

DINFOS GRADUATION  
FORT MEADE, MD  
7 MARCH 1997

BELIEVE IT OR NOT, I REMEMBER HOW IT FELT TO BE IN YOUR SEAT  
RIGHT NOW - AFTER THIS LENGTHY ACADEMIC EXPERIENCE, YOU JUST  
WANT TO JUMP IN YOUR CARS OR ON AN AIRPLANE AND GET OUT OF  
HERE. SO I'M GOING TO TRY AND KEEP THIS BRIEF, BUT I'VE GOT TWO  
RELATED TOPICS TO TALK TO YOU ABOUT THAT I BELIEVE ARE  
IMPORTANT ENOUGH TO DELAY YOUR DEPARTURE FOR JUST A FEW  
MINUTES.

THE FIRST TOPIC IS ONE THAT YOU MAY NOT EVEN HAVE REALIZED  
YOU WERE LEARNING OVER THE PAST WEEKS HERE AT SCHOOL AND  
THAT IS THE **JOINTNESS** OF THE PUBLIC AFFAIRS BUSINESS. WHEN I  
WENT THROUGH DINFOS, IT WASN'T SOMETHING THAT I FOCUSED ON  
BECAUSE I WAS MORE WORRIED ABOUT PASSING TESTS AND TRYING  
TO FIGURE OUT WHAT THE AIR FORCE WAS ALL ABOUT. AS THE YEARS  
HAVE FLOWN BY, HOWEVER, THE BENEFIT OF THE JOINTNESS OF THIS  
TRAINING HAS TAKEN ON ALMOST MORE IMPORTANCE THAN THE  
STUFF I LEARNED IN CLASS. BECAUSE OF THE SIZE OF OUR CAREER  
FIELD, PAS HAVE ALWAYS BEEN TRAINED JOINTLY. BUT A MORE

IMPORTANT TRUTH IN THIS JOINT TRAINING IS THAT TOGETHER, WE ARE THE KEEPERS OF THE REPUTATION OF US MILITARY FORCES. THINK ABOUT IT: WHAT OTHER MILITARY SPECIALTY HAS THE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE REPUTATION OF THOSE FORCES ON A DAY-TO-DAY BASIS? YOUR BOSSES' JOB IS TO WORRY ABOUT HIS COMMAND, HIS SUPERIORS AND HIS SERVICE, AND WHILE I'D LIKE TO BELIEVE THAT THEIR JOB IS ALWAYS TO DO THE "RIGHT" THING TO PROTECT THE REPUTATION OF THE MILITARY, 23 YEARS EXPERIENCE TELLS ME OTHERWISE. AS EACH OF YOU GETS OLDER, YOU'LL SEE THE RETICENCE TO TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH BECAUSE OF EMBARRASSMENT, EGO OR AN ATTEMPT TO HIDE BAD NEWS. YOU MAY ALSO EXPERIENCE AN ATTITUDE OF SMUGNESS ABOUT THE PROBLEMS THE OTHER SERVICES ARE EXPERIENCING. BUT REMEMBER THAT YOU CANNOT ENGAGE IN THAT PETINESS, EVEN AT THE SAME TIME YOU ARE FIGURING OUT WAYS TO BE ACCEPTED AS A VITAL MEMBER OF YOUR SERVICE TEAM. WHAT I'M SAYING IS THAT YOUR ROLE **MUST BE** A HIGHER CALLING THAN THAT OF ANY OTHER MILITARY SPECIALIST BECAUSE **YOU** ARE THE KEEPERS OF OUR REPUTATION, AND BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT, I'M ABOUT TO COMMIT HERESY: AS A PA, YOUR

INTEGRITY, YOUR COUNSEL AND YOUR ULTIMATE LOYALTY **MUST** BE TIED TO OUR OVERALL ORGANIZATION, NOT JUST TO YOUR BOSS, YOUR UNIT, YOUR BASE. I RECOGNIZE THIS FLIES IN THE FACE OF MILITARY TRAINING BUT CONSIDER SOME OF THE DEVELOPMENTS OF THE LAST FEW YEARS.

- THE NAVY'S GOING TO BE STUCK WITH **TAILHOOK** FOR THE REMAINDER OF THIS CENTURY INTO THE NEXT AND THAT HURTS US ALL

- THE ARMY HAS SEXUAL HARASSMENT ISSUES FROM THE VERY TOP TO THE BOTTOM OF THE ORGANIZATION AND WE ARE ALL SUFFERING WITH THEM.

