

Welcome

L.I.N.K.S. for Marine Parents
and Extended Family Members
of MCESG

*Lifestyle,
Insights,
Networking,
Knowledge,
Skills*



"Your LINK to the Corps"
MCESG Supplemental Guide
Revised 1/2017



Table of Contents

I. The Corps

The United States Marine Corps - Outlines USMC and Marine Corps Embassy Security Group (MCESG) structure and mission. Provides historical insights and discusses traditions.

- Marine Security Guard (MSG) History
- MSG Mission Statement
- MCESG and Department of State (DOS) Command Relationship
- MCESG Command Mission
- MCESG Headquarters at Quantico
- MCESG Regional Organization
- Region and Detachments
- MCESG Requirements
- MCESG Traits
- DOS and MCESG Common Terms and Acronyms
- World Time Zones Map

II. The Maze

The Maze: Benefits and Services - An overview of benefits, privileges, and resources available to USMC families; including the location of these services and how to leverage these assets. Certain services are only available to ID card holders, however, many are available such as:

- American Red Cross
- MCESG Points of Contact
- DStress Line
- Useful Websites

III. Pay Day

Explain the differences between a civilian and a military paycheck, while introducing the Leave and Earning Statement (LES), including a general discussion on basic pay and allowances. Beneficial financial management tips are also presented.

- Pay Chart

IV. Crossroads

Moving in the Military - Insights on the moving process.

- Visiting Post
- Subject Books
- Travel for Your Marine
- Community Liaison Officer (CLO)
- Enrichment & Learning
- Consumable Goods

V. Separation

Discuss the inevitable separations Marine families experience and provide suggestions on how to successfully balance the additional responsibilities when your Marine is away.

- Preparation, Emotions, & Separation
- OPSEC
- Culture Shock
- Completing MSG Duty
- Healthy Communication
- Mail and DIP Pouch Service Guidelines
- Mailing Addresses
- Mailing Packages

I. The Corps



Marine Security Guard History

The close relationship between the Department of State and the United States Marine Corps is almost as old as the Corps itself. For over 200 years Marines have served “In every clime and place” at the request of various Secretaries of State. Examples where Marines have served alongside diplomats include:

- In 1799, the American Consul General was guarded by a detachment of Marines while he negotiated with a rebel leader in Haiti.
- In 1804, Lt. Presley O’Bannon and his Marines accompanied U.S. diplomat, William Eaton, to negotiate an end to the Barbary piracy. After diplomatic efforts failed, O’Bannon and his detachment marched to Tripoli and forced the Pasha’s to capitulate. Their actions are now forever remembered in the first line of our Marine Hymn... “From the Halls of Montezuma to the shores of Tripoli...”
- In 1835, four Marines from the U.S.S. Brandywine were assigned to protect the Consulate in Lima, Peru.
- In 1842, Marines from the U.S.S. Brandywine landed in Shanghai and organized the first “U.S. Consular Guard.”
- In 1846, Marine Lieutenant Archibald Gillespie was sent by President James Polk with secret messages to the U.S. Consul, Thomas Larkin, in addition to messages for Commodore John D. Sloat and John Fremont.
- In 1856, Marines landed in Canton to protect American lives and property during the Tai’p’ing Rebellion at the request of the U.S. Consul General.
- In 1871, Marines accompanied U.S. Foreign Service personnel to Seoul, Korea to establish diplomatic relations. Legation Guard detachments were then stationed at various times in Tokyo, Seoul, and Managua.
- At the turn of the century, in 1900, during the “Boxer Rebellion” in China, a “Legation Guard” was formed and sent to protect the U.S. Legation in Peking (now known as Beijing).

- Marines also provided other security services to the Department of State, including accompanying U.S. diplomats to the Kingdom of Abyssinia (modern day Ethiopia) to establish diplomatic relations.
- During World War I, Marine non-commissioned officers served as diplomatic couriers, guarding the delivery of diplomatic and confidential mail.
- During World War II, a 60 Marine detachment was assigned to guard the U.S. Embassy in London. The London detachment provided internal security for U.S. diplomatic and military personnel, acted as diplomatic couriers, and provided ceremonial details for dignitaries.

After World War II, an alert, disciplined force was needed to protect American embassies, consulates, and legations throughout the world; and so the Marine Security Guard (MSG) program was established in January 1949, when six Marines arrived in Bangkok, Thailand for duty. Early assignments were based on the first new posts. In November 1954, the Marine Security Guard School commenced a formal training program. Since 1954, Marine Security Guards have continued their distinguished service and have performed superbly during numerous embassy crises to include Vietnam (1975), Tehran and Islamabad (1979), Beirut (1983), and also Kenya and Tanzania (1998).

Today our Marine Security Guard detachments are involved in every facet of life within the American community they serve. Whether hosting social events, sponsoring local community activities, or just generally adding to the rich experience of living overseas, our MSGs are indeed “Ambassadors in Blue.” Recent events, however, have clearly highlighted the true benefit and mission of the MSGs. The unexpected attack of the consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia (December 2004), as well as the unplanned and unexpected evacuation of the embassies in Freetown, Sierra Leone (May 1997), Brazzaville, Congo (June 1997), N’Djamena, Chad (2008), and Conakry, Guinea (2009) were greatly facilitated by the actions of the Marine detachments. Whether organizing convoys to the airport, destroying classified equipment, or providing protection to embassy personnel, the MSGs of these detachments were uniformly praised for their actions. Most recently, Marine Security Guards maintained embassy security and assisted with the crisis management during the immediate aftermath of earthquakes in Port au Prince, Haiti and Santiago, Chile.

Qualified volunteers for this special duty continue to be recommended by their Commanding Officers and ordered to Marine Security Guard School for eight weeks of extensive training, screening, and processing. Today, over 1,100 Marine Security Guards serve at over 176 detachments in more than 148 different countries throughout the world with possible future growth. The distinguished reputation enjoyed by all Marine Security Guards has been earned by their outstanding performance of duty while accomplishing an important mission for the United States of America. The constant reference of many American Ambassadors to “My Marines” is a source of great pride to the Corps.

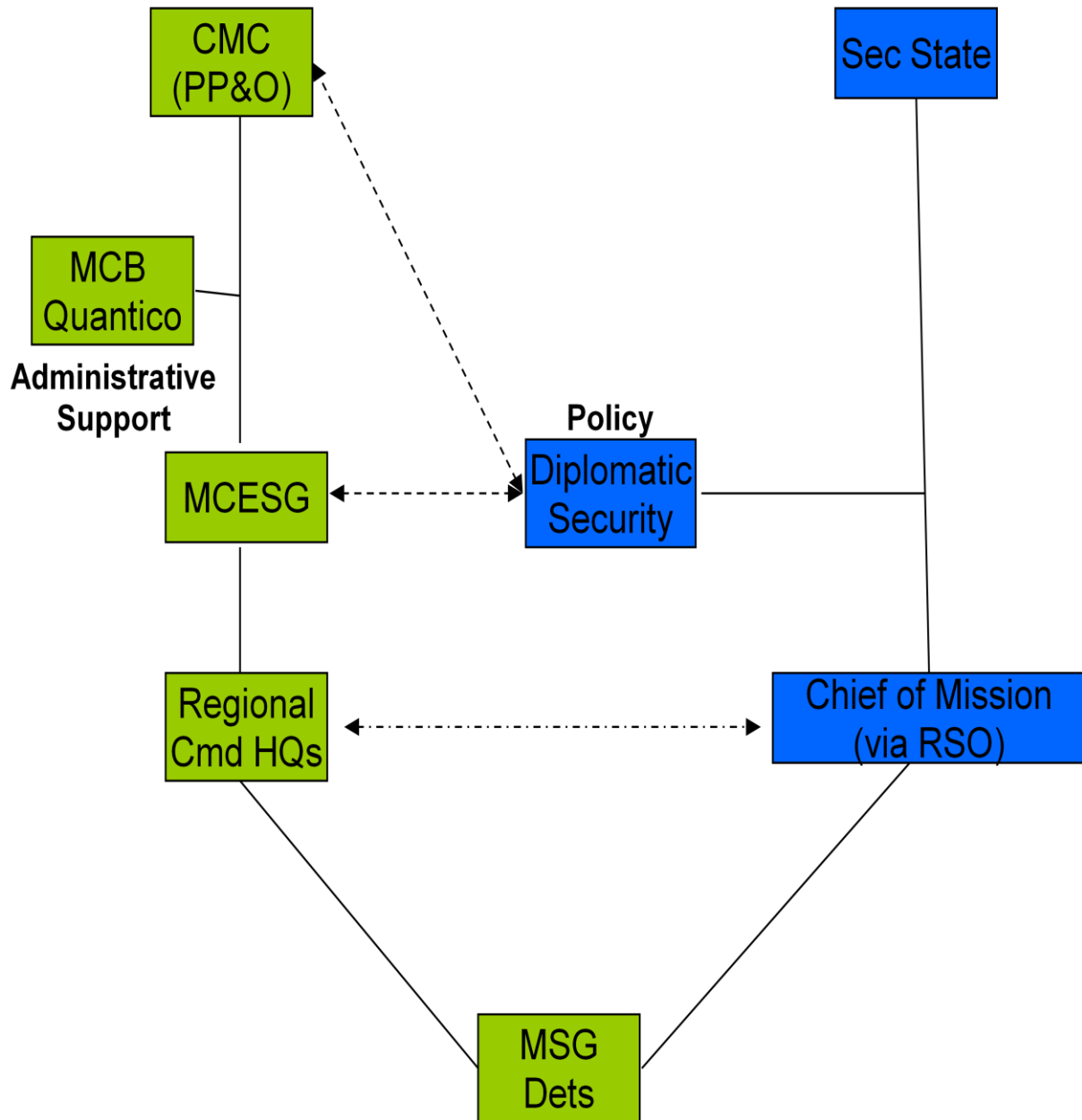
Marine Security Guard Mission

The mission of the Marine Security Guard (MSG) is to provide protection to mission personnel and prevent the compromise of national security information and equipment at designated diplomatic and consular facilities. The MSG is to be prepared to execute plans for the protection of the mission and its personnel as directed by the chief of mission or principal officer through regional security officer.



Source: Memorandum of Agreement between
DoS and USMC, signed 13 Mar 08

MCESG & DOS Command Relationship



MCESG Command Mission

HEADQUARTERS

The MCESG Headquarters Mission is to screen, train, assign, ensure the operational readiness, provide administration, logistical support and discipline of Marines. The MCESG will provide Marines for duty as MSGs at designated U.S. diplomatic missions in support of the Department of State in the protection of personnel, classified material, and U.S. property. The MCESG will exercise command, less operational supervision.

