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POLICY LETTER 9-16

From: Commanding General, I Marine Expeditionary Force
To: Distribution List

Subj: POLICY CONCERNING CHANGE OF COMMAND AND RELIEF AND APPOINTMENT CEREMONIES

Ref: (a) MCO P5060.20
(b) MCO P1020.34G Ch 1-5

1. Purpose. To establish policy for I Marine Expeditionary Force (I MEF) conduct of Change of Command and Relief and Appointment ceremonies.

2. Information. Per reference (a), ceremonies are important events that are part of our cherished military heritage. These ceremonies serve to reinforce the unique responsibilities inherent in command, and the significance of the Commander and his/her Senior Enlisted Advisor. Unfortunately, the intended impact of these important events can be lost due to their excessive lengths and undesirable weather conditions.

a. Commander's Intent. As most of our ceremonies occur during the summer months, the extended length of the ceremonies combined with the hot and humid weather may place at risk our Marines, Sailors, and guests. Limiting the duration of a ceremony by taking into consideration adverse weather conditions will ensure the welfare of our Marines, Sailors, and guests are preserved. As such, Commanders shall comply with the following:

(1) Planning Factors

(a) Duration. Ceremonies are to be planned to last no longer than one hour. Commanders have the authority to tailor ceremonies to comply with this time limit while preserving the dignity associated with these symbolic events.

(b) Risk Assessment. Ensure Operational Risk Management (ORM) is applied constantly and mitigated throughout.

1. Scheduling. Ensure to make every effort to de-conflict ceremonies with chain of command (up to MEF level) especially during the peak Permanent Change of Station (PCS) season in order to ensure multiple ceremonies do not overlap or occur on the same day.

2. Weather. Ensure weather conditions are a major planning factor in all ceremonies. Commanders should make every effort to arrange the conduct of ceremonies when weather conditions are most favorable (early morning/early evening).

3. Location. Ensure ceremonies are not conducted outdoors between the hours of 1100-1700 during the months of June through the first of September. Inclement weather considerations/planning are paramount in planning and execution deliberations when less than desirable/prohibitive conditions are present or projected.

4. Uniform. Tailor the designated uniform and gear list based on the weather conditions.

(2) Concept of Operations. In addition to duration and ORM considerations, the following expectations should also be adhered to:

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(a) Reviewing Officers (RO) for all ceremonies will be the next senior Commander of the outgoing Commander (i.e., CG, I MEB is CG, I MEF). The requirement for a RO to participate in the ceremony is at RO discretion. If RO is a general officer, honors will be given unless otherwise deferred (i.e., Breaking of Flag, Ruffles and Flourishes etc...)

(b) ROs for Sergeant Major (SgtMaj) Relief and Appointment ceremonies will be the respective unit's commander.

(c) Speakers should be limited to a maximum of three (i.e., RO, Incoming/Outgoing CO's/SgtsMaj). ROs and outgoing Commanders/SgtsMaj will deliver their comments in a five to seven minute time period. Incoming Commander's/SgtMaj's remarks shall not exceed the length of the outgoing Commander/SgtMaj.

(d) The only personnel authorized to be forward of the Reviewing Area are the parade participants (i.e., RO, Commander of Troops, Band, etc…)

(e) If the spouse of the Marine being recognized is on active duty (and not in a leave status), then the ceremony uniform or seasonal uniform of the day should be worn as implied in paragraph 1005.2c of reference (b). The uniform represents visual evidence of the authority and responsibility vested in the individual by the United States Government and wearing it should be a matter of personal pride.

(f) Recognitions

1. Personal awards may be presented during these ceremonies.

2. Spouse/family recognitions (i.e., Certificates of Appreciation) will not be presented during Change of Command/Relief and Appointment ceremonies, unless held in conjunction with a Retirement Ceremony.

b. Exceptions to Policy. Major Subordinate Command/Major Subordinate Element commanders who desire to deviate from this policy are required to submit a written request to the Commanding General, I MEF. The request must include rationale for the deviation, and detail planned mitigation measures to safeguard our Marines, Sailors, and guests.

3. Scope. While this policy applies specifically to Change of Command and Relief and Appointment ceremonies, the spirit and intent is applicable to retirements, memorial services, and other similar events conducted during adverse weather conditions.

4. Certification. This Policy Letter is effective the date signed, and is applicable to all I MEF commands, to include those units assigned under the operational control of I MEF.

LEWIS A. CRAPAROTTA

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