



DoD Media Awards

Nomination Guidance for Calendar Year 2024

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DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY
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October 17, 2024

MEMORANDUM FOR CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF THE ARMY
NAVY CHIEF OF INFORMATION, U.S. NAVY OFFICE OF
INFORMATION
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATION, HEADQUARTERS MARINE
CORPS
DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, DEPARTMENT OF THE AIR
FORCE
CHIEF OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS, U.S. COAST GUARD
DEFENSE AGENCY AND DOD FIELD ACTIVITY DIRECTORS

SUBJECT: Request for Nominations to the 2024 DoD Media Awards Competition

This memorandum is the call for nominations to the 2024 DoD Media Awards competition. Attached is the DoD-level awards program guidance designed by your designated public affairs and visual information representatives.

There are no significant changes to this year's nomination criteria. The number of categories remains at nine: Defense Communicator of the Year, Civilian and Military Graphic Designer of the Year, Civilian and Military Videographer of the Year, Civilian and Military Photographer of the Year, the Thomas Jefferson Civilian Print Journalist of the Year, and the Thomas Jefferson Military Print Journalist of the Year.

Minor changes to the nomination criteria for CY2024 include a DoD Visual Information Policy Review Checklist.

Each Service may submit one nomination for each category. Submit nominations in accordance with the attached guidance no later than March 26, 2025.

If you have any questions, please contact Mr. Chad McMeen at (443) 801-7824 or chad.e.mcmeen@mail.mil. Thank you for your support.

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FOR: Max D. Lederer Jr.
Acting Director

Attachment:
As stated

DoD Media Awards

Nomination Guidance for Calendar Year 2024

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I. ABOUT THE AWARDS PROGRAM

- A. The DoD Media Awards competition honors excellence among military and civilian broadcast journalists, graphic designers, writers, photographers, public affairs (PA) and visual information (VI) practitioners, mass communication specialists and videographers. It also fosters an environment of innovation and growth, leading to more effective communication programs. The awards are administered by the Defense Media Activity.
- B. PA and VI representatives of each Military Service created and approved entry requirements and category descriptions for the CY2024 competition.
- C. There are nine categories in the 2024 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 or command.

II. POINT OF CONTACT

For information regarding entry requirements, individuals should first contact their Military Service's contest coordinator. For general information or questions specific to the DoD-level program, send an email to chad.e.mcmeen.civ@mail.mil or call Mr. Chad McMeen at (443) 801-7824.

III. MILESTONES

2024

January 1	Program year began
November 1	Early bird entry submission window opens for Service contests
December 31	Program year ends

2025

March 26	Deadline for Branch-level contests to submit entries.
April 7-11	DoD Policy Review of entries
April 28	Judging begins.
May 8	Winners list sent to Services' PA/VI chiefs, Services' contest coordinators, and National Guard Bureau public affairs office.
May 15	Winning entries posted to Defense Visual Information Distribution Service (DVIDS).
June 10 or 11	Conduct after-action review with Service contest representatives.
September	Publish the CY2025 nomination guidance

IV. ELIGIBILITY

- A. No individual may enter the DoD competition directly. Only one entry per category may be submitted from each of the following:
 - 1. **Chief Master Sgt. Douglas W. Morrel Media Awards** (U.S. Air Force)
 - 2. **Maj. Gen. Keith L. Ware Communication Awards Competition** (U.S. Army)