- THE AIR FORCE ISSUES OF ACCOUNTABILITY FOR OUR SENIOR OFFICERS FROM GENERAL **ASHEY** ON DOWN CREATE A PERCEPTION OF ALL THE SERVICES' WILLINGNESS TO HOLD SENIOR LEADERS RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR ACTIONS.

**THE REALITY IS THAT WE ARE ALL THE SAME TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC.** YOU ALL PROBABLY GET QUESTIONS FROM CIVILIANS OR PEOPLE AT HOME ABOUT "HOW IT IS IN THE ARMY" NO MATTER WHAT COLOR SUIT YOU WEAR. AND AS THE MILITARY FORCES GET SMALLER AND THE AMERICAN PUBLIC KNOWS LESS AND LESS ABOUT WHAT

EACH INDIVIDUAL SERVICE IS OR DOES, WE WILE BECOME  
INDISTINGUISHABLE FROM EACH OTHER IN THEIR PERCEPTIONS.  
AN EXAMPLE OF THAT IS THE LATEST HARRIS POLL ON THE  
CREDIBILITY OF INSTITUTIONS. YOU MAY HAVE BEEN SHOCKED TO  
FIND THAT THE MILITARY DROPPED TEN **POINTS IN THE PUBLIC'S  
PERCEPTION OF OUR CREDIBILITY IN JUST THE LAST YEAR!** THAT  
WASN'T THE AIR FORCE OR THE ARMY OR ANY INDIVIDUAL SERVICE,  
BUT THE **MILITARY** SERVICES. WHILE WE REMAIN THE MOST  
CREDIBLE INSTITUTION IN THE PUBLIC'S MIND, IT WAS AN  
UNPRECEDENTED DROP DUE TO OUR SERVICE'S HANDLING OF THOSE  
PROBLEMS THAT HAVE RISEN. NOTICE 1 DIDN'T SAY THE PROBLEMS  
CAUSED THE DROP, BUT IT WAS OUR HANDLING OF THEM THAT HAS  
LOST US HARD WON CREDIBILITY. WE HAVE GOT TO CONVINCEN OUR  
SENIOR LEADERSHIP TO LISTEN TO OUR COUNSEL ON HOW BEST TO  
HANDLE THESE ISSUES. AND THAT IS WHY I SAY THAT WE PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS PEOPLE, JOINTLY, ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR RETAINING A  
REPUTATION THAT WILL ENGENDER THE CONFIDENCE OF THE  
AMERICAN PUBLIC IN OUR PROFESSIONALISM, OUR COMPETENCE AND  
OUR INTEGRITY. THAT REPUTATION IS VITAL TO RETAINING  
AMERICAN SUPPORT FOR WHAT WE DO.

AND THAT BRINGS ME TO THE SECOND TOPIC I WANTED TO SHARE WITH YOU TODAY. I'VE PROBABLY BORED EVERY GROUP THAT HAS COME TO THE PENTAGON IN THE PAST YEAR WITH "PRIBYLA'S TEN RULES OF MEDIA RELATIONS" BUT YOU'RE A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE AND I THINK THIS IS IMPORTANT.

**RULE #1:** PROTECTING THE REPUTATION OF US MILITARY FORCES DOESN'T MEAN SPIN **MEISTERING** OR LYING TO PROTECT OUR SERVICES, OUR BOSSES OR OUR JOBS. WE COLLECTIVELY HAVE TO BE KNOWN AS A GROUP THAT CONSISTENTLY PROVIDES AS MUCH ACCURATE, HONEST INFORMATION AS WE CAN TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC ON **THEIR** MILITARY FORCES. ONE REPORTER SAID IT BEST: CREDIBILITY IS A PA'S COIN OF THE REALM... IT IS THE BEDROCK OF WHAT WE DO. AND PEOPLE, YOU DON'T GAIN CREDIBILITY BY LYING. IF YOU CAN LEAVE YOUR PA CAREER AFTER THREE OR **THIRY** YEARS, AND LOOK YOURSELF IN THE MIRROR KNOWING THAT YOU NEVER KNOWINGLY LIED TO THE AMERICAN PUBLIC, YOU WILL HAVE BEEN A SUCCESS. YOU'VE GOT TO PUSH TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOUR SERVICE, THE PUBLIC AND OUR REPUTATION AND YOU'VE GOT TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT FOR YOUR FRIENDS IN THIS ROOM. ANY PA WHO IS LESS THAN HONEST WITH THE MEDIA REFLECTS ON **MY** CREDIBILITY

WITH THOSE SAME REPORTERS. I WONT TOLERATE THAT BLOW TO MY CREDIBILITY, AND YOU SHOULDN'T EITHER.