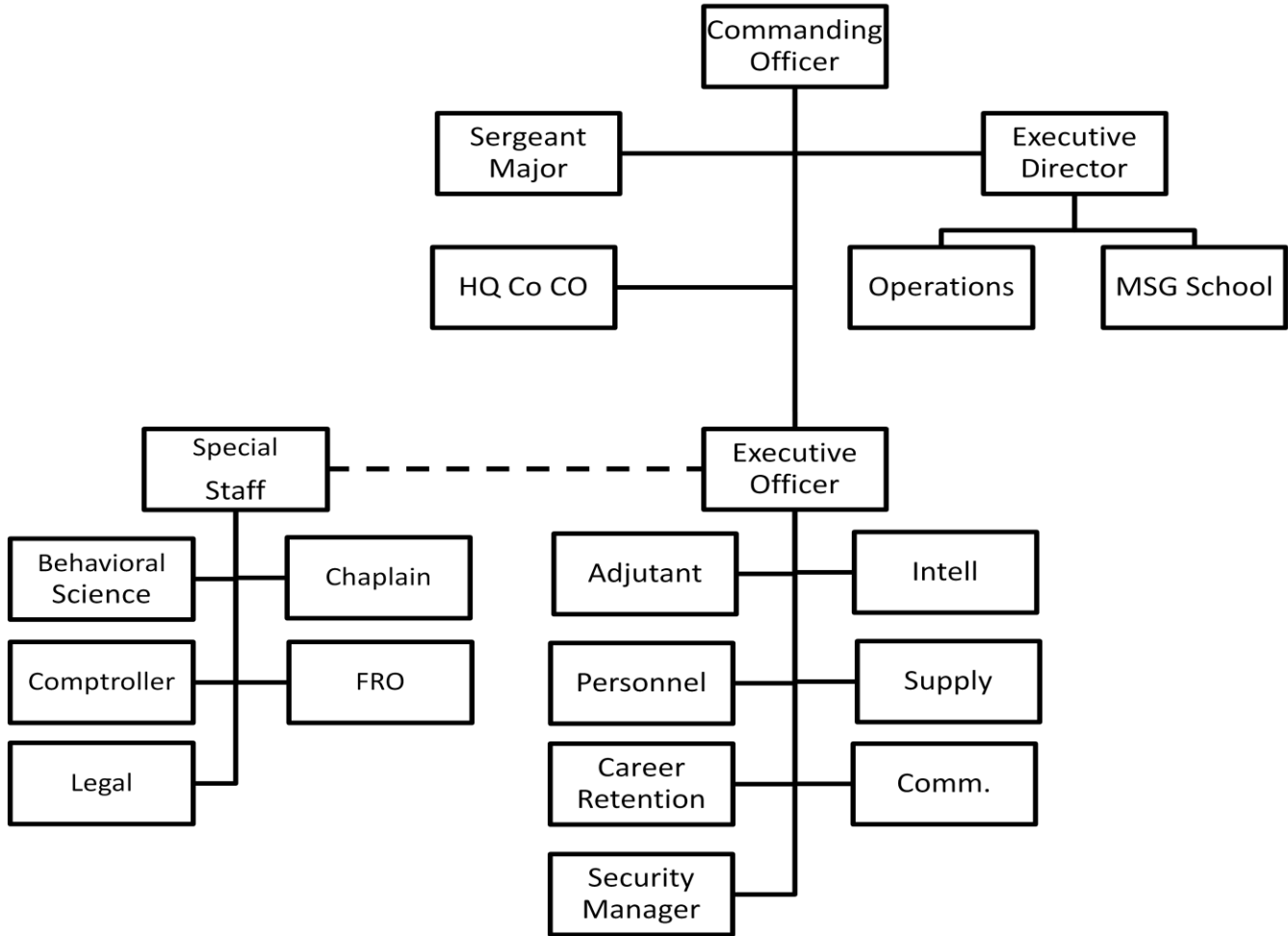
REGION COMMANDS

The MCESG Region Headquarters ensure the continued training, operational readiness, administration, logistical support, as well as the morale, welfare, and discipline of Marines. The MCESG Region Commands will exercise command, less operational supervision.

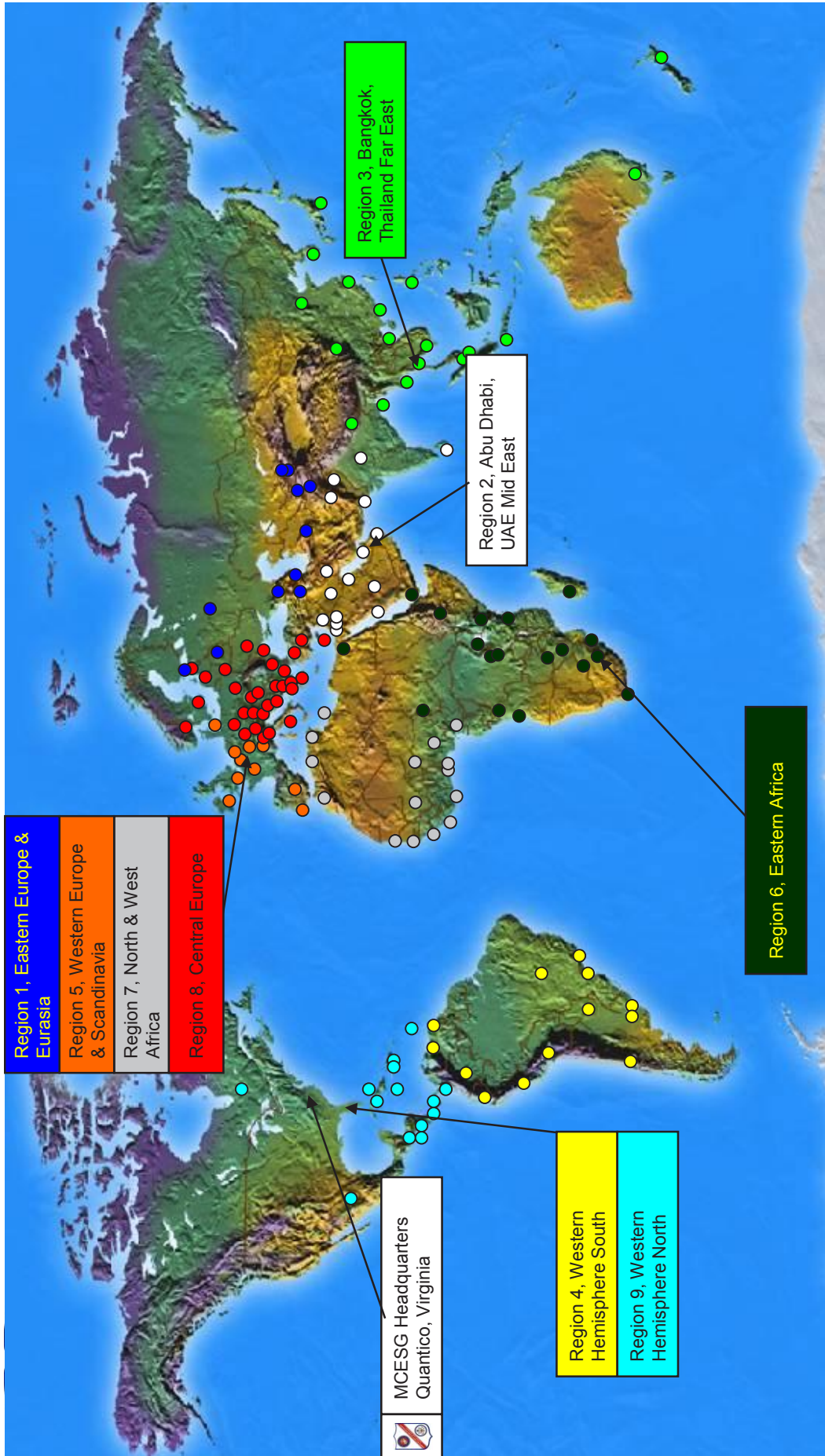
DET

The Mission of the DET is to provide protection to mission personnel and prevent the compromise of national security information and equipment at designated diplomatic and consular facilities. The DET is prepared to execute plans for the protection of the mission and its personnel as directed by the chief of mission or principal officer through the regional security officer.

MCESG HQ



MCESG Organization



Over 170 detachments; more than 148 countries; and possible future growth.

Region and Detachments

REGION

- Regionally based to facilitate command
 - 1st line of USMC interface with Embassy
 - Comprised of 13 to 20 Detachments
- Command Element (3 officers/4 enlisted)
 - Commanding Officer (LtCol screened & slated)
 - Executive Officer (Capt: Inspecting Officer)
 - Operations Officer (Capt: Inspecting Officer)
 - Assistant Operations Officer (Capt: Inspecting Officer)
 - 1st Sgt
 - Admin chief (SSgt)
 - Admin clerk (PFC-Cpl x 2)

DETACHMENT

- Commanded by a SNCO (SSgt-MSgt)
- Operationally responsible to Regional Security Officer (RSO)
- Detachment Size
 - Typical: 1 SNCO & 7 MSGs; one 24/7 Post
 - Largest Detachment: 2 SNCOs & 22 MSGs

Prerequisites and Training

PREREQUISITES

- Detachment Commander (SSgt - MGySgt)
 - Can be married (No more than 4 dependents)
 - Cannot have a family member assigned to EFMP
 - Spouses must obtain U.S.Citizenship prior to applying
 - Youngest child must be 9 months old prior to reporting to MSG school
 - Have an adjudicated Secret Clearance prior to applying
 - 100 GT score (minimum)
 - Have a 1ST Class Physical Fitness Test (PFT)
 - Be a minimum of 64 inches tall
 - All annual training must be completed prior to reporting unless waiver is granted by HQMC
 - SSgt must have 1 year time in grade
 - 18 months Time on Station
 - 39 months obligated service
 - MSgt- MGySgt within time in service limits

- Marine Security Guard (PFC - Sgt)
 - Single
 - Qualify for Top Secret security clearance
 - 90 GT score (minimum)
 - Pass Physical Fitness Test (PFT)
 - Financially stable
 - 18 months Time on Station
 - 38 months of obligated service

SCHOOL DURATION

- 8 weeks for MSG
- 8 weeks for Detachment Commander

TRAINING

- Security
- Antiterrorism
- Protection of classified materials
- Defensive tactics
- Chemical munitions
- Handcuffing
- First Aid
- Emergency response
- Expandable baton
- M9 Beretta service pistol
- Remington M870 12-guage shotgun
- M4 rifle

How Far Will Your Marine Go?