3. **Chief Journalist Alex Haley Awards** (U.S. Coast Guard)
 4. **Visual Information and Excellence in Communication (VIEC) Awards** (U.S. Marine Corps)
 5. **Navy Media Awards** (U.S. Navy)
 6. **Defense Media Merit Awards (DMMA)**. Sponsored by the Defense Media Activity, the DMMA competition is open to U.S. government civilian employees assigned to defense agencies, DoD field activities and combatant commands to submit their individual work products.
- B. The Military Services are responsible for establishing Service-specific rules and procedures to judge and select their qualified entries for submission to the DoD Media Awards competition. The Services also will ensure military nominees meet quality force standards for their respective service prior to their entrance to the DoD Media Awards competition.
 - C. The Defense Media Activity is responsible for establishing rules and procedures to judge and select qualified entries from the DMMA competition for submission to the DoD Media Awards competition. 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 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, Reserve, and National Guard members of the Armed Service as well as U.S. government civilian employees with the photographer, journalist, photojournalist, videographer, broadcast journalist, graphic artist, mass communication specialist, public affairs specialist or equivalent occupation specialty. Products created by service members who leave the Armed Forces during the year and civilian employees who leave DoD service may NOT enter the competition.
 - E. The Military Services and the Defense Media Activity can enter products created by individuals in any award category as long these individuals carry one of the occupation specialties listed in the previous paragraph. For example, graphics products created by a photographer or journalist may enter the graphic designer of the year category; video products created by a graphic designer or journalist may compete in the videographer of the year category; and so forth.
 - F. Products produced by personnel assigned to the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Civil Air Patrol are prohibited from competing unless they meet the eligibility criteria stated in paragraph D of this section.
 - G. Products produced by personnel 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. Civilian employees assigned to combatant commands, defense agencies and DoD field activities, must refer to the DMMA competition rules for entry information.

- K. Army and Air National Guard members and U.S. government civilian staff members assigned to Army and Air National Guard units must refer to the Air Force and Army rules for entry information.
- L. Reserve members will enter through their respective Service competition.
- M. National Guard or Reserve members that also fill DoD civilian public affairs positions are allowed to submit separate products done in their two different capacities. These personnel may not submit mixed products from military and civilian status to compete in a category. If the product is authored by Sgt XXX, that product is eligible for military categories only. The same rule applies for products created while in a civilian status.

V. ENTRY CRITERIA

- A. ***Products submitted to the competition must have been created, approved for public release, and published to DVIDS between Jan. 1, 2024 and 11:59 p.m. Eastern Standard Time on Dec. 31, 2024.***
- B. All products 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 the command's information and/or mission needs and, therefore, must be authorized products approved for public release. Consequently, ***all products must have military or DoD relevance.***
- C. No single product may be entered more than once in the nine DoD Of the Year categories.
- D. Entries to the Defense Communicator of the Year category may be from a military member or a U.S. DoD government civilian employee as long as the entrant meets the eligibility criteria listed in Section IV. The entrant may enter multiple of-the-year categories during the same competition year. Products may not be used more than once within a category entry or within separate category entries per paragraph C of this section. Entries found to contain the same products will be disqualified from the Defense Communicator of the Year and the other of-the-year category. If duplicate products are discovered, the Military Services and Defense Media Activity will not be allowed to replace the duplicate product nor will they be allowed to submit a replacement entry.
- E. Each entry requires multiple products highlighting the entrant's work. In order to create the entry, ***each product must be uploaded and published to DVIDS as a separate file.***
- F. Each graphic, photo or video product must contain an embedded caption and other required metadata. Also assign a Visual Information Record Identification Number (VIRIN) as required in the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) and Change 2 to [DoD Instruction 5040.02](#), "Visual Information," dated April 23, 2018. Captions for products released from operational areas of responsibility will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Partial or condensed captions may be allowed if directed by the release authority or higher headquarters within the operational command. While editing metadata during upload to DVIDS, list the person who created the product in the credit field and ensure their name is included in the caption.
- G. All products must comply with federal law and DoD policy. See Appendix A.

- H. A thorough policy adherence review and entry eligibility screening will be conducted on all VI products prior to judging. The policy review panel will consist of a DMA designated chairperson and one VI expert from each Military Service but may not be the Service contest coordinator. The review team will have five working days to complete the review and submit any discrepancies with recommendations for disqualification or corrections. Each Service contest coordinator will be given five working days to ensure minor corrections are made as needed.

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 requirements listed in Sections XII and V, and Appendix B, or that fail to follow federal law or established DoD policy will be disqualified.
- C. Entries not uploaded and published to DVIDS will be disqualified.
- D. ***Individual products with more than one name in a byline or credit line will be disqualified.***
- E. Unit products entered in individual categories will be disqualified. Individual products containing a DVIAN will also be disqualified.
- F. Products containing copyright protected or licensed music, video or graphics will be disqualified unless clarified in the caption. Individual or personal licenses may not be used in accordance with DoD policy.
- G. Challenges will be decided by the Defense Media Activity Director or the Director's designee after consulting with members of the DoD Media Awards Governance Committee. Voting members of the committee are the Service contest coordinators.

