army and Air National Guard members and U.S. government civilian staff members assigned to Army and Air National Guard units must refer to the Air Force, Army and DMMA rules for entry information.
- L. Reserve members will enter through their respective Service competition.

## V. ENTRY CRITERIA

- A. Products entering the competition must have been created, approved for public release, and published between Jan. 1, 2020 and Dec. 31, 2020. ***Products also must have been uploaded and published to DVIDS between Jan. 1, 2020, and 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time Dec. 31, 2020.***
- B. All products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and meet the highest standards of production, execution and professional excellence. Products must convey, by content and delivery, relevant information that supports the command’s information and/or mission needs and, therefore, must be authorized products approved for public release. Consequently, ***all products must have military relevance.***
- C. No single product may be entered more than once.
- D. Entries to the Defense Communicator of the Year category may be from a military member or a U.S. government civilian employee as long as the entrant meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section IV. The entrant is also eligible to enter only ***one*** additional category (either the graphic designer, photographer, videographer or writer of-the-year category) during the same competition year. Products may not be used more than once per paragraph C of this section. Entries found to contain the same products will be disqualified from the Defense Communicator of the Year and the other of-the-year category. If duplicate products are discovered, the Military Services and Defense Media Activity will not be allowed to replace the duplicate product nor will they be allowed to submit a replacement entry.
- E. Individuals who are ***not*** entering the Defense Communicator of the Year category may be entered into more than one of the following categories: graphic designer, photographer, videographer or writer of the year. Products may not be used more than once per paragraph C of this section. Entries found to contain the same products will be disqualified from all categories. If duplicate products are discovered, the Military Services and Defense Media Activity will not be allowed to replace the duplicate nor will they be allowed to submit a replacement entry.



- F. Each entry requires multiple products highlighting the entrant's work. In order to create the entry, *each product must be uploaded and published to DVIDS as a separate file.*
- G. Each graphic, photo or video product must contain an embedded caption and other required metadata. Also assign a Visual Information Record Identification Number (VIRIN) as required in the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) and Change 2 to [DoD Instruction 5040.02](#), "Visual Information," dated April 23, 2018. While editing metadata during upload to DVIDS, list the person who created the product in the credit field and ensure their name is included in the caption.
- H. All products must comply with federal law and DoD policy. See Appendix A.

## VI. ENTRY DISQUALIFICATION AND REJECTION

- A. Products entered by personnel who do not meet eligibility requirements listed in Section IV will be disqualified.
- B. Products that do not meet the specific requirements listed in Sections XII and V, and Appendix B, or that fail to follow federal law or established DoD policy will be disqualified.
- C. Entries not uploaded and published to DVIDS will be disqualified.
- D. *Products with more than one name in a byline or credit line will be disqualified.*
- E. Unit products will be disqualified. Individual products containing a DVIAN will also be disqualified.
- F. Challenges will be decided by the Defense Media Activity Director or the Director's designee after consulting with members of the Defense Media Awards Governance Committee.

## VII. HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES

- A. Entry to the Defense Media Awards will be accomplished through DVIDS. Entry is a two-step process.
  - 1. Upload and publish products to DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/>. Once logged in, go to the training section for upload instructions. Only products uploaded and published to DVIDS between Jan. 1, 2020 and 11:59 p.m. Eastern Time Dec. 31, 2020 are eligible to enter. Requests for exceptions will be denied. Publishing graphics after they have been uploaded requires extra steps; refer to the DVIDS website for instructions.
  - 2. Select products using the DVIDS Awards interface module under the Admin Portal. Instructions may be found on the DVIDS website. Entries must be submitted through the DVIDS Awards interface module to enter the competition. Requests for exceptions to this rule will be denied.
- B. The Military Services and Defense Media Activity will submit a list of their nominees by March 30, 2021 and will ensure military nominees meet quality force standards prior to submission. Information required:
  - 1. Entrant's first name, middle initial, last name

2. Rank for military members
  3. Unit Name (do not abbreviate) and unit mailing address
  4. The DVIDS Awards submission number for each entry as well as the product ID number and public URL for each product in the entry.
- C. Should a name on the submission list be different from the name associated with the product in DVIDS, the name associated with the entrant's DVIDS profile will take precedence. Should the unit's name and address differ from that listed in DVIDS, the information in DVIDS will take precedence.

