



UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS

4TH MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP
MARINE FORCES RESERVE
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IN REPLY REFER TO:

3000

G-3

12 MAY 2006

POLICY LETTER 5-06

From: Commanding General
To: Distribution List

Subj: 4TH MARINE LOGISTICS GROUP (MLG) COMMUNITY RELATIONS
(COMREL) GUIDANCE

Ref: (a) DoD Directive 5410.18 (Public Affairs (PA) Community
Relations Policy)
(b) SECNAVINST 5720.44A
(c) SECNAVINST 5370.2J (Standards of Conduct for Naval
Personnel)

Encl: (1) COMREL Guidelines for Event/Activity Support
(2) Individual Unit Commander's event checklist
(3) Example of Community Outreach Project Plan

1. Background. Upon the aftermath of two major tropical storms, 4th MLG has been provided a unique opportunity to support Marine Forces Reserve Community Relations (COMREL) efforts by maintaining positive relations between its individual commands, personnel, and the citizens of the surrounding communities by using its resources/capabilities to support recovery efforts. This guidance provides 4th MLG personnel participating in COMREL activities guidance with regard to propriety and execution of those efforts.

2. Discussion

a. Per reference (a), the bestowal of public trust and confidence in the Marine Corps as well as other services is tentative, critical and under constant review. As public trustees, the Marine Corps leadership has an obligation to enhance public understanding and support. A good community relations program will help meet this objective.

b. Many Marine Corps families live off-base and have the opportunity to make a lasting contribution to the image of the Marine Corps in their neighborhoods.

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c. The morale and esprit of Marines are influenced by regional attitudes of the civilian community towards their mission and presence in the region. In this vein, with morale a key factor in personnel readiness, a community relations program that improves public appreciation of the personal excellence of Navy and Marine Corps' personnel leads to enhanced command readiness.

d. An aggressive, goal-oriented community relations program builds relationships not only between the community and a base, but between local Marine Corps leadership and civic leaders in the community. Once these positive contacts are initiated, they can serve as avenues for problem solving when sensitive issues arise between the military and the local community.

3. Information

a. Community Relations Criteria. The wide dispersion of the 4th MLG and the great variety of local conditions and requirements dictate decentralized planning and execution of community relation activities. Per reference (c), all COMREL activities/events shall be consistent with the following:

(1) The interest of the Marine Corps and Department of Defense and the community as a whole are supported.

(2) The association of the Marine Corps and any other concerned military departments with the event is in the best interest of the Marine Corps.

(3) Support to the event does not interfere with the performance of official duties and does not impair operational training or other readiness requirements.

(4) Adequate and applicable resources are available, and the supporting Marine Corps units or organizations are able and willing to provide similar support to comparable events sponsored by similar non-federal entities to include city, state, and other local community groups.

(5) The support provided is funded through annual budget appropriations or other authorized sources and is in accordance with applicable statutes, executive orders (E.O.), reference (c), and other guidance.

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b. Public Affairs Messages. COMREL gives local area commanders a tangible means to communicate our public affairs messages through first-hand observation and face-to-face communication. By involving the community in a range of command-related activities, the public gains a better understanding of a ready and capable Marine Corps, its role in national defense, and as stewards of taxpayer resources. Key public affairs messages include:

(1) Every Marine a warrior. The Marines of MARFORRES are ready, willing and able to fight and win this nation's battles. Every Marine in this command is, first and foremost, a warrior. That is the enduring ethos of the Marine Corps and an important element of the story we seek to tell. Everyday, MARFORRES units and Marines are deployed around the globe supporting real world operations and exercises. Our fellow citizens have a right to expect that we stand ready to answer the nation's call in times of crisis as we have for more than two centuries.

(2) Marines are quality citizens. In large cities and small towns throughout this nation, MARFORRES Marines are daily examples of the highest standards of citizenship. They are local Scout leaders, church deacons, PTA presidents, volunteer firefighters, and neighbors. They serve as responsible members of the community they call home. Service in the Marine Corps, whether active or reserve, whether for three or thirty years, is an honorable calling. When individuals leave our ranks, they often go on to achieve notable success in a wide variety of endeavors. The dedication, commitment and integrity of the fine men and women who fill our ranks is a living testament to the value of Marine Corps service and to the extraordinary people who wear the eagle, globe and anchor.