VII. HOW TO SUBMIT ENTRIES

- A. Entry to the DoD Media Awards will be accomplished through DVIDS. Entry is a two-step process.
1. Upload and publish products to DVIDS at <https://www.dvidshub.net/>. Once logged in, go to the training section for upload instructions. Publishing graphics after they have been uploaded requires extra steps; refer to the DVIDS website for instructions.
 2. Select products using the DVIDS Awards interface module under the Admin Portal. Instructions may be found on the DVIDS website. Entries must be submitted through the DVIDS Awards interface module to enter the competition. Requests for exceptions to this rule will be denied. The entry submitter may NOT select their own entry as the winner. This second step must be done by a supervisor or third party and they must certify the entry meets eligibility. This separation rule also applies to entries submitted on behalf of a content producer.

- B. The Military Services and Defense Media Activity will submit a list of their nominees by 11:59 PM EST on March 26, 2025 and will ensure military nominees meet quality force standards prior to submission.
- C. Should a name on the submission list be different from the name associated with the product in DVIDS, the name associated with the entrant's DVIDS profile will take precedence. Should the unit's name and address differ from that listed in DVIDS, the information in DVIDS will take precedence.

VIII. AWARDS

- A. Awards will be given in nine categories: (1) Defense Communicator of the Year, (2) Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year, (3) Military Graphic Designer of the Year, (4) Civilian Photographer of the Year, (5) Military Photographer of the Year, (6) Civilian Videographer of the Year, (7) Military Videographer of the Year, (8) Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year, and (9) Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year.
- B. The winner of each category will receive a trophy and a certificate. ***Requests to replace a lost or misplaced trophy or certificate will not be honored.***

IX. NOTIFICATION OF WINNERS

- A. Each Military Services' PA/VI chief, the National Guard Bureau public affairs office and the Military Services' contest coordinators will receive concurrent notification of the winners prior to the public announcement. The Military Services will notify their Reserve components since entry by Reserve units and their members is through their respective competition.
- B. Winning entries will be highlighted on DVIDS one week after the winners are officially announced.

X. AFTER-ACTION REVIEW/MEDIA AWARDS GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE

The Defense Media Activity will host a DoD Media Awards Governance Committee meeting with the Military Services' appointed voting members and National Guard Bureau advisers to review and update competition guidance for the CY2023 award cycle. The meeting is tentatively planned for June 10 or 11, 2025.

XI. JUDGING GUIDANCE

- A. Judges will have access to the entries starting April 28, 2025 and will complete their scoring prior to entering their individual entry feedback. Comments from the judges will be available in the DVIDS awards module for supervisors to download and share with entrants.
- B. Three judges will be selected for each of these categories: graphic design, photo, video and print. Selection criteria for judges is based on their professional experience in the communication and visual information fields.
- C. All entries will be judged on professional excellence, communication impact, originality, and caption / description using the below weighted rubric. Judges' decisions are final.

Category	Weighed Score	Rating	Score
Professional Excellence	40%	★★★★★★★★★ 0	0.00
Communication Impact	35%	★★★★★★★★★ 0	0.00
Originality / Military Relevance	15%	★★★★★★★★★ 0	0.00
Caption / Description	10%	★★★★★★★★★ 0	0.00
			Total: 0

- D. Judges will select only one winner in each category. If no entry in a category is considered within contest standards, judges may choose to withhold any award within that category.
- E. An entrant of a category may NOT be a judge in the same category. When practical, supervisors may NOT be a judge of a category in which subordinates have entered.
- F. Captions for products released from operational areas of responsibility should be carefully reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Partial or condensed captions may be allowed if directed by the release authority or higher headquarters within the operational command.

XII. AWARD CATEGORIES

A. Defense Communicator of the Year

Open to both military and civilian personnel as long as they meet eligibility criteria listed in Section IV. Entry must be a portfolio profiling the work credited to one individual.