BENEFITS

- Increased promotion opportunities
- Top Secret security clearance
- Bonus composite score points
- Special duty pay
- Civilian clothing allowance
- Dress blue issue
- Overseas travel
- Exposure to different cultures
- Worldwide assignments
- Direct interaction with Dept. of State and other U.S. government agencies
- Opportunities to support President, Vice President and Secretary of State visits
- Specialized training in response to fire, bomb threats, intruders, civil disturbances, and other emergencies
- Off-duty education opportunities

SNCO SPECIFIC BENEFITS

- Command billet opportunities
- Detachment size ranges from 7-24 Marines
- Accompanied tours in most cases

DUTIES

- MSG Stands Post (36-42 hours per week)
- Collateral Duties (8-10 hours per week)
- Required USMC & MCESG Training (5-6 hours per week)
- Off-Duty Education

Marine Corps Embassy Security Group

MSG TRAITS

Since 1948, United States Marines have been guarding our nation's diplomatic missions overseas while demonstrating Professionalism, Discipline, and Vigilance both on and off duty. These traits that Marine Security Guards have habitually performed, were instilled throughout training and continue to guide us today. Every member of this Group must understand and demonstrate these traits. We will be faithful to the MSG Traits of Professionalism, Discipline, and Vigilance as our abiding duty and privilege.

Professionalism

Military knowledge and competence are not enough; Professionalism means demonstrating courage, subordination of self to the greater whole, and most importantly, moral integrity.

I will:

- Be technically and tactically proficient in my duties through continuous training and education.
- Be reliable in my duties, dependable in my actions, and exercise initiative whenever possible.
- Deal with all individuals with tact, bearing, and fairness in all matters.
- Maintain standards in personal appearance and physical fitness.
- Constantly seek to improve myself both personally and professionally.

Discipline

Discipline is not merely compliance with a set of rules and regulations drawn up for the purpose of preserving order in an organization. It may be defined as the habit of instantaneous and instinctive obedience under any and all circumstances.

I will:

- Have the moral courage to do what is right, regardless if someone is watching.
- Be an Ambassador in Blue and a diplomat at all times, projecting a positive image of the United States and the Marine Corps both on and off duty.
- Be ready to respond to emergency situations and fulfill my duties 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- Adhere to the Core Values of Honor, Courage, and Commitment.

Vigilance

To keep watch, stay awake, alertly watchful especially to avoid danger.

I will:

- Never become complacent in my duties, especially if I am alone.
- Bear full responsibility for the security of my post and mission.
- Maintain a high level of personal security and situational awareness.
- Be constantly aware of all possible threats due to terrorism, criminal activity, or unsafe acts and to guard my well being and the safety of my fellow detachment members and embassy personnel at all times.

Department of State and MCESG

Glossary of Common Terms and Acronyms

A	Bureau of Administration, Department of State.
A&D	Accounting and Disbursing System. Overseas financial management system.
ADM/ ADMIN	Administrative Section overseas (includes HRO, FMO, GSO, IMO, IPC, MED).
AFM	American Family Member.
AGR	Agricultural Section overseas.
AID	See USAID below.
ALDAC	All Diplomatic and Consular Posts.
AMB	Ambassador
AMB E&P	Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, representing a head of state and with full powers.
AMCITS	American Citizens
APHIS	Animal Plant and Health Inspection Service, part of U.S. Dept of Agriculture.
APO	Army Post Office. A mail system managed by the Department of Defense, capable of dealing with personal mail, classified and unclassified reports, as well as spare parts for military equipment provided to friendly nations. See also FPO below. Many Foreign Service posts abroad are included in the APO/FPO system.
Attaché	Specialist, civilian or military, assigned to an overseas mission.
B & F	Budget and Fiscal Section in some overseas missions. Newer name is Financial Management Office (FMO).
Board Week	Evaluation of Student Marines by a Board of Command Staff
Bureau	The basic organizational entity-either geographic or functional-of the State Department; headed by an Assistant Secretary responsible for directing the work of various “offices” or “country directors.”
CA	Bureau of Consular Affairs, Department of State.
CAO	Cultural Affairs Officer in Public Diplomacy section of Embassy.
CG	Consul General, principal officer of a consulate general.
Chancery	Principal office of an Embassy (building housing the Ambassador’s office).
Chargé d’Affaires	French, literally “in charge of affairs.” The designation of the officer- normally the Deputy Chief of Mission-who is temporarily in charge of an Embassy when the Ambassador is out of the country. Usually followed by the letters “a.i.,” which stands for the Latin “ad interim.”
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency.
Classification	Unclassified; Limited Official Use (outdated Administrative Classification only); Sensitive But Unclassified (not a classification, but used to indicate handling); Confidential, Secret, Top Secret.

CLO	Community Liaison Office. Overseas field office of the Family Liaison Office. Also the informal title of the office coordinator.
CODEL	Congressional Delegation. Usually a group but can refer simply to one member of Congress traveling abroad on official business; as distinct from a “STAFFDEL,” which is the term applied when the traveler or group of travelers is “Congressional staff.”
COM	Chief of Mission. This generally would be the Ambassador at an Embassy, the Chargé d’Affaires if there is no Ambassador or if he is out of the country, or the permanent representative (PERMREP) if a mission to a multilateral organization like the UN.
Compound	Living or Working Area Protected by High Walls &/or Guards
CON	Consular Section overseas.
CONGEN	Consulate-General. A large consulate (see below) headed by a Consul General and capable of performing a wider variety of consular and reporting functions than a consulate.
CONOFF	Consular Officer.
Consulate	A Foreign Service Post engaged primarily in consular work; officers assigned have consular titles. Consulates are usually constituent posts of an Embassy, either within the Embassy itself or in some other city in the foreign country. While consulates engage in routine reporting, they carry out no diplomatic or representational functions vis-à-vis the host government.
CONUS	Continental United States.
Counselor	A diplomatic title accorded to a head of section in the Embassy, as “Counselor for Political Affairs” or “Political Counselor” (for which the acronym is POLCOUNS). (N.B. Do not confuse diplomatic ranks like “Counselor” with the Senior Foreign Service pay grades of “Counselor,” “Minister-Counselor,” “Career Minister,” and “Career Ambassador,” which correspond to the top four grades of the Senior Intelligence Service and the Senior Executive Service.)
Country Team	Agency heads and other senior advisors of the Ambassador. Meets at intervals determined by the Ambassador.
CS	Tear Gas (chlorobenzylidenemalononitrile)
CV	Command Visit
DAO	Defense Attaché Office
DC	Designated Country
DCM	Deputy Chief of Mission. The second-ranking officer at Post, functioning as deputy to the Chief of Mission (COM); often functioning as the chief operating officer or chief of staff to the Ambassador. Acts for the Ambassador when he is away from post and as Chargé d’Affaires when the Ambassador is out of the country of assignment. Usually has the diplomatic rank of “Counselor of Embassy” or “Minister-Counselor.” Responsible for managing the reporting program.

L.I.N.K.S. for Parents/Extended Family

DEA	Drug Enforcement Administration.
DETCMDR	Detachment Commander
Dip Pass	Diplomatic Passport
Diplomatic Courier	Carries the classified diplomatic pouch.
DOJ	Department of Justice.
DOS	Department of State.
DPM	Diplomatic Pouch and Mail.
DS	Bureau of Diplomatic Security, Department of State.
Duty Officer	Officer at post or in the Department assigned during non-office hours to be responsible for any emergency.
ECC	Evacuation Control Center
ECON	Economic Section overseas.
EFM	Eligible family member. A dependent of a USG employee on travel orders; eligible for employment within a mission.
Embassy	A diplomatic mission in the capital city of a foreign country headed by an Ambassador.
ETA	Estimated Time of Arrival
ETD	Estimated Time of Departure
EU	European Union.
EX	Executive Office
FAST	Fleet Anti-terrorist Security Team
FBI	Federal Bureau of Investigation
FCS	Foreign Commercial Service, Department of Commerce. Provides Commercial Attachés to missions abroad.
FLO	Family Liaison Office, Department of State
FMA	Family Member Appointment. Department of State hiring mechanism.
FMO	Financial Management Office. Unit of administrative section in post overseas. Formerly B&F.
FOIA	Freedom of Information Act.
FPO	Fleet (Navy) Post Office. A mail system managed by the Department of Defense similar to the APO (see APO above).
FS	Foreign Service Salary Schedule for all Foreign Service U.S. personnel.
FSN	Foreign Service National. A non-American employed by a Foreign Service Post abroad, usually from the host country; important as staff members in every section.
FSO	Foreign Service Officer, an American recruited by examination and thereafter a member of a disciplined career service. May be employee of the State Department, AID, Commerce Department, or Agriculture Department.
FY	Fiscal Year.
GLS	Geographic Learning Site. On Department Web site-public outreach.

L.I.N.K.S. for Parents/Extended Family

GOS	Good of Service (form of relief from MSG duty)
GPO	Government Printing Office.
GSO	General Services Officer in an overseas mission. Responsible for motor pool, supplies, building maintenance, contracts and procurement, customs, travel, and shipping.
GWOT	Global War on Terrorism
HHE	Household Effects.
HL	Home Leave.
HRO	Human Resources Officer. Formerly Personnel Officer.
I/A	Instructor/Advisor (at MSG School)
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Service.
Inspector	A Foreign Service or General Schedule officer assigned to inspect a diplomatic or consular post.
Interest Section	The office responsible for protecting the interests of the United States, housed in a third country embassy, in a country with which the United States has no formal relations.
JCS	Joint Chiefs of Staff.
LGF	Local Guard Force. Post security group.
Liaison Office	The office responsible for protecting the interests of the United States prior to the establishment of diplomatic relations (or while diplomatic relations are suspended) between the United States and the host country.
Main State	Department of State main building (21st & C Street, NW). Harry S. Truman Building.
Marshall Hall	MCESG Headquarters building located on Quantico
MCESG	Marine Corps Embassy Security Group
MCI	Marine Corps Institute (In-grade or MOS PME for Marines)
MED	Medical Services, Department of State.
MEGA	Marine Embassy Guard Association
Mission	A generic term that can be used interchangeably with “embassy” or “post.” The entirety of official U.S. representation in a given foreign country that functions under the supervision of the Ambassador, including civilian and military personnel (except U.S. military reporting to a unified command and official U.S. representation to a multilateral organization). However, USAID uses the word to mean specifically the USAID component of a diplomatic mission. Also used as the term for posts accredited to multilateral organizations; e.g., the U.S. Mission to the United Nations, the U.S. Mission to NATO.
MOA	Memorandum of Agreement
MSG	Marine Security Guard
MSGDET	Marine Security Guard Detachment
MSAU	Marine Security Augmentation Unit -The MSAU is a unit made up of Marines that are trained Marine Security Guards, who are based at Quantico, but can rapidly deploy to provide augmentation of existing security at a diplomatic facility as deemed necessary, or to assist with VIP support.
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

