

# Defense Media Merit Awards

## Nomination Guide for Calendar Year 2016

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The Defense Media Merit Awards and the guidance contained in this document accomplishes four primary goals: (1) Provides a competitive pathway for government civilian employees assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces to submit their individual work and team-produced products for judging as potential entries into the DoD-level Defense Media Awards; (2) provides instructions for Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity (DMA) to compete so that their winning entries may be sent to the Air Force and Army competitions, respectively; (3) clarifies that U.S. Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps personnel assigned to DMA and all service members assigned to DoD field activities, defense agencies, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces must submit their work directly to their respective Service competitions; and (4) provides instructions for a number of unique categories created exclusively for special recognition in this contest.

Program administered by:

**Defense Media Activity**  
6700 Taylor Ave  
Fort George G. Meade, MD 20755

# Defense Media Merit Awards

## Nomination Guidance for Calendar Year 2016

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## **I. ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM**

- A. The Defense Media Merit Awards program recognizes excellence among broadcasters, graphic artists, journalists, photographers, public affairs practitioners, mass communication specialists and videographers assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces. 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. The Defense Media Merit Awards program provides a competitive pathway for government civilian employees assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces to submit their individual work and team-produced products for judging as potential entries into the DoD-level Defense Media Awards.

## **II. POINT OF CONTACT**

For information regarding entry requirements, email Navy Chief Petty Officer Jeremy Wood at [Jeremy.L.Wood.mil@mail.mil](mailto:Jeremy.L.Wood.mil@mail.mil) or call (301) 222-6241.

### III. MILESTONES

#### 2016

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

#### 2017

Jan. 10         Judges selected

Jan. 27         Deadline for Airmen assigned to the Defense Media Activity to submit individual work products

Jan. 30- Feb. 3   Airmen entries judged (Deadline to enter the Air Force competition: Feb. 10)

Feb. 10         Deadline for Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity to submit individual work products

Feb. 13-17       Soldier entries judged (Deadline to enter the Army competition: Feb. 24)

March 6         Deadline for the following products to enter the Defense Media Merit Awards:

- Individual work of government civilian employees assigned to defense agencies; DoD field activities, including the Defense Media Activity; combatant commands; and Joint Task Forces.
- Unit products created by teams assigned to defense agencies; DoD field activities, including the Defense Media Activity; combatant commands; and Joint Task Forces; and state-level unit productions created by National Guard Joint Force Headquarters staff members.
- Award categories exclusive to the Defense Media Merit Awards.

March 13-17     Entries judged  
March 13: Graphic Arts  
March 14: Photo  
March 15: Video  
March 16: Print  
March 17: Audio categories exclusive to Defense Media Merit Awards

April 5         Defense Media Merit Awards winners announced; winners entered into Defense Media Awards competition.

April 17-21      Defense Media Awards judging  
April 28         Defense Media Awards winners announced

June 1         Conduct after-action review

June 8         Submit after-action review report to Service representatives, conduct brief with Defense Media Awards committee

## IV. ELIGIBILITY

- A. The competition is open to civilian employees assigned to the defense agencies, DoD field activities (including the Defense Media Activity), combatant commands and Joint Task Forces with the photographer, journalist, photojournalist, videographer, broadcaster, graphic artist, communication, public affairs or equivalent occupation series.
- B. Unit products created by teams assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities (including the Defense Media Activity), combatant commands and Joint Task Forces also enter the competition. Team members must have the photographer, journalist, photojournalist, videographer, broadcaster, graphic artist, mass communication specialist, public affairs specialist or equivalent occupation specialty. Team-produced products compete in the unit award categories. Products may be the work of teams comprised of civilian employees and military members with contributions by contract employees. However, products must not have been created as part of a contract or by a team comprised exclusively of contract employees. Contractors' contribution to a team product must be less than 50 percent of the total submission.
- C. State-level unit productions created by National Guard Joint Force Headquarters staff members are also eligible. Products compete in the unit award categories. Products may be the work of teams comprised of civilian employees and military members with contributions by contract employees. However, products must not have been created as part of a contract or by a team comprised exclusively of contract employees. Contractors' contribution to a team product must be less than 50 percent of the total submission.
- D. The individual work of Airmen assigned to the Defense Media Activity with the photojournalist, broadcaster or equivalent occupational specialty also enters this competition. First-, second- and third-place winners will be entered into the Air Force Media Contest. However, only the top of-the-year category winners will be entered into the Air Force Media Contest. Team products produced by the Air Force production division will enter the Defense Media Merit Awards to compete against entries from the defense agencies, other DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces.
- E. The individual work of Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity with the photographer, journalist, videographer, broadcaster, graphic artist, public affairs specialist or equivalent occupational specialty also enter this competition. First-, second- and third-place winners will be entered into the Army's media contest. However, only the top of-the-year category winners will be entered into the Army contest. Team products produced by the Army production division will enter the Defense Media Merit Awards to compete against entries from the defense agencies, other DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces.
- F. U.S. Coast Guard, Navy and Marine Corps personnel assigned to the Defense Media Activity will submit their work to their respective Service competition. Unit products

created by the Navy and Marine Corps productions divisions enter the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. See Section IV, paragraph B.

