

August 08, 2013 | By Christine Clark

Marines to be Briefed at UC San Diego before Leaving for Middle East and North Africa

Pre-deployment educational briefings for active military sponsored by School of International Relations and Pacific Studies

Officers from Camp Pendleton's 1st Battalion, 4th Marines will be participating in a pre-deployment educational briefing on Aug. 12, just days before leaving for tours of duty in the Middle East and North Africa. The briefing, conducted by the University of California, San Diego's School of International Relations and Pacific Studies (IR/PS), will cover the current geopolitical, security, policy, economic and cultural issues in Syria, Egypt, Jordan, Somalia, India, Pakistan and other areas where the terror threat has led to the State Department's recent closing of some U.S. Embassies.



U.S. Marines at a June 4, 2008 pre-deployment educational briefing at UC San Diego's School of International Affairs and Pacific Studies.

More than 100 senior enlisted and commissioned officers will participate in the Aug. 12 program, which is designed to provide the battalion with the most up-to-date information, so precise decisions can be made in the field that will help defuse conflict.

Since 2006, IR/PS has conducted educational military briefings prior to major deployments to specific regions of the world. The sessions have been taught by IR/PS and UC San Diego professors, plus experts from organizations such as the Naval Postgraduate School (NPS), UC's Institute on Global Conflict and Cooperation (IGCC) and the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory. These briefings have been conducted for more than 500 officers leading battalions into the Asia-Pacific, South Asia/Indian Ocean and the Middle East and North Africa.

"Our school's history of conducting pre-deployment briefings is part of our ongoing commitment to providing a first-rate education to active duty military personnel and veterans," said Peter Cowhey, IR/PS dean and holder of the Qualcomm Endowed Chair in Communications and Technology Policy. "IR/PS is dedicated to educating the next generation of international problem solvers and peacemakers through our research and teaching activities."

Many officers first introduced to IR/PS through its pre-deployment educational briefings have also enrolled in the school's graduate degree programs, such as the one-year, executive master's program, the Master of Advanced Studies in International Affairs (MAS-IA).

Captain Aaron Bell, of the 2nd Battalion, 4th Marines attended a 2009 pre-deployment briefing and applied to the program after he returned home from his tour of duty.

According to Bell, who graduated from the program in June 2013, the MAS-IA degree is ideal for career military or those transitioning into civilian work because it is designed for students seeking a specialized and advanced education in the field of international affairs.

"The MAS-IA program broadened my perspective and deepened my understanding of strategic events around the world," said Bell. "The rigorous coursework combined with professors of the highest caliber who possess extensive public and private sector experience greatly enhanced my analytical and quantitative skill set. This complemented my leadership experience, making me a better-rounded military officer."

Due to the addition of the MAS-IA in 2010, UC San Diego was added to the Navy's elite list of approved civilian universities in the area of national security, international relations and diplomacy. Other schools on the list include Georgetown University, Harvard University, Johns

Hopkins University, New York University, Stanford University, Tufts University and the University of Chicago.

Additionally, the program received a similar endorsement from the Army with the approval of the MAS-IA degree as Advanced Civil Schooling (ACS) for the Foreign Area Officer (FAO) program. Foreign Area Officers serve as the military's international affairs experts.

Cowhey added, "The security track emphasis in our degree program is a great value to our military service men and women as it focuses on foreign relations with the Asia-Pacific. With the military's recent 'pivot' to this region of the world, policies on security and technology (including cybersecurity) and defense innovation are of significant interest. This fall alone, we will welcome seven Foreign Area Officers to the MAS-IA program."

In addition, active duty military personnel and veterans have enrolled in IR/PS's Master of Pacific International Affairs (MPIA) two-year, professional degree program. The curriculum focuses on the professional's need to have a comprehensive worldview and it allows students to specialize in business, politics, economics and public policy in the Pacific region.

With its unique focus on Asia and the Americas, the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies is one of the top schools in the nation for international relations and is dedicated to educating people and developing research focused on finding solutions for the challenges that face the international community.

For more information about IR/PS, go to: <http://irps.ucsd.edu>.

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