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry will consist of **five** products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One print story (Must be either a commentary, feature story, information story or one story of a series.)
- One video story
- One photo (Must be either a news photo, feature photo, portrait or one photo from a photo series.)
- Two products of the candidate's choice (Must not be a photo series.)

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Only one of the candidate's choices may be a photojournalism product (3-5 photos and a story), but it must be on a topic or event different from the other products in the portfolio. Only one photojournalism product may be entered as part of the portfolio.
- Any of the candidate's choices may **not** be a photo series.

- Do not extract and submit component elements of a product as a candidate's choice if that product in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to this or another category. For example, do not extract and submit as a logo or other graphic from a multimedia product if the entire multimedia product is being submitted as a candidate's choice to this or another category. This rule, however, does not prohibit individuals from submitting a graphic element extracted from a team-produced video, a multimedia product or a video credited to another person, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant and it must have been uploaded and published to DVIDS as a separate file.

B. Civilian Graphic Designer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must consist of *six* graphic design products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One layout & design product
- One digital art product
- Four graphic design products of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Do not submit two-dimensional work created by free-hand methods using dry- or wet-based methods, such as line art, sketches, water colors and oil paintings, and work created using pencil, chalk and charcoal; pictures of displays; and fine art pieces.
- Do not extract and submit component elements of a multimedia product, video story or video spot as one of the six graphic design products if the multimedia product, video story or video spot in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to another category. This does not prohibit individuals from extracting a graphic element they created for a team-produced product or a product credited to another individual, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant.
- Do not extract and submit component elements from a layout & design product as a separate product if the layout & design product in its entirety is being entered by the entrant to this or other category. Conversely, do not enter a layout & design product that contains elements submitted as digital art and identity design products. Each product must be separate and distinct from the other.
- Do not submit layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents.

C. Military Graphic Designer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must consist of *six* graphic design products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One layout & design product
- One digital art product
- Four graphic design products of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Do not submit two-dimensional work created by free-hand methods using dry- or wet-based methods, such as line art, sketches, water colors and oil paintings, and work created using pencil, chalk and charcoal; pictures of displays; and fine art pieces.
- Do not extract and submit component elements of a multimedia product, video story or video spot as one of the six graphic design products if the multimedia product, video story or video spot in its entirety is being submitted by the entrant to another category. This does not prohibit individuals from extracting a graphic element they created for a team-produced product or a product credited to another individual, but the extracted element must be the work of the entrant.
- Do not extract and submit component elements from a layout & design product as a separate product if the layout & design product in its entirety is being entered by the entrant to this or other category. Conversely, do not enter a layout & design product that contains elements submitted as digital art and identity design products. Each product must be separate and distinct from the other.
- Do not submit layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents.

D. Civilian Photographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *seven* photo products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One news photo
- One feature photo
- One portrait
- Three photos of the candidate's choice
- One photo series consisting of at least seven, but no more than 12 photos. Do not submit a composite layout. **Tip:** Create the photo series as a collection within DVIDS before adding the collection to the portfolio and attempting to enter the category.

Entry must contain 13 to 18 images in total. Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Submit only one photo series.
- Photo illustrations are not authorized.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product as a candidate's choice.
- Do not submit photos from a photojournalism product if it is part of the Defense Communicator of the Year portfolio.
- Do not extract photos from a multimedia product or other video product and enter them as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo if the multimedia product or video is submitted as part of another category.
- **Do not submit the same photo more than once.** Do not enter the same photo from the photo series as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. This rule does not prevent submission of a different photo from that same operation as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. Note, however, the purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate one's ability to take photos in a variety of settings. Therefore, products from more than one operation or event earn higher scores.

E. Military Photographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a portfolio within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *seven* photo products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One news photo
- One feature photo
- One portrait
- Three photos of the candidate's choice
- One photo series consisting of at least seven, but no more than 12 photos. Do not submit a composite layout. **Tip:** Create the photo series as a collection within DVIDS before adding the collection to the portfolio and attempting to enter the category.