- G. Military members, civilian employees and teams assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities (including the Defense Media Activity), combatant commands and Joint Task Forces may submit entries to the categories exclusive to the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. (See Section XIV.) Winners of these categories will NOT be forwarded to the Defense Media Awards as these categories are not available in that competition.
- H. Active-duty and Reserve military members assigned to combatant commands, defense agencies and DoD field activities (except for active-duty Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity) will enter their individual work to their respective Service competition.
- I. Army and Air National Guard members assigned to combatant commands, defense agencies and DoD field activities will enter their individual work products through the National Guard Bureau.
- J. Members who leave the Armed Forces during the year may compete as long as the material submitted was completed in its entirety while on active duty, in a Reserve or National Guard status, or during DoD civilian employment.
- K. Personnel assigned to the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Civil Air Patrol are prohibited from competing unless they meet the eligibility criteria stated above.
- L. Military, civilian and contract personnel assigned to Stars and Stripes newspapers are not eligible to participate. All non-appropriated fund productions and personnel are also ineligible.
- M. Government contractor employees are not authorized to compete in any individual category. Products produced with the assistance of government contractor employees are eligible for unit categories. However, contractor employees will not be recognized individually and must contribute less than 50 percent of the total submission.

## V. ENTRY CRITERIA

- A. All entries 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 that command's information and/or mission needs and, therefore, must be authorized products approved for public release.
- B. Entries also must have been published, broadcasted or posted by one or more communication means available to the public between Jan. 1, 2016 and Dec. 31, 2016. The Defense Video and Imagery Distribution System (DVIDS) is one of those communication means.

- C. Units must ensure entries meet eligibility criteria and comply with DoD and Service issuances (publications entered in any print and social media categories must conform to DoDI 5120.04, “Department of Defense Newspapers, Magazines and Civilian Enterprise Publications”). The following products are not eligible for this program: civilian enterprise guides and directories, yearbooks, cruise books, and publications and productions funded by non-appropriated funds.
- D. Entries must reach DMA Headquarters by the deadlines established in Section III.
- E. Each defense agency, DoD field activity (except for the Defense Media Activity, see paragraphs F, G and H in this section), combatant command and Joint Task Force may enter no more than three entries per category listed in Sections XIII and XIV. Each entry must be from a different competitor. However, the of-the-year portfolio categories are limited to one nomination.
- F. Each Defense Media Activity (DMA) government civilian employee may submit one entry per individual category listed in Sections XIII and XIV. Each DMA service member, regardless of branch of Service, may submit one entry per individual category listed in Section XIV (categories exclusive to the Defense Media Merit Awards program). Division leaders will submit a list of their nominees, as stated in Section VII, by the deadline listed in Section III.
- G. Airmen and Soldiers assigned to DMA may submit one entry per individual category listed in their respective Service contest. Team products produced by the Air Force and Army production divisions will compete in the Defense Media Merit Awards competition against other entries from the defense agencies, other DoD field activities, combatant commands, Joint Task Forces and other productions division within the Defense Media Activity. Division leaders will submit a list of their nominees, as stated in Section VII, by the deadline listed in Section III
- H. Each division of the Military Service Production Directorate (Air Force production, Army production, Marine Corps production, Navy production); each division of the DoD Production Directorate (broadcast operations, content management, editorial, Pentagon operations, Riverside operations), each American Forces Network affiliate, each Regional Media Center, each forward center assigned to the Joint Operations Center Directorate, and the Defense Information School may submit one entry per unit category listed in Sections XIII and XIV. Leaders will submit a list of their nominees, as stated in Section VII, by the deadline listed in Section III
- I. The Defense Media Merit Awards program is one of six competitions eligible to submit entries to the Defense Media Awards. The Defense Media Merit Awards competition may submit no more than three entries per category with each entry from a different competitor. However, the of-the-year portfolio categories are limited to one nomination from the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. Categories created exclusively for

Defense Media Merit Awards competition will not be forwarded to the Defense Media Awards competition.

