



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE  
DEFENSE MEDIA ACTIVITY  
DEFENSE INFORMATION SCHOOL  
6500 MAPES ROAD  
FORT MEADE, MD 20755-5620

## **Welcome to the Intermediate Public Affairs Specialist Course**

**NOTE:** This course is currently undergoing major revisions. An updated Welcome Letter will be provided once learning objectives and content are finalized. The anticipated launch of new content is late 2021 to early 2022.

### **DESCRIPTION**

This course offers intermediate Public Affairs and Communications Strategy and Operations professionals, both military and civilian, a challenging academic curriculum designed to groom students during their transition from content producer to strategic thinker and leader in the joint public affairs and strategic communications environment.

### **KEY COURSE EVENTS**

The course features full-duty-days of lecture, discussion, practical exercise, assignments, structured lab time and mentorship opportunities. This is an intensive 10-day instruction period and off-duty hours of academic research and writing will be required. Homework should be expected on most evenings. This can range from read-ahead material study to group/individual writing assignments.

Class hours are 7:55 a.m. – 4:00 p.m. EST. There is no anticipated formal instruction during the evenings or on the weekend.

Students will work with their fellow PA/CommStrat classmates (both military and civilians) to complete a scenario-based communications plan and a proposed public affairs guidance as well as an Annex F. You will be working in a simulated PA shop to engage with crises on a fictional joint military base. During this time, you will be working in a small group to develop themes, messages, talking points, communication management, media relations, community relations and special issues related to a crisis. Additional areas in which you will be evaluated include: preparing a subject matter expert and on-camera interviews. Additionally, there will be instructor led discussions in PA and Information Operations, Ethics, Crisis Communications, Issues Management, Resource Management and Social Media. Students should be prepared to contribute to the group discussion

An informal graduation takes place on the final training day. Do not schedule flights departing from Baltimore/Washington International (BWI) Thurgood Marshall Airport prior to 1800 on the final training day. You will not be released early.

### **ITEMS TO CONSIDER**

This is a unique opportunity to participate in an exercise solely designed to stress and test your PA/CommStrat skill sets. You will be called upon to execute fundamental public affairs duties, exercise strategic thinking, perform complex problem solving, anticipate and guide course of action development, conduct public affairs planning, and make public affairs recommendations.

Sharing experiences and best practices with your fellow students is one of the benefits of attending the course. Feel free to share material from your present and previous assignments/experiences that you may find useful during the exercises and discussions.

### **EQUIPMENT AND TECHNOLOGY**

You are not required to bring a computer, but it is encouraged if you have one at your disposal. **You will be provided a DINFOS-issued laptop on Day 1.** Wi-Fi will be available inside of DINFOS. If you do bring a computer, it should be loaded with Microsoft Word, PowerPoint and a web browser (preferably Google Chrome).

Students who have not used Google apps, such as Google email, Classroom, Hangouts, documents, etc., please watch the first four minutes of this [introductory video](#). Students will receive an @dinfos.edu email address, which will provide access to these Google apps during the course.

Students must have completed their annual Cyber Security Awareness Challenge in order to access DINFOS computer systems. **Please have both a hard copy and access to an electronic copy available on Training Day One.**

### **REASONABLE ACCOMMODATIONS**

If you require reasonable accommodations, please inform the Registrar (dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil) as soon as possible so the office can work with the training department and logistics to provide needed resources on training day one.

### **UNIFORM AND CLOTHING REQUIREMENTS**

DINFOS military students are expected to maintain their personal appearance in accordance with applicable service regulations. Civilians are expected to be professional in appearance.

#### **For Daily Wear:**

- All Services: Current Duty Uniform. Flight suits are not an authorized uniform at DINFOS. See service specific guidelines at: [uniform policies](#)
- Civilians: Business casual. No jeans.

### **LATE ARRIVALS**

Students arriving late risk losing their course reservation to a person on the "standby" list. If you are going to be late, contact the DINFOS Registrar's Office at (301) 677-4648.