Entry must contain 13 to 18 images in total. Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Submit only one photo series.
- Photo illustrations are not authorized.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product as a candidate's choice.
- Do not submit photos from a photojournalism product if it is part of the Defense Communicator of the Year portfolio.
- Do not extract photos from a multimedia product or other video product and enter them as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo if the multimedia product or video is submitted as part of another category.
- **Do not submit the same photo more than once.** Do not enter the same photo from the photo series as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. This rule does not prevent submission of a different photo from that same operation as a portrait, news photo, feature photo, or any candidate's choice photo. Note, however, the purpose of the portfolio is to demonstrate one's ability to take photos in a variety of settings. Therefore, products from more than one operation or event earn higher scores.

F. Civilian Videographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain **four** video products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One b-roll video
- One video story
- Two products of the candidate's choice, either a video story, multimedia product, video spot, or one video from a video series. A video designed exclusively for use on a social media platform may also be entered as a candidate's choice.

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- A b-roll video package may not be submitted as a candidate's choice, however, a portion of the b-roll may be used to create the candidate's choice products (e.g. video story, multimedia product... etc)
- Slates are not required.
- Videos may contain closed captions, but they are not required.

G. Military Videographer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain **four** video products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One b-roll video
- One video story
- Two products of the candidate's choice, either a video story, multimedia product, video spot, or one video from a video series. A video designed exclusively for use on a social media platform may also be entered as a candidate's choice.

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- A b-roll video package may not be submitted as a candidate's choice, however, a portion of the b-roll may be used to create the candidate's choice products (e.g. video story, multimedia product... etc)
- Slates are not required.
- Videos may contain closed captions, but they are not required.

H. Thomas Jefferson Civilian Writer of the Year

Entry must be work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *five* products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One information story
- One feature story
- Three stories of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Products must be from separate events.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product in its entirety. A story from a photojournalism product may be entered as a candidate's choice, but only if the entire photojournalism product (photos and story) is not entered into the Defense Communicator of the Year category.
- Upload each article as a separate story in DVIDS. Do **not** upload PDF files.

Thomas Jefferson Military Writer of the Year

Entry must be the work of one individual.

Submit entry as a collection within the DVIDS Awards interface module.

Entry must contain *five* products each clearly labeled for the judges when submitting:

- One information story
- One feature story
- Three stories of the candidate's choice

Refer to Appendix B for product descriptions.

Other requirements:

- Follow entry criteria listed in Section V.
- Products must be from separate events.
- Do not submit a photojournalism product in its entirety. A story from a photojournalism product may be entered as a candidate's choice, but only if the entire photojournalism product (photos and story) is not entered into the Defense Communicator of the Year category.
- Upload each article as a separate story in DVIDS. Do **not** upload PDF files.

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 www.copyright.gov. HIPPA information may be found at www.hhs.gov.
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 DoD Media Awards contest must include unlimited distribution. Individual or personally purchased licenses may not be used. 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 Change 1 of [DoD Instruction 5230.29](#), "Security and Policy Review of Information for Public Release," dated April 14, 2017. Any questions regarding public release should be directed to the local public affairs office.
4. Stories must conform to Change 1 of [DoD Instruction 5120.04](#), "DoD Newspapers, Magazines, Guides, and Installation Maps," dated November 20, 2017. Blog posts must be from an official military blog that has been registered as required in [DoD Instruction 8170.01](#), "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," dated January 2, 2019.
5. Graphics, photos and video products must conform to Change 2 of [DoD Instruction 5040.02](#), "Visual Information," dated April 23, 2018, and include metadata in accordance with the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) dated July 16, 2018.
6. U.S. Coast Guard products must also follow U.S. Coast Guard guidelines.

Appendix B, Product Definitions

All products will contain embedded captions and other required metadata, including a VIRIN, as required by the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#). In addition, all products must support or contribute to organizational communication objectives and be authorized products approved for public release.

A. Graphic Design Products

Upload products to DVIDS using the graphics upload portal. Once uploaded, **ensure the graphics are then published to DVIDS**. This requires extra steps. See DVIDS website for instructions. Ineligible: two-dimensional work created by free-hand methods using dry- or wet-based methods, such as line art, sketches, watercolors and oil paintings, and work created using pencil, chalk and charcoal; pictures of displays; and fine art pieces. Ensure products contain the required metadata, including a VIRIN and a caption prior to uploading to DVIDS.