- J. No single product may be entered in more than one category except when entered as part of an “of-the-year” portfolio or listed on the products sheets for the Outstanding Communication Plan entry. In addition, individual components (graphics, photos, video, etc.) of a multimedia piece, picture story, or video or photojournalism entry may not be entered into other categories as these items were created for the overall product, not for individual use.
- K. The Communicator of the Year category is open to civilian personnel as long as they meet eligibility criteria listed in Section IV, paragraph A. Individuals who elect to compete in the Communicator of the Year category may not simultaneously enter the graphic artist, journalist, photographer or videographer of-the-year categories during the same competition year. Since military members assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces must compete in their Service competition, entries from military members for this category in the Defense Media Merit Award competition will be rejected. The only exceptions are Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity who will compete for selection to enter the Air Force Media Contest and the Army media contest, respectively.
- L. Individuals who choose not to compete in the Communicator of the Year category may enter more than one of the following categories: graphic artist, journalist, photographer or videographer of the year.
- M. All still and motion imagery (photos and videos), graphic and audio productions will contain embedded captions and other required metadata, and will be assigned a Visual Information Record Identification Number (VIRIN) as instructed in the DoD Captioning Style Guide and DoDI 5040.02 Change 1.
- N. All entries must comply with federal law and DoD policy. For a complete list, 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 category requirements listed in Section XIII, Section XIV or that fail to follow federal law or established DoD policy will be disqualified.
- C. Challenges in judging will be decided by the Defense Media Activity director or the director’s designee.



- D. DVIDS upload requirements enforce as much objective criteria as possible and will prohibit the submitter from a successful upload if errors are found using automation checks. Entries uploaded using other methods will be disqualified without prior exemption coordination, due to possible technical limitations.
- E. The chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board and appointed committee members reserve final discretion on eligibility.

## **VII. HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES**

- A. Entry to the Defense Media Merit Awards will be accomplished through DVIDS. Specific upload instructions will be provided one month prior to judging.
- B. Defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces will ensure submissions meet quality standards prior to entry. A letter listing individual and unit submissions will be sent by the entry deadline to the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards. This letter will contain the following information:
  - 1. Individual Awards: First name, middle initial, last name, rank; product title; VIRINs for graphic, photo and video entries; and PDF names and URLs, if applicable, for print entries. For of-the-year submissions, list the product titles, and the VIRINs and PDF names, as applicable, for all elements of the portfolio. List the URL for the blog post entry.
  - 2. Unit Awards: Unit or organization name, and the first name, middle initial and last names of the primary and significant contributors. Also list the product title, VIRINs for video entries; PDF names and URLs, if applicable, for print entries; and the URL for the digital publication entry.
- C. Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity will use DVIDS to enter the contests set aside exclusively for them. Leaders will ensure these individual submissions meet quality standards prior to entry. They will also send a letter listing their submissions to the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board by the entry deadlines listed in Section III. The letter will contain information listed in paragraph B.1. of this section.
- D. National Guard Joint Force Headquarters staffs submitting state-level unit productions will ensure submissions meet quality standards prior to entry. A letter listing unit submissions will be sent to the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board by entry deadline. This letter will contain the information listed in paragraph B.2. of this section.

## **VIII. DESCRIPTION OF AWARD CATEGORY TYPES**

Each award category is marked as either an individual or as a unit entry.

- A. Individual awards are for products created by a single person. Photos or graphics must not contain signatures, logos or markings of any kind on the image.
- B. Unit awards are for products created as a result of a team effort with primary and significant contributors.

## **IX. AWARDS**

- A. Awards will be given in 5 graphic arts, 9 print, 9 photo and 10 video categories and one Communicator of the Year category listed in Section XIII. Awards will also be given categories exclusive to the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. First-, second- and third-place awards will be given for all categories except for the of-the-year categories. Only one person will receive an award in each of-the-year category. No award will be made if the judges deem that no one entry meets program standards.
- B. Individual Awards.
  - 1. First-place individual award winners will receive certificates and plaques.
  - 2. Second- and third-place individual award winners will receive certificates.
  - 3. No honorable mentions will be awarded.
- C. Unit Awards.
  - 1. First-place unit award winners will receive a plaque for the office of primary responsibility. Primary and significant contributors will each receive certificates.
  - 2. Second- and third-place unit award winners will receive certificates: one to the unit and one each to the primary and significant contributors.
  - 3. No honorable mentions will be awarded.
- D. Plaques and certificates will be conveyed to the defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands, Joint Task Forces and National Guard Bureau for presentation to the winners.

## **X. NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS**

- A. The defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces who submitted entries to the Defense Media Merit Awards competition will be notified of the winners and will be responsible for notifying the winners' chains of command. The National Guard Bureau will also be notified so they may notify the winners' chains of command.

- B. Winning entries will be announced via the Defense Media Activity website at [www.dma.mil](http://www.dma.mil) after entries have been submitted to the Defense Media Awards program. All entries remain the property of the Department of Defense.

## **XI. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW / MEDIA AWARDS GOVERNANCE**

The Defense Media Activity will host a Defense Media Awards Governance Committee meeting June 8, 2017, with the Services' appointed voting members and National Guard Bureau advisers to review and update competition guidance for the 2017 award cycle. The chair for the Defense Media Merit Awards board will provide feedback in a non-voting capacity.

