Weathering the Storm
By Jara Allen, IMCEA Executive Director

2013 is certainly proving to be a challenge for all of us. The uncertain budget picture, which caused cancellation of the annual Armed Forces Workshop and therefore our IMCEA trade show, continues to disrupt operations across the services and among our sister associations. Other major associations and organizations have also cancelled events for this year and even 2014, among them International Food Service Executives Association, Professional Housing Management Association, and Defense Logistics Agency. The impact is not limited to a single sector and is not short-term. At the installation level, you and your employees may be facing furlough in light of sequestration. At the very least you are probably hampered by the inability to travel, train, and network. Our customer base will certainly be impacted; as discretionary income and work schedules shift, we may see associated changes in buying patterns. It would be easy to draw back and go into survival mode in the face of this adversity. But I argue that now more than ever we must search for new and innovative ways to serve our customers. Creativity in programming and in marketing will be required to survive, and maybe even thrive in this environment. But beyond that, our customers need us now more than ever. We are a cornerstone of warfighter and community support; service members and families rely on us! Let’s face it, MWR personnel are no strangers to adversity. We have weathered tough economies, force protection restrictions, funding changes, organizational mergers, and more. We will weather this the same way; reaching out to our community to assess customer need in this “new” environment, then meeting that need in a creative, responsible way. The following quote is from a National Library Service librarian facing drastic personnel and budget cuts, “We realized that while we had to work within our current restraints to do our work to the best of our abilities in order to serve our patrons, we had to push even harder on outreach and advocacy efforts. It was a critical time to demonstrate the importance of our service and to employ creative measures to maintain and improve the level of service.” What a positive proactive approach! And lest you think we do not practice what we preach, please know that your IMCEA national staff and Board of Directors is going back to the drawing board to determine how to best serve YOU during this time. Just this week we had a very productive discussion regarding “virtual” interaction...training, networking, outreach, vendor exposure, etc. The next few weeks will be spent defining our goals and identifying the best approach. Watch for more on those initiatives in the near future and please let us know your thoughts and ideas! As always, thank you for continuing to serve those who serve this nation.

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United States Coast Guard Commander Robert L. Smith has been invited for induction into the Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s (BGCA) National Hall of Fame, Class of 2013.

CDR Smith will be inducted into the BGCA Hall of Fame as part of the annual National BGCA conference on 1 May 2013 at the World Center Marriott in Orlando, FL. He will join more than 150 other former Boys and Girls Club members who have been recognized as leaders in their fields, including Denzel Washington, Jennifer Lopez, Edward James Olmos, Olympian Jackie Joyner-Kersee, basketball great Michael Jordan, baseball great Joe Morgan, General Wesley Clark, and Coast Guard Captain Daniel Travers.

CDR Smith is currently serving as the Executive Assistant to the Deputy Commandant for Mission Support. He credits a great deal of his success in life to his early experience with the Boys and Girls Club organization in Brooklyn, NY. Three months after starting at the Club, his academic performance improved so much that he was placed in the top seventh grade class in his school and was eventually promoted from the seventh grade into the ninth grade. When he entered high school he had the academic credits to start as a sophomore. What made this progression noteworthy was that prior to his BGCA experience; he struggled with academics and had to repeat the fourth grade.

CDR Smith leveraged his BGCA experience to develop a life-long passion for learning and a successful Coast Guard career. He went on to earn his Bachelor of Science degree in Communications from West Virginia State College, his Master of Science in Industrial/Organizational Psychology from Capella University, and a Master of Science in Instructional and Performance Technology from Boise State University. He has only the dissertation to complete for his PhD in Psychology from Capella University. He is currently a Captain-select and is the first Minority Officer Recruiting Effort candidate to be selected for promotion to the rank of Captain. CDR Smith exemplifies that positive direction and hard work can lead to success.