Animation. Product includes various media components that allow for animation, such as video production elements, digital displays, web animations or info graphics. Any animation style is allowed, such as 2-D, 2.5-D, 3-D, or stop motion. Standard lower thirds do not qualify as animation, even if motion is present. Must not use any copyrighted materials, such as movie clips and sound bites or music without broadcast rights. Product may not contain copyrighted rigs, props or characters. Upload to DVIDS as a high-resolution MP4 or SVG file.

Digital Art. Original work created by digital means. Examples include digital paintings, vector art, and 3-D renderings. A hand-drawn sketch, which is then digitized, may be used as the starting point, but these marks may not be visible in the final product. Does ***not*** include animation, cartoons, comic strips, and still photographs enhanced by digital means.

Identity Design. Original work 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. Unit crests must have been registered with the appropriate office of heraldry prior to entry. Entrant must be prepared to provide proof of registration.

Layout & Design. Single- or two-page layouts created using elements from various sources. Examples include info charts, info graphics, flyers, certificates, CD covers, cover art, and posters. All must be completed by the entrant, but elements can come from other sources. Entry is limited to two pages that may be extracted from a larger work published between Jan. 1, 2024 and Dec. 31, 2024. Layouts from interactive publications or interactive PDF documents are not allowed.

Photo Illustration. Single image or graphic created using a single or multiple images. Images used may be sourced from other means (i.e. not the nominee), but 100% of graphic production must be from the nominee. **Must be properly identified as a photo illustration in the caption.**

B. Photo Products

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, military equipment, employees or family members.

News Photo. Scheduled or unscheduled news event featuring a military organization, employees, equipment or family members. Ensure product contains the required metadata, including a VIRIN and a caption prior to uploading to DVIDS.

Picture Story. See photo series.

Photo Series. A series of at least seven, but no more than 12 photos that depict a military or military-related storyline or theme, including a military operation or contingency, or participation in a military exercise or other training event. ***Coverage of the event must be preplanned and deliberate.*** Photos of a cancer victim receiving treatment over the course of the contest year are acceptable. Photos depicting one particular aspect of a military operation or exercise, or the entire event are also acceptable. Key is that the coverage was planned with a specific communication objective. Controlled and uncontrolled action photos are acceptable. A picture story is considered a photo series.

Portrait. A picture of a person that identifies and captures the essence of that person's character and depicts his or her personality. Subject must have a connection to the military. Only one person may be portrayed prominently (as the main subject) in the photo. Official photos are not allowed.

Sports Photo. A picture depicting some form of physical activity or sport (football, martial arts, swimming, etc.). Subjects must have a connection to the military.

C. Video Products

B-roll. Product must be of the same military or military-related theme, and must be filmed by one individual in its entirety. Do not include reporter standups, narration or music bed. Natural sound is allowed and encouraged. An interview with a subject matter expert may be included; however, the interview may not be used in the sound bed throughout. Some of the b-roll footage may also be used in a multimedia product, video story or video series produced by the same individual. Upload to DVIDS as one file.

Multimedia Product. Illustrates the use of visual storytelling techniques across multiple digital mediums while telling a story. Must have military or DoD relevance. All forms of media are allowed: audio, video, photography, graphics, animation, or any other visual tool.

Product must use a minimum of four elements. May be a feature, personality or news journalism piece. Product must be a single story produced and edited by one individual with at least 51 percent of the story's content created by that individual. Product may include dramatization if (1) the enhancement does not misrepresent the subject of the original, (2) it is clearly and readily apparent from the content that it is not intended to be an accurate representation of the actual event, and (3) the caption indicates the product contains

dramatization. See Enclosure 10 of DoD Instruction 5040.02 for specific requirements. Entry will be judged by the quality of storytelling and creative use of combined mediums.