## **XII. JUDGING GUIDANCE**

- A. Judging will occur March 13-17, 2017, except for the judging panels set aside for Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity, which take place in February. See Section III for a schedule.
- B. Judges will be assigned and coordinated by the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board. The chair will ensure judges provide feedback for each entry and will share this feedback with entrants.
- C. The defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces who submitted entries will be notified of the winners and will be responsible for notifying the winners' chain of command. The National Guard Bureau will also be informed so it may, in turn, notify its Joint Force Headquarters staff members who entered the contest.
- D. A panel of three judges will be selected for each medium (graphic arts, photography, video, print and audio) submitted to the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. Selection criteria for judges will be based on their professional experience in the communication and visual information fields. The primary lead for each panel will not be a Defense Media Activity staff member.
- E. Separate judging panels for products created by Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity will be convened by a representative from the Air Force and Army elements within the Defense Media Activity. Airmen and Soldiers should refer to their respective Service media contest rules for entry criteria.
  - 1. There will be one three-person judging panel for Air Force entries and one three-person judging panel for Army entries. Each judging panel will be comprised of volunteers from media community professionals, military and civilian. DMA staff may participate on the panels as advisors, subject matter experts and judges. Judging may be conducted virtually or hosted within Defense Media Activity.

2. Winning entries from the Air Force panel will be sent to the Air Force Media Contest. Winning entries from the Army panel will be sent to the Army media contest.
  3. A memorandum listing the winners of the Air Force and Army panels will be sent from the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board to the respective Service contest point of contact.
  4. Specific criteria set by the Services will be followed.
- F. All entries will be judged on professional excellence, originality, storytelling ability and creativity. The judges' discretionary comments and feedback will be provided to the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board after the competition, who will forward them to the entrant's command.

### **XIII. DEFENSE MEDIA MERIT AWARDS CATEGORIES**

#### **A. General Information.**

1. The categories listed are the same as those in the Defense Media Awards competition. Categories in this section are open to individual work created by civilian employees assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces. Unit products created by National Guard Joint Headquarters Staff members, the defense agencies, DoD field activities, combatant commands and Joint Task Forces are also eligible.
2. Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity will compete in panels set aside exclusively for them for selection to the Air Force and Army competitions, respectively, and should refer to their Service instructions for a list of categories.
3. Civilian employees assigned to the Defense Media Activity, including those who work in the Air Force, Army, Navy, Marine Corps and DoD production divisions, also compete in these categories. They are ineligible to compete in the Service competitions because they are DoD civilian employees; they are not Department of the Air Force, Army, Navy or Marine Corps civilian employees.

**B. Graphic Arts Categories.** Products will contain embedded captions and other required metadata as specified in Section V. In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be authorized products approved for public release as explained in Section V. Those who do not follow these requirements will be disqualified.

1. Digital Art. This category includes original artwork created entirely by digital means. Examples of artwork accepted in this category are digital paintings, vector art, and 3D renderings. Still photographs enhanced by digital means are allowed; however, animation is not. Submit entry as a high-resolution JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: GIDA.
2. Identity Design. This category includes original artwork 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. An entry entered into the Digital Art category cannot be entered into this category. Note: All unit crests must have been approved by the appropriate office of heraldry prior to entry. Submit entry as a high-resolution JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: GIID.
3. Layout and Design. This category includes a single-page or double-truck layout created using elements from various sources. All layout and design work must be completed by the entrant, but elements can come from other sources. Examples include interactive PDFs, info charts and info graphics, fliers, certificates, CD covers, cover art and posters. An entry created and entered as a Digital Art entry cannot be entered in this category, such as adding elements to a Digital Art entry

and submitting it as a Layout and Design entry. Using a Digital Art entry as part of the layout is also not permitted. Submit entry as a high-resolution JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: GILD.

4. Military Graphic Artist of the Year\*. Candidates must submit a portfolio containing no less than six and no more than eight entries with at least one entry from the Digital Art category and one from the Layout and Design category. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an optical character recognition (OCR) scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: MGY.

*\*This category is for the exclusive use of Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity. Refer to the Air Force Media Contest and Army media contest rules for more details. Other service members refer to Section IV, paragraphs F, H and I for entry information.*

5. Civilian Graphic Artist of the Year. Candidates must submit a portfolio containing no less than six and no more than eight entries with at least one entry from the Digital Art category and one from the Layout and Design category. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: CGY.

- C. **Photography Categories**. All products will contain embedded captions and other required metadata as specified in Section V. In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be authorized products approved for release as stated in Section V. Those that do not follow these requirements will be disqualified.