## VIII. AWARDS

- A. Awards will be given in nine categories: (1) Defense Communicator of the Year, (2) Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year, (3) Military Graphic Designer of the Year, (4) Civilian Photographer of the Year, (5) Military Photographer of the Year, (6) Civilian Videographer of the Year, (7) Military Videographer of the Year, (8) Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year, and (9) Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year.
- B. The winner of each category will receive a trophy and a certificate. ***Requests to replace a lost or misplaced trophy or certificate will not be honored.***

## IX. NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS

- A. Each Military Services' PA/VI chief, the Department of the Army G6, the National Guard Bureau public affairs office and the Military Services' contest coordinators will receive concurrent notification of the winners. The Military Services will notify their Reserve components since entry by Reserve units and their members is through their respective competition.
- B. A list of the winners will be posted to Defense Media Activity's social media sites the day after the Military Services are notified.
- C. Winning entries will be highlighted on DVIDS two weeks after the winners are announced.

## X. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW/MEDIA AWARDS GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Defense Media Activity will host a Defense Media Awards Governance Committee meeting with the Military Services' appointed voting members and National Guard Bureau advisers to review and update competition guidance for the 2020 award cycle. The meeting is tentatively planned for May 6, 2021.

## XI. JUDGING GUIDANCE

- A. Judges will have access to the entries starting April 5, 2021 and will complete their scoring prior to the feedback sessions. Judges will provide feedback to the entrants via livestream April 13-16, 2021. ***Scores will not be shared nor will the winners be announced during the livestream sessions.***



- B. Three judges will be selected for each of these products: graphic design, photo, video and written. Selection criteria for judges is based on their professional experience in the communication and visual information fields.
- C. All entries will be judged on professional excellence, originality, storytelling ability, and creativity. Judges' decisions are final. The judges' discretionary comments and feedback will be provided to the Military Services' contest coordinators after the competition.
- D. Judges will select only one winner in each category. If no entry in a category is considered within contest standards, judges may choose to withhold any award within that category.

## XII. AWARD CATEGORIES

### A. Defense Communicator of the Year

Open to both military and civilian personnel as long as they meet eligibility criteria listed in Section IV. Entry must be a portfolio profiling the work credited to one individual. ***Products with more than one name in a byline or credit line will be disqualified.***

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry will consist of *five* products:

- One print story (Must be either a commentary, feature story, information story or one story of a series.)
- One video story
- One photo (Must be either a news photo, feature photo, portrait or one photo from a photo series.)
- Two products of the candidate's choice (Must not be a photo series.)

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Only one of the candidate's choices may be a photojournalism product (3-5 photos and a story), but it must be on a topic or event different from the other products in the portfolio. Only one photojournalism product may be entered as part of the portfolio.
- Any of the candidate's choices may ***not*** be a photo series.
- Do not extract and submit component elements of a product as a candidate's choice if that product in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to this or another category. For example, do not extract and submit as a logo or other graphic from a multimedia product if the entire multimedia product is being submitted as a candidate's choice to this or another category. This rule, however, does not prohibit individuals from submitting a graphic element extracted from a team-produced video, a multimedia product or a video credited to another person, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant and it must have been uploaded and published to DVIDS as a separate file.

## B. Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one name in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must consist of *six* graphic design products:

- One layout & design product
- One digital art product
- Four graphic design products of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Do not submit two-dimensional work created by free-hand methods using dry- or wet-based methods, such as line art, sketches, water colors and oil paintings, and work created using pencil, chalk and charcoal; pictures of displays; and fine art pieces.
- Do not extract and submit component elements of a multimedia product, video story or video spot as one of the six graphic design products if the multimedia product, video story or video spot in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to another category. This does not prohibit individuals from extracting a graphic element they created for a team-produced product or a product credited to another individual, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant.
- Do not extract and submit component elements from a layout & design product as a separate product if the layout & design product in its entirety is being entered by the entrant to this or other category. Conversely, do not enter a layout & design product that contains elements submitted as digital art and identity design products. Each product must be separate and distinct from the other.
- Do not submit layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents.