Video Series. A series of at least two, but no more than five video stories on a common military-related or DoD-related theme. Must be planned in advance with each video clearly identified as part of a series with either an anchor lead, or a consistent opening and closing. For example, this video is the first (second, third, or fourth) in a series of four videos about <topic>. 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.

Video Story. May be a feature, personality or news journalism piece. Lower-thirds and an opening title are acceptable. The product must have military or DoD relevance. Entrant must have filmed 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 stand-ups are allowed but not required.

Video Spot. Must be 60 seconds or less in duration. Must be the work of one individual in its entirety (planned, filmed and edited). Identify the target audience in the caption.

D. Written Products

Upload articles to DVIDS as a news story with or without photos. Associated photos will not be judged and may be submitted in the News Photo, Feature Photo or Portrait categories as appropriate.

Blog Post. An article written using an informational or conversational style that conveys the writer's opinion. Ghost-written blogs are ineligible. Blog posts must be from an official military blog that has been registered as such as required in [DoD Instruction 8170.01](#), "Online Information Management and Electronic Messaging," dated January 2, 2019.

Commentary. A commentary is an article that conveys the writer's opinion on a topic as specified in DoDI 5120.04. Ghost-written commentaries are ineligible. Commentaries posted to an official military website are allowed as are commentaries published in a command newspaper, magazine or newsletter.

Feature Story. Feature story must have a focus that is maintained and supported throughout. Product may be a sports, human interest, personality or news feature.

Information Story. A story that conveys information while answering the five W's (who, what, where, when, why) and H (how). It can be written in different shapes and forms, including the Inverted Pyramid, Kabob/Wall Street Journal Style, Hour/Martini Glass, and Question and Answer. News and sports stories are allowed.

Photojournalism. Product includes a story and at least three, but no more than five photographs with embedded captions. Photos and story must be on the same topic, and must be the work of one individual.

E. Audio Products

Podcast. Service competitions may include a Podcast category as a stand-alone entry for individuals or teams, but, those entries will not feed into any DoD category (including Communicator of the Year). Podcasts are uploaded as either audio or video files in the DVIDS system.

F. Other Terms

Caption. Used to identify the people or unit profiled in the product, and to describe what happened, and where and when it happened. The caption also explains why the event took place: the purpose of the event. It is added to the product's metadata prior to upload to DVIDS. Refer to the [DoD Visual Information Style Guide](#) for specific information and Appendix C for examples.

Closed caption (closed captioning). Used to display the audio portion of a television program or video product as text on the screen for individuals who are deaf or partially deaf.

Collection. A series of photos or a group of products organized for entry in specific categories.

Portfolio. A group of specific products and a portfolio also allows a collection of other items required for entry in certain categories. *(example: the Photographer of the Year categories require a series of photos as a collection in addition to individual products rolled up as a portfolio).*

Appendix C, Caption Examples

While editing metadata during upload to DVIDS, list the person who created the product in the credit field and ensure their name is included in the credit line. Captions for products released from operational areas of responsibility will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Partial or condensed captions may be allowed if directed by the release authority or higher headquarters within the operational command.

A. Graphic Caption



The 1st Marine Division Band held the Honor Our Fallen concert at the Marines' Memorial Theatre in San Francisco Oct. 4, 2018. The graphic depicts a Fallen Soldier Battle Cross, the San Francisco Fleet Week logo and text with information about the event. This graphic was designed Oct. 3, 2018 at I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Pendleton, California, and intended for use by any U.S. Marine Corps units or installations. (U.S. Marine Corps graphic by Cpl. Rachel E. Conrad)

B. Photo Caption



U.S. Air Force military working dog Ukkie jumps out of a patrol car during training at RAF Mildenhall, England, Nov. 6, 2018. Each day military working dog teams practice the six phases of aggression,

including the field interview, pursuit of attach, search, escort and a standoff. (U.S. Air Force photo by Staff Sgt. Christine Groening)

C. Video Caption



U.S. Soldiers with the 797th Engineer Company, Army Reserve, and members of the Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands Department of Fire and Emergency Services build tents for homeowners Nov. 13, 2018 after Super Typhoon Yutu destroyed their homes on Saipan, Commonwealth of Northern Marianas Islands. Relief efforts included teamwork and communication between the services and the CNMI Fire Department after Yutu. (U.S. Air Force video by Staff Sgt. Bethany La Ville)

Appendix D, Policy Review Checklist

The below Checklist will be used by contest submitters, supervisors and contest coordinators to ensure the products meet eligibility and follow DoD guidelines. Judges will be provided specific guidance via separate correspondence.