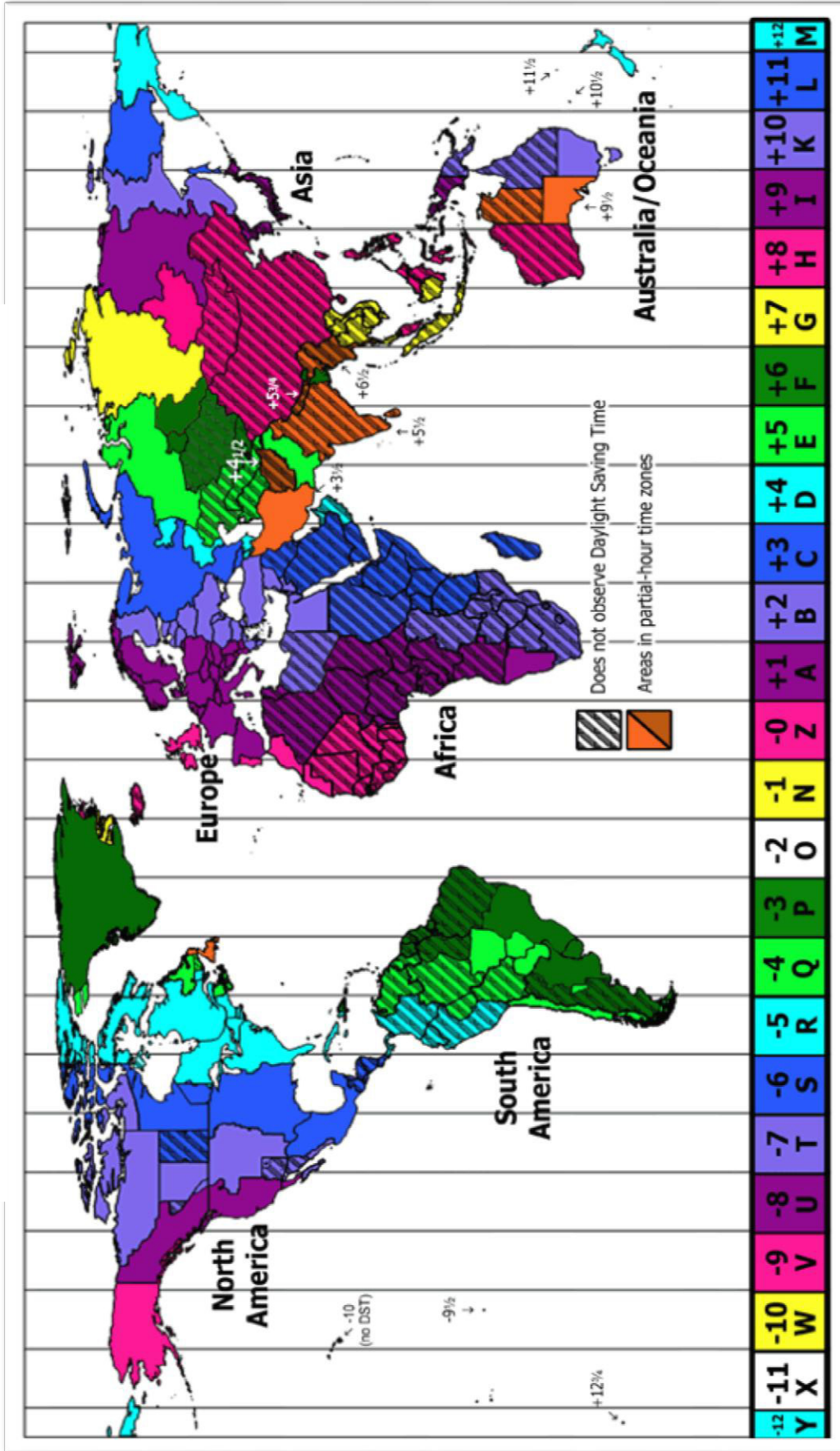
L.I.N.K.S. for Parents/Extended Family

NBC	Nuclear, Biological & Chemical
NEC	New Embassy Compound
NGO	Non-governmental organization.
OB	Official Building (Embassy Building).
OMS	Office Management Specialist (formerly Foreign Service secretary).
PA	Bureau of Public Affairs, Department of State.
PAO	Public Affairs Officer. The title of Public Diplomacy officer assigned to the Public Affairs Section of an Embassy or Consulate. Responsible for managing programs of public information and cultural affairs.
PC	Peace Corps (PC Rep-Peace Corps Representative, PCV-Peace Corps Volunteer).
POL	Political Section overseas.
Post 1	Entry/Exit Control Point at Embassy, where MSGs stand duty
Post	Any diplomatic or consular establishment maintained by the United States abroad.
POTUS	President of the United States.
Pouch	Also called air pouch or diplomatic pouch. Used as a noun to refer to the mailbag by which communications and other materials are conveyed to and from posts. Pouches enjoy diplomatic protection and thus are exempted from customs search. They may travel by air or by sea, depending on bulk. Pouches may be unclassified (moving on their own like mail) or classified (moving under the care of a U.S. Department of State employee known as a Diplomatic Courier). The word can also be used as a verb, i.e., “to pouch.”
POV	Privately Owned Vehicle.
Protocol Officer	Officer assigned to deal with protocol and ceremonial matters.
Public Diplomacy Section	Formerly the United States Information Agency (USIA). See PAO.
R&R	Rest and recuperation leave.
RAST	Recruiting Advertising Screening Team
REACT	Reaction Teams
RFC	Relieved for Cause (form of disciplinary relief from MSG duty)
RMO	Regional Medical Officer.
Rover	MSG that patrols interior areas of an Embassy
RSO	Regional Security Officer. Reports directly to the Deputy Chief of Mission.
SA	State Annex. A Department of State building besides Main State.
Secretary Overseas	A diplomatic rank, as in Third Secretary, Second Secretary, and First Secretary, in ascending order of seniority. In the Department of State (or Defense or Commerce, etc.) usually prefaced with “The” and referring to the cabinet officer in charge.

L.I.N.K.S. for Parents/Extended Family

Seventh Floor	Department of State terminology referring to the Secretary of State, the Deputy Secretary and the Under Secretaries.
Sixth Floor	State Department terminology referring to the next lower echelon within the Department; i.e., the Assistant Secretary level.
TCN	Third country national. A citizen of a country other than the United States or the host country.
TDY	Temporary Duty.
The Residence	Living quarters of the Ambassador.
TS	Top Secret.
TSP	Thrift Savings Plan.
UAB	Unaccompanied Air Baggage.
USAID	United States Agency for International Development. An agency responsible to the Secretary of State, with missions attached to U.S. Embassies, under USAID Mission Directors, in countries where the United States maintains economic aid programs.
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture.
USG	United States Government.
USIA	United States Information Agency. (Former foreign affairs agency incorporated into the DOS in 1999.)
VIP	Very Important Person.
VISA	Endorsement on passport granting official entry to a country.
WHO	World Health Organization, United Nations.
WTO	World Trade Organization in Geneva

Worldwide Time Zones Map



Notes

II. The Maze

Marine Corps Embassy Security Group American Red Cross Message Information

Post	Servicemember's Full Legal Name	Rank/Grade	Branch of Service	Social Security Number	Official Address	Information About Duty Station
1 st						
2 nd						
3 rd						

It is important to know that a verified Red Cross Emergency Message does not mean the servicemember will immediately return. Operational conditions in country and the availability of transportation are both factors in the decision made by the Commanding Officer on when, or if, the servicemember can return. Red Cross Emergency Messages are messages that relate to the birth of a servicemember's child, the death or serious illness of a family member or other family emergencies. The Red Cross message confirms to the command that the emergency is real, the relationship of the family member, and the seriousness of the emergency.



MCESG

Points of Contact

Commanding Officer
Marine Corps Embassy Security Group
27277 Browning Rd.
Quantico, Virginia 22134

Family Readiness Officer
Marine Corps Embassy Security Group
27277 Browning Rd.
Quantico, Virginia 22134
Office: 703-784-4907
Email: Jennifer.Douglas@usmc.mil

MCESG website: <http://www.mcesg.usmc.mil>

DSTRESS

DSTRESS LINE
1.877.476.7734
A SERVICE OF THE MARINE CORPS

A PLACE TO CALL
FOR THOSE WITH THE COURAGE TO ANSWER OUR NATION'S CALL

Home Resources About Us Media A SERVICE OF THE MARINE CORPS

From the everyday stressors of life to the stressors related to combat, stress can affect even the strongest Marine. The DSTRESS Line was developed by the Corps to provide professional, anonymous counseling for Marines, attached Sailors, and families when it's needed most. Call today to speak with one of your own.

I JUST WANT TO TALK
COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS
24/7 DStressline
Call and Talk to a Live Person!
1.877.476.7734

I CAN FIND IT MYSELF
Locate local resources & find links that will help you or a friend get help fast!
Locate Local Resources

I JUST WANT TO CHAT
Live Chat
Live Chat

COMPLETELY ANONYMOUS read it

A SERVICE OF THE MARINE CORPS

ABOUT US

The Marine Corps DSTRESS Line is a 24/7, anonymous phone and chat counseling service with a “Marine-to-Marine” approach. The call center is staffed with veteran Marines, former FMF Corpsmen, Marine Corps family members, and licensed clinicians with specific training in Marine Corps culture.

Who

The DSTRESS Line is available to all Marines, attached Sailors, and family members. Callers can speak with veteran Marines, former FMF corpsmen with years of experience on ‘the green side’, Marine Corps spouses or other family members, and licensed behavioral health clinical counselors who have taken Marine Corps-specific training to understand our culture.

What

The DSTRESS Line is an anonymous behavioral health counseling service that gives Marines, attached Sailors, and family members a place to call and speak with “one of their own.” It’s a place to call and talk about stress in our lives—from the common everyday stressors to post-traumatic stress to life-threatening crises. It’s non-medical. DSTRESS Line counselors won’t diagnose symptoms, but they will work with callers to help with a way forward.

Where

The DSTRESS Line is Corps-wide, available around the globe through an international phone number or this website.

When

The DSTRESS Line is open 24/7/365.

Why

Marines want to talk with someone who understands them as a Marine. The DSTRESS Line provides Marines, attached Sailors, and family members with a place to call and speak with 'one of their own.' It is a place to call and talk about problems before they turn into a crisis. The DSTRESS Line helps callers increase total fitness and develop the necessary skills required to cope with the widely varying challenges of life in the Corps.