***RULE #2: BE STUBBORN***

- CROSS CHECK FACTS AND QUESTION THE ANSWERS YOU GET FROM

"EXPERTS"

- TAKE ON THE "IF I TOLD YOU, I'D HAVE TO SHOOT YOU" CROWD TO

ENSURE THEY AREN'T JUST ENAMoured OF THEIR SECRET DECODER RINGS.

- INFORMATION WARFARE IS EXAMPLE; HARD PA QUESTIONS HAVE ADJUSTED THE COMMUNITIES' POSITION THAT THEY CAN USE MEDIA AS DISINFORMATION CONDUIT

-NEVER ACCEPT "NO RELEASE" AS AN ANSWER WITHOUT QUESTIONING IT SO YOU CAN UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE IMPACT OF THE INFORMATION BEING RELEASED; SECURITY CLASSIFICATION GUIDES ARE OFTEN MISAPPLIED SO IF YOU'VE GOT THE CLEARANCE, GET THEM TO TELL YOU THE TRUTH SO YOU CAN TRULY PROTECT THAT INFORMATION THAT NEEDS PROTECTING.

***RULE #3: BE RESPONSIVE***

- IT'S EITHER TIMELY OR IT DOESN'T COUNT; THEIR DEADLINE IS YOURS

- GET THEM **SOMETHING** EVEN IF YOU CANT GET THEM WHAT THEY WANT

- FIND OUT WHERE THE INFORMATION RESIDES BEFORE TOSSING THEM INTO "DIALING FOR DOLLARS"

- **KNOW** THEIR DEADLINES, GIVE THEM INTERIM OR DAILY UPDATES ON WHEN YOU CAN GET THE INFORMATION AND THEN **CLOSE THE LOOP**

**RULE #4:** BE ACCURATE

- CROSS CHECK ANSWERS AND TRY NOT TO RELY ON JUST ONE SOURCE; CONTRARY TO POPULAR MILITARY OPINION, COLONELS DON'T ALWAYS HAVE THE ANSWER - IT MAY RESIDE WITH THE LIEUTENANT WHO WORKS THE PROBLEM

- MAKE SURE MEDIA UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU ARE GIVING THEM; WALK THEM THROUGH IT EVEN IF THEY DON'T THINK THEY HAVE TIME  
- READ, STUDY AND KNOW YOUR OWN STUFF; SHOULDN'T HAVE TO RESEARCH BASICS SUCH AS HOW MANY PLANES OR PEOPLE ON YOUR BASE

- STAY ON THE LOOKOUT FOR SOURCES; GET TO KNOW THE JOBS OF THE REST OF THE STAFF ALMOST AS WELL AS YOUR OWN SO YOU'LL KNOW WHERE TO GO TO GET THE CORRECT INFORMATION

***RULE #5: BE PROFESSIONAL***

- MEDIA ISN'T THE ENEMY; THAT'S THE GUYS WITH THE GUNS
- CALL IT WING COMMANDER SYNDROME; STAFF CAN TRASH

**MEDIA BUT **THAT'S NOT FOR PA'S TO DO****

- SOME PA'S ENGAGED IN DESERT STORM STORIES OF "WE BEAT THEM?"