1. Operational Documentation. Entries will depict the U.S. military's participation in a joint or service operation or contingency. Photo will depict real-world operations to include combat operations, disaster relief, and any contingency event not related to training, exercise or simulation. Submit as a JPEG file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIOD.

2. Training Documentation. Entries will depict the U.S. military's participation in a joint or service exercise or other training event. Submit as a JPEG file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PITD.

3. Picture Story. A series of pictures that reveal a storyline or single theme. A composite picture story layout is not required. Submit at least seven but no more than 12 photos. Submit as JPEG files. VIRINs must be sequentially adjusted, using the series field to attribute the proper and intended order.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIPS.

4. News Photo. Scheduled or unscheduled military news event featuring a military organization, employees, equipment or family members. Submit as a JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PINP.
5. 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, employees, equipment or family members. Submit as JPEG.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIFP.
6. Portrait. A picture of a person that identifies and captures the essence of that person's character and depicts his or her personality. Official photos are not allowed. Submit entry as a JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIPO.
7. Pictorial. A photograph that enhances the visual qualities of the subject with primary emphasis on composition and aesthetics. Expresses beauty, tension, harmony, chaos and other abstract concepts through composition, and tonal and color relationships more than through human interaction and features a military organization, employees, equipment or family members. Silhouettes, sunsets or photographs of military hardware are permitted in this category. Submit as a JPEG file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIPI.
8. Military Photographer of the Year\*. Candidates must submit a portfolio consisting of at least eight, but no more than 10 entries, with at least one from one of the two documentation categories, one picture story, one news photo, one feature photo and one portrait. Portfolio may NOT include pictorial, photojournalism or multimedia story entries, and will include only one picture story. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office. Submit photos as JPEG files.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: MPY.  
*\*This category is for the exclusive use of Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity. Refer to the Air Force Media Contest and Army media contest rules for more details. Other service members refer to Section IV, paragraphs F, H and I for entry information.*
9. Civilian Photographer of the Year. Candidates must submit a portfolio consisting of at least eight, but no more than 10 entries, with at least one from one of the two documentation categories, one picture story, one news photo, one feature photo and one portrait. Portfolio may NOT include pictorial, photojournalism or multimedia story entries, and will include only one picture story. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo,

submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office. Submit photos as JPEG files.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: CPY.

D. **Video Categories.** All products will contain required metadata as specified in Section V. Slates are not required. In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be approved for release as stated in Section V. Those that do not follow these requirements will be disqualified.

1. Short-form Production. A self-contained video package conveying military information using process components such as script, talent, pre-production, production and post-production. Sound, music, narration and interviews with identified participants for voice-over may be used. Appropriate effects, graphics, fades or wipes are allowed. Production, in its entirety, must be 5 minutes or less in duration. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.  
Award Type: Unit. Category Code: VUSP.
2. Long-form Production. A self-contained video package conveying military information using process components such as script, talent, pre-production, production and post-production. Sound, music, narration and interviews with identified participants for voice-over may be used. Appropriate effects, graphics, fades or wipes are allowed. Production entries must be greater than 5 minutes in duration. Enter productions 15 minutes or less in duration in their entirety. Productions greater than 15 minutes must be telescoped down to 15 minutes for judging purposes with a link provided to the entire production. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.  
Award Type: Unit. Category Code: VULP.
3. Operational Documentation. A product that depicts the U.S. military's participation in a joint or service operation or contingency composed primarily of uncontrolled activities. Natural sound and interviews with identified participant for voice-over may be used. Appropriate effects, fades or wipes are allowed. Reporter standups are not allowed. Entry must not exceed 5 minutes. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VIOD.
4. Training Documentation. A story composed primarily of uncontrolled activities depicting the U.S. military's participation in a joint or service exercise, or other training event. Natural sound and interviews with identified participant for voice-over may be used. Appropriate effects, fades or wipes are allowed. Reporter standups are not allowed. Entry must not exceed 5 minutes. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VITD
5. Multimedia Story. Entry must illustrate the use of visual storytelling techniques across multiple digital mediums while telling a story. All forms of media are



allowed: audio, video, photography, graphics, animation, design or any other visual tool. Entry may be a narrative feature, personality or news journalism piece. Entry may not include dramatization. An entry is defined as a single story produced and edited by one individual with at least 51 percent of the story's content created by the producer. Entry must not exceed 5 minutes. Entry will be judged by the quality of storytelling and creative use of the medium. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VIMS.

6. Video Feature Story. A storytelling video not news related, usually a situation that has strong human interest or a fresh view of a commonplace occurrence. Story 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 standups are allowed but not required. Entry must not exceed 5 minutes. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VIFS.

7. Video Spot. Entries must be one spot 60 seconds or less in length. The target audience must be identified. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VISP.