### C. Military Graphic Designer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one name in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must consist of *six* graphic design products:

- One layout & design product
- One digital art product
- Four graphic design products of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Do not submit two-dimensional work created by free-hand methods using dry- or wet-based methods, such as line art, sketches, water colors and oil paintings, and work created using pencil, chalk and charcoal; pictures of displays; and fine art pieces.
- Do not extract and submit component elements of a multimedia product, video story or video spot as one of the six graphic design products if the multimedia product, video story or video spot in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to another category. This does not prohibit individuals from extracting a graphic element they created for a team-produced product or a product credited to another individual, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant.
- Do not extract and submit component elements from a layout & design product as a separate product if the layout & design product in its entirety is being entered by the entrant to this or other category. Conversely, do not enter a layout & design product that contains elements submitted as digital art and identity design products. Each product must be separate and distinct from the other.
- Do not submit layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents.

## D. Civilian Photographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one name in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *seven* photo products:

- One news photo
- One feature photo
- One portrait
- Three photos of the candidate's choice
- One photo series consisting of at least 7, but no more than 12 photos. Do not submit a composite layout. *Tip:* It may be easier to create the photos series as a collection within DVIDS before attempting to create the entry.

Entry must contain 13 to 18 images in total. Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Submit only one photo series.
- Photo illustrations are not authorized.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product as a candidate's choice.
- Do not submit photos from a photojournalism product if it is part of the Defense Communicator of the Year portfolio.
- Do not extract photos from a multimedia product or other video product and enter them as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo if the multimedia product or video is submitted as part of another category.
- **Do not submit the same photo more than once.** Do not enter the same photo from the photo series as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. This rule does not prevent submission of a different photo from that same operation as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. Note, however, the purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate one's ability to take photos in a variety of settings. Therefore, products from more than one operation or event earn higher scores.

### E. Military Photographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one name in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *seven* photo products:

- One news photo
- One feature photo
- One portrait
- Three photos of the candidate's choice
- One photo series consisting of at least 7, but no more than 12 photos. Do not submit a composite layout. *Tip:* It may be easier to create the photos series as a collection within DVIDS before attempting to create the entry.

Entry must contain 13 to 18 images in total. Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Submit only one photo series.
- Photo illustrations are not authorized.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product as a candidate's choice.
- Do not submit photos from a photojournalism product if it is part of the Defense Communicator of the Year portfolio.
- Do not extract photos from a multimedia product or other video product and enter them as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo if the multimedia product or video is submitted as part of another category.
- **Do not submit the same photo more than once.** Do not enter the same photo from the photo series as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. This rule does not prevent submission of a different photo from that same operation as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. Note, however, the purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate one's ability to take photos in a variety of settings. Therefore, products from more than one operation or event earn higher scores.



## F. Civilian Videographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one person listed in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *four* video products:

- One b-roll video
- One video story
- Two products of the candidate's choice, either a video story, multimedia product, video spot, or one video from a video series. A video designed exclusively for use on a social media platform may also be entered as a candidate's choice.

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- A b-roll video may not be submitted as a candidate's choice.
- Slates are not required.
- Videos may contain closed captions, but they are not required.

## G. Military Videographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Products with more than one person listed in the credit line will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *four* video products:

- One b-roll video
- One video story
- Two products of the candidate's choice, either a video story, multimedia product, video spot, or one video from a video series. A video designed exclusively for use on a social media platform may also be entered as a candidate's choice.

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- A b-roll video may not be submitted as a candidate's choice.
- Slates are not required.
- Videos may contain closed captions, but they are not required.