### **ABSENCE POLICY**

Absences for non-emergency, personal reasons are not normally approved. Clear your schedule now. Absence requests will be reviewed individually and granted for emergencies only.

### **DIRECTIONS TO FORT GEORGE G. MEADE**

The address for DINFOS is: 6500 Mapes Road, Fort Meade, MD, 20755. You will need a valid DOD identification card to enter the base.

**Caution:** Mapping software like Google Maps may recommend a route through an unauthorized part of the base (i.e., National Security Agency). Do not proceed past signs saying "NSA EMPLOYEES ONLY." Even with a DOD ID card, you are not allowed to traverse through NSA areas, and you may be detained. To be safe, we recommend you enter through one of these three gates: Reece Road (main gate on the northeast part of the base); Rockenbach Road, also known as MD-713 or Route 713 (on the northern part of the base); or Mapes Road, off of MD-32 or Route 32 (on the southern part of the base).

**Flying:** If you arrive by commercial air, we recommend you fly into Baltimore/Washington International Airport (BWI). Fort George G. Meade is about 10 miles south of the airport. Military transportation is not available. Taxi service is available from BWI to Fort Meade at an estimated cost of \$20 for one person. A rental car may be beneficial if it is authorized on your orders. The other two major airports in the region, Ronald Reagan Washington National (DCA) and Washington Dulles International (IAD) airports, are a considerable distance from Fort Meade. Taxi fare from DCA is approximately \$65, while a taxi from IAD can run as high as \$150.

### **BILLETING/LODGING**

Candlewood Suites (an IHG Hotel) is located on Fort Meade. Please contact them directly at 410-674-7700 for reservations. If you are Active-Duty Army, ARNG, and USAR you should already have a reservation in the system. All other branches, ie. Air Force, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard and Civilians will be required to make individual reservations.

If lodging is full, the Candlewood staff will provide a list of approved off post lodging. If you encounter problems with your reservation, or have other questions about billeting, please contact your appropriate military detachment.

Please note: All MARINE E5s and below, with the exception of those physically stationed at Ft. Meade will be issued a barracks room and meal card for the duration of their course. Per MCO 10110.47A, any Marine receiving ComRats will have them suspended during this period.

### **INPROCESSING**

Please follow your service specific instructions for prior-service members. These instructions are provided at [dinfos.dma.mil](https://dinfos.dma.mil) under "STUDENT INFO"

### **RENTAL CARS**

Rental Cars are unit funded. The Candlewood Suites hotel on base is located within walking distance of DINFOS. However, if you are billeted outside of the installation, a rental car is strongly recommended.

### **HEALTH CARE**

Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center, located on Fort Meade, is not a full-service hospital and may not be able to provide the health care you require. However, Walter Reed National Military Medical Center and the hospital at Andrews Air Force Base are within driving distance. If you have specific healthcare issues, it would be best to call Kimbrough Ambulatory Care Center and/or your regional Tricare representative before you arrive. For government civilians who are enrolled in a health benefits plan, most plans are accepted at civilian facilities in this area. It is strongly recommended that you contact your insurance provider prior to arrival, in case medical care is needed while you are away from home. You may have to change your Tricare region prior to arrival at Fort Meade. Ensure you bring an adequate supply of any prescription medications.

### **DINING FACILITY**

All Service members on TDY orders MUST follow their orders in regards to MEALS and LODGING. Per Diem is typically not authorized for those lodged on base.

### **PAY**

Ensure your pay is properly arranged through your unit/organization before you arrive. There is a very limited finance center located on Fort Meade.

### **QUESTIONS**

Please work with your training POC in your organization with any questions or concerns. You can also contact the DINFOS Registrar [dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil](mailto:dma.meade.dinfos.list.academic-records@mail.mil) and your [student service detachment](#) on Fort Meade for any orders, logistics, and or service-related concerns.

We look forward to working with you during IPASC. Your instructors are experienced, demanding, and dedicated to ensuring you have an enriching experience and complete this course equipped to handle whatever missions you may face in the future.

***Strength Through Truth***