

Marine Corps Visual Information & Excellence in Communication Awards Program SOP – 2021



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 2021 through 31 DEC 2021 (CY 2021).
- 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 2021 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 (i.e.: 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 Service (DVIDS) Awards Portal through the individual'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 (USMCCCA). 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 35 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: Editing, 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*
- * VIEC categories that route to DMA/DOD Awards

II. POINTS OF CONTACT

For information regarding entry requirements, unit leaders should send an email to HQMC_45XX_Proponent@usmc.mil or call (703) 614-1494. HQMC CD POCs are CWO5 Jonathan Knauth at jonathan.knauth@usmc.mil and MSgt Bryan Peterson at bryan.peterson@usmc.mil. DVIDS submission process

POC is MSgt Andrew Pendracki at Andrew.pendracki@usmc.mil or (703) 614-2445. 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 and must refer to the DMMA competition rules for entry information.
- 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. Per the DoD Media Awards SOP, "No single product may be entered more than once." True for DoD Media Awards, but not true for the VIEC Awards. Remember that DoD Media Awards categories are: Defense Communicator, MILGRAPH, MILPHOG, MILVID and MILWriter. As such if a Marine is being submitted for two (2) of the above, then all the products must be different. For the VIEC Awards program, individual products submitted in individual VIEC categories (e.g., Digital Art) can also be submitted in "of the Year" categories (e.g., MILGRAPH) as one of the submission requirements.
- F. 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.
- G. 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.
- 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. 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.
- K. All content must have been acquired/created, produced, uploaded to DVIDS and released to the public by 31 Dec 2021 (2359).

IV. MARINE CORPS-SPECIFIC MILESTONES

2021

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

2022

Feb 25	Unit Leaders Deadline to submit entries via DVIDS Awards Module (2359 EST)
March 1	VIEC judging begins by USMCCCA and HQMC CD
March 30	HQMC CD submits 1 st place VIEC winners to DMA for DoD-level competition *only applicable to the 9 DMA “of the Year” categories
April 29	VIEC Award winners announced via MARADMIN
Aug 26	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:

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 achievements endorsed by the unit COMMSTRAT Director and first O6-level commander.
- 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.
- Entire package must be saved and consolidated into one file (including enclosures), and must be scanned in sequence listed above. Enclosures must be identified and spoke to in write up, per Naval Correspondence Manual.

Entry requirements for COMMSTRAT Unit of the Year category

- Summary of action nomination letter will be no more than four pages. SOA must be signed by the unit COMMSTRAT Director and endorsed by the first O6-level or higher commander. The SOA letter must include 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).

 45XX OccFld Core Competencies	
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

- 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.
- Entire package must be saved and consolidated into one file (including enclosures), and must be scanned in sequence listed above. Enclosures must be identified and spoke to in write up, per Naval Correspondence Manual.

VI. VIEC Award Categories

VIEC categories are as follows and must be in accordance with DMA rules and SOP located on the bottom right side of this page: <https://www.dma.mil/Services/Defense-Media-Awards/>.

Category descriptions and requirements listed in Appendix B of DOD SOP.

Submission into these categories are through DVIDS Awards Portal.

Defense Communicator of the Year

(1) Marine Corps Communicator of the Year

Graphic Design Categories

- (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**
- (6) **Marine Corps Graphic Designer of the Year**

Photography Categories

- (1) **Photo Series** (*individual award*)
- (2) **News Photo** (*individual award*). News imagery should conform to elements of news including but not limited to; immediacy, proximity, prominence, oddity, conflict, suspense, emotion, and consequence.
- (3) **Feature Photo** (*individual award*)
- (4) **Portrait** (*individual award*)
- (5) **Sports Photography** (*individual award*)
- (6) **Civilian Photographer of the Year**
- (7) **Military Photographer of the Year**
- (* **Photojournalism** (*See requirements listed in Print Categories section below*))

Videography Categories

- (1) **Short-form Production Video** (*unit award*). Entry must be more than 3:00 minutes but less than 10:00 minutes. DVIAN is required for unit entry. All contributors should be listed in the Credit and Caption Line for unit entry. One submission per unit. Category found under Submit Products>Team.
- (2) **Long-form Production Video** (*unit award*). Entry must be more than 10:00 minutes. DVIAN is required for unit entry. All contributors should be listed in the Credit and Caption Line for unit entry. One submission per unit. Category found under Submit Products>Team.
- (3) **B-roll Videography** (*individual award*)
- (4) **Multimedia Product** (*individual award*). Note: Video intro and outro graphics or lower thirds do not count as animation for this category.
- (5) **Video Story** (*individual award*)
- (6) **Video Spot** (*individual award*)
- (7) **Editing** (*individual award*) The Editing category is designed to recognize the talents and achievements of the entrant in editing a clip depicting any aspect of the military mission. Post-production techniques such as narration, interviews, music, dissolves, wipes, split screens, slow motion, color grading, and computer graphic displays are encouraged in this category. Footage used for this clip may or may not be the work of the individual submitting the entry. Up to 100% of the entry may be military-generated archival stock footage. Up to 30 seconds of the clip may be non-military historical/archival stock footage, if critical to the story. At least 75% of the footage must have been edited by the entrant. Natural sound, music, interviews with identified participant for voice-over, and narration may be used. Music videos are allowed. There will be no reporter stand-ups. Entry must not exceed 4 minutes.
- (8) **Marine Corps Civilian Videographer of the Year**
- (9) **Marine Corps Videographer of the Year**

Print Categories

- (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. Communication Plan must outline and describe the Research, Plan, Implementation, and Evaluation (RPIE) 519process. 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, etc.); 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**

(6) **Marine Corps Writer of the Year**

END OF MARINE CORPS SPECIFIC SOP / OPEN & READ DOD SOP FOR CATEGORY SPECIFICS