DoD VI Policy Compliance Checklist			
Use this checklist to verify a visual information (VI) product complies with DoD VI policy prior to upload to the Defense Visual Information Distribution System (DVIDS) and entry to the DoD Media Awards competition. Go to the reference listed for an explanation of each policy requirement. Legend: Pass: Complies with DoD VI policy. A-DQ: Automatic Disqualification (A-DQ) C-A: DoD will allow corrections. If none are made, points will be deducted. C-D: DoD will allow corrections. If none are made, entry will be automatically disqualified. VIRIN: Visual Information Record Identification Number			
Entry Requirements	Yes	No	Notes
1. Was the VI product produced and published to DVIDS in 2024? (DoD Media Awards Nomination Guidance)	Pass	A-DQ	Corrections not allowed.
2. Does the VI product have military or DoD relevance? (DoD Media Awards Nomination Guidance)	Pass	A-DQ	Corrections not allowed.
VIRIN Requirements	Yes	No	Notes
3. Does the Vision ID listed in the product's VIRIN match the individual listed in the credit line? (Page 23, DoDI 5040.02 .)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
4. Does the VIRIN contain the correct sequence number? (Page 24, DoDI 5040.02 .)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
5. Does the date in the VIRIN match the date in the caption? (Page 23, DoDI 5040.02 ; page 27, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
6. Does the DVIDS "Date Taken" field match the date in the VIRIN and the date listed in the caption? ("Date Shot" entry, Page 36, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
Caption Requirements	Yes	No	Notes

7. Does the caption answer the 5 Ws (who, what, when, where, and why)? (Pages 26-30, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
8. Is only one person listed in the caption's credit line? For the DoD Media Contest, only one person may be listed in the caption's credit line. (DoD Media Awards Nomination Guidance)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
9. Does the caption list the hometown and state of any person or persons identified in the VI product? ("Hometown" entry, page 7, DoD Visual Information Style Guide , and paragraph C4.2.2.5.2.1.14, pages 39-40, DoD 5400.11-R , "Department of Defense Privacy Program.")	Go to question 9.a	Pass	
9.a. Does the unit have <u>written</u> permission from the individual to publish their hometown and state? An individual's hometown and state may not be released to the public without their written consent. State alone, however, may be disclosed per DoD 5400.11-R .	Go to question 9.b	A-D	Corrections not allowed.
9.b. Was written permission obtained <u>before</u> the VI product was published to DVIDS? Disclosing an individual's hometown and state without their permission is a violation of the Privacy Act of 1974. Therefore, obtain written permission from the individual before uploading the VI product to DVIDS. Disclosing the state alone is authorized. Entrants must be prepared to provide written documentation when queried.	Pass ¹	A-D	Corrections not allowed.
Metadata Requirements	Yes	No	Notes
10. Is the correct location where the image was taken listed in the metadata? (City/Base/Location/Ship; State or Province; Country or Area) (Page 37, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	Points deducted	C-A
11. Do the release instructions include a release status? (Page 37, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	See notes.	C-D

12. Do the release instructions include the release authority's name, duty position, phone number and/or email address? (Page 37, DoD Visual Information Style Guide)	Pass	See notes.	C-D
13. Does the VI product contain copyrighted material, including music and other proprietary information? (Page 16, DoDI 5040.07)	Go to question 14.	Pass	
14. Does the unit have <u>written</u> permission stating the organization and the DoD have permission to use the copyrighted material into perpetuity? A screenshot from the company's website is not adequate permission and will not be accepted. Note that a legal review by the entrant's legal office is also required per DoDI 5040.07 . Entrants must be prepared to provide this documentation when queried.	Pass ¹	A-DQ	DoD will not allow corrections.

¹ Entrants must provide documentation when queried. Entrants who fail to do so will have their entries disqualified.