8. Video Series. Entry must include two, but no more than four, video stories supporting a common theme. The entry must be clearly identified as part of a series with either an anchor lead, or a consistent opening and closing. 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. Each story in the series must not exceed 5 minutes. Reporter standups are allowed but not required. Submit entries as an MPEG-4 or H.264 file.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: VISR.

9. Military Videographer of the Year\*. Candidates must submit three video products: one from one of the two video documentation categories, one from the video feature story category and one from either of the multimedia, video spot or video series categories. Only one video of a video series is required. Entry in its entirety may not exceed 15 minutes. Judges are briefed on the descriptions of the categories. Failure to properly categorize the videos will result in disqualification of the entire portfolio. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: MVY

*\*This category is for the exclusive use of Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity. Refer to the Air Force Media Contest and Army media contest rules for more details. Other service members refer to Section IV, paragraphs F, H and I for entry information.*

10. Civilian Videographer of the Year. Candidates must submit three video products: one from one of the two video documentation categories, one from the video feature story category and one from either the multimedia, video spot or video series categories. Only one video of a video series is required. Entry in its entirety may not exceed 15 minutes. Judges are briefed on the descriptions of the categories. Failure to properly categorize the videos will result in the judges disqualifying the entire entry. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: CVY.

- E. **Print and Digital Publication Categories.** All products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be approved for release. Those that do not follow these requirements will be disqualified.

1. Civilian Enterprise News Publication. Printed DoD publications (newspapers, newsletters and magazines) that support the command's information mission and are printed using the commercial-enterprise concept as stated in DoDI 5120.04. For the 2016 competition year, enter only one issue. Submit entry as a PDF and, if a digital version is also created, provide the URL. Printed and online versions must be the same. Advertisements may be included, but are not required.

Award Type: Unit. Category Code: PUCE.

2. Funded News Publication. Printed DoD publications (newspapers, newsletters and magazines) that support the command's information mission and printed using government-appropriated funds as stated in DoDI 5120.04. For the 2016 competition year, enter only one issue. Submit entry as a PDF and, if a digital version is also available, provide the URL. Printed and online versions must be the same.

Award Type: Unit. Category Code: PUFN.

3. Digital Publication. Entries will be judged as they exist the day of judging and must be an issue or edition such as a newsletter, magazine or newspaper designed for the Web. Electronic versions of printed publications are not eligible. This entry must display transmedia properties, such as hyperlinks, embedded video, 3-D imagery or slideshows, and built on HTML 5, iFrames or another mobile-enabled platform. Provide URL information on the nomination letter.

Award Type: Unit. Category Code: PUDP

4. Outstanding Communication Plan. This award recognizes an organization's ability to assist the command in achieving its goals through the use of a communication plan. Entry is comprised of a two-page information paper and a separate one-to-two page products sheet. Submit information paper and products sheet as one PDF.
  - a. Information paper must contain:
    - 1) An introduction describing the issue or problem the command is trying to solve, a potential problem the command wishes to avert or an opportunity the command wishes to leverage. Provide an explanation of how the issue, problem or potential problem affects the command's ability to achieve its goal or how the opportunity helps with goal achievement.
    - 2) Also include the types of research (primary and/or secondary) used to define or redefine the situation and the publics affected by the issue, problem or potential problem, or opportunity. Lastly, list when the plan was developed. If the plan was developed prior to the competition year, state so, but be sure to include what updates, if any, were made during the competition year and why.
    - 3) List the specific, measurable objective the plan is designed to achieve, and the overall strategy or strategies used to achieve it. Explain why the strategy or strategies were selected. If one of those strategies was a campaign run in coordination with other organizations, such as local broadcast stations or tenant organizations with their own PA office, list it and include an explanation as to why the campaign was chosen.
    - 4) List the communication tactics used and the specific audience each tactic was designed to reach. At least half of the communication tactics must have been implemented during the program year, though they may have started during the previous year.
    - 5) A paragraph summarizing the results. This paragraph may include outputs (numbers of products produced overall and number of website views); however, an explanation of the outcomes achieved, such as increased awareness of the unit's mission, must be included. To do so, an analysis of the specific, measurable objective and whether or not it was achieved is required. The analysis must include how the objective was measured and the evaluation methods used. For example, pre-plan and post-plan assessments. Lastly, explain how the plan helped the command resolve the issue or problem, avert a potential problem or leverage an opportunity.

b. Products sheet must:

- 1) List the communication products produced to support communication tactics, such as spots, news stories, and special programs. Be sure to provide hyperlinks to where the products may be found online.
- 2) Include at least two digital platforms with URLs and explain how the platforms accomplished communication objectives. The platforms may be the unit's official website or official social media sites.
- 3) Content for the digital platforms must be provided by DoD or Service PA practitioners with overall management of the sites and release authority residing within the Service or Defense Media Activity. The sites must conform to DoD, Defense Media Activity and Service information, security review, and web instructions and regulations. The sites must have been in existence for a minimum of three months during the program year and must be updated on a regular schedule, either daily or weekly. The sites will be judged as they exist on the day of judging. If the URLs are not working, judges reserve the right to disqualify the entry.