## H. Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year

Entry must be work of one individual. *Stories with more than one person listed in the byline will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *five* products:

- One information story
- One feature story
- Three stories of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Products must be from separate events.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product in its entirety. A story from a photojournalism product may be entered as a candidate's choice, but only if the entire photojournalism product (photos and story) is not entered into the Defense Communicator of the Year category.
- Upload each article as a separate story in DVIDS. Do **not** upload PDF files.
- Add the page number (if published in a printed product first), and the date and name of the publication and/or the website in which the articles first appeared as the last paragraph of the story. Use the appropriate version of the following examples:

Example 1: Story was originally published on Page 12 of the Feb. 12, 2020 issue of "Publication Name." It may also be found at <URL>.

Example 2: Story was originally posted to the Base X website on Feb. 12, 2020 and may be found at <URL>.

- Ensure DVIDS and published versions are the same except for *minor* corrections. If corrections are made, an explanation must be provided as the last paragraph of the DVIDS version. Here are two examples:

Example 1: This story differs from the article originally published on page 12 of Feb. 12, 2020 issue of "Publication Name" in that John Peter's name has been corrected.

Example 2: This story differs from the article originally posted Feb. 12, 2020 on the Base X website at <URL>. It was updated Feb. 15, 2020 to correct the address for the family center.

## I. Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual. *Stories with more than one person listed in the byline will be disqualified.*

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *five* products:

- One information story
- One feature story
- Three stories of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Products must be from separate events.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product in its entirety. A story from a photojournalism product may be entered as a candidate's choice, but only if the entire photojournalism product (photos and story) is not entered into the Defense Communicator of the Year category.
- Upload each article as a separate story in DVIDS. Do **not** upload PDF files.
- Add the page number (if published in a printed product first), and the date and name of the publication and/or the website in which the articles first appeared as the last paragraph of the story. Use the appropriate version of the following examples:

Example 1: Story was originally published on Page 12 of the Feb. 12, 2020 issue of "Publication Name." It may also be found at <URL>.

Example 2: Story was originally posted to the Base X website on Feb. 12, 2020 and may be found at <URL>.

- Ensure DVIDS and published versions are the same except for *minor* corrections. If corrections are made, an explanation must be provided as the last paragraph of the DVIDS version. Here are two examples:

Example 1: This story differs from the article originally published on page 12 of Feb. 12, 2020 issue of "Publication Name" in that John Peter's name has been corrected.

Example 2: This story differs from the article originally posted Feb. 12, 2020 on the Base X website at <URL>. It was updated Feb. 15, 2020 to correct the address for the family center.

## Appendix A, Federal Laws and DoD Policy

1. All products must comply with applicable laws and DoD policy, including copyright and intellectual property laws and regulations, and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). Information regarding copyright and intellectual property laws may be found at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov). HIPPA information may be found at [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov).
2. Productions containing commercial music must conform to U.S. copyright laws. This generally includes synchronization rights obtained via a music license agency. Otherwise, military units must obtain written approval from the artist, musicians' union and/or record company, to include synchronization rights. Rights obtained for commercial music used in productions submitted to the Defense Media Awards contest must include unlimited distribution. Organizations may be asked to provide written confirmation that all music complies with copyright law and DoD standards.
3. All products must meet the requirements for public affairs release as stated in Change 1 of [DoD Instruction 5230.29](#), "Security and Policy Review of Information for Public Release," dated April 14, 2017. Any questions regarding public release should be directed to the local public affairs office.
4. Stories must conform to Change 1 of [DoD Instruction 5120.04](#), "DoD Newspapers, Magazines, Guides, and Installation Maps," dated November 20, 2017. Blog posts must be from an official military blog that has been registered as required in [DoD Instruction 8170.01](#), "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," dated January 2, 2019.
5. Graphics, photos and video products must conform to Change 2 of [DoD Instruction 5040.02](#), "Visual Information," dated April 23, 2018, and include metadata in accordance with the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) dated July 16, 2018.
6. U.S. Coast Guard products must also follow U.S. Coast Guard guidelines.



## Appendix B, Product Definitions

All products will contain embedded captions and other required metadata, including a VIRIN, as required by the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#). In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be authorized products approved for public release.

