

Objectives

After reading this lesson you will be able to:

1. Define the mission of Joint Combat Camera
2. Explain the capabilities of Joint Combat Camera



Overview

This unit of instruction will take a close look at:

Definitions

ComCam

Visual Information

Joint Combat Camera Center

ComCam Mission

Service Assets and Capabilities



Combat Camera

"The acquisition and utilization of still and motion imagery in support of combat, information, humanitarian, special operation forces, intelligence, reconnaissance, engineering, legal, **public affairs** and other operations involving the military services."

That's the definition from the manuals.

Note that public affairs is one of the many operational elements that combat camera, or comcam, supports.

Visual Information

How does ComCam do its job?

- With or without sound
- Stills, Motion Media
- Video/Audio Recording
- Gaphic Arts/Visual Aids/Models
- Support Processes

Note that all of these elements also work into the job flow of public affairs.

Joint Combat Camera Center

- Web-based database
- Official U.S. military images
- 35,000 stills
- 175 Quicktime Previews

All the information collected around the world by ComCam becomes part of the Joint Combat Camera Center. The DOD Imagery Server is jam-packed with useful information that the public affairs office can access.

The Mission I

Provides the President, Secretary of Defense, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, combat commands and joint task forces with directed imagery capability in support of operational and planning requirements during wartime operations, worldwide crises, contingencies and joint exercises.

"Directed imagery capability" = "Don't wait for the picture to happen, you go out and get it."

The Mission II

Provides tangible situational awareness information for use by military commanders and a valuable visual record of still and motion imagery used as historical evidence of military operations.



Classic examples include the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7th, 1941 and the raising of the American Flag on Iwo Jima in February 1945.



Combat Camera also helped to document the capture of deposed Panamanian leader Manuel Noriega in 1990...

ComCam forces were a big help in the peacekeeping mission in Bosnia by documenting key occurrences of civil unrest...

More recently there was America's retaliation against terrorism in Afghanistan after September 11.

And while ComCam operations are ongoing in Iraq, as they have been since the 2003 invasion, ComCam photographers were also present at a key moment in that operation...



Surely you remember this guy. The shaggy dog photo came from December 2003 after we found Saddam hiding in his spider hole...



Combat Camera Capabilities

- Unique, Specialized
- Aerial photography
- Underwater, Special Forces
- Special, Distinct, Defined
- **No Routine PA Duties**

Obviously ComCam forces perform a mission with a whole range of capabilities... from aerial photography and airborne qualification to underwater photography and special forces reconnaissance.

Here's a few things you need to know: ComCam forces are assigned to J-3 Operations under the direct control of the J-39 staff officer... and while everything they do helps support intelligence and public affairs missions, ComCam exists as a "separate and distinct" operational entity with a clearly defined documentation mission.

What that means is that you, as a PAO, shouldn't be expecting the ComCam team to act as your everyday public affairs specialists, e.g., they're not going to take your ribbon cutting shots at the new PX.

Service Assets and JCCC

Each of the services has its own assets and special capabilities (detailed on next pages):



v

Air Force Assets & Capabilities:

- ComCam teams are uniquely trained, equipped and organized for rapid global deployment to provide documentation of Air Force air and ground operations.
- Adaptive force packages:
- Fully qualified and equipped for day/night operations
- Expediently transmit imagery.
- Possess certified/qualified aircrew members for aerial documentation.
- ComCam is the lead for collecting, managing and distributing weapons system video (WSV), which provides the combat air forces and combatant commanders with a visual record of aircraft weapons delivery, targeting and accuracy

ComCam units are under the operational control of Air Mobility Command.