Award Type: Unit. Category Code: PUOC.

5. Feature Story. Feature story must have a focus that is maintained and supported throughout. Entry may be a sports, human interest, personality or news feature. Submit entry as a PDF and, if the story is posted online, submit the URL. PDF and online version must be the same.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIFS.

6. Commentary / Blog Post. Entry may be a commentary, which conveys the writer's opinion on a topic as specified in DoDI 5120.04, or a blog post, as long as it is written using an informational or conversational style and conveys the writer's opinion. Articles or blog posts written by commanders or those in a leadership position are ineligible. Blog posts must be from an official military registered as such as required in DoDI 8550.01, "DoD Internet Services and Internet-based Capabilities." Blog post will be judged as it exists on the day of judging. If the URL is not working, judges reserve the right to disqualify the entry. Commentaries posted to an official military website are also eligible as are commentaries published in a command newspaper, magazine or newsletter. Commentaries published as a printed product must be submitted as a PDF and, if posted online, provide the URL. PDF and online version must be identical.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIBC.

7. Photojournalism. Entries must include three to five photographs with embedded captions and a story. All elements will be judged. Photos and story must be on the same topic. No elements may be entered in any other category. Photos and story must be the work of one individual. Submit article as a PDF and photos as JPEG

files. If the entry is also posted online, provide the URL. PDF and online version must be the same.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: PIPJ.

8. Thomas Jefferson Military Journalist of the Year\*. Candidates must submit a portfolio consisting of five entries: one feature story, one photojournalism entry and three entries of the candidate's choice. Candidates must submit a certificate of authenticity from the responsible public affairs officer for articles published without a byline. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office. Submit articles and certificates of authenticity, if applicable, as PDFs and photos as JPEG files. If the articles are posted online, provide URLs where they may be found. PDF and online versions must be the same.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: MJY

*\*This category is for the exclusive use of Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity. Refer to the Air Force Media Contest and Army media contest rules for more details. Other service members refer to Section IV, paragraphs F, H and I for entry information.*

9. Thomas Jefferson Civilian Journalist of the Year. Candidates must submit a portfolio consisting of five entries: one feature story, one photojournalism entry and three entries of the candidate's choice. Candidates must submit a certificate of authenticity from the responsible public affairs officer for articles published without a byline. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office. Submit articles and certificates of authenticity, if applicable, as PDFs and photos as JPEG files. If the articles are posted online, provide URLs where they may be found. PDF and online versions must be the same.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: CJY

F. **Communicator of the Year Category**. Candidates must submit a portfolio consisting of seven products of the following media: graphic arts, photographs, published articles or videos.

1. Four products must support a common theme and consist of at least three different types of media. The remaining three products are at the candidate's discretion, consisting of at least two different types of media. Candidates do not have to enter examples of all four media types, but the portfolio must contain at least three different types of media demonstrating the candidate's ability to communicate using various media.

2. Candidates must submit a certificate of authenticity from the responsible public affairs officer if an article was published without a byline.
3. The Defense Communicator of the Year category is open to both military and civilian personnel as long as they meet the eligibility criteria. Note: Airmen and Soldiers assigned to the Defense Media Activity may compete in this category; winners will go on to compete in their respective Service competition. They will not compete against civilians entering the Defense Media Merit Awards competition. *Other service members refer to Section IV, paragraphs F, H and I for entry information.*
4. Individuals who elect to compete in the Defense Communicator of the Year category may not simultaneously enter the graphic artist, journalist, photographer or videographer of-the-year categories during the same competition year.
5. Candidates also must submit a one-page biography and a digital photograph with their portfolio, which will not be judged. The biography, submitted as an OCR scanned PDF, and the photo, submitted as a separate JPEG file, must be cleared by the local public affairs office. Submit articles and certificates of authenticity, if applicable, as PDFs and photos as JPEG files. Submit video files as MPEG-4 or H.264 files. If the products may also be found online, provide the URLs. PDF and online versions must be the same.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: DCY

## **XIV. CATEGORIES EXCLUSIVE TO THE DEFENSE MEDIA MERIT AWARDS PROGRAM**

The categories listed in this section are open to military and civilian personnel assigned to the Defense Media Activity, DoD agencies, DoD field activities and joint commands. Winners will not go on to compete at the Defense Media Awards.

**A. Audio Categories.** All products will contain embedded metadata within the file format. In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be authorized products approved for public release as explained in Section V. Audio entries will have the following format: audio slug, two seconds of silence and the entry. Those that do not follow these requirements will be disqualified. Media files will be in MP3 format, with a constant bit rate of at least 128 kbps. Metadata format will include ID3 tags.

