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PUBLIC AFFAIRS

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MEMORANDUM FOR SECRETARIES OF THE MILITARY DEPARTMENTS
CHAIRMAN OF THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
UNDER SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
DEPUTY CHIEF MANAGEMENT OFFICER
COMMANDERS OF THE COMBATANT COMMANDS
ASSISTANT SECRETARIES OF DEFENSE
GENERAL COUNSEL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, OPERATIONAL TEST AND EVALUATION
DIRECTOR, COST ASSESSMENT AND PROGRAM EVALUATION
INSPECTOR GENERAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE
ASSISTANTS TO THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
DIRECTOR, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
DIRECTOR, NET ASSESSMENT
DIRECTORS OF THE DEFENSE AGENCIES
DIRECTORS OF THE DOD FIELD ACTIVITIES

SUBJECT: Guidance for Use of Visual Information Captured by Department of Defense
Personnel on Personal Equipment

- References: (a) Department of Defense Directive 5230.09, "Clearance of DoD Information for Public Release," August 22, 2008
(b) Department of Defense Instruction 5040.02, "Visual Information (VI)," July 8, 2016
(c) Department of Defense Instruction 5230.29, "Security and Policy Review of DoD Information for Public Release," August 13, 2014
(d) Department of Defense Instruction 8550.01, "DoD Internet Services and Internet-Based Capabilities," September 11, 2012
(e) ALDODACT message 11/06, "Information Security/Website Alert," DTG 090426Z AUG 06

This memo is intended to address the security risks associated with the public release of mission-related Visual Information (VI) captured by Department of Defense (DoD) personnel and my office's efforts to update the current VI policy to mitigate that risk.

Providing timely and noteworthy VI is an important component of our Public Affairs mission to keep the American people informed on the activities of our personnel at home and abroad. Video is also a key tool in our training. To that end, the Department currently produces a significant amount of video material for public distribution and internal use. We will continue to encourage the dissemination of videotaped DoD activities to the public, after appropriate review.

There have been recent instances, however, in which Service members deployed in a combat theater have captured mission-related VI, most notably video, on personal electronic



devices and subsequently distributed that VI outside of the Department to media outlets and production companies or posted on social media without undergoing a proper security review. The release of mission-related VI without a proper review could potentially compromise military operations and sensitive information, and could jeopardize the safety and security of our Service members and other individuals. Security review can reduce the risk to our personnel, information, and national security. As a result, in consultation with relevant stakeholders, my office is working to update DoD policy to clarify security review responsibilities for the public release of mission-related VI captured by DoD personnel. We anticipate this review will include the standards outlined in the references.

During this process, commanders at all levels should work to ensure that DoD personnel do not provide media outlets or other public forums, including social media, with any mission-related VI that has not been approved for release at a level deemed appropriate by the commander. We realize that commanders may, in certain circumstances, authorize their personnel to use personal equipment, such as helmet cameras, to capture VI during a mission for the limited purpose of enhancing after-action review and informal training for unit members. However, DoD personnel should obtain a security review and approval at the appropriate command level prior to releasing outside the Department any mission-related VI depicting military persons, places or material.

For additional information, please contact Mr. David Evans at 703-697-6005 or via email at: david.e.evans47.civ@mail.mil.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Peter C. Cook". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "P" and "C".

Peter C. Cook

Attachments:
None