Army Assets & Capabilities:

The ComCam Company can provide:

- Day and night still and video acquisition of land, free fall, static airborne and air assault operations.
- Deploy on short notice to support any level of combat force projection.
- Imagery can be expeditiously transmitted to the JCCC.
- The Army has limited capability to process WSV.
- When fully deployed, ComCam supports the warfighter at all echelons in a theater of war.
- Its modular design facilitates the tailoring of support packages for lesser regional conflicts, small-scale contingencies and other operations in the spectrum

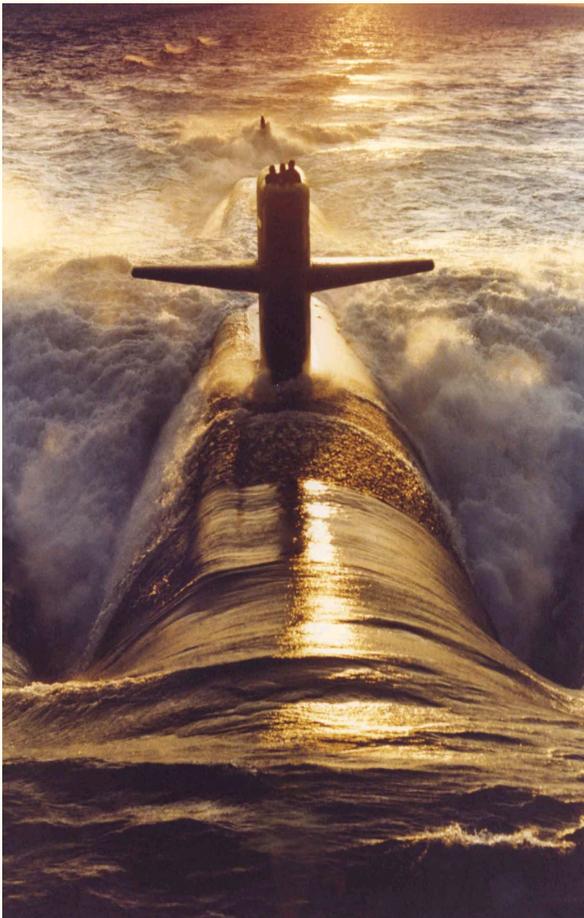
ComCam units are under the operational control of US Army Forces Command (FORSCOM).



Navy Assets & Capabilities:

- Navy fleet ComCam units are expressly organized, trained and equipped to provide rapid deployment of ComCam assets to support military exercises, operations and contingencies.
- Specialized day/night, all-weather aerial (fixed and rotary wing), surface.
- Underwater (Fleet Combat Camera, Atlantic only) and land imagery acquisition and transmission capabilities to document force deployments and activities before, during and after military engagements.

ComCam units are under the operational control of the Commanders, Atlantic and Pacific Fleets, respectively.



Marine Assets & Capabilities:

- Marine Corps ComCam is organized to support the warfighters' imagery requirements at all levels within the Marine Air-Ground Task Force (MAGTF).
- Marine Corps operational ComCam provide the MAGTF Commander direct VI support in the form of photography, videography, graphic arts and lithography.
- ComCam teams deploy with man pack systems capable of all-weather, day and night digital acquisition.
- The teams use organic Marine Corps communications systems to disseminate VI both horizontally and vertically throughout the MAGTF.
- Marine Corps ComCam personnel are resident within the supporting establishment VI centers aboard Marine bases, stations and recruit training depots. These centers fall under the cognizance of Commanders, Marine Forces (MARFOR), Atlantic and Pacific.

The MARFOR commanders may task these supporting establishment ComCam Marines to support joint ComCam operations within their joint operations area for a joint ComCam team requirement. They are also the personnel replacement resource for the MAGTF COMCAM teams for sustainment.



Joint COMCAM Center:

The JCCC, located in the Pentagon, is responsible for the receipt, rapid processing and distribution of current still and motion imagery, most of which is provided by deployed ComCam teams. ComCam teams transmit their imagery to the JCCC in near real-time using state-of-the-art communications technology.

- JCCC customers include the OSD, the Joint Staff, combatant commands and other military and government agencies. Distribution of imagery is largely accomplished online, via the Defense Imagery Server.
- The JCCC is the official central reception center for all Combat Camera still and video imagery of significant DoD operations and exercises worldwide.
- Provides one central POC for all combat camera imagery, allowing for faster collection and distribution.

Provides DoD Activities with a ready source of images to support operational, training, education, public affairs and briefing requirements.



ComCam Mission Support

Here is a list of all the "masters" that ComCam answers to...