How

To contact the DSTRESS Line, access the Chat feature found on this website, or by these phone numbers:

Voice/Text (domestic and international)	877-476-7734
Okinawa (DSN)	645-7734
Okinawa (local cell or local land line)	098-970-7734
Okinawa (US based VOIP)	877-476-7734
MCAS Iwakuni (DSN)	645-7734
MCAS Iwakuni (local cell or local land line)	098-970-7734

If you would like more information about the DSTRESS Line, please call 703-432-9385 or email us at dstressline@usmc.mil

Useful Websites for MCESG Parents and Extended Family Members

<http://www.mcesg.marines.mil>

<http://www.state.gov>

<http://www.state.gov/countries>

<http://www.militaryonesource.com>

<http://www.usmc.mil>

<http://www.quantico.usmc-mccs.org>

<http://www.marineshop.net>

<http://www.embassymarine.org>

<http://ircalc.usps.gov>

This page also contains a link to a “postal bulletin” pull-out section that has information about individual country restrictions on mailings.

<http://hqdainet.army.mil/mpsa/main.htm>

<http://www.usps.com>

<http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/passports.html>

<http://www.nc.cdc.gov/travel!default.aspx>

<https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html>

<http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock>

Notes

III. Pay Day

IV. Crossroads

Visiting Your Marine at an Embassy Post

One of the benefits of the Marine Security Guard Program is that Marines are stationed in unique locations around the world. Often, family and friends take advantage of this by visiting the Marine at post in the host country, and are able to share, a bit, in the overseas experience. Since watchstanders serve three posts, it is likely that there will be at least one location that is appropriate for visiting. Before you plan a trip, there are a few things you should consider:

1. Is this the right location for a visit?

Not all of our overseas postings are appropriate for visitors. Third world standards of medicine, cleanliness, drinking water, roads, accommodations, political conditions will not be comparable to U.S. standards. While Marines and dependants authorized on orders in country receive outstanding support from the Department of State and the United States Marine Corps to provide for their needs, this support is not available to friends and families who are visiting, and taking a trip to some countries is simply not worth the personal risk.

2. Is this the right time for a visit?

Marines are in country on a mission. They can request leave, and have it granted, but this is based on operational conditions. Talk with your Marine and plan the trip for a time when your Marine anticipates having some free time to spend with you. Some friends and families choose to travel and attend the U.S. Marine Corps Birthday Ball in November, but always be sure to schedule travel with your Marine's time available, in mind. Remember that schedules are subject to change, so have back-up plans. Arriving just as your Marine is starting a new tour or just at the end of a tour is probably not the best plan, as training requirements will still affect the situation, as will your Marine's responsibility to provide good "turnover" information to his/her replacement.

3. Where will you stay?

Your Marine will, most likely, continue to stay at the Marine Security Guard Quarters (MSGQ) or "Marine House" while you are there visiting. A maximum of four overnight stays away from the MSGQ are permitted per month for your Marine. The Marine House is not available for overnight guests. Accommodations should be arranged prior to arrival in country and your Marine should have ample notice of your visit so that he/she can research this for you so that you stay in a safe and appropriate location.

4. What are the cultural protocols in country?

As a guest in the area, you will want to make an effort not to offend the host nation or the sensibilities of the locals. Religious and social customs may be very different from what you experience at home. For example, in some countries, women do not wear shorts. Therefore, you would be unwise to pack shorts for your trip, regardless of the weather. In other locations, the locals are offended if someone includes them in a photograph. Research the customs of the country and ask your Marine about the things you should consider.

5. What about a visit to the Embassy or the MSG Quarters?

No doubt, you would like to see where your Marine works and lives. It is important to remember that the Embassy is a workplace, and many areas are off-limits to any visitors, and others require an escort at all times. Being respectful of these boundaries is key. The same applies to the Marine House or MSGQ. In general, guests are not permitted in the private rooms of the Quarters or in other off-limits areas, such as kitchens or behind the bar. There are plenty of other “public areas” in the Marine House for guests, however, sometimes these may require an escort as well.

6. What about the currency in country and the exchange rate?

Not every ATM or monetary exchange facility is safe or honest. Ask your Marine to guide you in this. In some countries, all transactions are cash and carry. Be aware of situations that could place you at risk for identity theft.

7. What souvenirs can I bring home?

Remember that U.S. Customs has policies in place regarding items that cannot be brought into country. Familiarize yourself with this information before you spend money on something that will never make it home. (For example: ivory, Cuban cigars, etc.).

8. What gifts can I bring to my Marine?

Check the restrictions for the country you intend to visit. Ask your Marine what he/she or their fellow Marines might really enjoy. The answer may surprise you!

9. What can I do to make this a great experience?

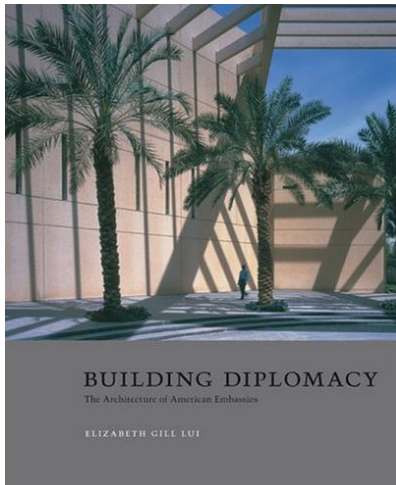
Be flexible. Operational conditions can change at any time. Try to relax and enjoy the time you get with your Marine, as well as the country you visit.

Helpful Hints:

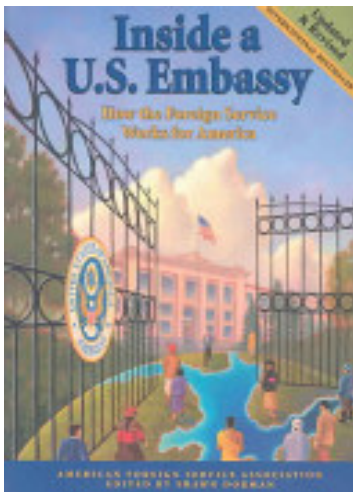
- Travel with “hard cover” suitcases when traveling overseas. It helps reduce the risk of your luggage being torn into and theft of personal items.
- Check out these websites before travel to reduce confusion and to help schedule your travel with ease and meet appropriate time lines:

- <http://travel.state.gov/passport>
- <http://www.state.gov/countries>
- <http://www.usembassy.gov>
- <http://wwwnc.cdc.gov/travel/default.aspx>
- <http://www.timeanddate.com/worldclock>
- <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook>

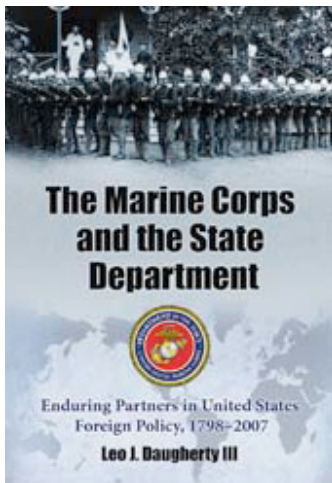
Available Books



- **Building Diplomacy: The Architecture of American Embassies**
- By Elizabeth Gill Lui
- Published January 2004



- **Inside a U.S. Embassy: How the Foreign Service Works for America**
- Published by the American Foreign Service
- Updated and Revised for 2005



- **The Marine Corps and the State Department**
- By Leo J. Daugherty III, former Marine and Historian
- Published March 2009

Travel Opportunities for Your Marine

Your Marine gets a unique opportunity to travel to various different countries than are usually afforded to most Marines. Marines can accomplish this several different ways:

- **Watch Standers**

While at Post. During your Marine's 3-year obligation of MSG duty, he/she will be posted in three different countries for a period of 12 months each posting. Not only does your Marine get to live and work in that country, but during off hours, he/she will get a chance to explore the city they live in, and take in the sites. During a command visit, Marines are usually given a chance to take the CO and SgtMaj on a cultural outing in their country.

- **DET CMDR**

If your Marine is a Detachment Commander, he or she will be posted in 2 different countries for a period of 18 months each posting. Not only does your Marine get to live and work in that country, but during off hours, he/she will get a chance to explore the city they live in, and take in the sites. During a command visit, Marines are usually given a chance to take the CO and SgtMaj on a cultural outing in their country.

- **While on LEAVE**

Depending on operational commitments for their detachment, your Marine can request LEAVE and have it granted. Marines might choose to further explore the city or country he/she is posted in, or even travel to a neighboring country.

- **While TAD for VIP Support**

Sometimes, when the President of the U.S., Vice President, or Secretary of State travel overseas, there is an opportunity for Marines to provide security support. Often times, Marines are able to travel to another country to help provide that support, and take in the sites when they are not tasked with working.

Community Liaison Officer (CLO)

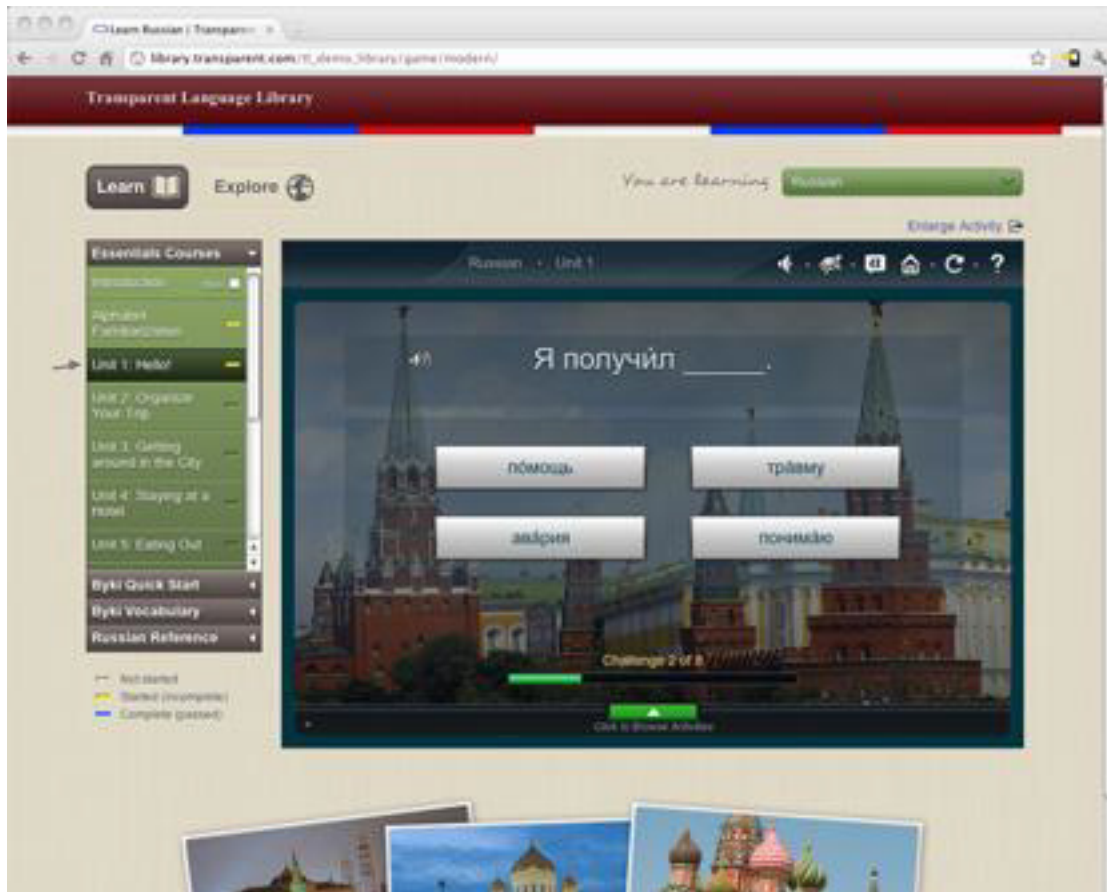
A Community Liaison Officer, or “CLO” (pronounced: “ca - low”) is the point person for quality-of-life issues at an embassy. This position is usually held by an embassy family member, not a direct-hire Foreign Service employee. The CLO plays a vital role in ensuring a healthy embassy community. A CLO works to maintain high morale through orientation programs, cultural and recreational activities, dissemination of information and assists with family member employment at post. A good CLO serves as a critical link between embassy management and the greater embassy community, ensuring lines of communication remain open and that management is always aware of the concerns of the community.