Like other military branches, the Coast Guard has an affiliation agreement with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America and currently has four BGCA-affiliated youth programs on Coast Guard installations. These Clubs are at Air Station Borinquen, in Aguadilla, PR; Air Station Cape Cod, MA; Training Center Petaluma, CA; and Base Kodiak, AK. Coast Guard active duty members may also enroll their dependent children in local Boys and Girls Clubs through the BGCA Mission Youth Outreach program. The Mission Youth Outreach program has been instrumental in providing world-class youth programming to Coast Guard active duty family members in their local communities.
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One amazing benefit of your membership with IMCEA is the Ability to become CMCE Certified. The only military Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) certification program that is nationally registered by the National Certification Commission. As with any certification, you have to re-certify every three years. Recertification is easy! All you have to do is fill out the form on our website https://imcea.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/cmcerecognition1.pdf and send it in to us. The cost for re-certification is $50.

We are in the process of sending out reminders to those members who need to re-certify. You do not want to let this prestigious certification lapse! For questions about CMCE certification, or your CMCE status, please contact John Walker at john@imcea.org.
For years, the Ultimate Fighting Championship has enjoyed a longstanding relationship with the United States Military. In fact, many former servicemen, such as light heavyweight contender Brian Stann (U.S. Marines), currently compete in the UFC.

In 2006, the UFC hosted the first of three Fight for the Troops nights that raised a combined $13 million for the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, which serves U.S. military personnel wounded in service to our nation, and their families. After the third event in 2011, Marty Edelman, trustee for the Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund, told MMAjunkie.com, “They’re devoted to America’s troops.”

That same UFC excitement delivered live to the troops is still available each month through Joe Hand Promotions, Inc.; the nation’s premier TV distributor for special pay-per-view events, such as the UFC and championship boxing. For over 42 years, JHP has delivered special pay-per-view events to its customer base, which includes thousands of sports bars, restaurants, casinos, military bases, universities, cruise ships and oil rigs.

By promoting the UFC, Joe Hand Promotions helps various commercial establishments increase their sales on fight nights. JHP supplies the necessary tools and expertise to run a successful UFC event. Not only do they provide free promotional kits that include UFC posters and giveaways, but a personal sales representative is available to assist in marketing needs.

Over the years, more than a few military bases have benefited from showing live UFC pay-per-view events. They not only saw an increase in their sales but also a huge morale boost.

“UFC fights at Beale really boost morale,” said Michael L. Burger, operations manager at Recce Point Club, Beale AFB, Calif. “It is great to see airmen that don’t normally get the chance to meet each other come together and have a great time.”

“We have a variety of guests and many regulars, from active duty and their dependents, to retired military and DoD civilians,” said Sarah Farquharson, operator of Club Five Six at Luke Air Force Base, Phoenix, Az. “The attendance continues to grow each month, as do sales.”

The fastest growing sports organization in the world, the UFC started in 1993 as a professional
mixed martial arts organization. Today it stands as the world's leading MMA promoter, offering the premier series of MMA sports events that have sold out some of the biggest arenas and stadiums across the globe.

In 2006, the UFC became the largest pay-per-view event provider worldwide. In 2011, the UFC burst into the mainstream with a landmark seven-year broadcast agreement with FOX Sports Media Group.

According to Nielsen ratings, one-in-five men watch UFC programming. In the fourth quarter of 2011, 20 percent of all males 18 and over (21.1 million) watched UFC programming.

Other highlights from the Nielsen study include:
- The debut of UFC on FOX was the most watched professional fight since 2003.
- UFC on FOX out-performs college football with men 18-34, except for the historical LSU vs. Alabama game.
- UFC on FOX out-delivered 84 percent of MLB playoff telecasts on both FOX (including the World Series) and TBS over the last five years among men 18-34.
- The UFC delivers a higher composition of Hispanic viewers than "The Big 4" sports leagues.