### A. Graphic Design Products

Upload products to DVIDS using the graphics upload portal. Once uploaded, **ensure the graphics are then published to DVIDS**. This requires extra steps. See DVIDS website for instructions.

**Animation.** Product includes various media components that allow for animation, such as video production elements, digital displays, web animations or info graphics. Any animation style is allowed, such as 2-D, 2.5-D, 3-D, or stop motion. Must not use any copyrighted materials, such as movie clips and sound bites or music without broadcast rights. Product may not contain copyrighted rigs, props or characters. Upload to DVIDS as a high-resolution MP4 or SVG file.

**Digital Art.** Original work created by digital means. Examples include digital paintings, vector art, and 3-D renderings. A hand-drawn sketch, which is then digitized, may be used as the starting point, but these marks may not be visible in the final product. Does *not* include animation, cartoons, comic strips, and still photographs enhanced by digital means.

**Identity Design.** Original work that represents a logo or crest that was used in some kind of official military capacity. Examples include unit coin designs, team logos and unit crests. Unit crests must have been registered with the appropriate office of heraldry prior to entry. Entrant must be prepared to provide proof of registration.

**Layout & Design.** Single- or two-page layouts created using elements from various sources. Examples include info charts, info graphics, flyers, certificates, CD covers, cover art, and posters. All must be completed by the entrant, but elements can come from other sources. Entry is limited to two pages that may be extracted from a larger work published between Jan. 1, 2020 and Dec. 31, 2020. Layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents are not allowed.

**Photo Illustration.** Single image or graphic created using a single or multiple images. Images used may be sourced from other means (i.e. not the nominee), but 100% of graphic production must be from the nominee. **Must be properly identified as a photo illustration in the caption.**

### B. Photo Products

**Feature Photo.** Storytelling picture not news related, usually a situation that has strong human interest or a fresh view of a commonplace occurrence featuring a military organization, military equipment, employees or family members.

**News Photo.** Scheduled or unscheduled news event featuring a military organization, employees, equipment or family members. Ensure product contains the required metadata, including a VIRIN and a caption prior to uploading to DVIDS.

**Picture Story.** See photo series.

**Photo Series.** A series of at least 7, but no more than 12 photos that depict a military or military-related storyline or theme, including a military operation or contingency, or participation in a military exercise or other training event. *Coverage of the event must be preplanned and deliberate.* Photos of a cancer victim receiving treatment over the course of the contest year are acceptable. Photos depicting one particular aspect of a military operation or exercise, or the entire event are also acceptable. Key is that the coverage was planned with a specific communication objective. Controlled and uncontrolled action photos are acceptable. A picture story is considered a photo series.

**Portrait.** A picture of a person that identifies and captures the essence of that person's character and depicts his or her personality. Subject must have a connection to the military. Only one person may be portrayed prominently (as the main subject) in the photo. Official photos are not allowed.

**Sports Photo.** A picture depicting some form of physical activity or sport (football, martial arts, swimming, etc.). Subjects must have a connection to the military.

### C. Video Products

**B-roll.** Product must be of the same military or military-related theme, and must be the work of one individual in its entirety. Do not include reporter standups, narration or music bed. Natural sound is allowed and encouraged. An interview with a subject matter expert may be included; however, the interview may not be used in the sound bed throughout. Some of the footage may also be used in a multimedia product, video story or video series produced by the same individual. Upload to DVIDS as one file.

**Multimedia Product.** Illustrates the use of visual storytelling techniques across multiple digital mediums while telling a story. Must have a military tie. All forms of media are allowed: audio, video, photography, graphics, animation, or any other visual tool. *Product must use a minimum of four elements.* May be a feature, personality or news journalism piece. Product must be a single story produced and edited by one individual with at least 51 percent of the story's content created by that individual. Product may include dramatization if (1) the enhancement does not misrepresent the subject of the original, (2) it is clearly and readily apparent from the content that it is not intended to be an accurate representation of the actual event, and (3) the caption indicates the product contains dramatization. See Enclosure 10 of DoD Instruction 5040.02 for specific requirements. Entry will be judged by the quality of storytelling and creative use of combined mediums.