At most embassies, the CLO usually works closely with the Marine Detachment to coordinate community activities to help maintain high morale at post. Depending on the size of the embassy community, the CLO(s) usually helps to keep American holiday traditions, values, and events “alive” by celebrating them at post, just as we would do back in the states.

The CLO can also serve as a confidant that Marines can talk to when there is an issue bothering them. They have been trained to help deal with a wide variety of concerns. Although they may not have personal experience with a particular issue a Marine may present, they do have experience with helping people deal with rough times.

Personal Enrichment and Recreational Learning

Research-based and experience-driven, Transparent Language Online is a language-learning program that provides an effective, fun, and engaging experience for learners for all levels.



www.transparent.com/libraries/military

Consumable Goods

Some of the MSG posts are in such remote areas that they are allowed a Consumable Goods shipment. This shipment can be anything from non-perishable food to toilet paper and tooth brushes. The Marine pays for these items, but the cost of shipping is covered by the government. This is only for countries where common goods are either not available, or not available at a reasonable quality and cost. For example, boxed cereal can be quite expensive in some of the underdeveloped countries.

If the post rates a Consumable Goods shipment, the single “Watchstander” Marine (Sergeant and below) is usually entitled to 1250 pounds of goods for a one year tour. Detachment Commanders whose posts rate Consumable Goods are allotted 1875 pounds for an 18-month tour. Many Marines use this shipment to augment the local cuisine with familiar American products. While Detachment Commanders often arrange these shipments prior to going to post, Watchstanders work with their Detachment Commanders to arrange this after arrival at post so that the best benefit can be achieved.

There are several different ways to accomplish this shipment, including online ordering, but the methods available vary from post to post.

Regardless of means, your Marine will have plenty to eat.

V. Separation

Preparation, Emotions, and Separation

The Marine who is preparing to go out to Post as a Marine Security Guard has trained and worked incredibly hard for this opportunity. Weeks of physical training, classes on tasks they may be assigned, and added instruction on everything from handcuffing to appropriate attire for events has culminated in this moment. For many Marines, this is a bittersweet time. They're thrilled to have the opportunity, but it means saying "Goodbye" to friends, family, and all that is so familiar here in the United States.

It's natural to have some doubts, anxiety, and uncertainty along with the excitement. This is normal and healthy. After all, this is a major life transition, and mixed feelings are normal.

When a first post Marine arrives at post, the hardest part of getting settled is adjusting to all of the new experiences. A new boss (the Detachment Commander), being away from the "regular" Marine Corps and a houseful of new colleagues with whom the Marine both works and lives would be enough to shake anyone's confidence. Add to that a completely new country where the local people may not speak, dress, eat or even drive like we do in the United States, and you may have one stressed Marine. Some Marines find themselves wondering, "What have I gotten myself into?" They may even go through a period where they take stock and find themselves thinking, "This is not what I thought it would be," or maybe they'll have negative feelings about the host country, "Everything takes too long here," or "It is impossible to get anything done here". If this is expressed through a phone call, email or letter, don't worry. This is not abnormal. After a while, however, the unfamiliar becomes routine, new housemates become friends, and the Marine begins to feel at "home" in the host country. When the Marine moves on to his/her next post, the cycle starts again, but the Marine has some new skills and the Embassy Community is more familiar. In fact, the third post Marine's hardest transition is the one back to the United States when the MSG three year tour is over.

What makes the return and reintegration difficult for many Marines is that it is unexpected. After all, coming to a new country, they knew and expected everything to be a bit different. Returning to a familiar language and culture should be, they expect, easy. After all, they're just coming home. That sense of belonging, however, isn't just about the place in which they live. It's a lifestyle constructed of routines, habits, and behaviors that are associated with people, places and activities that they experience frequently and on a regular basis. The change from a country where, for example, the locals smile when you speak their language, to one where making a comment in that same language nets a bewildered stare, can be quite disconcerting.

The feelings of being out of place are increased when people, having heard the stories of MSG duty for a few days, lose interest. The Marines may complain of feeling like they live in a fishbowl while they were on duty, with every move and social interaction scrutinized, but the return to anonymity as “the new guy” in a fleet unit can be disappointing. The Marines have experienced changes, both through the unique experiences of new countries and cultures, and in their experience as an “Ambassador in Blue”. People who didn’t know them before those experiences won’t notice a difference, and even those who do notice, like friends and family, will rapidly adapt to the changes and cease to comment on them. Often Marines will seek out others who have served on the duty, and have a sense of almost instant camaraderie. They may feel less at home with their own families, or more accustomed to having a houseful of comrades, and the home or barracks experience falls a bit flat.

Again, this is normal. The Marine won’t be the exact same person he/she once was. Just as the initial Marine Corps boot camp experience caused a change, so the three years on the MSG program will affect their world view and their sense of self. They will grow more comfortable eventually. Families can help by allowing the Marine to set the pace of the reintegration. Most of the Marines are happy to see their friends and families, but flustered by their own sense of change. Encourage the Marine to talk about his/her experiences, and share changes that have taken place at home as well. Try not to be upset if they seem to need space. It’s not you, it’s their own adjustment process.

Operational Security (OPSEC)

- OPSEC involves keeping potential adversaries from discovering our critical information. It protects our operations – planned, in progress, and those completed.
- Critical information deals with the specific facts about military intentions, capabilities, operations, or activities.
- Examples of critical information include, but are not limited to, flight schedules, troop/ship movements, temporary duty locations, and installation activities.

Four Primary Things to Remember about OPSEC

- Where and how you discuss this information is just as important as with whom you discuss it. Places like internet blogs and chat rooms are not the place to reveal any unit separation/deployment information; you can never be certain who is on the other end receiving this information.
- Determined individuals can easily collect data from cordless and cellular phones and even baby monitors using readily available and inexpensive receivers.
- Personal conversations conducted in public may be easily overheard.
- If anyone, especially a foreign national, persistently seeks information, notify your spouse or FRO. They will contact the Security Manager of the unit.

Protecting Operational Security

One of our greatest concerns is protecting the operational security of our Marines. When friends and family post information on their Facebook, Twitter, MySpace or other social networking accounts, the following questions might be useful in preventing an inadvertent risk to the Marine.

Questions to ask yourself:

- Does this tell someone who I am, where I go, where I live or where I work?
- Does this tell someone who my Marine is, where the Marine is, what he does?
- Does this give someone access to locating me, my Marine, or his/her spouse or family?
- Does this tell someone that I/we are vulnerable?
- Does this tell someone about the movement of my Marine or other Marines assigned with him or her?
- Does this tell someone how many Marines are stationed with my Marine, or what they are doing?
- Am I exposing my own travel plans or my Marine's travel plans?

Note: It is extremely important to practice good OPSEC at ALL times. Sensitive and critical information is handled throughout a Marine's career, not just during a separation or deployment.

Culture Shock

“A State of Dis-ease”

What Is It?

Culture shock is not a clinical term or medical condition. It is simply a common way to describe the confusing and nervous feelings a person may have after leaving a familiar culture to live in a new and different culture. When your Marine moves to a new place, they are bound to face a lot of changes. That can be exciting and stimulating, but it can also be overwhelming. Your Marine may feel sad, anxious, frustrated, and want to go home. It is natural to have difficulty adjusting to a new culture. People from other cultures may have grown up with values and beliefs that differ from ours. Because of these differences, the things they talk about, the ways they express themselves, and the importance of various ideas may be very different from what we are used to. But the good news is that culture shock is temporary.

Phases of Culture Shock

The shock (of moving to a foreign country) often consists of distinct phases, though not everyone passes through these phases and not everyone is in the new culture long enough to pass through all three:

- **Honeymoon Phase** - During this period the differences between the old and new culture are seen in a romantic light, wonderful and new. For example, in moving to a new country, an individual might love the new foods, the pace of the life, the people's habits, the buildings and so on. During the first few weeks most people are fascinated by the new culture. They associate with the nationals that speak their language and are polite to the foreigners. This period is full of observations and new discoveries. Like many honeymoons this stage eventually ends.
- **Negotiation Phase** - After some time (usually weeks), differences between the old and new culture become apparent and may create anxiety. That sense of excitement will eventually give way to new and unpleasant feelings of frustration and anger as you continue to have unfavorable encounters that strike you as strange, offensive, and unacceptable. These reactions are typically centered on the language barrier, as well as stark differences in: public hygiene; traffic safety; the type and quality of the food. You may long for food the way it is prepared in your native country, may find the pace of life too fast or slow, may find the people's habits annoying, disgusting, and irritating etc. This phase is often marked by mood swings caused by minor issues or without apparent reason. This is where excitement turns to disappointment and more and more differences start to occur. Depression is not uncommon.
- **Adjustment Phase** - Again, after some time (usually 6 months), you grow accustomed to the new culture and develops routines. You know what to expect in most situations and the host country no longer feels all that new. You become concerned with basic living again, and things become more “normal”. You start to develop problem-solving skills for dealing with

the culture, and begin to accept the culture ways with a positive attitude. The culture begins to make sense, and negative reactions and responses to the culture are reduced. Reaching this stage requires a constructive response to culture shock with effective means of adaptation.

What Causes Culture Shock?

To understand culture shock, it helps to understand what culture is. You may know that genes determine a big part of how we look and act. What you might not know is that your environment — your surroundings — has a big effect on appearances and behavior.