- NOT THE ENEMY, BUT NOT YOUR BEST BUDDIES EITHER

- THEY ARE **ALWAYS** JOURNALISTS; I'VE KNOWN SOME OF THEM FOR 20 YEARS AND HAVE NEVER FORGOTTEN WHO THEY ARE

- NEVER FORGET YOUR PLACE IN THE OVERALL ORGANIZATION;  
**MAJCOM** DIRECTOR STORY

***RULE#6: BE ENERGETIC***

- TAKE INITIATIVE WITH MEDIA

- CALL TO HELP IF YOU KNOW THEY ARE WORKING SOMETHING

- CORRECT THEM IF THEY ARE WRONG

- GET TO KNOW THEM BEFORE YOU HAVE TO FIRST MEET THEM

**AT THE SMOKING HOLE**

- TALK TO MEDIA ABOUT THE PROFESSION TO LEARN WHAT YOU

NEED TO KNOW TO SUPPORT THEM AND GET THE MEDIA TO TALK TO

OUR MILITARY PEOPLE ABOUT WHAT THEY DO; IT FOSTERS  
UNDERSTANDING BEFORE WE HAVE TO MEET THEM IN BOSNIA

***RULE #7: BE A CHEERLEADER***

- EDUCATE OUR SENIOR PEOPLE ABOUT THE MEDIA'S ROLE IN THIS  
DEMOCRACY BUT **USE WELL THOUGHT OUT ARGUMENTS**; PA TOSSED  
OUT OF COMMAND POST BECAUSE "**MAJCOM** SAYS WE HAVE TO  
RELEASE FACT THAT AIRPLANE CRASHED"

- DON'T BACK DOWN ON THE MEDIA'S RIGHT TO AN ANSWER JUST  
BECAUSE YOU ARE THE LONE—AND JUNIOR—VOICE AT THE TABLE

- EXPOSE AS MANY MILITARY PEOPLE TO MEDIA FOLKS AS YOU CAN  
- TRAIN THOSE PEOPLE YOU SET UP TO TALK TO MEDIA ON HOW TO BE  
SUCCESSFUL AND NOT GET BURNED; WE HAVE TOO MANY PEOPLE  
WHO SHY AWAY FROM MEDIA BECAUSE THEY DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO  
EXPECT

***RULE #8: BE PREPARED***

- STAY UP ON EVENTS, YOUR UNIT'S MISSION, ACTIVITIES AND  
PROBLEMS  
- FIGURE OUT **WHAT YOUR** RESPONSE WILL BE BEFORE THE TRAIN  
LEAVES THE TRACKS

- NO SUCH THING AS "WASTED **PAG**"
- NOTHING FANCY; JUST THINK/TALK ABOUT IT WITH YOUR STAFF

- KEEP YOUR STAFF TOTALLY INFORMED ON WHAT THEY NEED TO  
KNOW

- DON'T EVER BE ONLY ONE ALLOWED TO RESPOND TO MEDIA IN  
YOUR OFFICE; TRAIN THEM AND YOU MAY FIND THEY ARE BETTER AT  
DEALING WITH MEDIA THAN YOU ARE!

***RULE#9:*** BE TRUSTWORTHY

-DO WHAT YOU **SAY** YOU'LL DO

- EXPLAIN WHY YOU **CAN'T** DO SOMETHING
- WORK YOUR BUTT OFF TO MAKE IT SO; DON'T WALK OUT THE DOOR

WITHOUT CLOSING OUT A MEDIA QUERY

- GAIN AND KEEP TRUST OF THE STAFF AS WELL; MAKE THEM TRUST  
YOUR ACTIONS AND YOUR COUNSEL

- MEET THE MEDIA'S AND YOUR BOSSES SUSPENSES
- AND TO BE ULTIMATELY TRUSTWORTHY, **NEVER, NEVER** LIE TO THE

MEDIA OR THE AMERICAN PUBLIC

***AND FINALLY, RULE #10:*** BE PASSIONATE

- ADOPT A SENSE OF OWNERSHIP ABOUT YOUR SERVICE AND OUR  
MILITARY - NOT THE **IMAGE** OF THEM BUT THE REALITY

- CARE MORE FOR THE LONG TERM VIEW THAN FOR THE FEELINGS OF  
COMMANDERS ABOUT SHORT TERM ISSUES

- BE PASSIONATE ABOUT THE PUBLIC'S RIGHT TO KNOW; NONE OF US  
WERE BORN MILITARY OFFICERS BUT WE WERE BORN CITIZENS; BE  
PASSIONATE ABOUT OUR RIGHTS

- AND FINALLY, I NEED YOU TO BE PASSIONATE ABOUT YOUR OWN  
INTEGRITY BECAUSE TELLING THE TRUTH IS NOT ONLY THE RIGHT  
THING TO DO FOR YOUR SERVICE, THE MILITARY, THIS NATION AND  
FOR YOU, IT IS ALSO THE RIGHT THING TO DO FOR OUR PROFESSION.  
JUST REMEMBER, WHEN ALL THE CAREERS IN THIS ROOM ARE OVER,  
OUR CREDIBILITY AND INTEGRITY ARE THE THINGS THAT WILL REMAIN

- THE THINGS THAT WILL SEAL THE REPUTATION OF OUR PUBLIC  
AFFAIRS COMMUNITY AND OUR MILITARY FORCES.