(3) Marines support communities. MARFORRES Marines and Sailors provide support to our communities through uniformed participation in command-sponsored and supported programs and events. They volunteer their time and effort for numerous worthwhile charitable and youth programs, perform in Color Guard details at public patriotic events, and provide funeral honors to our fallen comrades. Most notably, each year we come together as a command during the traditional holiday season to conduct our most important community relations effort, the U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots program. Since 1947, Marines have helped millions of young people experience the joy of the holidays through the gift of a new toy.

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(4) Marines are cost effective. The Marine Corps has proven to be efficient and effective stewards of the Nation's tax dollars. We have established a long and proud tradition as a frugal organization, able to accomplish our diverse, worldwide mission in the most cost effective manner possible. To do more with less is implicit in the expeditionary nature of our forces. We have historically provided a proportionally larger share of the Department of Defense's operational forces than the resources we consume. Marine Forces Reserve will continue to lead the way in finding the most efficient business practices and extracting maximum benefit from the resources we have available to us.

4. Reports. Submit after action reports to the 4th MLG G-3, within 30 days of executing any community relations event/activity.

5. Contact Information. The point of contact for COMREL at this headquarters is AC/S G-1 at 504-678-4973.



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COMREL Guidelines for Event/Activity Support

1. General. When considering command-initiated community relations activities to include MSCA or reviewing an external request for participation in an event, commands must ensure that a determination of propriety is made prior to approval. Events that meet the guidelines of the references will be forwarded up the appropriate chain of command to 4th MLG G-3 for final approval. If there is any question as to the propriety of the event/activity or Marine Corps participation in the event/activity, the G-3 will staff the request to the Marine Forces Reserve (MFR) Staff Judge Advocate (SJA) and Public Affairs Office (PAO), who will be the final clearinghouse for 4th MLG participation.

a. Whether or not specifically mentioned in reference (a) or (d), all Marine Corps personnel will avoid involvement which might result in or create the appearance of:

- (1) Using a government position for private gain;
- (2) Treating any person preferentially;
- (3) Impairing government efficiency or economy;
- (4) Losing complete independence or impartiality;
- (5) Making a government decision outside official channels or;
- (6) Losing public confidence in the integrity of the government.

b. Additional guidance. The Marine Corps does not take part in programs/events that are:

- (1) Intended to appear to endorse, selectively benefit, or favor any private individual, special interest group, business, religion, ideology, commercial venture, political candidate or organization.
- (2) Commercially sponsored and intended to increase sales and business traffic.
- (3) Apparently intended to provoke controversy or public confrontation.

(4) An organization that specifically excludes any person from its membership for reasons of race, creed, color or national origin, unless the program conforms to an organization whose membership is based on sex or national origin only when the particular program is of community-wide interest and benefit, not for the primary benefit of the organization.

(5) Might constitute a restraint of trade in the regular employment of civilians in their art, trade or profession. And,

(6) Use of Marine Corps services, resources or facilities which are reasonably available from commercial sources and where such use would be in fact, or perceived to be unfair competition.

Individual Unit Commander's event checklist

1. The following checklist is provided for local area commander's to follow with regards to COMREL activities in support of Hurricane Katrina and Rita. This list may also apply to other COMREL activities, which may vary depending on the situation.

- _____ a. Seek out local community officials and coordinate a community relations event/activity.
- _____ b. Determine if event/activity meets the criteria in the guidance provided and the guidelines contained in enclosure (1).
- _____ c. Submit Community Outreach Project Plan (see enclosure (3)) to the 4th MLG G-3 who will staff the request through the appropriate chain of command, MFR PAO and SJA.
- _____ d. Upon approval from the 4th MLG G-3, begin execution of the COMREL event/activity.
- _____ e. If disapproved, the 4th MLG G-3 will respond to the requesting unit as to why the request was disapproved.
- _____ f. Submit appropriate after action reports as prescribed in this guidance.