Your environment is not just the air you breathe and the food you eat, though, a big part of your environment is culture. Culture is made up of the common things that members of a community learn from family, friends, media, literature, and even strangers. These are the things that influence how they look, act, and communicate. Often, you do not even know you are learning these things because they become second nature to you — for instance, the way you shake hands with someone when meeting them, when you eat your meals each day, the kind of things you find funny, or how you view religion.

When you go to a new place, such as a new country (or even a new city), you often enter a culture that is different from the one you left. Sometimes your culture and the new culture are similar. Other times, they can be very different, and even contradictory. What might be perfectly normal in one culture — for instance, eating dinner late at night like at 9 or 10 p.m. — might be unusual in another culture.

The differences between cultures can make it very difficult to adjust to the new surroundings. You may encounter unfamiliar clothes, weather, and food as well as different people, ways of shopping, and values. You may find yourself struggling to do things in your new surroundings that were easy back home. Dealing with the differences can be very unsettling; those feelings are part adjusting to a new culture.

How Does It Feel?

One person's adjustment to a new culture is not necessarily like another person's. In some situations, people are excited about their move. Though they may feel a little sad about leaving important people and places behind, they think of the move as a new adventure, or they have heard great things about the place that will soon become their new home. Some people stay this way. But difficulties adjusting often do not show up right away. In some people, the excitement gives way to frustration as time goes on and they still have trouble understanding their new surroundings.

Though people experience culture shock in different ways, these feelings are common:

- not wanting to be around people who are different from you
- sadness
- loneliness
- anxiety

- trouble concentrating
- feeling left out or misunderstood
- developing negative and simplistic views of the new culture
- frustration
- extreme homesickness

These difficult feelings may tempt you to isolate yourself from your new surroundings and dismiss the new culture. It is best not to withdraw like this. If you stay calm, observe and learn, and keep things in perspective, you will probably find that your difficulties will pass. But if you are feeling depressed and you are not able to function normally even after the first few months in your new environment, you should talk to someone about it and whether to seek help from a professional.

So how does one deal with the frustration and fears associated with culture shock? How does one begin to feel comfortable in your new surroundings?

Learning the Language

Depending on where one comes from and where one goes, you may or may not have trouble with the native language. It is a good idea to become comfortable with the language as soon as one can. Not being able to understand what people are saying is almost as frustrating as not knowing how to make people understand what you are saying.

Lots of good resources are around to help our Marines practice. Many embassies know or have a list of people available for hire as a personal language tutor. In addition, books make good resources and even some websites, such as: <https://www.marinenet.usmc.mil/MarineNet/default.aspx> has Rosetta Stone courses available in many different languages for Marines at no charge.

Whatever method one chooses, practice is really important. A lot of people are worried about speaking a language they are not completely comfortable with and think that people who speak the language well will tease them when they stumble over words. This might tempt you to practice the language with someone who is at the same comfort level as you, but it is also important to practice with people who have mastered the language, so that you know when you make a mistake and learn from it.

It might make one uncomfortable when it takes twice as long to say the same thing as a native speaker, or use the wrong word, but remember that you have nothing to be ashamed of.

Even if one is familiar with the new language spoken, chances are you do not know a lot of the slang — casual speech that does not make it into translation dictionaries (or most dictionaries, for that matter). This is one of the many reasons why it is a good idea to do some studying on the culture you are immersed in.

Knowing What to Expect

The process of cultural adjustment usually encompasses five distinct stages:

- Stage 1: The feeling of excitement and eagerness. This stage occurs before leaving to go to the new culture.
- Stage 2: The feeling that everything in the new culture is great. This stage occurs upon arrival to the new culture.
- Stage 3: The feeling of everything in the new culture is terrible.
- Stage 4: The feeling of adjustment. The stage where the visitor begins to feel comfortable and takes steps to become more familiar with the culture.
- Stage 5: The feeling that everything is fine. The stage where the visitor has adapted to the culture and in some ways is embracing it as their own.

A lot of the anxiety that comes with moving to a new place has to do with not knowing what to expect in your new environment. Learning things about your new environment will help you become more comfortable, like once a Marine knows where their Post will be, they should acquire a Post Report and study it before arriving in that country.

Watch and learn from other Marines already at Post and other embassy members around you — see how they interact with each other. Find out what they do for fun and what kinds of things are important to them.

One can also get some insight from television and movies, but be careful — not everything on the screen is meant to be realistic, but these media do help if you are still trying to learn the language or catch up on some slang.

One does not have to love everything you find out about the culture, or start acting the way that others do, but when you gain knowledge of what people mean when they say certain phrases or why they dress a certain way, you do begin to feel better.

Your Family

It is important to realize that some people have an easier time adjusting to a new culture than others. Sometimes, if family members are having an easy transition, they will be a great source of support — a group of people who are going through something very much like what you are going through. In addition, families can be a big part of keeping ties to home.

But sometimes, family members might want to keep ties to home too tight. Parents might not expect the changes that may happen as their Marine begins to learn more about the new culture. Be patient; chances are that both family and Marine are trying to manage this new lifestyle.

Help If You Need It

There is much one can do to adjust to a new culture. Do not forget there are people one can go to for help:

- **Family and Friends** - Find someone who has experience with culture shock — maybe another Marine who moved to the country before you did. Find out how they handled the newness of their surroundings.
- **Community Liaison Officer (CLO)** - Try talking to the embassy's CLO. They have been trained to help deal with a wide variety of concerns. Although they may not have personal experience with culture shock, they do have experience with helping people deal with rough times.
- **New Friends** - Making friends who are not new to the culture may help one understand the culture better and have someone to talk to when feeling down.

Rather than giving up your culture to fit in, keep your mind open to new ways of doing and thinking about things. Notice things that are the same and things that are different. Appreciating that variety is what makes people so interesting.

Maintaining Your Culture

Everyone feels the pressure to fit in at one time or another — whether they have lived in the area for days or years. But do not feel like you need to change everything about yourself so you can stand out less. All of your experiences before you came to your new home are part of you, and what makes you special.

Here are a few tips for making sure your new culture does not overpower the old:

- Educate people about your culture. Just because you are the one entering the new culture does not mean you should be the one doing all the learning. Take the opportunity to teach others and new friends about your culture; they may know little about it. It will also help them to learn more about you in the process. Invite them over for traditional dishes from your culture, or show them how you celebrate your holidays.
- Keep in touch with home. You probably left behind good friends and family when you moved. If it is going to be a long time until your next visit, keep in touch. Write letters, emails, and make an occasional phone call so you can stay up-to-date on the things happening there, and talk about your new experiences. You have not only left behind people, but also other things — like your favorite spot to hang out. Keep pictures around to remind you of home.

Remember, the key to getting over your culture shock is understanding the new culture and finding a way to live comfortably within it while keeping true to the parts of your culture that you value.

It is important to be yourself. Try not to force yourself to change too fast or to change too many things all at once. You will have your own pace of adjusting. Everyone goes through changes in their life, and it may seem that you are going through more changes than the average person — but as long as you hold on to what is important to you and find a good combination between old and new, you will be fine.

Most Marines (98-99%), manage to adapt the aspects of the host culture they see as positive, while keeping some of their own and creating their unique blend. They get involved in embassy and community activities, they maintain healthy lines of communication with family and friends back home, keep busy with collateral duties and distance education, as well as knowing they have an important job and mission to carry out for the U.S. government. They have no major problems returning home or relocating elsewhere.



Three Ways to Complete an MSG Tour of Duty

1. **3-years Obligation:** Complete successful tours of duty at all Posts. Marine rates MSG Ribbon (pictured above).
2. **Good of the Service (GOS):** Normally reserved for medical and/or family issues. This has no negative effects on the Marine's career. Marine rates MSG Ribbon, if at least 24 months of duty as been successfully completed before separation.
3. **Relief for Cause (RFC):** For failing to perform and/or for disciplinary issues, (for example, alcohol related issues). This does have a negative effect on a Marine's career for promotion, retention, and future assignments. Marine will normally lose Top Secret clearance. No MSG Ribbon.

Healthy Communication

It may be a friend or family member who is serving as a Marine Security Guard, but those on the home front play a key role in the Marine's experience. Anyone who has ever seen a Marine open a letter or package from home knows how much support the families of our Marines provide. Nothing boosts morale higher than a letter from home (and nothing undermines it more than the absence of mail). While Marines do receive support from the embassy community, it does not replace the special understanding and acceptance that comes from caring friends and family.

Therefore, the single most important thing you can do for your Marine is to stay in frequent touch, even when there is no news to report. What you say in letters, e-mails, etc. is not as important as that you continue to send them. Just knowing that you are thinking of them makes a big difference. You can be a big part of the support network that brings your Marine through the three years of obligated duty as an MSG successfully.

If you are not tech savvy, this is a great time to learn how to e-mail. Because of the time differences, e-mail may become the easiest and cheapest way to contact your Marine without disrupting sleep. Traditional phone calls may not be easy, especially in undeveloped countries with limited phone and cell phone service, and they also may be expensive. Skype, Vonage and other software applications that allow users to make voice calls over the Internet are popular with some detachments. Calls to other users within the service are usually free. Skype has also become popular for their additional features which include instant messaging, file transfer, and video conferencing.

When you communicate with your Marine, ask about the experiences he/she is having. If you notice that they seem different, ask about what is going on in their life. Taking the time to familiarize yourself with information about their country may help you to better understand what is happening in their world.

Regardless of how you communicate with your Marine, do communicate. Regular letters may take a while to make the trip from one side of the world to the other, but they mean a great deal to the Marine. A positive, uplifting note can make the whole day brighter, and wise advice from a family member or trusted friend can help a Marine to make better decisions when faced with difficult choices. By the same token, it may take the Marine a long time to get a letter to you, so be patient.

We know that families and friends who are supportive can positively affect a Marine, his/her outlook and their professional performance. As a Marine rides the emotional roller coaster that comes with the wide variety of new experiences on this program, your support is invaluable.

Mail and DIP Pouch Services

One of the best ways you can support a Marine is to send mail. Letters, photos, cards and care packages can boost morale immensely. Mail at post is a touch of home. E-mail may be quick, but Marines will often save the handwritten letters from home to read over and over again. If you intend to send mail, remember that it may take a long time to arrive or to get a reply. Additionally, please verify your address to which you are sending mail with the Marine.

Mail may be sent overseas by international postal service, Army Post Office (APO), Fleet Post Office (FPO), Diplomatic Post Office (DPO), or by the U.S. Department of State Diplomatic Pouch and Mail Service. While international mail service is available around the world, it may not be reliable, especially in remote countries. Be sure to find out what mail service is like before using an international mail address.

APO/FPO Addresses

Through partnerships with other agencies, the Military Postal Service provides service to various locations overseas based on Department of Defense program requirements. The Military Postal Service Agency (MPSA) ensures that overseas APO/FPO postal facilities and services meet USPS operational standards. Some posts are able to use APO or FPO services, but they are not available at every overseas post.