- Information Operations
- Psychological Operations
- Investigation Support
- Civil Affairs
- Homeland Security Medical
- Legal Documentation
- Civil-Military Operations
- Special Operations
- Historical Documentation
- Operational Assessment
- Country-drug Operations
- Counterterrorism
- Peace Operations
- Crisis Management
- Battle Damage Assessment Intelligence
- Operational Test and Evaluation
- Training and Support
- Force Protection
- [Public Affairs](#)
- Foreign Humanitarian Assistance
- Domestic Operations

The list is long and note that Public Affairs is just one of many, many jobs that ComCam can do.

Command Relationship

If you follow the chain of tasks you won't break it... and it won't break you.

- Joint Combat Camera is an operational mission **assigned to the J-3**.
- ComCam **deliberate plans** are published in **Appendix 9 to Annex C** of the operations plan.
- Other functions, such as intelligence, communications, information operations, psychological operations, PA, etc., may cross-reference ComCam support in their respective annexes.
- Operational control (**OPCON**) for joint ComCam team **retained at JTF level**.
- Tactical control (**TACON**) for joint ComCam assets **may** be passed to the **component** commanders.
- Components retain OPCON of their assigned ComCam forces, but component ComCam forces may receive mission assignments from the joint ComCam team

Tasking ComCam

How does one task the local Combat Camera team, if you have one?

- First ask if you have VI capability
- If yes, can they meet the COMCAM Mission
- If yes, then task them
- If no, go to the following website:

<http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/tasking>

Concept of Operations

- The typical Combat Camera team can **produce both still and motion imagery** and **transmit imagery** to multiple locations via portable and fixed long-range transmission systems, such as satellite communication (SATCOM), NIPRNET, SIPRNET, etc.
- Teams document **day and night** combat operations. When requested, specially trained ComCam personnel can provide **underwater, aerial and airborne** documentation.
- All ComCam personnel are field trained and can operate in forward areas. Many are survival, escape, resistance and evasion (SERE) trained and **qualified to operate with special operations forces.**

Use of Imagery

On-Scene Commander



On-scene commanders are encouraged to utilize Combat Camera teams for operational imagery requirements. On-scene commanders may utilize ComCam imagery for **daily battle briefings, targeting, operational assessment, force protection, battlefield orientation, airfield qualification** or any other purpose that assists decision making and mission accomplishment.

Use of Imagery

Joint Forces

Supported Combatant Command



Joint Force/JTF Commander. The joint force may utilize imagery for **operational awareness, information operations, psychological operations, battle damage assessment**, etc.

Supported Combatant Command. Imagery provides **operational awareness, briefing support, information operations, public affairs support**, etc.

Use of Imagery



- President
- OSD
- PAO
- News Media

Combat Camera imagery end-use finds its way to the office of the President, the Secretary of Defense, the Public Affairs Office, or course, and the news media.

Scroll down to take a look at a few of those...

[Click here for the images captured by Combat Camera in their final version:](#)

[Click here for the 99 top military photographs of all time:](#)

Getting the Imagery

How do you, as a PAO, get access to the ComCam the imagery? Here's the Web link. Check it out and bookmark it later. You have to register for the service and must have a password to access.

<http://dodimagery.afis.osd.mil/home.html>



Joint Combat Camera Training

Joint exercises provide a valuable opportunity for service Combat Camera teams to integrate and operate together. It offers commanders and their staffs the opportunity to train on the proper planning and employment of ComCam in the joint exercise environment. Additionally, it gives the ComCam teams and commanders experience on effective utilization of ComCam imagery.



Joint Combat Camera Training II

Commanders should **incorporate joint Combat Camera forces as a part of the actual exercise** rather than used as a separate organization simply documenting the exercise. Exercise planners should write ComCam into exercise joint mission essential task lists and master scenario events list because ComCam must train as they will operate in a real-world environment.

Summary Review

A look through the viewfinder of this unit of instruction gave focus for you, as a PAO, to develop a firm working relationship with a Combat Camera unit. The settings were for:

Definitions

ComCam

Visual Information

Joint Combat Camera Center

ComCam Mission

Service Assets and Capabilities

Public Affairs & Combat Camera

With Combat Camera you have an invaluable tool to take the viewer right to the heart of the action... to tell your stories with powerful images...you need to understand how you, as a PAO, can use that tool. What you have studied will be an additional implement in your public affairs toolkit.

You can learn more about Combat Camera via a Web site maintained by the International Combat Camera Association at:

www.combatcamera.org