1. Audio Entertainment Program. This category includes a telescoped entertainment program containing the disc jockey's voice and only those elements unique to the program. Pre-produced spots and non-local elements will be removed from the submission. Program submission must be part of scheduled segment.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: AIEP.
2. Audio Spot Production. This category includes an entry 60 seconds or less in length. The production must have been broadcast. A self-contained audio package conveying military information using components such as script, talent and production elements. Appropriate effects, sound, music and narration used to convey the message are allowed. Music and effects must have required broadcast usage rights to be included in production. A copy of the usage rights must be available when requested by the judges.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: AISP.
3. Audio Report Production. This category includes a production of five minutes or less. Story must be event/mission-oriented. A self-contained audio package conveying military information or depicting military operations. Natural sound and interviews with identified participants for voice-over may be used.  
Award Type: Individual. Category Code: AIRP.
4. Audio Newscast. This category includes a targeted audience. Audio package has two or more elements, excluding non-news and non-military sourced elements. Newscast packages will include story lead-ins/tags, title and name of contributors in a separate PDF document. Natural sound and interviews with identified participants for voice-over may be used.  
Award Type: Unit. Category Code: AIUN.

5. Audio Producer of the Year. A package including a body of work that showcases an entrant's audio-production skillset. Package must include a minimum of 5 products from at least two of the three individual audio categories, but must not exceed 15 minutes in total run-time.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: APY.

## **B. Graphic Arts Categories.**

1. Animation. Productions include various media components that allow for animation, such as video production elements, digital displays, web animations, infographics or hand-drawn elements. Productions must not use any copyrighted materials, such as movie clips and sound bites or music without broadcast rights. Any animation style is allowed, such as 2D, 2.5D, 3D or stop motion. Packages will be judged on the use of cleverness to convey information, entertainment value and evidence of animation skill. Animators cannot submit copyrighted rigs, props or characters. A PDF document must describe the use of animation for broadcast, video production or web element. Submissions must be in MOV or H.264 format with a maximum size of 1GB, include 4 seconds black, no slates or bars, at the beginning of the submission and 2 seconds of black at the end. Note: To be judged, entries must be submitted from three or more organizations, including those entities within DMA. For example, if entries are exclusively from one or two divisions within DMA, entries will not be judged and no award will be given in this category. Also note that animation created and used as a part of another entry, such as a video product or multimedia story, may not be entered. See paragraph J in Section V.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: GIAM.

2. Interactive Design. Includes communication products for digital platforms that require manipulation by the user to promote engagement with content. Products may have been created by an individual or a team; all will compete against one another. Products may include, but are not limited to web pages, web content, apps, digital ads, digital displays and kiosks. The title and basic credits of the project; the URL, application link or VIRIN for videos; project duration; list of team members (as applicable) and the communication goal the project supports must be listed in a separate memo from the organization's leader to the chair of the Defense Media Merit Awards board by the deadline listed in Section III. Submit entries using one of the following formats:

- a. Video: Submit as a MOV, MP4 or H.264 file; file may not exceed 1GB. Include 4 seconds of black, no slates or bars, at the beginning of the submission and 2 seconds of black at the end. The video must convey the look and feel of the interactive project only and be no longer than 5 minutes in duration. No campaign overviews, such as production launches, are allowed. Files will be submitted via DVIDS. See Section VII.



- b. Web-based entries: All web-based entries must be viewable in a common web browser and accessible via the internet from the date the entry is submitted through the judging period. If the entry is not publicly accessible, a video of the web demonstration is required. Web-based video demonstrations must be a direct link to the production and no longer than 5 minutes in duration. No splash page or campaign overviews are allowed.
- c. Downloadable apps: Only DoD registered and sanctioned applications marketed on Apple Store or Google Play are allowed. A direct application URL will be submitted to the awards chair for judging consideration. All other applications must be submitted as a demonstration video.

Note: To be judged, entries must be submitted from three or more organizations, including those entities within DMA. For example, if entries are exclusively from only one or two divisions within DMA, entries will not be judged and no award will be given in this category.

Award Type: Individual. Category Code: GIDD or  
Award Type: Unit. Category Code: GUDD

## 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 <http://www.copyright.gov>. HIPPA information may be found at <http://www.hhs.gov/regulations/index.html>.
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 DoD Instruction 5230.29, "Security and Policy Review of Information for Public Release." Any questions regarding public release should be directed to the local public affairs office.
4. Printed products must conform to DoD Instruction 5120.04, "DoD Newspapers, Magazines, Guides, and Installation Maps," and broadcast products must conform to DoDI 5120.20, "American Forces Radio and Television Service."
5. Graphics, photos and video products must conform to DoD Instruction 5040.02, "Visual Information" and be captioned with metadata in accordance with the DoD Captioning Style guide.