On average, the UFC promotes 14 pay-per-view events a year. Upcoming live pay-per-view events include:

**UFC 158, Saturday, March 16**
The top welterweights in the world will converge on the Bell Centre in Montreal. In the main event, champion Georges St-Pierre (23-2-0) faces his fiercest rival, Nick Diaz (27-8-1), in a highly anticipated showdown. Also, another welterweight rivalry continues as Rory MacDonald (14-1-0) faces Carlos Condit (28-6-0), the only man to beat him. Plus, two of the hardest punchers in the division face off when Johny Hendricks (14-1-0) meets Jake Ellenberger (28-6-0).

**UFC 159, Saturday, April 27**
UFC light heavyweight champion Jon Jones (17-1-0) returns to New Jersey where he first won his world title. He will face one of the most polarizing figures in mixed martial arts, Chael Sonnen (28-12-1). Fresh from their stint as coaches on The Ultimate Fighter season 17, Jones and Sonnen will now settle the score in a super fight for the ages.

For more information on how Joe Hand Promotions can deliver live UFC pay-per-view events to your installation, contact Jim Fenstermacher at 1-800-557-4263, ext. 230, or email jim@joehandpromotions.com. Visit joehandpromotions.com for more event information.
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Promote your events, announce your achievements, and share the results of your hard work and dedication by contributing an article or photographs to the IMCEA Connections Newsletter! Email articles with at least two high resolution photographs to Melissa@imcea.org. Submissions must be received no later than the 15th of the month for publication. See your story here!
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For the sixth consecutive year, Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen in Aguadilla, Puerto Rico was gearing up to provide assistance for Wounded Warriors coming to Puerto Rico. Only this year, there was a slight change in plans. When John Thompson, the Director of Soldiers Undergoing Disabled Scuba (SUDS), called to plan the annual trip to Puerto Rico, he asked Blair Markham, MWR Director at the Coast Guard Air Station and long time friend, if he could support two groups of warriors on different dates. One group of six Wounded Warriors was coming from the Naval Medical Center San Diego, CA and another group from the Walter Reed National Military Medical Center in Bethesda, MD.

Markham reached out to Paige Kelly, MWR Director at the Coast Guard Sector San Juan to see if she could support the wounded warriors from the San Diego area. Without hesitation, Kelly and the command were instrumental in providing transportation for the wounded warriors to and from the San Juan international airport, as well as making suggestions for great dive sites off the eastern side of Puerto Rico. While on that side of the island, these wounded warriors enjoyed diving the waters surrounding the small islands of Culebra and Viequez, while earning their open water dive certifications.

A week later, Markham and the Borinquen command provided transportation for six Wounded Warriors and their support team from the San Juan International Airport and supported multiple dive operations off the western coast of Puerto Rico.

The visit to the Borinquen-side of the island of Puerto Rico coincided with the Air Station’s “Super Bowl Extravaganza, and Chili Cook-Off,” sponsored by Markham and his MWR staff. The Wounded Warriors participating in this event were treated to some great Coast Guard hospitality and one of the command’s annual best morale events. Anheuser-Busch and the distributor of Don Q supported this event. Additionally, Anheuser-Busch created and delivered some incredible “care-packages” for the Wounded Warriors. There were authentic NFL Jerseys, footballs, and other great marketing memorabilia available in recognition of this great event.

During the chili-cook off, Markham asked the wounded warriors to be the judges of the entries. According to Markham, one of the Wounded Warriors expressed thanks for not suffering a “stomach wound” while in Afghanistan, because the chili he just sampled nearly burned a whole in his stomach! Thankfully, that contestant did not make it to the winner’s circle!

Each year, the Coast Guard commands’ participation with the Wounded Warriors in the SUDS program generates a lot of interest with Air Station residents. The command is highly supportive of these efforts and this year was no different, as an estimated 150 active duty and fellow DHS employees participated in this most memorable event. What was amazing yet humbling to Markham was how the children interacted with the Wounded Warriors with their innocent yet naïve questions, putting smiles on everyone’s face.

Coast Guard Air Station Borinquen and Sector San Juan will continue to support those who have served and sacrificed so much. Once again, these two Coast Guard commands on the island of Puerto Rico worked hard to support these Wounded Warriors. At the end of their visits, it was hard to tell who had more fun.
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