**Video Series.** A sequence of videos on a common military-related theme. Must be planned in advance with each video clearly identified as part of a series with either an anchor lead, or a consistent opening and closing. For example, this video is the first (second, third, or fourth) in a series of four videos about <topic>. Entrant must have contributed at least 51 percent of the footage with the remainder coming from any other non-copyrighted source. Entrant must have performed all the editing. Appropriate effects, fades or wipes are allowed. Natural sound, music and voice-over narration may be used.

**Video Story.** May be a feature, personality or news journalism piece. Lower-thirds and an opening title are acceptable. Must have a military tie. Entrant must have contributed at least 51 percent of the footage with the remainder coming from any other non-copyrighted source. Entrant must have performed all the editing. Appropriate effects, fades or wipes are allowed. Natural sound, music and voice-over narration may be used. Reporter stand-ups are allowed but not required.

**Video Spot.** Must be 60 seconds or less in duration. Must be the work of one individual in its entirety. Identify the target audience in the caption.

#### **D. Written Products**

Upload blog posts and stories to DVIDS as a news story with the same photos that were published with the original. Photos will not be judged. Include the URL at the bottom of the story to indicate where the blog post and story was originally published. The DVIDS version and original published version must be the same.

**Blog Post.** An article written using an informational or conversational style that conveys the writer's opinion. Ghost-written blogs are ineligible. Blog posts must be from an official military blog that has been registered as such as required in [DoD Instruction 8170.01](#), "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," dated January 2, 2019.

**Commentary.** A commentary is an article that conveys the writer's opinion on a topic as specified in DoDI 5120.04. Ghost-written commentaries are ineligible. Commentaries posted to an official military website are allowed as are commentaries published in a command newspaper, magazine or newsletter.

**Feature Story.** Feature story must have a focus that is maintained and supported throughout. Product may be a sports, human interest, personality or news feature.

**Information Story.** A story that conveys information while answering the five W's (who, what, where, when, why) and H (how). It can be written in different shapes and forms, including the Inverted Pyramid, Kabob/Wall Street Journal Style, Hour/Martini Glass, and Question and Answer. News and sports stories are allowed.

**Photojournalism.** Product includes a story and at least three, but no more than five photographs with embedded captions. Photos and story must be on the same topic, and must be the work of one individual.

## E. Other Terms

**Caption.** Used to identify the people or unit profiled in the product, and to describe what happened, and where and when it happened. The caption also explains why the event took place: the purpose of the event. It is added to the product's metadata prior to upload to DVIDS. Refer to the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) for specific information and Appendix C for examples.

**Closed caption (closed captioning).** Used to display the audio portion of a television program or video product as text on the screen for individuals who are deaf or partially deaf.



## Appendix C, Caption Examples

While editing metadata during upload to DVIDS, list the person who created the product in the credit field and ensure their name is included in the credit line.

### A. Graphic Caption



The 1st Marine Division Band held the Honor Our Fallen concert at the Marines' Memorial Theatre in San Francisco Oct. 4, 2018. The graphic depicts a Fallen Soldier Battle Cross, the San Francisco Fleet Week logo and text with information about the event. This graphic was designed Oct. 3, 2018 at I Marine Expeditionary Force CommStrat, Camp Pendleton, California, and intended for use by any U.S. Marine Corps units or installations. (U.S. Marine Corps graphic by Cpl. Rachel E. Conrad)

### B. Photo Caption



U.S. Air Force military working dog Ukkie jumps out of a patrol car during training at RAF Mildenhall, England, Nov. 6, 2018. Each day military working dog teams practice the six phases of aggression, including the field interview, pursuit of attach, search, escort and a standoff. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christine Groening)



### C. Video Caption



U.S. Soldiers with the 797th Engineer Company, Army Reserve, and members of the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands Department of Fire and Emergency Services build tents for homeowners after Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed their homes Nov. 13, 2018 on Saipan, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands. Teamwork and communication between the services and the CNMI Fire Department were instrumental in relief efforts after Yutu. (U.S. Air Force video by Staff Sgt. Bethany La Ville)