If there is an APO/FPO system available, personnel are expected to use this for their personal mailings. However, items sent by FEDEX, UPS, Airborne, DHL or any other private carrier cannot be addressed to APO/FPO and will be refused. If a vendor refuses to deliver to an APO/FPO/DPO, then the personal “pouch” address may be used. Packages are usually limited to 70 pounds and 108 inches in length and girth combined. Some APO/FPO facilities have more stringent restrictions than others, and for specific restrictions, please consult your local U.S. Post Office. All APO/FPO mail requires a customs declaration and appropriate U.S. postage from the point of origin to the point of entry into the military postal service.

Diplomatic Post Office (DPO)

DPO began as a pilot program in 2003 and currently operates in 16 locations. DPO provides APO-like service, but is considerably more restrictive than traditional APO/FPO locations. DPO is mail being sent as pouch “via U.S. Mail” and all items must fit into a United States Postal Service bag. DPO service also requires the same customs declaration as APO/FPO. Be sure to verify each post’s preferred address format with your Marine. Do not add job titles, embassy names, or section location unless specifically instructed to do so, as this can cause confusion and delay arrival.

State Department Diplomatic Pouch Services

The term “diplomatic pouch” includes both the official pouch, which has a Washington D.C. zip code and the personal pouch, which has a Dulles, VA zip code. The official pouch should not be used for personal correspondence or personal packages, as this mail is irradiated by the U.S. Postal Service causing both delays and possible damage.

The Department of State does have a zip code for personal mail to support personnel assigned to non-APO/FPO posts overseas. Mail sent to this address will not be irradiated. Marine Security Guards and their dependants living overseas can receive mail through this “Personal Pouch” address. Personal Pouch mail is limited to letters and packages at a maximum of 17x18x32 inches (no single dimension can exceed this limit) and a maximum weight of 50 pounds.

Since some posts have special size and weight restrictions in effect because of host government decisions and/or aircraft size limitations, please have your Marine verify the restrictions at post.

The frequency of Personal Pouch Mail is determined by volume of mail and other material. Larger posts receive up to three dispatches per week. A small post will receive a minimum of one dispatch per week. Pouches are sent on commercial airlines as air cargo. Passenger baggage and critical supplies have priority when space is limited.

Postage must be paid at the applicable domestic rate for the class of mail and type of service desired, subject to zone rates (for parcel post) from point of origin to Dulles, Virginia. Using express mail services does not get mail to a post any quicker because the express mail is only from the point of origin to Dulles. Packages may be mailed at any U.S. Post Office in the United States or sent to the State Department by UPS, FedEx, DHL, or other non-postal means of transportation, but again, this only delivers as far as the Dulles address.

When using the Dulles, VA zip code, for security reasons, nothing in the address field should reference in any way the mission, the office, a job title, or anything official about where your Marine or family member works.

Magazines and newspapers may also be sent via the personal diplomatic pouch. All parcels should be securely packed and sealed. Insured and registered mail services are not available for items sent through the pouch and the Department accepts no liability for loss or damage.

Articles prohibited by U.S. postal regulations may not be sent through State Department pouch facilities. Lists of such articles may be obtained from local postmasters or online. In addition, aerosols, alcoholic beverages, ammunition, items for resale, bulk supplies, corrosives (acids), currency, explosives, firearms, flammables, glass containers, illegal substances, incendiary materials, narcotics, plants, poisons, and radioactive substances are prohibited.

It is now permitted to send 16 ounces of liquid per box; liquids include anything that flows, such as syrup. Since it is forbidden to let the airlines know the contents of a Diplomatic Pouch, they must be assured that there is no hazardous material in any pouch, under any circumstance. For more information regarding restricted materials consult: <http://www.usps.com/aviationsecurity/welcome.htm> .

The USPS guidelines and acceptance policy for Dulles personal pouch mail can be found at: <http://pe.usps.com/text/dmm300/703.htm#wp1113914>. The guidelines for USPS international mail (APO/FPO/DPO) can be found at www.state.gov/documents/organization/16290.pdf

Mailing Addresses

(Fill in the blanks with your Marine's information.)

1st POST:

Det. Commander Name: _____

Post 1 Telephone Number: _____

MSG House Telephone Number: _____

2nd POST:

Det. Commander Name: _____

Post 2 Telephone Number: _____

MSG House Telephone Number: _____

3rd POST:

Det. Commander Name: _____

Post 3 Telephone Number: _____

MSG House Telephone Number: _____

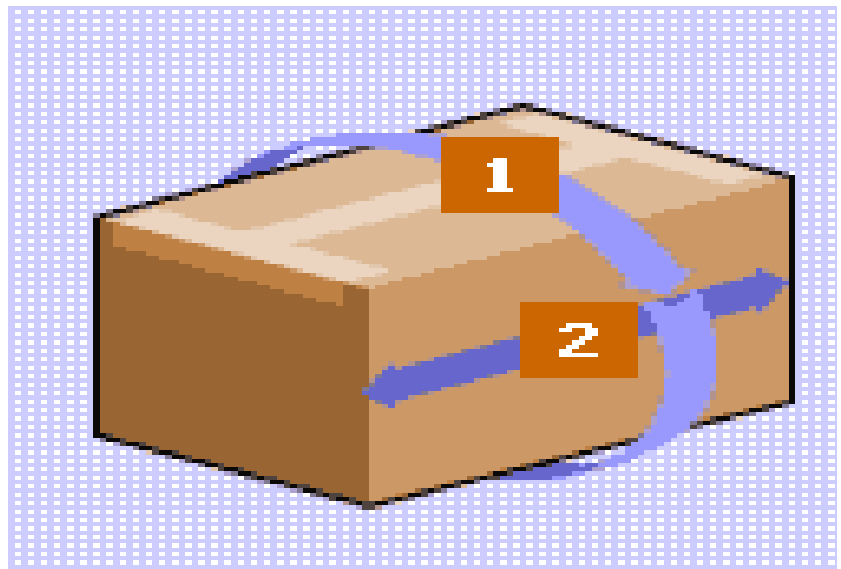
How to Measure for Mailing Packages to Post

How to Measure Your Package Size

- **Girth** - represented by number 1 on the diagram, is the total distance around your package or object at its widest point, perpendicular to the length
- **Length** - represented by number 2 on the diagram, is the longest side of your package or object
- Add the length and girth measurements together to get your total package size.


$$\begin{array}{r} \text{Girth} \\ + \text{Length} \\ \hline \text{Total Size} \end{array}$$

**PACKAGES
CANNOT EXCEED
108 INCHES
TOTAL**



USPS Customs Form

- Under 4 Pounds -



LC075644963US

Documents Commercial sample Other
 Merchandise Gift Country of Origin of Goods: USA

Detailed description of contents (1)	Qty. (2)	Weight (3) lb. oz.	Value (4) (US \$)	HS Tariff # (5)
Jerky	1		\$4	
Candy	1		\$2	
T-shirt	1		\$15	
Totals (6)			\$21	

Exemption/Exclusion Legend (7)
 (Check one of the following) NOEEI § 30.37(a) NOEEI § 30.37(h)

I certify the particulars given in this customs declaration are correct. This item does not contain any dangerous article, or articles prohibited by legislation or by postal or customs regulations. I have met all applicable export filing requirements under the Foreign Trade Regulations.

Sender's Signature and Date (8)
Mom Smith

PS Form 2976, December 2009 PSN 7530-01-000-9833

USPS® Customs Declaration – CN 22
IMPORTANT: The item/parcel may be opened officially. See Privacy Notice on reverse of Sender's Instructions page. Please print in English and press firmly; you are making multiple copies.


From:
MOM SMITH
1234 Main St.
Anywhere, XX 01234
USA

To:
Any Marine
PSC or Unit #, Box #
APO AE 09080-Box #

Do not duplicate without USPS approval. 1 - Scan Copy

USPS Customs Form

- Over 4 Pounds -



CP8040313457US

FROM: Sender's Last Name
SMITH **First:** MARY **MI:** J

Business Address (Number, street, suite, apt., P.O. Box, etc. Residents of Puerto Rico include Urbanization Code preceded with URB)
1234 MAIN STREET
City: ANYWHERE **State:** XX **ZIP+4:** 01234-

TO: Addressee's Last Name
SMITH **First:** JOHN **MI:** D

Business Address (Number, street, suite, apt., P.O. Box, etc.)
PSC or Unit #, Box #
Postcode: 09080-Box # **City:** APO AE
State/Province: **Country:**

1. Detailed Description of Contents (enter one item per line)	2. Qty.	3. Lbs.	Oz.	4. Value (U.S. \$)
<u>SNACKS: COOKIES CANDY</u>				<u>8.00</u>
<u>MAGAZINES NEWSPAPER</u>				<u>5.00</u>
<u>CLOTHES</u>				<u>40.00</u>
<u>SHOES</u>				<u>20.00</u>
				73.00

5. Check One:
 Gift Returned Goods Documents Commercial Sample Merchandise Other:
 6. Check One:
 Airmail Surface

7. Other Restrictions: (pertains to No. 12)
 Quarantine Sanitary or Phytosanitary Inspection

8. Total Gross Wt: (all items Lbs. & Ozs.)
73.00

9. Total Value US \$ (all items)
73.00

10. If non-deliverable:
 Treat as Abandoned Return to Sender (see inst) Redirect to Address Below:

11. EEL/PFC

13. I certify the particulars given in this customs declaration are correct. This item does not contain any dangerous article, or articles prohibited by legislation or by postal or customs regulations. I have met all applicable export filing requirements under the Foreign Trade Regulations.

Sender's Signature and Date
Mom Smith 01/01/2011

PS Form 2976-A, May 2009 PSN: 7530-01-000-9834

United States Postal Service®
Customs Declaration and Dispatch Note – CP 72
IMPORTANT: This item may be opened officially. Please print in English. Please print in English, using blue or black ink, and press firmly; you are making multiple copies. See Privacy Notice and Indemnity Coverage on Customer Copy.

Insured Amount (US \$)	SDR Value
\$ <u>0.00</u>	
Insurance Fees (US \$)	Total Postage Fees (US \$)
\$ <u>0.00</u>	\$ <u>0.00</u>

14. Sender's Customs Reference (if any)

15. Importer's Reference - Optional (if any)

16. Importer's Telephone Fax Email (select one)

17. License No.

18. Certificate No.

19. Invoice No.

20. HS Tariff Number 21. Country of Origin of Goods

20. HS Tariff Number 21. Country of Origin of Goods

Mailing Office Date Stamp

Do not duplicate this form without USPS approval. 1 - Manifesting/Scan Copy